
Workplace Paracletes

Training Manual

Charles Young, PhD

Bible Studies at Work

This is a list of reasons to hold Bible studies at places of work. This is not designed to advocate "Workplace" ministry only, but ANY ministry.

1. It's daytime work.
2. Finding places to hold these is fairly easy.
3. Each person attending is a potential circle of influence, instead of already being in a family setting.
4. We can borrow the relationships of others instead of spending years building our own.
5. People are more likely to attend than after work, when they are tired.
6. The time works because it is NOT another time away from home.
7. It also works because they have already designated the time for lunch use.
8. They can eat lunch as the Bible study is being conducted.
9. Other prospects are readily available.
10. People can come and go weekly without too much disruption of the group.

Tacit Approval

As the host seeks the privilege of inviting the teacher into the Bible study, he/she should seek “tacit” approval. Tacit means in this case “implied (as by an act or by silence) rather than expressed.” An affirmative decision to hold a Bible study in the workplace by a “lost” employer is a lot to ask. Therefore seeking “tacit” approval is a less threatening way to go.

Some may say, “Some of us are gathering at lunchtime for a simple Bible study, we will even pray for the company. You don’t care, do you?” You can see the difference between this and outright asking for permission. It places less pressure on the employer.

Perhaps no permission is necessary. If the host can normally have a guest into their office without special permission, *do it*. Normal company protocol should be used. Sometimes it’s easier to ask for forgiveness than asking for permission. Each case is different. Remember, in some cases it simply will not be possible.

GIBBS LAW FIRM, P.A.

Attorneys and Counselors at Law

Thank you for contacting the Christian Law Association and our law firm regarding your desire to sponsor Bible studies for various companies in your area. It is entirely appropriate for employees to gather together for a Bible study or prayer group during non work time, such as a lunch break. In fact, many private employers initiate such meetings on their own. The attached document discusses this issue with regard to federal government workplaces---and the same rules would apply for any government workplace. In fact, employees of many federal agencies and various other government workplaces regularly engage in Bible study and prayer group meetings either before or after work or during lunch.

In an Example listed just before Section C in the attached document, the following guideline is discussed:

(g) During lunch, certain employees gather on their own time for prayer and Bible study in an empty conference room that employees are generally free to use on a first-come, first-served basis. Such a gathering does not constitute religious harassment even if other employees with different views on how to pray might feel excluded or ask that the group be disbanded.

That is the general standard, not only for government workplaces, but also for private workplaces as well. If other groups are permitted to gather to discuss other topics during non work times, a religious gathering may not be denied under Title VII anti-discrimination employment law. Title VII requires that a private company not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, etc. with regarding to hiring, firing or benefits and privileges of employment. One benefit of employment is for likeminded people to be able to interact around issues like religion. As long as this type of gathering is not disruptive in the work environment, there are no legal difficulties and, in fact, many private employers initiate such groups for their employees since religious people tend to be productive and honest workers.

I hope this information will be helpful as you seek to assist workers to organize Bible study groups in the workplace.

Sincerely,
Barbara J. Weller
Admitted in Florida

Gibbs Law Firm, P.A.
5666 Seminole Blvd., Suite 2
Seminole, FL 33772

Making it Special

People respond to something “special.” People resist ordinary. In order to make the Bible study “special” initially a special leader is assigned to do the Bible study. This is the main reason that the study should be initiated by an outsider. Someone has said that an expert is someone from out of town with a briefcase. Even though this is meant to be humorous there is a measure of truth in it.

A famous man (Jesus) once said, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own country.”

In order to invite others to this special Bible study, a flyer touting the credentials of the teacher should be prepared. Every person can be made to look like a “specialist.” By finessing a person’s credentials, anyone can be made “special.” The intent is not to make up things about a person, only to present them in a way that shows authority. Therefore the flyer should make the teacher look like a genius. The invitees will respond better to such an invitation. It doesn’t mean that the teacher is the only person to continue the study, only initiate it. A sample flyer can be seen below.

Invitation Script

“As you may know, I am trying to follow the teachings of Jesus. I have been trying to live my life in such a way that I will enjoy the blessings of God. This man/lady has agreed to help me along my journey. It occurs to me that you may also have a desire for God’s best in your life. (The teacher) has agreed to allow others to sit in on our sessions. I would like to give you a personal invitation to join us.”

Bible Discovery

Wednesday, October 26 @ 2:30 PM

Come discover how God wants to bless you in your life and family and help you on your life journey!

Wesley Young will lead this discovery group.

Wesley is a full time student. His accomplishments include having received numerous awards for his academic skills. He is also an avid football fan as well as a player. He has been a leader on the field as well as off. Having been gifted in academics and athletics is truly a blessing.

Wes met God one day when God was definitely drawing him. From the venue of the mind, God led Wes to himself. His initial response was one of fear which quickly turned into love and gratitude.

His attitude about the Bible is that it is totally true. He has come to the personal conclusion that God spoke every word for man to record. He continually commits Scripture passages to memory to be able to apply them to life's situations. He has a passion for others to learn the same Biblical truths that have been such a blessing to him. Wesley stands ready for God to use him in any way. His intelligent and honest view of the Bible will be a blessed and informative time for all those who attend.

Host and Hostess Responsibility

The **MOST** important thing in this entire process is coaching the host or hostess. If this is not done right the whole thing can stop here. It must be first determined, how much approval is needed for a Bible study in the workplace.

Logistics

- Would you like to do this study at work or in another location?
- Where will the Bible study take place? Need for privacy.
- When? During lunch? How will you deal with the lunch meal?
- How often? Suggest once a month at first, then let the group itself decide if they want to meet more often.
- Pick a time and stick to it.

Tacit approval

- Normal company protocol should be observed.
- Does host need permission to have a guest in the building?
- Does host need permission to have the study in the office? If so, tacit approval should be sought. Example of asking for tacit approval, "Some of us are gathering at lunchtime to read the Bible together. You don't care, do you?"

Inviting people

- All the host/hostess has to do is invite.
- Invite broadly (~2-3 out of 10 will come).
- Invite people in person. Face to face works much better than a mass email.
- Don't assume who will or will not come.
- Make it special. Don't leave flyers around the work place, only show one.
- The people invited should be put at ease about not being put on the spot, asked any questions, asked to read out loud, or anything else that would cause any embarrassment at all.
- Great care should be taken to insure a safe environment.
- The Host/hostess should expect that people will drop out and not be discouraged by this.

- Be careful when inviting other believers. Everyone has an agenda. We have taken care to not be divisive in the lessons, i.e.: teaching controversial doctrine.

Prepare a flyer (don't leave this with them)

A flyer should accompany the invitation to the meeting discussing the "special" attributes of the meeting. The time and place of the meeting should be made clear.

Regular reminders

- Prior to each meeting, sufficient notice should be given to each participant about the meeting, as well as the day of the meeting.

Lunch

- If the meeting is during lunch, some provision should be made to accommodate the meeting during lunch.

Enlist prayer advocates

- The host or group leader should be encouraged to enlist people in the church to pray for the Bible study group being held in their place of business. This will accomplish three things: first, it will invoke the power and presence of God in the lives of the attendees; secondly, it will place a burden on the person praying to perhaps have a Bible study in *their* place of business and thirdly, it will create an excitement in the church about outreach. The only prayer request handed down by Jesus is to "pray the Lord of the harvest that He will send forth laborers into the harvest." Our advocate or host/hostess should solicit prayer. Perhaps there are other believers where you work. That would also be a good resource for prayer for the same reasons.

