

# First Principles

*The Seven Fundamentals  
of  
Ephesians 4:4-6*

## **First Principles – “The Seven Fundamentals”**

This edition of First Principles is a combination of many resources, predominantly from the study series written by Andy Fleming (*The Seven Fundamentals of Ephesians 4:4-6*). Other contributing sources include the original First Principles series by the ICOC and Shining Like Stars written by Douglas Jacoby. We recommend you use all of these resources and refer to them. As you grow you should become better equipped to study the Bible with individuals.

Our experience shows us there are many ways to study the Bible with individuals, however, we want to always make sure God’s core principles of conversion are clearly communicated. There are many reasons for a new study series. Of first importance, God continues to teach us how to effectively communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ (*Acts 14:1*). The gospel is ‘good news’ and it needs to be encouraging for those who are truly seeking the Lord.

The goal of the study series is to ultimately help individuals make decisions to become true disciples of Christ. When we teach these scriptures to our friends, let’s be like the apostle Paul with the disciples in Thessalonica (*1Thessalonians 2:8*)...he was delighted to share with them not only the gospel of God but his life as well.

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# One God

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*). A person's reaction to this study reflects his openness to God. The goal of this study is to impress one's responsibility in their relationship with God.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts 17:22-31	God created us for a purpose.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 6:25-34	God cares for each one of us; seek God first.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Matthew 7:7-11	Ask, seek and knock.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Jeremiah 29:11-13	God wants to bless our lives.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts 17:11-12	Have a noble heart before God. Do your homework!

*Describe the kind of relationship you presently have with God. What adjectives best describe God for you?*

## Acts 17:22-31

What is your purpose in life?

- Being 'religious' is not enough – we must seek the truth (*vv. 22-23*)
- God does not need anything from us since he is the source of life (*vv. 24-25*)
- God wants a personal relationship with us that we have chosen to have by our own free will – we must seek him (*vv. 26-27*)
- Everyone has been made in God's image and therefore inherently knows how God wants to be loved and treated – we are just like him (*vv. 28-29*)
- God sent his Son, Jesus to teach us how to have a relationship with him and also proved who he was by raising him from the dead (*vv. 30-31*)

## Matthew 6:25-34

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

- God knows exactly what we need (*vv. 25-32*)
- If we seek first his kingdom and righteousness, our needs will be met (*vv. 33-34*)

## Matthew 7:7-11

God is waiting for us to respond – ask, seek and knock.

## Jeremiah 29:11-13

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

## Acts 17:11-12

Have a Noble Heart before God

- You must check what religious leaders say – put your faith in God's word
- Challenge: be a Berean—begin to feed yourself with God's word.

## CONCLUSION

- Begin praying and reading the Scriptures daily.
- Do the homework assigned each day.

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## EXTRA PASSAGES

### Genesis 1:1

God is the Creator. This statement alone separates faith in the Bible from most other religions and human philosophies, for example:

- *Atheism* – the belief that there is no God
- *Pantheism* – the belief that the universe (i.e., everything) is God
- *Polytheism* – the belief in more than one God
- *Evolution* – the theory that all species of life developed from earlier forms even to the point that life came from inanimate matter (i.e., creation was not a supernatural event)

### Isaiah 40:12-31

The incredible nature of God

- *God's knowledge* goes far beyond human understanding (*vv. 12-14*)
- *God's power*—The power of the nations is like nothing compared to God (*vv. 15-17*)
- *God's greatness* is beyond human imagination (*vv. 18-20*)
- *God's control*—The vastness of the universe and passage of time are small things to God (*vv. 21-26*)
- *God's care*—Most incredibly, he cares for each one of us and gives strength to those who put their hope in him (*vv. 27-31*)

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## 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 (*Psalms 8*)
- God's plan for us is more precious than gold (*Psalms 19*)
- God knows everything about us (*Psalms 139*)

# One Faith

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Faith is not an option, it is absolutely necessary to possess in order to please God. The purpose of this study is to convey the importance of building one's faith in God and His word. Our goal is to help individuals connect their life with scripture.

