

Series C

Devotional Book

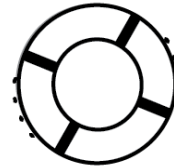
CREATION



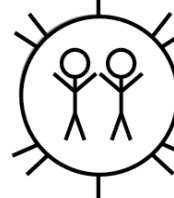
FALL



RESCUE



RESTORATION



Series C Unit 1 Lesson 1
4 Chapter Gospel Overview

John 8:32- *Then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*

Truth: God has a plan for all of life.

Response: Participate in God's plan.

The 4 chapter gospel is simply explained as Creation, Fall, Rescue, and Restoration. Within the greatest story ever written, we believe all aspects of our humanity (including all of creation) was once pristine and perfect. This creation idea explains how the world and the people living in it "ought" to be.

But, we recognize that because we are all born of Adam, creation and humans living in creation, now currently live in a fallen state. The fall would explain how the world actually "is" as we struggle to make sense of it. But, as people of faith, we are privileged because we still have hope. To be hopeful is an exceptionally relevant and vital part of life. Even while we mourn, we also mourn with hope.

Then God the Father sent His son, Jesus, to save this world. Jesus grew up, worked as a carpenter, and then began His ministry to show us how to live with one another and how to love one another. He taught 12 men who became His disciples. Many people followed Him because of the many miracles that He performed and healings that took place. The religious leaders of His time did not like Him because Jesus was causing people to see Him as Divine. They persecuted Jesus which led to His crucifixion and to His Resurrection. This was the rescue. Jesus died for our sins.

The story doesn't end with redemption. God has promised to renew the whole world, and the Bible gives us a peak into this glorious future. The restoration of all things will take place in two ways. Christ will return to judge sin and evil, and He will usher in righteousness and peace. The question is how can I join God in doing His work?

<http://fallschurchofellowsof.blogspot.com/2007/05/four-chapter-gospel-expose.html>

Four Chapter Gospel

CREATION



How did it all begin?

Genesis 1:1,31

Where did I come from?

Genesis 1:27; 2:7

FALL



What went wrong?

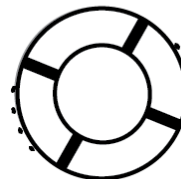
Genesis 3:6-10

Have you experienced hurt or pain?

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

RESCUE



Can anything be done?

How does Jesus fix this broken world?

Romans 5:8

Luke 19:10

II Corinthians 5:17-21

RESTORATION



What will the future hold?

Revelation 21:1-5

How can I join God now in His work?

Mark 16:15

Series C Unit 7 Lesson 3

Peter-Trusting God with my mistakes-Reinstatement after mistake

Proverbs 3:5- *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.*

Truth: God gives us understanding.

Response: Trust God for help with a decision instead of doing things my way.

Who do you trust? That is a challenging question, because there are so few I have found trustworthy. It has been one of the most difficult lessons in life; accepting how few are genuinely trustworthy for the long-haul. I have had many fair weather friends, people with whom I shared good times, but when trials swirled and troubles came, they vanished with ne'er a call.

An even greater challenge has been learning to not trust myself! Too many of us make daily decisions without a conscious effort of prayer for wisdom. Some make life changing, unalterable decisions that shadow the rest of their lives without taking time to pray, seek counsel and wait on the Lord.

Bathe decisions in prayer and in the light of truth. Cultivate a wealth of wisdom by reading God's Word and follow His will. Trust the Lord and wait on Him to weigh every thought and action.

How many of us have made decisions, signed a contract or made a commitment, because we were unwilling to wait and pray?

<https://heartofashepherd.com/2015/07/03/proverbs-35-6-who-do-you-trust-2/>

Series C Unit 1 Lesson 2

Bible Introductory Lesson

Psalm 119:11- *I have hidden your Word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

Truth: God's Word is all true and needs to be my instruction book.

Response: Memorize scripture so I can use it in my life.