Maintain a good, ongoing relationship with host/hostess.

Continually encourage the host/hostess. Remember satanic attacks will also affect them.

- Mentor the host/hostess so that he/she will start another group.

SMALL GROUP TEACHER TRAINING

1. Promise to teach lessons from www.workplacefruits.com.
2. Prepare the individual's bio for invitation/flyer.
3. Review host/hostess coaching.
4. Deliver the invitation/flyer to hosts/hostesses.
5. Listen to all the lessons on the Work Place Fruits website, www.workplacefruits.com.
6. Find Lessons on the web to use for reference, www.workplacefruits.com.
7. Lessons 8 & 9 on salvation, repeat the Sinners Prayer.
8. Lesson 11, teach the SPEKA questions.
9. Strive for the "DNA".
10. Constantly encourage multiplication.
11. Don't drop the group.

Drawing the Net

How can we know who really knows Jesus? It has been said, "All I know about is me and thee and I have doubts about thee." Therefore we must give everyone a solid chance to accept Jesus as their Savior.

Along the way, through the lessons, constantly ask, "Which way would you choose?" when the lesson gives choices. These consents can be used when the

final choice comes. It makes the last choice easier if they have been agreeing regularly.

After Lesson 8 which summarizes salvation using Nicodemous as the example, the group should be allowed to openly ask Jesus to be their Savior. Instead of hoping that the people will approach you for salvation, assume that they want to be saved and lead them to it.

Collectively lead the group in the Sinner's Prayer. An honest heart and a yielded spirit should be discussed prior to the prayer. The prayer should be said out loud and something like this:

“Dear Lord Jesus. I know that I am a sinner, and I am sorry for my sins. Today, as sincerely as I can, I accept Jesus as my Savior. I open my heart to you and invite you to come into my life, my heart, and my family. Please make the changes in my life that will honor you. In Jesus name, amen.”

While heads are still bowed, ask for eye contact for those who truly meant the prayer. This is a commitment and should not be taken lightly. The results need to be measured and the teacher needs the information for future use.

SMALL GROUP “DNA”

There are several ingredients that should be included in small group “DNA”. These characteristics are to be practiced in *some* form so that if and when another group springs from the initial group, it will also contain the same “DNA”. The purpose is to ensure that we do NOT build into any group something that will prevent its duplication.

It is assumed that cultural differences and methods of practice will differ from group to group and that each characteristic will be expressed in unique forms. Some suggestions will be included in this narrative but they are only suggestions. Do not feel bound to practice any one of these areas in a prescribed way. Each group should be at liberty to introduce the “DNA” in unique ways.

PREPARE LEADERS

Leaders will automatically rise to the top. They cannot hide their leadership. Early on, however, it may not be possible to identify natural leaders. Therefore everyone should be treated as a leader and preparation should begin at the inception of the group, to spin off another group. It should not be kept secret that the group should develop another group. After the fashion of II Timothy 2:2, “faithful men” should be identified. A way to find these people is to assign them a task and see if they perform it. Some suggestions for training include but are not limited to:

- *Assigning scripture to study and share with the group.
- *Give someone a part of the “program” to perform.
- *Give someone an outline to study and share.
- *Give homework assignments, i.e.: reading something.
- *Researching something on the internet.

PRAYER

Methods of praying should be included on a regular basis. The ideal is to get people to pray regularly for each other, their families, those who have not yet opened their hearts to Jesus, and the possibility of starting a new group. Perhaps each person should have a notebook for the study and have a page designated for prayer requests. By reviewing this list, one can track answers to prayer and thus bolster their personal faith.

PRAISE/WORSHIP

Each group can decide how to express these attributes of faith, on their own. In some cases, praise and worship can be expressed in praise and worship music. It should be carefully taught that this is the purpose of the music. Others can perhaps observe a period of silence as each person privately thanks God for something in their lives. Suggestions can be made that will stir everyone’s thinking.

SCRIPTURE READING/STUDY

Someone should open the Bible and present a message of sorts that intentionally teaches a principle of the Christian life. Possible methods are:

- *Inductive study
- *Specific outlines on certain principles
- *SPECKA questions can be applied to certain passages
 - Sin to confess
 - Promise to claim
 - Example to follow
 - Command to obey
 - Knowledge to gain
 - Application to my life
- *Homework studies can be discussed

SHARING AND COMMUNITY

A deliberate effort should be made to create a sense of “community” with the group. Most people like to feel that they belong to something. Anything that brings people together will help develop “community.” Perhaps intimacy can be created by praying for each other. Perhaps you could pair off and pray or listen to a memory verse or hold each other accountable for something. Often certain people will monopolize the group. Special care should be observed to avoid that. Draw everyone into the discussions.

MULTIPLICATION

An obvious message should be maintained that the group intends to multiply. Every person should, in time, be able to give a clear testimony of their faith in Christ. This testimony should include: what my life was before, what happened to me, the results of my belief. This mindset should prevail in the group. Care should also be taken to NOT be oppressive in this pursuit. At best, one person in the group will actually branch out. Therefore the others should NOT feel so much pressure that they quit the group.

OBSERVANCES

Baptism and the Lord’s Supper should be taught and practiced. This is a tremendously slippery spot within most religious cultures. Many will say that they have already been baptized. Great care should be taken to teach these two observances without being offensive. One should have the confidence of the group that will withstand the pressure of this teaching. The big question is how much pressure should be exerted to keep these observances. During the course of studying these things the Holy Spirit will lead a receptive heart to clear up the confusion about these matters. Don’t lose people over these practices.

OBEDIENCE

The culture of obedience should prevail in the group. When an issue is taught from the scripture the group should be challenged to obey. It is unknown how

much pressure should be exerted to realize obedience. Each person will probably respond differently as the Holy Spirit leads them into all truth. If one is able to achieve this feature the rest will be easy.

How God Can Bless Your Life

A study of God's story, and what it means for daily living.

This is a ten-session overview of the story of what God has done in human history, as recorded in the Bible. Our goal will be not only to gain a general understanding of the content of the Bible, but also to think about what it means for every-day life in the 21st century. This study has an eye toward redemption and multiplication.

Session 1: The Bible is God's Word

The Bible is not simply another good book written by man. It is a compilation of writings, totally inspired by God, and recorded for our instruction. It is instruction not only for this life but with a view to the life to come. It alone will help us find a connection to God. Read it, study it, learn it, understand it and live by it.

Main point: God wants you to know Him through His Word.

Key word: Respect

Session 2: God Created You to Bless You - Genesis 1 and 2

In the story of creation, we see a God who created a perfect world, and then created the first man and woman to live in perfect relationship with the world, with one another and, most importantly, with Him. This opening scene in the Bible tells us a great deal about what God intends for every person's life.

Main point: Its' all about relationships.

Key words: Relationship, choice, obedience

Session 3: God Seeks You when You Stray - Genesis 3

Scene two in the Bible shows us what happened to corrupt God's perfect world. Every person chooses to turn his or her back on God, with terrible consequences. However, God, in His love, seeks us to bring us back to Himself.

Main point: Sin separates but God provides.

Key words: Separation, mercy

Session 4: God Offers Promise in Stead of Judgment when You Seek Him- Genesis 6

The story of Noah and the flood helps us to understand even more both how serious our rebellion against God is, and how determined He is to give us safe passage into His best intentions for us.