- |                          |                  |   |
|--------------------------|------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Hebrews 11:1-10  | Faith goes beyond what we can see.                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Ephesians 2:8-10 | Faith is necessary for salvation.                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | James 2:14-26    | Faith without action is dead.                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Romans 10:17     | Faith comes from hearing the message (the Bible). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | John 7:17        | By doing God's will, and you will know!           |

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

## (I) FAITH DEFINED

*Hebrews 11:1-3*

- Faith is a conviction of truth beyond the confirmation of our senses
- Faith is the full acceptance of the truth of God's word (i.e., the universe was formed at God's command) – faith must be put in something greater than ourselves

*Hebrews 11:6*

- Without faith it is impossible to please God
- To come to God one must believe that he exists and rewards those who earnestly seek him

*1 Peter 1:3-9*

Faith is of greater worth than gold in God's sight

- The resurrection of Christ gives us the hope of an eternal inheritance
- Through faith we are shielded by God's power even as we face difficulties
- Through faith we have confidence and joy in the salvation of our souls

*Ephesians 2:8-10*

Salvation is only possible if there is both grace and faith

- Only God has the power to give grace (i.e. forgive the eternal consequences of sin)
- Only man can have faith since God is all-knowing and all-powerful
- Therefore salvation is a gift made available through God's grace, which can only be received by us through faith – grace and faith must work together

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## (II) FAITH THAT PLEASURES GOD

*James 2:14-17*

Faith is more than simple ascent that God exists – it is demonstrated by one's obedience and service to God. Consider these examples from history: *by faith...*

- 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*)

## (III) HOW TO BUILD FAITH

*Romans 10:17*

Faith comes from hearing the message through the word of Christ— Bible reading.

*John 7:17*

The way to find out whether the Bible is from God is to try putting it into practice.

## CONCLUSION

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

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## EXTRA PASSAGES

*Hebrews 10:35-39*

Through faith we can receive blessings from God.

- Persevere in doing God's will so that we can receive what was promised
- Although some promises of God are simply statements of what he will do, others are conditional statements with a blessing and are dependent on our obedience
- Consider the promises covered in the previous study:
  - i. *If we seek God with all our hearts then we will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13)*
  - ii. *If we seek God's kingdom and righteousness first then God will take care of all our physical needs (Matthew 6:33)*
  - iii. *If we fulfill the condition in faith, then God will give us the blessing*

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## HOMEWORK (read the following passages)

- 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*)

The world has many definitions of what it means to be a Christian. However, in order to find true meaning of discipleship, one must return to the definitions 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.

- |                          |                  |   |
|--------------------------|------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Matthew 28:18-20 | Go preach the Gospel and make disciples.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Acts 11:19-26    | Disciples called 'Christians' for the first time.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mark 1:14-18     | Jesus calls the first disciples.                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Luke 9:23-26     | The heart of following Jesus.                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Luke 14:25-33    | Everyone must count the cost: total surrender.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Mark 12:28-31    | Love God with your heart, soul, mind, and strength. |

Can you accept Jesus as your Savior without accepting him as your Lord?

## (I) JESUS IS LORD

*Acts 2:36*

God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ.

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

*Romans 10:9*

Must make Jesus Lord of your life by confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart that He is Lord.

- You can't be saved if you haven't made Jesus Lord of your life.
- How have you made Jesus Lord of your life?

## (II) THE LORD OF MY LIFE

*Mark 12:28-31*

The *Greatest Commandment*

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength
- Love your neighbor as yourself

*Luke 9:23-26*

The heart of following Jesus

- Deny oneself. Carry the cross daily – always prepared to sacrifice our wills
- Gain the world and lose your soul, or lose your life to Jesus and receive eternal life

*Luke 14:25-35*

- Love Jesus' will for our lives more than any other's – even our own (*vv. 25-27*)
- Love Jesus' kingdom more than all we possess (*vv. 28-33*)
- One opportunity to fulfill this is through *regular contribution* to the work of the church

*Acts 11:19-26*

Disciples were called 'Christians' for the first time.

- If you are not a 'disciple,' then you are also not a true 'Christian'.
- The word 'Christian' is barely used in the New Testament—only three times
- 'Christian' was the name that the world gave the followers of Jesus
- Most often, the followers of Jesus are referred to as 'disciples' (more than 270 times) and Jesus clearly defined its meaning through his example and teaching

## (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 promised to give them a new purpose to be "fishers of men" (just like him)

*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?
- Challenge: decide to make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life!

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## 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 wanted to be like Jesus in his prayer life (*Luke 11:1-4*)

- ‘Doing God’s will’ is the right response to the Lordship of Jesus Christ (*Matthew 7:21-23*)

## One Hope

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 their specific sins against God, they will now have the opportunity to repent.

<input type="checkbox"/>	1 Peter 1:1-9	The living hope of salvation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 Peter 2:9-10	The spiritual condition of mankind.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Isaiah 59:1-2	Sin separates us from God.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Romans 3:22-24	All have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Galatians 5:19-21	Sinful acts are obvious.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Psalms 32:1-11	Confess your sins to God first.
<input type="checkbox"/>	James 5:16	Confess your sins to man.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 John 1:5–2:2	Must walk in the light.

