

## PREFACE

This study series, “Christian Foundations 101” was put together with much love, faith, and prayer to help people seeking God to come to a full knowledge of the truth. It lays a foundation for a spiritual walk with God that will last a lifetime- until they meet God- if they accept the scriptures and put them into practice. The first century church appeared to teach similar basics as elementary or foundational teachings. (Hebrews 6:1-3)

Our goal is not only to lead our friends and family in developing a relationship with God but also to help them understand the balanced life God wants them to experience once they become a Christian. Living a purposeful life that is centered on the five purposes of Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Evangelism & Ministry!

The outlines offered here are, as Hebrews 6 says, elementary teachings or principles. They are not the final word. Simply reading these outlines to your friend will not guarantee salvation to anyone. Keep in mind that you are studying the Bible, not just these outlines, with your friend. If you have other scriptures - or other basics - in mind, by all means, include them! In all these things, do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

### TIPS ON USING A STUDY SERIES:

- **A study series is a guide.** People did not use this study series on the day of Pentecost. They did however, fully understand what Jesus did, were cut to the heart (broken), repented, and were baptized because of their faith. A good study series really helps as a tool because it joins scriptures together so God’s purposes are understandable and clear.
- **A study series is like an outline.** It is a skeleton, and you must put the flesh on it with your life, knowledge and understanding of God, and your love. You CAN interchange scriptures and put the studies in a different order- the goal is that your friend will come to understand God and live for him.

### TIPS FOR LEADING STUDIES:

1. **Pray before you lead studies.** Pray or God’s spirit to guide you, and for you to treat your friend with compassion and conviction like Jesus would. Pray for all of your hearts to accept and be fertile soil for God’s Word.
2. **Get to know them well.** It is always good if you can have a “lifetalk” with someone leading up to the studies- lifetalks are conversations where you can get to know the person’s family, background, and perspectives. Building a relationship with someone and understanding why they think as they do can prove vital in helping someone to remove spiritual roadblocks and get a correct view of God.

**Proverbs 20:5** The purposes of a man’s heart are deep waters, but a man of understanding draws them out.

3. **Your job- to plant and water.** You don’t have to force something- God has the power to make it grow! (1st Cor 3:5-9)
4. **Check to see if they have a Bible!** Make sure your friend has a Bible with a good translation they he/she can

readily understand. If not, a great gesture would be to get your friend one!

5. **Be a great example yourself. 1 Tim. 4:16** Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.
  - Your example of living a balanced life will speak volumes to your friend.
6. **Get a good feel for each study.** The studies are laid out in a very practical manner.
  - There is a brief note at the very top to explain the purpose of each study.
  - The box underneath the note lists all of the main scriptures in the study and the main idea for each.
  - Underneath the box is an opening question and then each scripture is listed in order with more depth.
  - The study ends with a conclusion that contains some challenges that help practically apply the study to our lives.
  - **NOTE:** There is also an additional resources section at the end that generally includes Extra Passages, Homework, and Facilitation Questions. You can use these resources to further bolster the power of each study!
7. **Be led by the Spirit, and enjoy yourself.** God is about to do a miracle, even if we don’t know how!

**Mark 4:26-29** He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

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## GOD & FAITH

This is a great introductory study for those who are seeking the Lord. Many people don't realize that God Himself is looking for individuals to strengthen (2 Chronicles 16:9). If we are open to His influence, our lives will change eternally. Make sure to impress a person's responsibility in his relationship with God.

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
- Jeremiah 29:11-13 God wants to bless our lives.
- Matthew 6:25-34 God cares for each one of us; seek God first.
- Hebrews 11:1-10 Faith goes beyond what we can see.
- James 2:14-26 Faith without action is dead.