Main point: The ark is a type of Christ – enter and be saved.

Key words: Picture, provision

Session 5: God Calls You to a Life of Faith - Genesis 12

The life of Abraham, “the father of faith,” is a great example of what it means to learn to follow God daily. Abraham didn’t always get it right, but the fact that God continued to lead him anyway is an encouraging thought!

Main point: Faith is required and it grows.

Key words: Faith, substitution

Session 6: God Shows You the Path to Real Freedom - Exodus 12

The story of Moses and the People of Israel is a picture of how God leads a people out of slavery, through the wilderness and into the blessing of His promises for us. The pathway He gave them still has meaning for us today.

Main point: It’s all about the details of salvation (getting it right).

Key words: Details

Session 7: God Gives You a Second Chance - Psalms 51

King David was a man after God’s own heart, but he still failed miserably. God’s grace towards David is a great example of the second chance He offers to every person.

Main point: God responds to a sincere heart.

Key words: Sincerity

Session 8: God Invites You into a New Kingdom - John 3

The story of Jesus is the story of an inauguration of a New Kingdom where God’s purposes can be finally and completely fulfilled in our lives. In this kingdom, our sins are forgiven, our lives are healed and we may experience God’s new creation. The story of Jesus is an invitation to live in that Kingdom.

Main point: Religion won’t save you.

Key words: When, believe

Session 9: God wants You to Feel Secure

Once God brings you into His family, He wants you to enjoy the security of being a family member. “Salvation” is not something that we could ever earn. It is a gift that God gives us. Since we do not earn it, we can’t be expected to continually earn it. We actually become “children” of God, a member of His family. Once a member, always a member.

Main point: Eternal security.

Key words: Family member

Session 10: God Places You in a Spiritual Community - Acts 2:41-47

Living in a new Kingdom while the world around you stays in the old kingdom may seem almost impossible. The picture of the church that we find in the New Testament is of a spiritual community, gathered by God, where followers of Jesus can help one another along the journey.

Main point: Don't keep it to yourself.

Key words: Share, multiply

RESPECT GOD'S WORD

I. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12

Watch for the words "God's Word". It is the assertion of this lesson that, if a place is to be found called "God's Word", it is in this book, the Bible.

II. WRITTEN THROUGH MAN

II Peter 1:21; Jeremiah 30:2; Daniel 12:8-9; II Peter 3:10

Of course, the Bible was written by men, but they were only the penmen, "holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".

This is demonstrated in Jeremiah 30:2, as Jeremiah was instructed by God to write the words, spoken by God in a book. We therefore have the book of Jeremiah.

Daniel did not understand what he was writing and said as much. God said that it was not for him to know, those in the last times (us) would understand. Daniel wrote about world empires not yet in existence, peace treaties, the European Common Market, the destroyed and rebuilt temple in Jerusalem (not as yet destroyed), and other prophecies, which we can plainly see in hindsight.

Peter could not imagine the explosion mentioned in his letter. We can plainly understand such an explosion that will melt the elements, about which he knew nothing.

III. EVERY WORD BELONGS TO GOD

II Timothy 3:16

"All" scripture is from God, not just some. In fact the four things mentioned in this passage are the purposes God had for including certain ideas into the scripture. As we read scripture, we should find those four things. Perhaps it seems that we are reading history or poetry, but they are included in the Bible for one or more of those purposes.

IV. ITS PURPOSE II Timothy 3:16

To Teach Doctrine - Psalm 119:99; I John 5:13

“Doctrine” are those deep truths about God and His ways or purposes. John gives a sample of doctrine.

To Reprove (rebuke) - Jeremiah 23:29; Matthew 5:21-22

The scripture is like a refiner’s fire that exposes the motives of our heart. Matthew 5 is an example of the heart being the focus.

To Correct (expose error) - Psalm 119:104; Ephesians 4:14

In Ephesians we are told of religion created by men. Would people actually create some religion that was wrong? Only the Bible is able to expose such error.

To Instruct (lead right) - Psalm 119:105; II Timothy 3:15

Once we know error we need to know the right way. The Timothy passage shows that the Bible only shows the way to salvation (being right with God). That certainly eliminates a lot of religion.

V. ONLY CHRISTIANS CAN UNDERSTAND IT

I Corinthians 2:14; John 14:26

Until a person has experienced a spiritual connection with God, spiritual things make no sense to him. It is only with the guiding light of the Holy Spirit that we are able to search out the “spiritual” truths of scripture.

VI. IT’S PRACTICAL USE

II Timothy 3:15 - **Salvation**

I John 5:13 - **Assurance**

Eph. 4:14 - **Error exposed**

I Peter 1:25 - **Eternal guidance**

VII. IT IS MORE THAN A SPIRITUAL BOOK

History: Isaiah 20:1; Malachi 3:6

Isaiah 20:1 has become an historic benchmark for dating events in world history. Prior to the discovery of the Palace of Sargon in the late 1800’s, skeptics of scripture used this passage to say that the Bible was fiction.

Malachi tells us of the perpetual existence of the Jews, even though they have experienced so much persecution through the centuries.

Science: Isaiah 40:22; Leviticus 17:11; Job 26:7; Genesis 15:5;
Psalm 8:8

Isaiah gives us a hint that the earth is round and that was written in 750 BC. When did we figure that to be true?

Leviticus instructs us that the life of the flesh is in the blood. No blood no life. George Washington was bled to death as the physicians tried to purge him of his fever by blood letting. Too bad they hadn't read Leviticus.

Imagine Job knowing that the earth "hangs on nothing."

In Genesis we find that the stars cannot be numbered. One might have thought differently until the Hubble telescope.

The ocean currents were mapped because a man read in Psalms that the ocean had currents.

Home: Titus 2:3-6; Ephesians 5:21-33

Do you have a domestic issue? The Bible gives insight into how things should really exist.

Economics: Luke 6:38

What if everyone in the world practiced this kind of economics?

Relationships: Ephesians 4:29-32

The world would be a safer place if we practiced this kind of relationship maintenance.

Psychology: Philippians 4:5-9

Here is the power of positive thinking.

Government: I & II Kings and Judges

Good and bad alike are demonstrated for all to see.

Social : Proverbs 18:24

How simple is this to understand?

Prophecy: John 14:1-2

Prophecy is the thing that sets the scripture aside from all books of religion. It dares to predict the future. Look for the fulfillment of these verses soon.

VIII. HOW TO APPLY IT

II Timothy 2:15 - Read it, study it

John 20:29 - Believe it
John 13:17 - Practice it
John 12:48 - Be accountable for it.

IX. SPECKA

Here is a technique for applying the scripture to your own life and heart.
Ask these questions as you read the portions listed below.