*What is your greatest hope for this life?*

### (I) ETERNAL HOPE

*1 Peter 1:1-9*

Salvation is a gift dependent on God’s mercy

- Assured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ—he’s already waiting for us there
- An inheritance kept in heaven that can never perish, spoil or fade

*1 Peter 2:9-10*

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

Darkness	God’s Light
Not a People	God's People
No Mercy (Not forgiven)	Mercy (Forgiven)

- ‘Being in God’s light’ is much more than an ‘intellectual’ state (i.e., *enlightenment*) but it is our true spiritual condition before God

### (II) RUINED HOPE

*Isaiah 59:1-2*

Spiritual darkness means separation from God’s light

- Sin separates us from God like a wall
- Salvation is only possible if wall is removed by God since only through his grace can sins be forgiven

*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

*James 4:17*

Sins of Omission

- God also holds us responsible for the good that we know that we should do

### (III) RESTORED HOPE

*Romans 6:23*

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

*Psalms 32:1-11*

Make sure you confess your sins to God.

*James 5:16*

Confession to each other brings healing and helps with accountability.

- This is God’s way of keeping our hope restored.

*1 John 1:5–2:2*

In order to be right with God, we must walk in the light.

- The blood of Jesus is what purifies us from all sin
- Be honest and open with our lives

### CONCLUSION

- Consider what needs to be repented in your life.
- Challenge: confess and repent.

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**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*)

## One Gospel

The word ‘gospel’ comes from the Greek ‘euaggelion’ (which literally means ‘good news’). The good news of Jesus Christ includes his life, death, and resurrection. Many people today do not understand what Jesus Christ has done for them through his death. When one understands the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, it will change one’s life forever.

☐ Matthew 26:31–28:10	Matthew’s account of The Passion.
☐ 1 Peter 2:21-24	Christ suffered for us in his body.
☐ 2 Corinthians 5:21	Jesus paid the ultimate price for us already. Accept it!

*Why do you think that the story of Jesus is called ‘good news’?*

### *Matthew 26:31 – 28:10*

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

Suggested reading intervals:

<i>26:31-35</i>	<i>26:36-46</i>
<i>26:47-56</i>	<i>26:57-68</i>
<i>26:69-75</i>	<i>27:1-10</i>
<i>27:11-26</i>	<i>27:27-31</i>
<i>27:32-44</i>	<i>27:45-56</i>
<i>27:57-61</i>	<i>27:62-66</i>
<i>28:1-10</i>	

### *1 Peter 2:21-24*

Christ suffered for us in his body.

- He set us an example by trusting in God through his trials
- He bore our sins and received the punishment that we deserved

### *2 Corinthians 5:21*

The message is clear and personal for each one of us: ‘*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*’

- What awaits a man who has sin and dies? Answer: hell.
- On the cross, Jesus paid the ultimate price on our behalf. He went to hell for us so that we wouldn’t have to go there.

### *Matthew 26:26-29*

Jesus asked us to remember the sacrifice of his body and blood.

- The bread represents his body which was given for us
- The cup represents his blood that was poured out for the forgiveness of our sins

### **CONCLUSION**

- Communion is usually celebrated each week during the Sunday worship service.
- Challenge: come to Sunday church services to partake communion.

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### **EXTRA PASSAGES**

#### *Romans 1:16-17*

The Gospel is the power of God for salvation.

- The righteousness of the gospel comes only through faith
- The facts of the gospel are that Jesus died, was buried, and then was raised to life (*1 Corinthians 15:1-4*)

#### *1 Peter 1:18-21*

The Gospel was God’s plan from the beginning.

- Jesus was the lamb of God chosen before the creation of the world
- His resurrection gives us faith and hope

#### *Philippians 2:5-8*

The sacrifice of Jesus began long before his death on the cross.

- He gave up equality with God
- He took the form of a servant being made in human likeness
- He humbled himself to the point of death

#### *Hebrews 9:14-15, 22*

The incredible power of the blood of Christ

- The blood of Christ cleanses our consciences and sets us free from the guilt of our sins
  - The blood of Christ puts the new covenant into effect and guarantees forgiveness
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## HOMEWORK

- Read the “Medical Account of the Crucifixion” (pages 20-22)
- View the KNN edition entitled “The Cross.”
- Simply review the scriptures given in the study

## One Baptism (Part 1)

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 their willingness to repent and desire to become a disciple. Be wise, unless a person sees his or her ‘lostness’ you may end up arguing more than converting (2 Timothy 2:23-26).