*Describe the kind of relationship you presently have with God.  
How would you describe God?*

### **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

- The "Shema" is the center of our faith
- God is the only God
- He is one God
- He is the Creator God
- God calls us to love Him with all we are
- God calls us to obey Him
- God calls us to pass our faith on to others

### **Jeremiah 29:11-13, 14**

- God wants to bless our lives.
- God has plans for each one of us
- God listens to our prayers
- God will be found when we seek him with all our hearts
- God wants to set us free from things that hold us captive (cf Jn. 8:31-36)

### **Matthew 6:25-34**

Because God cares for each one of us, we should seek God first.

- God knows exactly what we need, so we shouldn't worry about life (vv. 25-32)
- If we seek first his kingdom and righteousness, our needs will be met (vv. 33-34)

Each day has enough trouble of its own -- spiritually focus from day to day

### **Hebrews 11:1-3**

- Faith is a conviction of truth beyond the confirmation of our senses
- The goal of the Christian walk is a *relationship* with God. What is real faith in terms of a relationship with a close friend? Faith in a relationship = trust.
- There are many things you can't *see or prove* in a relationship- but you *know* that they are there. Love, for instance. Do you *know* your parents love you? How? You can't see it flying through the air, obviously, but you *know* that it is there- How do you know if you trust someone?
- Faith is lived, not merely head knowledge.

### **Consider these examples of faith showing itself experientially.**

- Noah built the ark to save his family after being warned by God (*Hebrews 11:7*)
- Abraham obeyed and went to a foreign land because he understood that God was calling him to an even better home (i.e. heaven) (*Hebrews 11:8-10*)
- Moses- gave up the treasures of this world because he *trusted* God's promises to be better in the end. (*Hebrews 11:23-27*)

### **James 2:14-26**

- Faith without action is like a body without spirit -- dead! Faith is more than simple belief that God exists. "Faith" that does not produce action is not really faith at all.

- Though God did not choose you because of your deeds, deeds in a relationship is critical. What someone DOES in a relationship greatly affects you and makes a difference either positively (being considerate, gifts, etc.) or negatively (like not showing up or gossiping). So what you DO matters as well.

### **CONCLUSION**

- Continue reading the Bible; put into practice what you've read.
- Challenge: to attend fellowships (Sunday & midweek services) for one month

### **HOMEWORK (read the following passages)**

The proof of God's existence is clearly seen in the creation (*Romans 1:20*)

- It is incredible that God cares for us (*Psalm 8*)
- God's plan for us is more precious than gold (*Psalm 19*)
- God knows everything about us (*Psalm 139*)
- All Scripture is inspired by God and works to mature our hearts (*2 Timothy 3:16-17*)
- The word of God reveals the thoughts and attitudes of our hearts (*Hebrews 4:12,13*)
- Although Jesus came to save, the same message of salvation will condemn those who do not accept it (*John 12:47-48*)

### **Facilitation Questions:**

1. Where can you easily see God's plan for your life? Where do you doubt?
2. What good things has God given you recently? What do you need to give over to him?
3. How can you grow in putting God first? Attendance? Giving? Outreach? Time?
4. What do you think is God's vision for your life? Who or what in your life helps you get closer to God?
5. What specific changes will you make this week to grow in 'seeking God'?
6. Share an experience in life where you achieved victory thru faith
7. Share where you feel most challenged in your faith.
8. What have you read this week in your Bible study that has helped your faith?
9. Where does your life (deeds) need to better match your faith?

# LORDSHIP

The world has many definitions of what it means to be a Christian. However, in order to find the true meaning of discipleship, one must return to the standard of the Bible. This study can be used earlier or later in the series, depending on the individual. For the religious and uncommitted person, use this study early on to challenge them. For those who openly admit to not being disciples, use this study to give vision of what they need to become for God.

- Acts 2:36 Jesus is Lord and Christ.
- Philippians 2:3-11 All knees will bow to Jesus on the last day.
- Mark 12:28-31 Love God with your heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- Luke 9:23-26 The heart of following Jesus.
- Luke 14:25-33 Everyone must count the cost: total surrender.
- Mark 1:14-18 Jesus calls the first disciples.
- Matthew 28:18-20 Go preach the Gospel and make disciples.