IS THERE A:

Sin to confess
Promise to claim
Example to follow
Command to obey
Knowledge to gain
Application to my life

SUGGESTED CHAPTERS

Acts 1-4; Philippians; Eph. 4-5; Matt. 5-7; John 1; Hebrews 4, 10;
I John; I Peter 1; Romans 10

RESPECT GOD'S WORD

I. THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD

Mark 7:13; Romans 10:17; Hebrews 4:12

II. WRITTEN THROUGH MAN

II Peter 1:21; Jeremiah 30:2; Daniel 12:8-9; II Peter 3:10

III. EVERY WORD BELONGS TO GOD

II Timothy 3:16

IV. ITS PURPOSE

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To Teach Doctrine - Psalm 119:99; I John 5:13

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To Instruct (lead right) - Psalm 119:105; II Timothy 3:15

V. ONLY CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND IT

I Corinthians 2:14; John 14:26

VI. IT'S PRACTICAL USE

II Timothy 3:15; I John 5:13; Eph. 4:14; I Peter 1:25

VII. IT IS MORE THAN A SPIRITUAL BOOK

History: Isaiah 20:1; Mal. 3:6

Science: Isaiah 40:22; Lev. 17:11; Job 26:7; Gen. 15:5; Psalm 8:8

Home: Titus 2:3-6; Eph. 5:21-33

Economics: Luke 6:38

Relationships: Eph. 4:29-32

Psychology: Phil. 4:5-9

Government: I & II Kings, Judges

Social : Proverbs 18:24

Prophecy: John 14:1-2

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II Timothy 2:15; John 20:29; John 13:17; John 12:48

IX. SPECKA

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Promise to claim

Example to follow

Command to obey

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Application to my life

SUGGESTED CHAPTERS

Acts 1-4; Philippians; Eph. 4-5; Matt. 5-7; John 1; Hebrews 4,10; I John; I Peter 1; Romans 10

The Creation

The purpose of this study is to acquaint one with the original intent of God as He made the world and all that is in it. This lesson should stimulate one's thinking to imagine what life would be like centered upon God and His will, fulfilling His purpose.

- I. It was all done by God (Genesis 1:1)
This is not a discussion about HOW it was done, only a declaration that it was done by God. There are several theories: evolution, theistic evolution, day age, parent age. All seem to be trying to explain TIME. None of the theories matter, only that God did it.
- II. Being without God creates a void (Genesis 1:2)
Every life has a natural void that can only be filled by God. He made it that way. That's why mankind naturally creates religion, because of a natural longing.
- III. Everything was created with a Divine order (Genesis 1:3-31)
"After its kind." Hybrids don't reproduce.
- IV. Mankind was God's crowning achievement (Genesis 1:26-31)
Man was made in the image of God. He called it, "Very Good."
- V. God gave mankind authority over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28)
Man was in charge. This reflects stewardship over the earth.
- VI. The ecological system was different then (Genesis 2:1-6)
It had never rained before. The earth was watered by a mist. A water canopy covered the earth. This inhibits Carbon14 dating.
- VII. We are special to God (Genesis 2:7-9)
Each day of creation God spoke things into existence. Here He molded, formed, breathed and planted each step demonstrating intimacy.
- VIII. The boundaries of Eden (Genesis 2:10-14)
Eden was situated between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, toward the south, near the Persian Gulf. Also called Mesopotamia (between two rivers), also called "the fertile crescent (where life began). The second most mentioned area in the Bible next to Israel.
- IX. God ordained work; it was not "labor" (Genesis 2:15)
One man's work is another man's hobby.

- X. God's only requirement: "obedience" (Genesis 2:16-17)
Only one requirement was given to mankind, obey. Since a relationship is the aim, a choice must be given. Therefore, God asked man only to obey. Thus man is allowed to "choose" a relationship with God.

- XI. It's all about relationships (Genesis 2:18-25)
 - A. With God (verses 16-17)
God wants us to choose this relationship. It is an awesome way to live, dependent on God.

 - B. With the earth (verses 19-20)
Our relationship with the earth is in question. We haven't done well with our responsibility.

 - C. With each other (verses 21-25)
God wants us to be at peace with each other and enjoy the natural gifts and talents of one another as we fit into the ultimate family of God. Unfortunately, we haven't done well in our relationships with each other. We seem to always be warring with each other.

 - D. Within our selves, no "shame" (verse 25)
Imagine life at perfect peace with our selves. No baggage to inhibit and encumber our minds. "Peace" is probably the quest of every person on the planet.

Remember the words:

RELATIONSHIPS
CHOICE
OBEDIENCE

The Creation

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- II. Being without God creates a void, (Genesis 1:2)
- III. Everything was created with a Divine order, (Genesis 1:3-31)
- IV. Mankind was God's crowning achievement, (Genesis 1:26-31)
- V. God gave mankind authority over the earth, (Genesis 1: 26-28)
- VI. The ecological system was different then, (Genesis 2:1-6)
- VII. We are special to God, (Genesis 2:7-9) (planted).
- VIII. The boundaries of Eden, (Genesis 2:10-14)
- IX. God ordained work. It was not "labor" (Genesis 2:15)
- X. God's only requirement, "obedience" (Genesis 2:16-17)
- XI. It's all about relationships, (Genesis 2:18-25)
 - A. With God, (verses 16-17)
 - B. With the earth, (verses 19-20)
 - C. With each other, (verses 21-25)
 - D. Within ourselves, no "shame" (verse 25)

The Fall Genesis 3

Introduction: While one studies this chapter, he will see the plight of man. Satan entices Eve to disobey God's command and the result is the first sin. The death penalty accompanies this failure of moral character and disobedience. Once having walked with God in the garden, now there is separation. God, who hates sin but loves the sinner, must make provision for man's failing or kill him. What plan did God devise?

- I. The Subtlety of Satan (Genesis 3:1)
Satan uses many means to cause us to doubt God and His word. Satan is not a shouting voice but a subtle idea. His goal is to cause harm to God's creation, thus God.
- II. The Ignorance of Eve (Genesis 3:2-3)
Eve misquoted God instructions, see Ch. 2 Verse 15. Man was to "keep" up the garden. Only "eating" was forbidden. Satan had found fertile soil in the mind of Eve (ignorance).
- III. The First Lie (Genesis 3:4, John 8:44)
Of course Eve did die. All of Satan's apples have worms. Jesus said that all lies come from Satan; most of them are "religious." Satan then becomes the author of RELIGION. Every religion claims to be the only one. Of course that is impossible. It is not about religion, it is about "relationships."
- IV. Satan Questions God's Purposes (Genesis 3:5)
He tried to make God into a selfish egotistical unconcerned being. Nothing could be further from the truth. We will learn more about the character of God later.
- V. Eve Fell on All Accounts (Genesis 3:6; I John 2:16)
Compare I John 2:16, Eve fell to:
 - The lust of the eye She "saw" the tree was pleasant to the eye.
 - The lust of the flesh It was good for "food".
 - The pride of life It would make her "wise".
- V. Carnal knowledge(Genesis 3:7)
There are many things that we would be better off NOT knowing.
- VII. Enter fear (Genesis 3: 8)
What a sad state, to be afraid of God, the one who can supply every need, fill every thought, make joy abound in our lives.