<input type="checkbox"/>	John 3:3-8	Must be born again; born of water and the Spirit.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts 2:22-24, 36-41	Believe the Gospel and respond!
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Corinthians 7:10-11	Repentance leads to salvation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Romans 6:1-7	Baptism unites us with the death of Christ.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Galatians 2:20	I have been crucified with Christ. I now live for Christ.

*How does someone respond in faith to the message of the gospel?*

### John 3:3-8

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

## Page 11

## Page 12

### 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

Repentance is also a turning to God

- Brings times of refreshing (Acts 3:17-20)
- Demonstrated by actions (Acts 26:19-21)

### Romans 6:3-7

**Be Baptized** (transliterated from the Greek ‘baptizo’ 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

### Galatians 2:20

I now live my life for Christ, not for myself

- Baptism is the putting off of the sinful nature

## CONCLUSION

- Challenge: set a date and time to get baptized.

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## EXTRA PASSAGES

### Hebrews 9:14-15, 22

Through baptism we contact with the cleansing blood of Christ.

### 1 Peter 3:21-22

Baptism saves us.

- Not through ceremonial cleansing but by virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our faith in the promise of God (i.e., the response of a good conscience)

### 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

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### HOMEWORK (read the following passages)

- Repent or perish (*Luke 13:1-9*)
- 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 all the 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*)

## One Baptism (Part 2)

We live in a religious society with many different understandings about God. Consequently, how one becomes a Christian is also confused. This study addresses the most popular false doctrines (teachings) on how someone becomes a Christian. Once you begin talking to more people about God, you will soon discover the widespread effect of these false teachings. *1 Peter 3:15* calls us to be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks us to give the reason for the hope we have...this study will better equip us to give those answers.

□ Galatians 1:6-9	False doctrine (teaching) is destructive. No one can alter the gospel!
□ Ezekiel 18:20	“Original sin” is a false teaching.
□ Hebrews 10:26	“Once saved, always saved” is a false teaching.
□ James 2:24	Salvation by “faith alone” is a false teaching
□ Revelation 3:20	Salvation through the “sinner’s prayer” is a false teaching.

Begin the session with a summary of the New Testament teaching on conversion:

- Hear the message *Romans 10:17, Acts 11:14*
- Believe (trust) *John 3:16, Acts 16:31*
- Repent *Luke 13:3, Acts 3:19*
- Confess Jesus as Lord *Romans 10:9, 1 Timothy 6:12*
- Be baptized *Acts 2:38, 1 Peter 3:21*

### *Galatians 1:6-10*

We must take a stand and not be “people-pleasers” (v10).

- No one—religious leader, angel, apostle—has the right to “update” the gospel!

### *Ezekiel 18:20*

**Infant baptism** is a false teaching.

- Advocates of infant baptism hold that baptism remits “original sin.”
- Clearly, this Scripture shows that guilt is nontransferable.
- The Catholic Church did not officially endorse this false teaching until the early fifth century.
- The sister doctrine of “confirmation” is equally baseless.

### *Colossians 2:12, Galatians 3:26-27*

These passages also clearly refute the infant baptism doctrine.

- Faith is key in baptism. Can babies have faith? Answer: No.
- Repentance is necessary for baptism. Do babies understand the concept of repentance? Answer: No way.

### *Hebrews 10:26*

This passage is only one of hundreds that refutes the false doctrine of “**once saved, always saved.**”

### *James 2:24*

Salvation by “**faith alone**” is a false teaching.

- John 3:16 shows faith as the basis of our entire response to the gospel. But this must not be taken out of context.
- Consider all relevant passages.
- *John 8:30-32, Hebrews 5:9, Romans 1:5, and Romans 16:26*

### *Revelation 3:20*

The false doctrine of “**praying Jesus into your heart,**” “accepting Christ” or “receiving Christ” was invented on the American frontier in the early nineteenth century from this verse.

- Must examine this passage carefully, and its context!
- It is written to Christians, the *already* saved (*Revelation 3:14, 22*)
- “Be earnest, and repent” means to let Christ *back* into your life, not to be converted initially.
- The passage mentions nothing about faith, confession or baptism, as the readers were already converted.

### CONCLUSION

- Have a deep conviction of the right and Biblical doctrine of conversion.
-

*Luke 23:39-43*

The false doctrine of the **thief on the cross** says, “The thief was not baptized, but Jesus said he would see him in heaven. What do you say to that?”