*What do you think it means to make Jesus Lord?*

## (I) JESUS IS LORD

### **Acts 2:36**

God has made Jesus both Lord (King) and Christ (Messiah).

- Jesus is Lord whether we accept it, say it, or even know it

### **Philippians 2:3-11**

On the Day of Judgment Jesus will be revealed for the Lord that he really is.

- You need to humble yourself and acknowledge the reality of that Jesus is Lord of your life
- Taking this same attitude- how have you made Jesus Lord of your life?

## (II) THE LORD OF MY LIFE

### **Mark 12:28-31**

The *Greatest Commandment*

- Love is more than feelings. It includes loyalty.
- Our relationship with God must be grounded in affectionate, loyal love with all that we are.

### **Luke 9:23-26**

The heart of following Jesus

- Deny “oneself” Carry the cross daily - always prepared to sacrifice our wills.
- Carry the cross daily - our walk with God should be daily.
- Gain the world and lose your soul, or lose your life to Jesus and receive eternal life.

### **Luke 14:25-35**

The cost (the price of following Jesus).

- Jesus calls us to love him more than anyone else (vv. 25-27).
- Our relationship with God is for life.
- Total commitment is essential.

## (III) THE LORD OF ALL

*What do you think is God’s dream for the world?*

### **Mark 1:14-18**

Jesus calls the first disciples.

- Jesus called them to “Follow me” and they immediately left everything.
- He gave them the purpose in their lives they had been waiting for new purpose: to be fishers of men.
- How can you become a fisher of men?

### **Matthew 28:18-20**

The *Great Commission* is for every disciple.

- This command includes baptizing and teaching obedience to Christ.
- God uses faithful disciples to make more disciples and bring them to maturity.
- Faithfulness to God’s plan could evangelize the world in one generation.

## CONCLUSION

What would it take for you to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life?

## HOMEWORK (read the following passages)

- Deny oneself - Like Jesus in the garden *..Not my will, but your will. (Matthew 26:36-39)*
- The world will know the disciples of Christ when we “love” one another, and “hold” to his teachings (*John 13:34-35; John 8:31-32*)
- Learn how to pray: the disciples imitated Jesus in his prayer life (*Luke 11:1-4*)

## Facilitation Questions:

1. In what specific areas have you grown as a disciple of Christ?
2. In what areas have you not had the victory you’d hoped for?
3. In what areas would your spouse, roommate, child or friend say you need to grow? Are you willing to ask them? If so, when?
4. What will you do this week in order to make progress in any areas where additional growth is necessary?

# SIN

We all need hope and God is the answer for our lives. Use this study to show people how God sees them: sinful. The fact that everyone has sinned means everyone needs forgiveness from God. Once a person understands his specific sins against God, he will now have the opportunity to repent.

- Genesis 6:5-8 God is deeply hurt by sin.
- Isaiah 59:1-3 Sin separates us from God.
- 1 Peter 2:9-10 The spiritual condition of mankind.
- Romans 3:22-24 All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory.
- Galatians 5:19-21 Sinful acts are obvious.
- Romans 6:20-23 The payment of sin is death without God's forgiveness.

## (I) RUINED HOPE

### Genesis 6:5-8

- How is God affected by sin? How are you affected when someone sins against you?
- How is your relationship with God affected by sin?

### Isaiah 59:1-3

Spiritual darkness means separation from God's light.

- Sin separates us from God (like a wall separating two people in a relationship)
- How can the wall of sin can be removed? Can you remove it yourself?
- You are only reconciled to God if HE removes the wall. HE must forgive you.

### 1 Peter 2:9-10

- Everyone is either in the *darkness* or in the *light* - there is no twilight zone.

#### Darkness

No Mercy (Not forgiven)

Not a People

#### God's Light

Mercy (Forgiven)

God's People

### Romans 3:22-24

Sin is falling short of God's glory.