- VIII. The First Philosophical Question (Genesis 3:9)
Of course God knew where Adam was. But did Adam now know that he was “away from God”. Adam must own up to his SIN (an offense against God).
- IX. You Can't Hide From God (Genesis 3:10)
Nor can you hide your offense.
- X. Man's Innocence Was Taken Away (Genesis 3:11)
We always are outraged when someone hurts a child or does injury to a child's person or formation. Our outrage is based largely on the child's “innocence”. Here is where the loss of innocence started. Even the adults were innocent. But no longer.
- XI. “I am not to blame” (Genesis 3:12; Proverbs 28:13)
Here is the first “blame shifting”. Mankind has now become masterful at this art. Proverbs tells us that it is to our detriment.
- XII. Every person is accountable for his own actions (Genesis 3:13)
God held Eve personally responsible. You are responsible for your own sin, as is everyone.
- XIII. Satan is Cursed (Genesis 3:14)
A cosmic struggle ensues that pits Satan against God. We seem to be pawns in this cosmic chess match, but with a will of our own.
- XIV. The Hint of Promise (Genesis 3:15)
Who is this “seed of woman” that will ultimately inflict a mortal wound on Satan? In this veiled Prophecy, we see the very first mention of Jesus. In fact it even suggests a virgin birth. The crucifixion is also hinted here.
- XV. Mankind is Cursed (Genesis 3:16-17)
This opens the door for all manner of suffering in the world.
- XVI. The Earth is Cursed (Genesis 3:18-19)
“Natural” disasters began here.

XVII. God begins to make provision for sin (Genesis 3:20-21)

God already has a plan for the redemption of man. We are given hints here as to how this plan will unfold. Something must have been sacrificed here in order to have a skin for a covering. It seems that in the redemption of man that a sacrifice is involved. Keep your eye on Jesus all through this revelation.

Remember these words:

Sin separates (us from God).

God provides (a way for restoration).

A sacrifice is involved.

The Fall Genesis 3

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- I. The subtlety of Satan (Genesis 3:1)
- II. The ignorance of Eve (Genesis 3: 2-3)
- III. The first lie (Genesis 3: 4; John 8:44)
- IV. Satan questions God's purposes (Genesis3: 5)
- VI. Eve fell on all accounts (Genesis 3:6; I John 2:16)
- VI. Carnal knowledge (Genesis 3: 7)
- VII. Enter fear (Genesis 3: 8)
- VIII. The first philosophical question (Genesis 3: 9)
- IX. You can't hide from God (Genesis 3:10)
- X. Man's innocence was taken away (Genesis 3:11)
- XI. "I am not to blame" (Genesis 3:12; Proverbs 28:13)
- XII. Adam is accountable for his actions (Genesis 3:13)
- XIII. Satan is cursed (Genesis 3:14)
- XIV. The hint of promise (Genesis 3:15)
- XV. Mankind is cursed (Genesis 3:16-17)
- XVI. The earth is cursed (Genesis 3:18-19)
- XVII. God begins to make provision for sin (Genesis 3:20-21)

The Flood

By paying particular attention to the flood of Noah's day one can learn many lessons about the character of God. Lessons about Jesus are ever increasing. Progressive revelation prevails. Watch for the type of Christ.

Facts:

Never rained before (Genesis 2:6)

The earth had been watered by a mist. This means that "rain" was a new thing. We understand how rain happens now but we don't know what that system must have been. We can only speculate, but we can say with assurance that it is NOT like now.

It was the judgment of God (Genesis 6:5-7)

God will always judge sin. This demonstration shows the extent to which man had gone in his depravation.

Noah and his family were spared (Genesis 6:8-14)

They were told to build a boat which would save them from the judgment. This boat is a vivid type of Christ. Those inside the boat would be spared; those outside of the boat would perish. **Same with Jesus. What???**

Noah obeyed God (Genesis 6:22, 7:5)

Remember from lesson one that God required obedience. It is still the watchword, obey.

God gave everyone a chance (Genesis 7:4)

We know that Noah was a "preacher" (II Peter 2:5). It stands to reason that Noah would have generously spread this message. Everyone would have been warned about the final week.

Animals were spared (Genesis 7:9)

Within that week the animals began to march into the ark. What were the people thinking who saw this event? Even the parade was a warning to the people. The opened door to the ark was an invitation. They refused to believe.

It was colossal (Genesis 7:11)

This was not a gentle afternoon sprinkling. It was cataclysmic. The earth broke up the heavens opened, the environment was broken into.

It rained forty days and forty nights (Genesis 7:12)

For forty days the earth was pounded by this disaster. Physical changes were experienced. Mountains were push up, valleys were formed. The continents were formed.

It was global (Genesis 7:19-20)

This was not a local flood, the entire earth was covered. Every civilization has a flood story.

Everything else died (Genesis 7:21-22)

When the rain started, how many of the people would have liked to change their mind? How many would have liked to have entered the ark? How many would believe? ALL! It was too late. Judgment was come. These truths will be experienced again when the FINAL judgment comes.

The system changed (II Peter 3:4-6)

The world that had existed before the flood, radically changed. It perished. The pre-flood world was not the same as the post flood world.

Gen. 6:3, 6:4, 7:11, 8:22, 9:2, 9:3, 9:13-14, 9:21

Can you spot the changes in the verses above?

Lessons:

Grace (Genesis 6:8)

Grace is the unmerited favor of God. Eph. 2:8-9

Mercy (II Peter 2:5) (**preached**) **WHAT??**

Mercy was also available to the participants in the story. Since Noah was preaching to them, warning them, they could have responded.

Last chance (Genesis 7:4, 9)

At some point God will close the door on everybody.

Opportunities end (Genesis 7:16; Isaiah 55:6)

God's mercy is incredible but will end. Find Him!

Ark: a picture of Jesus (pitch) (Genesis 6:14)

In the Scofield Reference Bible a note is included for this verse. The note says that the word used for "pitch" in the Old Testament is the same word used for redemption in the New. Smear "redemption" on the outside so that the judgment cannot get in and put it also on the inside so that those on the inside cannot leak out.

This is how it works with Jesus. See the picture?

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Genesis 6:3, 6:4, 7:11, 8:22, 9:2, 9:3, 9:13-14, 9:21;
II Peter 3:4-6

Lessons:

Grace (Genesis 6:8)

Mercy (II Peter 2:5) **(preached) What???**

Last chance (Genesis 7:4, 9)

Opportunities end 7:16, Isaiah 55:6

Ark a picture of Jesus "Pitch" 6:14

The Growth of Faith Abraham

- I. Introduction: Since we are telling the story of redemption, we must understand “faith.” Faith is required for salvation and then continues to grow as we mature on our journey.
 - A. Abraham was saved by faith (Rom. 4:1-3)
Salvation has not changed from the Old to the New Testament. Faith is and has always been the method of connecting with God.
 - B. Abraham is linked to our faith (Gal. 3:6-9)
Abraham is considered the “father” of the faithful. We are link to him because we also follow the path of faith.
 - C. Abraham is held out as an example to us (Heb. 11:8-1)
His life of faith is a model for us.
- II. Abraham had a purpose (Gen. 17:6-8) as do we all (Mark 13:34)
We all have a purpose. We will only be fulfilled in life as we recognize that purpose and live is out in our lives. It must be that which glorifies God.
- III. God gave him special qualifications (Gen. 18:19) as well as us (I Cor. 12:7)
We can identify with Abraham because we all have been place on the globe and given a special task to fill. The skills needed to fill that task are bestowed upon us. It is our job to pursue our calling.
- IV. The call to faith (Gen. 11:31-32)
For Abraham it started in Ur of the Chaldees. Where does yours start?
- V. Faith begins (Genesis12:4)
For Abraham, he stepped out and followed God’s way. It will happen the same way for you.
- VI. Faith will lead you to God’s house (Genesis12:8)
Bethel means “house of God.” As a result of his accepting by faith God’s way, he landed in “house of God.”
- VII. Baby faith is tested (Genesis12:10)
Life is a series of tests from God. Each one strengthens us as we follow the steps of faith.
- VIII. Baby faith has fear (Genesis12:12)
Fear, doubt and wonder are all natural on our journey. With each step we gain understanding.