- *Mark 2:10* Jesus had authority during his earthly ministry to forgive sins.
- *Romans 6:3-4* Baptism is a participation in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. The penitent thief could not have been baptized, as Jesus had not yet died.
- *Hebrews 9:17* The new covenant (New Testament) was not yet in force, as Jesus had not yet died under the old covenant.
- “Accepting” Christ is necessary to become a child of God (born again), but it is not sufficient (*John 1:12*)
- “Accepting” Christ Biblically means accepting the words of Christ, receiving his message (*John 12:48*).
- Nowhere in the New Testament is there a record of anyone just saying a prayer and becoming a Christian!

## One Spirit

The Holy Spirit is received at baptism. This study explains the power given to us supplied by the Holy Spirit. Quite honestly we need greater awareness of the Spirit’s presence in our lives. *John 16:13* says that He will guide us into all truth. Let’s stay alert and open to God working through our lives.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Genesis 1:1-3	The Spirit is the power of God.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Psalm 139:7-10	God’s Spirit is everywhere.
<input type="checkbox"/>	John 16:13	The Spirit guides us into all truth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	2 Corinthians 3:17-18	The Spirit helps transform us into the likeness of Christ
<input type="checkbox"/>	Romans 8:9-11	The Spirit helps us to live righteously.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acts 2:17-21, 29-41	The Holy Spirit is received at baptism.
<input type="checkbox"/>	1 Corinthians 6:17-20	Do not pollute our bodies because they are the temples of the Holy Spirit.

*What does the phrase ‘to be born again’ mean to you?*

### (I) THE POWER OF GOD’S SPIRIT

*Genesis 1:1-3*

Review the Old Testament’s teaching – God is Spirit

- The Spirit is the power of God
  - i. ‘Spirit’ is translated from ‘ruwach’ (Hebrew for ‘wind’, sometimes also ‘breath’)
  - ii. *The earth was formlessness, empty and darkness was over the surface of the deep.* The creation was then transformed into form, order, life and light by the Spirit of God
  - iii. The Spirit of God moves like the blowing of an invisible wind – through the Spirit we see the effects and evidence of God’s power, presence and person in the creation

*Psalm 139:7-10*

The Spirit of God being everywhere means that God is everywhere

### (II) WHAT WILL THE SPIRIT DO FOR US?

*John 16:13*

God’s Spirit will guide us into all truth.

*2 Corinthians 3:17-18*

God’s Spirit helps us to be transformed into the likeness of Christ.

- If we have the Holy Spirit working in us, we will become more and more like Christ.

*Romans 8:9-11*

God’s Spirit will help us live righteous lives and not be controlled by the sinful nature.

- Without the Holy Spirit in us, it is very difficult to change our lives.

### (III) HOW DO YOU GET GOD’S SPIRIT?

*Acts 2:17-21, 29-41*

The gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit

- After Jesus was raised to life, he ascended to heaven and received the promised Holy Spirit from God that he then poured out on all people on the day of Pentecost
- Only those who repent and are baptized with water will receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (i.e., be ‘born again’)

*1 Corinthians 6:17-20*

To make our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit and to prove our spiritual union with Him.

## CONCLUSION

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- Decide to live a righteous life!
- Do not pollute your body—which is the temple of the Holy Spirit—with sin so that God’s Spirit will continue to live and work in you life.

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## EXTRA PASSAGES

- To guarantee our salvation and help us stand firm in Christ (*2 Corinthians 1:21-22*)
- To guide us in spiritual living and produce God’s character in our hearts (*Galatians 5:16-18,22-25*)
- This succession of events resulted in the quality of ‘sonship to God’ being made available to anyone who responds in faith to the gospel of Jesus Christ (*Galatians 3:26-27, 4:4-6*)
- If anyone is in Christ there is a New Creation (*2 Corinthians 5:16-17*)

The Gift of the Holy Spirit is the Person of Christ in Our Hearts

- Testifying that we are God’s children as he is (*Romans 8:14-17*)
- Helping us in our prayers by interceding for us to God (*Romans 8:26-34*)
- Enabling Christ to dwell in our hearts through faith (*Ephesians 3:16,17a*)

The Spirit is the person of God (*Isaiah 63:7-10*)

- God responded personally to the condition of Israel – distress and grief

## One Body

The aim 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. Ultimately, there’s no other group of people we want to be part of than God’s family!

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| □ Ephesians 4:4          | There is one body.                              |
| □ Colossians 1:18        | The church is the body of Christ.               |
| □ Ephesians 2:19-22      | The church is the family of God.                |
| □ Acts 2:42-47           | A powerful description of the early fellowship. |
| □ I Corinthians 12:12-13 | We are baptized into the church.                |
| □ I Peter 4:8-11         | Shared responsibilities of every disciple.      |

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What comes to mind when you hear the word ‘church’?