- "Sin" is translated from the Greek "hamartano" for "missing the mark" (i.e., *like an arrow falling short of the target*)
- How much sin does it require to become a "sinner"? Just one
- Can good deeds cancel out sin? No, only God's grace can make us righteous and that grace can only be received through faith

### Galatians 5:19-21

Sins of Commission (in action and in thought).

- The acts of the sinful nature are obvious
- Not a list of what we CANNOT do, but a list of acts we are SAVED from.

## (II) RESTORED HOPE

### Romans 6:20-23

Man's eternal destiny is connected to his spiritual condition.

- The wages of sin is death (eternal separation from God)

- The gift of God is life (eternity in heaven with Him)
- These are the only two possibilities

## CONCLUSION

- Consider what needs to be repented in your life.
- Challenge: Be specific with your sins, confess them and begin to radically repent.

Note: A good practice is to write a heartfelt apology letter to God. It is helpful to write out all the ways that you have sinned that you can remember. It will help you to get in touch with the barrier of sin that exists between you and God, and it will also help you to start repenting specifically.

## HOMEWORK (read the following passages)

- Evil comes from inside our hearts (*Mark 7:20-23*)
- The sacrifice of Christ's blood is our only chance (*Romans 5:9-11*)
- God loves us even at our worst- powerless, ungodly, sinners (*Romans 5:6-8*)
- Despite our sins, we can rejoice in our hope of the glory of God (*Romans 5:1-5*)
- With a true understanding of our sinfulness comes humility (*Psalms 51*)

**Facilitation Questions:** (Need privacy & confidentiality to have this discussion.)

Re-read Ps. 32:1-11 & James 5:16. Pray for open, gracious & humble hearts. Then answer the following questions:

1. What are the 3 greatest areas of temptation that you face?
2. Confess to (and/or discuss with) each other how you're doing with the following areas of temptation (be specific):
  - a. Purity
  - b. Financial Discipline
  - c. Work Ethic
  - d. One of the answers to a question not already discussed
3. Close the evening in prayer asking God for power to overcome sin!

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## CROSS & RESURRECTION

The word “gospel” comes from the Greek “eaungelion” (which literally means “good news”). The good news of Jesus Christ includes his life, death, burial and resurrection.

Many people today do not understand what Jesus Christ has done for them through his death & resurrection. When one understands the all that Jesus did through the cross, it will change one’s life forever.

- Matthew 26:31-28:10 Matthew’s account of The Passion.
- Luke 24 The Risen Lord!
- Acts 2:36 Jesus is Lord & Christ

*Why do you think that the story of Jesus is called “good news”?*

### **Matthew 26:31-28:10**

Christ suffered for us in his body.

- Read and consider the suffering of Jesus as well as how the people around him were sinners just like us.

### **Luke 24**

Christ rose from the dead

- Was dead, but overcame death and raised from the dead.
- Jesus was given a new body that somehow resembled his old body
- Discuss the response of the people who came in contact with the risen Lord

### **Acts 2:36**

- People crucified Jesus but God raised him
- Through His death He is the Messiah (Christ)
- Through His resurrection He is the King (Lord)

## CONCLUSION

Understanding what Jesus has done for you is truly good news.

- Communion is usually celebrated each week during the Sunday worship service.
- Challenge: Start attending Sunday worship and start laying down your life for others as Jesus did.

## HOMEWORK

- Simply review the scriptures given in the study

### **Facilitation Questions:**

How did the cross of Jesus affect your decision to become a disciple?

1. What moves you the most about the cross? Be specific.
2. What does it mean to you that Jesus has been made Lord?
3. What steps will you take this week to keep Jesus’ sacrifice alive in your heart this week?
4. Where do you find your heart most resistant to the message of the cross? How can you grow through this area of weakness?