- IX. Failure effects others (Genesis12:17)
No person lives totally isolated. Every act we perform affects someone else.
- X. Faith gets back on track (Genesis13:1-4)
It is expected that we will find our way back on track after we stray. A sincere follower of Jesus will seek to do right.
- XI. New faith struggles with old ways (Genesis13:6-7)
Abraham was instructed to depart from Lot. Had he obeyed completely this strife would not have happened. Complete obedience is the goal of a follower of Jesus.
- XII. The new way is compelled by faith (Genesis13:9)
Obey now.
- XIII. The old way lives by sight (Genesis13:10)
“Faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things *unseen*.”(Heb. 11:1)
- XIV. Faith is rewarded (Genesis13:14-18)
Expect God’s blessing when you obey.
- XV. Faith acknowledges others (Genesis14:14-16)
It’s not all about you. Someone else needs help. Pass it on.
- XVI. Faith practices stewardship (Genesis 14:17-20)
Who is this priest of the most high God? It’s Jesus making a visit in the Old Testament. The priesthood had not yet been established, yet here is the priest (Heb. 1-3). Abraham feels compelled to make an offering of 10% of his wealth. This is the start of a pattern for us.
- XVII. Faith puts material goods in perspective (Genesis 14:21-22)
The pursuit of “stuff” is a lifetime distraction. How much is enough? One man said “just a little bit more.” A person who lives only to acquire more, will not have a fruitful life (Matt. 13:22).
- XVIII. Impatient faith doesn’t wait (Genesis16:1-4,12)
One of the hardest lessons in life is to learn to “wait” on God (Isaiah 40:31). It is a hard lesson for everyone, patience. Abraham’s impatience will cause a world of trouble. This illegitimate child is the problem with the Middle East today. Isaac is the first Arab (Gen. 16:12). Since God promised to multiply the seed of Abraham, He did. Both Isaac (Jews) and Ishmael (Arabs) claim the same land, the land of Abraham.

- XIX. Faith overcomes the flesh (Genesis 17:9-11)
This is a painful reminder to Abraham of his commitment to God.
- XX. Faith realizes its purpose (Genesis 21:1-3)
Finally the promised son is given. God will always work it out.
- XXI. Big faith must pass big tests (Genesis 22:1-10)
Could you put God that far above your son? What a huge test.
- XXII. Mature faith sees miracles (Genesis 22:11-12)
God is smarter than all of us. Who could have dreamed that God would provide a sacrifice? Remember lesson two. A sacrifice was always in the plan of God. The ultimate sacrifice is Jesus (John 1:35-36).
- XXIII. Great Faith is renown (Genesis 22:15-18)
"All nations of the earth" bless? Not too bad for a farm boy.

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XXIII. Mature faith sees miracles (Genesis 2:11-12)

XXIV. Great Faith is renown (Genesis 22:15-18)

Moses

Most of us have seen Moses on the television or in the movies. His story relates to us far more than we know. His experiences are “typical” of the criteria for starting a relationship with God. As we explore the Passover especially, we will be struck by the weight of details required.

I. History

Into Egypt (Exodus 1:8)

During the life of Joseph, the tribes of Israel were providentially led to Egypt. While there God continued to bless them with numerical growth. Four hundred years after their journey to Egypt, the sheer size of their population made the King (Pharaoh) of Egypt nervous. He felt that if an enemy were to become allies with Israel that Egypt could be overthrown from within. He devised a plan to reduce the population. He would have all of the male babies killed.

II. In Egypt

Moses' birth - Exodus 2:1-10

During this time, as Moses was a baby, his sister and mother hid him from the death squads. He was found by the daughter of Pharaoh who rescued him from death. He grew up in the household of Pharaoh.

III. Moses the deliverer - Exodus 2:11

Moses' special call (Exodus 3:3-4, 14)

After running ahead of the plan of God, Moses found himself hiding on the backside of the desert. After 40 years God's plan came to fruition as Moses went back to Egypt to deliver his brethren from the oppression of Pharaoh. God singled him out for this task with a special “calling” to serve Him.

Give it to God (Exodus 4:20)

Lessons were learned as Moses got a quick class in faith. As he experienced the hand of God on his life, he was able to confidentially move forward with God's plan. His staff started as a “stick” but became the “rod of God” when Moses yielded his possession to God. God can always do more with our lives than we can.

A following (Exodus 4:31)

A vacuum of leadership allowed Moses to step up and quickly gain a following.

IV. The Passover (Exodus 12:1-13)

After 9 previous plagues, God finally would bring to pass His deliverance. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Romans 9:17-18) on each of the plagues in order to conquer each of the gods of Egypt. This conquest became the benchmark for power as Israel was constantly reminded to "remember" Egypt.

We know that the Passover lamb was a direct picture of Jesus (I Cor. 5:7). Not the *details* in this passage. If this experience is a picture of salvation, we must become aware of the detail. When it comes to the salvation of our souls, it would not be wise to "make up" religious ideas to solve the issue. THIS is time to follow GOD'S plan. Make sure you understand it. More details will be given later as we continue to draw a picture of salvation.

V. The last Passover (Luke 22; I Cor. 5:7)

Since Jesus IS our Passover, it stands to reason that He should DIE on the Passover. This is when the lamb was to be slain. The importance given to the blood sacrifice as previously shown in Exodus 12, should be carefully considered here. Blood not only spilled but also "applied."

VI. Moses on the mountain (Matt. 17:1-3)

On the Mount of Transfiguration Moses and Elijah appeared. Each one represented something. Moses represented the law while Elijah represented the prophets. As the scene unfolded, all that was left was Jesus. Neither the law nor the Prophets can allow us to approach God. The only approach is Jesus only (John 14:6).

VII. A repetitive practice (I Cor. 11:23-28)

How fitting that we should memorialize the supreme sacrifice of Jesus. In doing so we may even be celebrating God's Passover.

Moses

Most of us have seen Moses on the television or in the movies. His story relates to us far more than we know. His experiences are “typical” of the criteria for starting a relationship with God. As we explore the Passover especially, we will be struck by the weight of details required.

- I. History
 - Into Egypt (Exodus 1:8)
- II. In Egypt
 - Born (Exodus 2:1-10)
- III. Moses the deliverer (Exodus 2:11)
 - Special call (Exodus 3:3-4,14)
 - Give it to God (Exodus 4:20)
 - A following (Exodus 4:31)
- IV. The Passover (Exodus 12:1-13)
- V. The last Passover (Exodus Luke 22; I Cor. 5:7)
- VI. Moses on the mountain (Matt. 17:1-3)
- VII. A repetitive practice (I Cor. 11:23-28)

David's Heart

Introduction: This lesson shows the sincere heart of David. It lets us look into the depths of his thoughts and consequently helps us to understand why God used him. The pattern given by David instructs us as to how to successfully approach God.

I. Saul the first king.

Israel had lived without a king, under the leadership of God. It didn't satisfy the people so they asked for a king. It was not God's perfect will but He relented by having the prophet select a person to lead the nation (I Sam. 8:7-8). Even then it was a matter of the heart (I Sam. 10:9).

II. A man after God's heart. (I Samuel 13:14)

As time moved on God chose another king: David. Even now the choice had to do with the heart.