### (I) CHURCH DEFINED

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

There is only one body in God’s eyes.

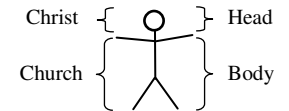
- ‘Church’ is translated from ‘ekklesia’ (common Greek word for ‘assembly’)
- In the New Testament, ‘church’ is mostly used in a spiritual sense as the assembly of God’s people both *eternally* and *locally*
  - A. *Eternal Body*: The assembly of all who will live in heaven with God forever
    - Only the church of Jesus can overcome death (*Matthew 16:15-19*)
    - The names of the saved are written in heaven (*Hebrews 12:22-24*)
  - B. *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

*Colossians 1:18*

Jesus is the true head of the body.

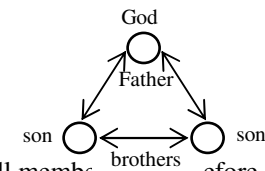
- In order to have a relationship with Jesus, one must have a relationship with his church. Our commitment to Jesus and to the church should be exactly the same.

Body = Church



*Ephesians 2:19-22*

Church = family of God



- God’s household: all members before ‘brothers and sisters’
- A Building: built on the truth of God’s word as recorded in the NT
  - i. Jesus is the chief cornerstone (level and direction for the rest of the foundation)
  - ii. *Apostles* (Paul, Peter, John, Matthew) and *Prophets* (Mark, Luke, James, Jude, *unspecified* writer of Hebrews)
  - iii. A local assembly can only be part of God’s eternal church if it is built in accordance with the teaching of the New Testament
- A Holy Temple: God lives in the church by his Spirit

*Acts 2:42-47*

This is a powerful description of the early Christians’ fellowship.

*1 Corinthians 12:12-13*

Entrance through one baptism. Membership in one body. Sustained by one Spirit.

*1 Corinthians 1:10-12*

God expects a unified family—unity in His church

- Unity in mind in thought; and thought requires effort
- God doesn't want divisions or denominations

(III) CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES

*1 Peter 4:8-11*

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

- *Teaching Each Other (Romans 15:14)*
- *Encouraging Each Other (Hebrews 10:24,25; Hebrews 3:12-14)*
- *Benevolence (1 John 3:16-18)*
- *Evangelism: Go into all the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)*
- *Conflict Resolution (Matthew 18:15-20)*

*1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24*

Leadership in the Local Church

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

*Ephesians 3:7-12*

The expression of God's manifold wisdom

- The Church represents God's eternal purpose for man
- This knowledge allows us to approach God with freedom and confidence

CONCLUSION

- Become a part of God's church eternally and locally.

## A Medical Account of the Crucifixion

### Simplified and Amended

*This is a simplified medical account of Jesus' crucifixion (an adaptation of the Davis' version). Other medical reports have been written – all useful but usually rather technical. This account aims to be accessible to the average reader. Douglas Jacoby created this adaptation, with the assistance of Alex Mnatzaganian, in December 1989.*

Hanging, electrocution, knee-capping, gas chamber; these punishments are feared. They all happen today, and we shudder as we think of the horror and pain. But as we shall see, these ordeals pale into insignificance compared with the bitter fate of Jesus Christ: crucifixion.

No one is crucified today. For us the cross remains confined to ornaments, jewelry, stained-glass windows, and romanticized pictures and statues portraying a serene death. Crucifixion was a form of execution refined by the Romans to a precise art. It was carefully conceived to produce a slow death with maximum pain. It was a public spectacle intended to deter other would-be criminals. It was a death to be feared.

### SWEAT LIKE BLOOD

Luke 22:44 says of Jesus, "and being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground." His sweat was unusually intense because his emotional state was unusually intense. Dehydration, coupled with exhaustion, further weakened him.

### BEATING

It was in this condition that Jesus faced the first physical abuse: punches and slaps to the face and head while blindfolded. Unable to anticipate the blows, Jesus was badly bruised, his mouth and eyes possibly injured. The psychological effects of the false trials should not be underestimated. Consider that Jesus faced them bruised, dehydrated, exhausted and possibly in shock.

### FLOGGING

In the previous twelve hours Jesus had suffered emotional trauma, rejection by his closest friends, a cruel beating and a sleepless night, during which he had to walk miles between unjust hearings. Despite the fitness he must certainly have gained during his travels in Palestine, he was in no way prepared for the punishment of flogging. The effects of the crucifixion would be worse as a result.