# BAPTISM

The purpose of this study is to explain how we receive forgiveness for our sins and become Christians. This study should be used when a person has demonstrated his or her willingness to repent and desire to become a disciple. Be wise, unless a person really wants to change his or her life you may end up arguing more than converting (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

- John 3:3-8 Must be born again; born of water and the Spirit.
- Acts 2:22-24, 36-41 Believe the Gospel and respond!
- 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 Repentance leads to salvation.
- Romans 6:1-7 Baptism unites us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.
- Titus 3:4-7 Baptism makes us God's heirs

For those with religious background, construct a timeline of significant spiritual events such as when they: "were born again", "were baptized", "had their sins forgiven", "saved", "came to faith in Jesus as Lord", "received the Holy Spirit" etc.

## John 3:3-8

What does the phrase "to be born again" mean to you? Jesus taught that we must be born again.

- Being born again is equated with being born of water and the Spirit
- No one can enter the kingdom unless they are born of water and the Spirit
- Being born of the Spirit is invisible and miraculous

## Acts 2:22-24, 36-41

The Apostles taught that we believe the Gospel and respond.

- Our sins put Jesus on the cross (i.e., we crucified him as surely as the Roman soldiers did)
- Jesus physically rose from the dead
- The truth should cut our hearts and help us surrender to God's will: "What shall we do?"
- Everyone must make his/her own decision to repent and be baptized. These are the conditions connected to God's promise of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit

## 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

**Repent** (translated from the Greek "metanoeo" meaning to change your thinking.)

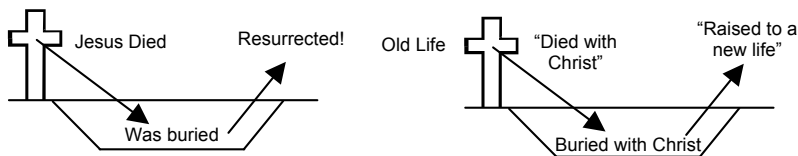
Repentance leads to salvation.

- Sorrow for sin is not enough - godly sorrow leads to repentance and worldly sorrow leads to regret and death
- True repentance comes from the heart and is zealous in both attitude and action (note the difference between Peter and Judas after betraying Jesus). Repentance is also a turning to God
- Brings times of refreshing (Acts 3:17-20)
- Demonstrated by actions (Acts 26:19-21)

## Romans 6:1-7

**Be Baptized** (transliterated from the Greek "baptize" meaning "to immerse") Baptism unites us with the death of Christ.

- Baptism is a burial so that we might be raised to a new life
- Through baptism we acknowledge that our "old self" (our sins) was crucified with Jesus on the cross



## Titus 3:4-7

Baptism is an expression of God's kindness, love and mercy.

- Salvation comes through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. Remember the words of Jesus, "You must be born again" "born of water and the Spirit".
- Our own righteousness cannot save us, but we are justified by his grace
- We become heirs of God with the hope of eternal life

## CONCLUSION

Challenge: set a date and time to get baptized.

## HOMEWORK (read the following passages)

- God knows our hearts and gives grace to the humble (James 4:4-10)
- Without humility there will be no salvation (Matthew 18:3,4)
- We must decide to get rid of sin in our lives (Colossians 3:5-10)
- The example of Paul's conversion (Acts 22:12-16)
- Baptism is the putting off of the sinful nature; a spiritual circumcision; buried with Christ in baptism (Colossians 2:9-15)

## Facilitation Questions:

1. Share what you remember from your baptism. What is the happiest memory? What troubled you?
2. Who would you like to see baptized? (Make a short list and get the group to commit the list to prayer)
3. From 2 Co. 7:11, which characteristics of repentance do you not understand? (Look them up if necessary) Which challenge you most? Which help you the most to repent of sin?
4. Is baptism essential for salvation today? Why or why not?