III. Selected from his family. (I Samuel 16:7)

The selection had nothing to do with the physical attributes of David. The choice was made because of his sincere heart.

IV. David and Goliath. (I Samuel 17:31-51)

David's courage came from his experiences with God. He knew that God was able to deliver him from the giant. He went into battle "assuming" that God would help him. God LOVES dependency! David put himself into a position where if God did not help him, he would perish. WHAT GREAT FAITH! God loves dependency of heart. This is surely the way salvation works. If we, with a sincere heart, cast ourselves onto totally dependency of God, He will grant to us salvation.

V. Encounters with Saul. (I Samuel 18:1-9)

David remained respectful of Saul at all times.

VI. The penman of Psalms.

David was the penman of most of the Psalms. One can examine David's heart throughout the Psalms.

VII. His great sin. (II Samuel 11-12)

David fell to temptation. What a tragedy in this moral lapse. When confronted by the prophet, David acknowledged his sin. The lesson must be learned by all people. WE are to blame for our own transgressions. Own up to it.

III. David's penitence. (Psalm 51)

This Psalm is generally thought to be written to ask God's forgiveness for his terrible failure. Can you sense the appeal from the heart of David? It is that kind of sincerity that attracts the attention of God.

IV. God's great forgiveness. (Luke 1:32)

Do you think that God forgave David based on this text?

REMEMBER:

To approach God successfully, you must have a humble, sincere heart.

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II. A man after God's heart (I Samuel 13:14)

III. Selected from his family (I Samuel 16:7)

IV. David and Goliath (I Samuel 17:31-51)

V. Encounters with Saul (I Samuel 18:1-9)

VI. The penman of Psalms

VII. His great sin (II Samuel 11-12)

III. David's penitence (Psalm 51)

IV. God's great forgiveness (Luke 1:32)

Salvation

This is the greatest theme of the Bible. It is important for all people of the world to search out this truth.

I. The main purpose of Jesus (Matthew 1:21)

“Jesus” means Jehovah saving. In His name we see his purpose. Here the explanation is given to the Jews. They had been trusting in their religion for hundreds of years. It seems that they not only needed to be saved from the penalty of sin, but also from their own religion.

II. By dying on the cross (I Peter 2:21-24)

Jesus would accomplish salvation for all man-kind by dying on the cross. In His death He satisfied the sin debt for every person that ever lived (Romans 6:23).

III. Salvation is personal, not national (Matthew 7:21-23)

To the same Jewish people, Jesus now says that many of them will miss Heaven. This verse in great conflict with Matt. 1:21. He came to save people but many will NOT be saved. WHY?

IV. Check out Nicodemus (John 3:1-18)

Here is the classic example why people will not be saved. Nicodemus was trusting in his religion to help him approach God. His religion was the right religion. His book was the right book. His prayers were the right prayers. His God was the right God. He was highly religious, which ALWAYS gets in the way of a personal relationship with God.

Jesus said to him, “you must be born again.” A supernatural birth must take place, directed by God. Religion can never fill such a need. In his amazement, Nicodemus said “how can these things be?” Imagine the frustration of this highly religious man. Religion is never the answer.

One must “believe”, John 3:16.

V. What kind of belief (Romans 10:9)

The kind of belief required is told to be from the “heart.” This was the missing element in the journey of Nicodemus.

VII. The culmination of the process:

Creation – relationships, choice
Fall – separation, mercy
Flood – picture, grace
Abraham – faith, substitute
Moses – details
David – sincere heart

Remember the lessons we have taught. Piece together the ingredients and find the process for “true” salvation.

VII. The unique prayer (Romans 10:13)

Having included each element on the above list, it is now time to tell God, through Jesus, that you accept JESUS. Open your heart and tell JESUS that you want HIM in your life. This prayer is unique because it only deals with ETERNAL matters. Most of our prayers are about temporary things, health, money, relationships, home, family. This prayer deals with your soul and your eternal destiny.

VIII. When was that? (Romans 13:11)

In this verse we read a very interesting phrase, “...when we believed.” In the spirit of that verse, let us examine the idea of “when.” When did this miracle of the new birth take place? When did you open your heart to HIM? Not, when did you join a religion. Each of the listed people would have a different story.

Zacchaeus

“I was a tax collector. One day I heard that Jesus would pass by. I decided that I wanted to see Him. I had heard that He might be the Messiah. I had climbed a tree to see Him when He spotted me there. He beckoned me down. My heart burned within me to know Him. My heart was fertile soil for His love. That day I opened it to Him.”

Thief on the cross

“I was hanging on a cross next to Jesus. I recognized that He was there unjustly. The man on the other cross was mocking but not me. I knew that HE was the Son of God. I asked Him, with a sincere heart, to “remember me when you enter your kingdom.” He said “today you will be with Me in Paradise.” How thrilled my heart was to hear those words. For the first time in my miserable life, I had hope.”

You

Teacher, tell your story in a brief form. Include, before, what happened, after.

IX. The dangerous question

Is it possible that somewhere along my spiritual journey, I did this? This is a dangerous question to ask because of the weight of the consequences. Are you prepared to stake your eternal destiny on a “perhaps?”

TODAY:

Ask Jesus to be your savior. Don't take an eternal chance. Sincerely open your heart to Him.

“Dear Jesus, I BELIEVE that You died for my sins, and I accept You as my Savior. I need You in my life and heart. Please save me from my sins.”

Salvation

This is the greatest theme of the Bible. It is important for all people of the world to search out this truth.

I. The main purpose of Jesus (Matthew 1:21)

II. By dying on the cross (I Peter 2:21-24)

III. Salvation is personal, not national (Matthew 7:21-23)

IV. Check out Nicodemus (John 3:1-18)

V. What kind of belief (Romans 10:9)

VI. The culmination of the process:

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David – sincere heart

VII. The unique prayer (Romans 10:13)

VIII. When was that? (Romans 13:11)

Zacchaeus

Thief on the cross

Philippian jailer

Me

IX. The dangerous question

Feel Secure

I. Salvation is not earned

A. John 3 - An act of God by birth.

In John 3, Nicodemus is told by Jesus that his big spiritual need was to be “born again.” This birth is a supernatural experience that happens as an act of God. The spirit is born and one becomes a child of God. What would it take for one to become unborn? It is not God’s design for salvation.

B. Free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23b)

Grace is the unmerited favor of God. We cannot earn unmerited favor. Once a gift is given, it cannot be retracted. Salvation is not conditional. If we cannot earn it by our merits, it stands to reason that we cannot KEEP it by our merits. Religion makes a big departure here. The method of keeping the “faithful” involved in religion is primarily fear. This is not God’s way, it is love.

C. God becomes our father (Luke 12:45-46; John 15:15; Gal. 4:6-7)

Can you see the progression in the above verses? One moves from being a servant of God to becoming a child of God. Children are better relationally than either servants or friends. Once this birth takes place, we come under a whole new way of interaction with God.

D. His power saves and keeps us (I Peter 1:4-5; I John 5:13; John 3:16, 36; Romans 5:1)

In human frailty, we struggle to maintain a clean heart and pure thoughts. Our actions are inconsistent, and our ways must seem fickle to God. Fortunately the “keeping” of our salvation is not left up to our own deeds; it is consigned to the mighty hand of God Himself. There is no religious balance where our good deeds are measured against our bad deeds to determine our ultimate fate. No such scripture exists to suggest such a thing.