A man to be flogged was stripped of his clothes and his hands tied to a post above his head. He was then whipped across the shoulders, back, buttocks, thighs and legs, the soldier standing behind and to one side of the victim. The whip used – known as the flagellum – was designed to make this a devastating punishment, bringing the victim close to death. It consisted of several short, heavy leather thongs, with two small balls of lead or iron attached near the end of each. Pieces of sheep's bone were sometimes included.

As the scourging proceeded, the heavy leather thongs produced first superficial cuts, then deeper damage to underlying tissues. Bleeding became severe when not only capillaries and veins were cut, but also arteries in the underlying muscles. The small metal balls first produced large, deep bruises that were broken open by further blows. The fragments of sheep's bone ripped the flesh as the whip was drawn back. When the beating was finished, the skin of the back was in ribbons and the entire are torn and bleeding.

The words chosen by the gospel writers suggest that the scourging of Jesus was particularly severe: he was certainly at the point of collapse when he was cut down from the flogging post.

### THE MOCKING

Jesus was allowed no time to recover before facing his next ordeal. Made to stand, he was dressed in a robe by jeering soldiers, crowned with a twisted band of thorny twigs and, to complete the parody, given a wooden staff as a king's scepter. Next they spat on Jesus and struck him on the head with the wooden staff. The long thorns were driven into the sensitive scalp tissue, producing profuse bleeding. Even more terrible was the reopening of the wounds on Jesus' back when the robe was torn off again.

Further weakened physically and emotionally, Jesus was led away to be executed.

### THE CRUCIFIXION

The wooden cross used by the Romans was too heavy to be carried by one man. Instead, the victim to be crucified was made to bear the detached crossbar across his shoulders, carrying it outside the city walls to the place of execution. There the heavy upright portion of the cross was permanently in position. Jesus was unable to carry his load – a beam weighing approximately seventy-five to one hundred twenty-five pounds (35-55 kilograms). He collapsed under the burden, and an onlooker was ordered to take it for him.

Jesus refused to drink the wine and myrrh offered him before the nails were driven in, which would have dulled the pain. Thrown down on his back with arms outstretched along the crossbar, nails were driven through Jesus' wrists into the wood. These iron spikes, about six inches long and three-eighths of an inch thick, severed the large sensorimotor median nerve, causing excruciating pain in both arms. Carefully placed between bones and ligaments, the spikes were able to bear the full weight of the crucified man.

In preparation for the nailing of the feet, Jesus was lifted up and the crossbar fixed to the upright post. Then with legs bent at the knee, a single nail was used to pierce both feet, one foot being placed over the other. Again there was severe nerve damage and the pain caused was intense. It is important to note, however, that neither the wounds to the wrists nor the feet caused substantial bleeding, since no major arteries were ruptured. The executioner took care to ensure this in order that death would be slower and the suffering longer.

Now nailed to his cross, the real horror of crucifixion began. When the wrists were nailed to be crossbar, the elbows were intentionally left in a bent position so that the crucified man would hang with his arms above his head, the weight being taken on the nails in the wrists. Obviously this was unbearably painful, but it had another effect: It is very difficult to exhale in this position. In order to breathe out and then to take in fresh air, it was necessary to push the body up on the nailed feet. When the pain from the feet became unbearable, the victim would again slump down to hang by the arms. A terrible cycle of pain began – hanging by the

arms, unable to breathe, pushing up on the feet to inhale quickly before again slumping down, and on and on.

This tortured activity became more and more difficult as Jesus' back scraped against the upright post, as muscle cramps set in because of the inadequate respiration, and as exhaustion grew more severe. Jesus suffered in this manner for several hours until, with a final cry, he died.

### CAUSE OF DEATH

Many factors contributed to Jesus' death. A combination of shock and suffocation killed most victims of crucifixion. In Jesus' case, however, acute heart failure may have been the final trauma. This is suggested by the loud cry, followed by his sudden death, after only a few hours – sooner than expected, it would seem, as Pilate was surprised to find Jesus already dead. A fatal cardiac arrhythmia, or perhaps cardiac rupture, are likely possibilities.

### THE SPEAR WOUND

As the executioners broke the legs of the criminals crucified alongside him (in order to speed their deaths), Jesus was already dead. Instead, we read that a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a spear. Where on his side? The Greek wording in the Gospel of John suggests the ribs, and if the soldier intended to make Jesus' death certain, a wound to the heart was the obvious choice.

From the wound came a flow of "blood and water" (John 19:34). This is consistent with the spear blow to the heart, especially from the right side, the traditional site of the wound. Rupturing the pericardium (the sac surrounding the heart) released a flow of watery serum followed by blood as the heart was pierced.