# THE CHURCH

The goal of this study is to inspire someone on the importance and value of being committed to God's church. This study serves several purposes: First - it defines what church is – it's not a building! Secondly, the study explains the workings of the church. Lastly, the scriptures describe God's expectations for us as members of His eternal kingdom. Our goal is to always be growing larger and smaller at the same time. Share the importance of being in a "Small Group" family within the church.

- Colossians 1:18 The church is the body of Christ.
- Ephesians 2:19-22 The church is the family of God.
- 1 John 4:19-20 Loving your brother
- Acts 2:42-47 A powerful description of the early fellowship.
- 1 Corinthians 12:12-13 We are baptized into the church.
- 1 Corinthians 1:10-12 Unity in the church.
- 1 Peter 4:8-11 Shared responsibilities of every disciple.

*What comes to mind when you hear the word "church"?*

## (I) CHURCH DEFINED

### **Colossians 1:18**

Jesus is the true head of the body.

- In order to have a relationship with Jesus, one must be a part of His body. We must be committed to His church if we are going to be committed to Him Body = Church
- What happens to the body if the head is cut off? What happens to the church if we stop putting Jesus first daily?

### **Ephesians 4:3-4, Romans 12:4-5**

There is only one body in God's eyes. "Church" is translated from "ekklesia" (common Greek word for "assembly")

- In the New Testament, "church" is mostly used in a spiritual sense as the assembly of God's people both *eternally* and *locally*
1. *Eternal Body*: The assembly of all who will live in heaven and those saved on earth
    - Only the church of Jesus can overcome death (*Matthew 16:15-19*)
    - The names of the saved are written in heaven (*Hebrews 12:22-24*)
  2. *Local Body*: The assembly of baptized disciples in a certain geographic area that share the hope of eternal life
    - As the gospel spread there came to be many local churches on earth

### **Ephesians 2:19-22**

Church = Family of God

- All members of God's family are brothers and sisters in the Lord (*Mark 3:31-35*) *even after a fight they're still your brother or sister.*
- At your baptism you are baptized into God's family as well
- What is a cornerstone? Describe.

### **1 John 4:19-20**

- Loving brothers and sisters is an INSEPARABLE part of your relationship with God- you can't ignore problems in relationships and still think you have a great relationship with God. If you do not love those around you- you CAN'T love God!

### **Acts 2:42-47**

This is a powerful description of the first century church.

## (II) CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### **1 Corinthians 12:12-27**

- Entrance through one baptism
- Membership in one body

- Sustained by one Spirit

### **1 Corinthians 1:10-12**

God expects "family unity" in His church.

- Unity in mind and thought requires effort
- We should not have factions based on anything!
- God doesn't want divisions or denominations
- How can so many people of so many nationalities and backgrounds be perfectly united in mind and thought? They all have the same head- same mind- Jesus Christ!

## (III) CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES

### **1 Peter 4:8-11**

Ministry of the Local Church (i.e. shared responsibilities of every disciple)

- *Discipleship* (*Romans 15:14*)
- *Fellowship* (*Hebrews 10:24,25; Hebrews 3:12-14*)
- *Ministry* (*1 John 3:16-18*)
- *Evangelism*: Go into all the world (*Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16*)
- *Worship*: (*Matthew 22:37-38*)
  - *Conflict Resolution* (*Matthew 18:15-20*) *resolution in stages.*
  - *Tithes & Offerings* (*2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13*)

Leadership in the Local Church (*Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24*)

- Needs to be respected and loved
- Accountable to God for how they shepherd and lead (their authority is from God)

## CONCLUSION

- Are you ready to become a part of God's church?
- Set a time to get baptized into His body.

### **Facilitation Questions:**

1. What is your personal conviction about the following?
  - a. "One Another Relationships", Small Groups and Discipleship partner(s)
  - b. Meetings of the Body (Sunday Worship, Small Group meetings etc...)
  - c. Financial Giving, Tithes & Offerings
  - d. Conflict Resolution

Life's Priorities - Which areas do you personally need to grow in?