E. We do our part (Romans 10:9; 10:13)

Over and over again we are asked to believe from the heart, and from a sincere heart call upon the Lord, asking for His salvation.

F. He does His part (Titus 3:5)

In His infinite mercy and grace, He saves us. We do not save ourselves. What would I do to make myself “born again?” How would I go about performing the miracle of salvation on myself? The task is beyond my ability. I must trust God to do it. Since I trust Him to do it, I will not trust myself to “keep it.”

II. Guaranteed in writing

A. God is as good as His Word (Romans 8:33-39; Romans 5:1)

This passage in Romans 8 is extremely powerful, ascribing the “keeping” of our soul’s salvation to the mighty hand of God. The list seems to be inclusive of any threat that may befall us, even “self” and “sin.” Both are implied in the list. We shall NOT ever be separated from the love of God. We can therefore enjoy peace and security. Can we believe God’s word?

B. Jesus said it was so (John 5:24; John 10:27-30)

In John 5, notice the tense used, “has” “is passed” it’s a done deal. We already have eternal life, if we have experienced the new birth. Eternal life is for ever and we believers already have it. Look at the John 10 passage and be thrilled at the confidence of the very Son of God, in His own ability to handle “all” opposition to our salvation.

C. Holy Spirit seals it (Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30-32)

Ephesians 1 gives a sort of progression to our salvation. We “trusted” after we “heard” we “believed” salvation became “ours” and the Holy Spirit of God “sealed” us “until” the time of redemption (the resurrection). Chapter 4 gives notice, once again, to the same thought.

Hallelujah! God the Father, Jesus the Son, and Holy Spirit are not only in on the saving of my soul, but also the keeping.

III. Demonstrated in picture form (Luke 15:11-24)

Did this prodigal son at any time become a NON-son? Did the father require the son to be reinitiated into the family? The son never lost his son-ship. He did lose his joy, blessing, provision, and “fellowship” from the father, as he was in his rebellious state. However he never lost his “relationship.” He remained a son.

IV. Results of sin

God knows that believers will still sin. In a sinful world, we still make bad choices. But God has thought of everything. He is never surprised by our weaknesses to live holy lives. God wants to be proud of His children. He wants us to be a good reflection of Him Matt. 5:16. There is a process, however, that we can expect as we fail Him.

A. Advocate is Jesus (I John 2:1)

As believers, we have a lawyer on retainer. Jesus pleads our case in the presence of God.

B. Lost Joy (Psalm 51)

From David's own heart, we can see the loss of joy. A constant consequence for sin is that loss. Sin is always an affront to God.

C. Broken fellowship (I John 1:7)

As in the life of the prodigal son, "fellowship" is at stake not "relationship."

D. Discipline (Hebrews 12:5-6)

As sinful people in a sinful world with sinful habits, we can expect to be disciplined by God. Discipline is different from punishment. Discipline is designed to yield a positive outcome; punishment is not necessarily the same. God's desire is to create in us and through us the "peaceable fruit of righteousness" Heb. 12:11. The unpleasantness of this process is incentive for us to "make our paths strait" (verse 13).

F. Death (I John 5:16)

How far would God go to gain the good reflection from us? At some point, God would actually give up on us. He seems to have His limit. He is said to be "long suffering" but He will not let us continue perpetually to shame His image. He may go so far as to remove us from this earth. Such a case existed in I Corinthians 5:1-5. This "believer" caused such moral shame that Paul recommended his removal by God. Of course, even beyond death, his spirit was saved (verse 5).

G. Confession & restoration (I John 1:9)

This is God's will, that we all be restored to good fellowship through private confession. Confession is us going straight to the "throne of Grace" (Hebrews 4:14-16) and telling the Great High Priest (Jesus) of our faults, naming them with specifics. Our sincere apology will always find favor with God. He will restore.

Feel Secure

I. Salvation is not earned

- A. An act of God by birth (John 3)
- B. Free gift (Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 6:23b)
- C. God becomes our father (Luke 12:45-46; John 15:15; Gal. 4:6-7)
- D. His power saves and keeps us (I Peter 1:4-5; I John 5:13; John 3:16, 36; Romans 5:1)
- E. We do our part (Romans 10:9, 10:13)
- F. He does His part (Titus 3:5)

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- G. Confession & Restoration (I John 1:9)

The Pattern for Today

The book of Acts gives us a pattern for our practices today. The task of reaching the world is ominous but we have help from God. If we follow the pattern the world will be reached. If we do nothing, the world will be lost.

I. The Command and Promise (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 1:8)

Jesus required of His disciples and consequentially us, to reach the entire world with the good news that He will engage in a personal relationship with us. The “gospel” is the good news of our opportunity, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, to begin a lifetime journey with Him. In both the Matthew and Acts passage, we are promised the ever abiding power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, to spread this message.

II. The miraculous event (Acts 2:1-11)

The overwhelming power of God was given, as predicted in the prophets, and people began to spread the message. Amazingly, ever person from foreign lands was able through the power of God to hear a message vital to their destinies.

III. Peter’s scathing message (Acts 2:14-36)

The message of Peter was that the people had chosen NOT to believe that Jesus was Messiah. They were convinced by the Holy Spirit empowered message that, in fact, they had erred.

IV. The obvious question (Acts 2:37)

To anyone having not yet believed, this question should always be asked.

V. The straight answer (Acts 2:38)

Here is the answer as plainly stated as can be. REPENT and be baptized. “Repent”, means to change ones mind. The answer is that those not yet believing should change their minds about the way they see Jesus, change their minds about how they view their own need. They should open their hearts and BELIEVE.

VI. The natural response (Acts 2: 39-41)

Simply put, they believed.

VII. They grew, learned, communed, prayed Acts 2:42)

This kind of growth is as natural as a newborn learning to walk.

VIII. Apostolic gifts (Acts 2:43)

I wish that these gifts were common today. It would make the message simpler to convey. They had something that we do not apparently have today, miracles. We have something that they did not have, the Word.

IX. Unity and bonding (Acts 2:44-45)

Other believers are naturally drawn to you now because of a common bond, Jesus.

X. They took it home (Acts 2:46)

In that society, it is probable that most of the people present in the public forum were men. Now every house received this vital message, as it should be. If this message is good for you, it is surely good for your family.

XI. Our pattern (Acts 2:47; I Cor. 6:19-20; Gal. 5:22-23)

Every day, people were accepting Jesus. We are also required to share the message as liberally as they did. In fact the same Holy Spirit that accompanied and empowered them also is with us.

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Small Group Training Attendee

Name:

Address:

Phone #'s

Email:

Church Membership:

For Teachers

Do you feel competent to teach? Y N

Could you teach at noon? Y N

Could you teach in the evening? Y N

In which area of Tampa Bay?

—

Do you feel competent to lead someone to Jesus? Y N

Have you had training in personal evangelism? Y N

Are you employed away from home? Y N

What is your work schedule?

Do you have any flexibility in that schedule? Y N

For Hosts

Do you want to host a Bible study? Y N

Where? at work at home other

What time of day? noon evenings other

If at work, do you need permission? Y N

Do you have a place to meet? Y N

Resume for Flyer

Name: _____

Phone numbers: _____

Email address: _____

Education:

Professional designations:

Work experience:

Achievements:

When did you become a believer?

What are the circumstances of your salvation?

Do you have unique life experience?

What is your attitude about the Bible?

What is your attitude about the lost?