### CONCLUSION

The detailed accounts given in the Gospels, combined with the historical evidence on crucifixion, bring us to a firm conclusion: modern medical knowledge supports the claim of the Scriptures that Jesus died on the cross.

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### NOTES

- Douglas Jacoby, Ph.D., *Shining Like Stars*. Woburn, Mass.: Discipleship Publications International, 2000.
- C. Truman Davis, M.D., M.S., "The Passion of Christ from a Medical Point of View," *Arizona Medicine*, March 1965.

## List of Extra Resources

### Useful Christian Websites

Acesonline

[www.acesonline.org](http://www.acesonline.org)

Christian Book Distributors

[www.christianbook.com](http://www.christianbook.com)

Christian Classics Ethereal Library

[ccl.wheaton.edu](http://ccl.wheaton.edu)

Discipleship Publications International

[www.dpibooks.org](http://www.dpibooks.org)

Entertainment Reviews for Parents

[www.screenit.com](http://www.screenit.com)

Great Commission Illustrated

[www.greatcommission.com](http://www.greatcommission.com)

International Churches of Christ

[www.icoc.org](http://www.icoc.org)

Internet Christian Library

[www.iclnet.org](http://www.iclnet.org)

Interpreting Ancient Manuscripts

[www.stg.brown.edu/projects/mss/overivew.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/mss/overivew.html)

Kingdom News Network (KNN)

[www.kingdomnewsnet.org](http://www.kingdomnewsnet.org)

Religion Religions Religious Studies

[www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/rel](http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/gthursby/rel)

Religious and Sacred Texts

[Davidwiley.com/religion.html](http://Davidwiley.com/religion.html)

Religium Religion Index

[www.teleport.com/~arden/religium.htm](http://www.teleport.com/~arden/religium.htm)

Resource Pages for Biblical Studies

[www.hivolda.no/asf/kkf/rel-stud.html](http://www.hivolda.no/asf/kkf/rel-stud.html)

## The Books of the Old Testament

Pentateuch	<b>Genesis</b>	Major Prophets	<b>Isaiah</b>
	<b>Exodus</b>		<b>Jeremiah</b>
	<b>Leviticus</b>		<b>Lamentations</b>
	<b>Numbers</b>		<b>Ezekiel</b>
	<b>Deuteronomy</b>		<b>Daniel</b>
	<b>Joshua</b>		<b>Hosea</b>
	<b>Judges</b>		<b>Joel</b>
	<b>Ruth</b>		<b>Amos</b>
	<b>1 Samuel</b>		<b>Obadiah</b>
	<b>2 Samuel</b>		<b>Jonah</b>
Historical Books	<b>1 Kings</b>	Minor Prophets	<b>Micah</b>
	<b>2 Kings</b>		<b>Nahum</b>
	<b>1 Chronicles</b>		<b>Habakkuk</b>
	<b>2 Chronicles</b>		<b>Zephaniah</b>
	<b>Ezra</b>		<b>Haggai</b>
	<b>Nehemiah</b>		<b>Zechariah</b>
	<b>Esther</b>		<b>Malachi</b>
	<b>Job</b>		
	<b>Psalms</b>		
	<b>Proverbs</b>		
Poetic Books	<b>Ecclesiastes</b>		
	<b>Song of Songs</b>		

# The Books of the New Testament

Biographical	<b>Matthew</b>
	<b>Mark</b>
Historical	<b>Luke</b>
	<b>John</b>
	<b>Acts</b>
	<b>Romans</b>
	<b>1 Corinthians</b>
	<b>2 Corinthians</b>
	<b>Galatians</b>
	<b>Ephesians</b>
	<b>Philippians</b>
	<b>Colossians</b>
Pauline Letters	<b>1 Thessalonians</b>
	<b>2 Thessalonians</b>
	<b>1 Timothy</b>
	<b>2 Timothy</b>
	<b>Titus</b>
	<b>Philemon</b>
	<b>Hebrews</b>
	<b>James</b>
	<b>1 Peter</b>
	<b>2 Peter</b>
General Letters	<b>1 John</b>
	<b>2 John</b>
	<b>3 John</b>
	<b>Jude</b>
	<b>Revelation</b>
Prophetic	

# Scripture Memory

*'But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.'*  
*1 Peter 3:15*

## (SAMPLE)

### SESSION A

*Keyword*

- *1 Peter 3:15*

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- *Acts 2:38*

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- *Luke 19:10*

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*prepare to answer*

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*repent & be baptized*

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*seek & save the lost*

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### SESSION 1

*Keyword*

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**SESSION 4**

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