The heart is that private place where inner secrets are stored and personal treasures carefully hidden. The heart is that concealed portion of our being where our choice thoughts, cherished wisdom and valued secrets are stored. It is the repository-box in which the Word of God and words from God are deposited for safe keeping and for righteous living.

The most precious book in the whole world is the Bible. It is the inspired Word of God and its content is profitable for godly living. Its benefits are manifold and profitable for teaching and for reproof – for correction and for training in righteousness. The heart is the best place to store this heavenly treasure so that we might not sin against the Lord Who bought us with His own precious blood.

The heart is the place to store the Word of God, which is our heavenly treasure, in time and eternity, where moth and rust will not spoil it and thieves can never break in to steal it. There is no more beneficial activity than reflecting, pondering and contemplating the Word of God, which is nourishment for the soul; rest for the weary; peace for the troubled; comfort for the afflicted and instruction for man of God. To do so will enable us to resist the accusations and taunts of the enemy; deter us from going astray; protect us from the ravages of sinning against the almighty God; guide us into all truth and instruct us righteous living.

Hiding the Word in our hearts is the most powerful antidote against sin and is the greatest influence to live a holy and perfect life. Day by day let us hide more of God's Word, deep within our hearts .

<http://www.knowing-jesus.com/psalm-119-11/>

Series C Unit 1 Lesson 3 Creation

Genesis 2:7-The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

Truth: God made the world by speaking each thing into existence and forming man with His hands.

Response: Recognize God's greatness through creation.

Scripture tells us human beings came into existence as a deliberate act of creation by God Himself. As the second chapter of Genesis begins, "the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array" (v. 1). An enormous level of creativity and detail went into the creation of everything we know on Earth and everything in the heavens beyond.

In these first moments of creation, God used springs to water the Earth rather than rain (v. 6). As God surveyed His work, He decided to create a caretaker for this majestic creation, someone to oversee the planting and harvesting of this abundance (v. 5). God completed His masterpiece of creation with a human being.

God formed man out of the dust of the earth (which was also God's creation). But this shape was not a living being; at this point, it was little more than just an elaborate clay container. In verse 7, we read that God Himself breathed into man's nostrils. Only God could create life from nothing. We were formed by God and breathed into life by Him. Look closely at your hand. Notice the detail of each knuckle and fingernail. Bend your fingers and observe the way your hands grip and stretch. While scientists are able to form robotic arms, they do not have the capacity of the human hand. You are indeed fearfully and wonderfully made. Thank God today for the care He took in your creation.

http://www.todayintheword.com/titw_devotion.aspx?id=197594

Series C Unit 7 Lesson 2 Peter-Trusting God with Fears-Walking on the Water

Isaiah 41:10- so do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God.

Truth: God is always with us, so I don't need to be afraid.

Response: Ask God to help me, even when I'm afraid.

When I am anxious about some risky new venture or meeting, I battle unbelief with one of my most often-used promises: [Isaiah 41:10](#) ("Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand")

The day I left for three years in Germany, my father called me long distance and gave me this promise on the telephone. For three years, I must have quoted it to myself five hundred times to get me through periods of tremendous stress.

When the motor of my mind is in neutral, the hum of the gears is the sound of [Isaiah 41:10](#).

When I am anxious about my ministry being useless and empty, I fight unbelief with the promise of [Isaiah 55:11](#). "So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

When I am anxious about being too weak to do my work, I battle unbelief with the promise of Christ, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)).

When I am anxious about decisions I have to make about the future, I battle unbelief with the promise, "I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you" ([Psalm 32:8](#)).

When I am anxious about facing opponents, I battle unbelief with the promise, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" ([Romans 8:31](#)).

When I am anxious about the welfare of those I love, I battle unbelief with the promise that if I, being evil, know how to give good things to my children, how much more will the "Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" ([Matthew 7:11](#)).

<http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/fighting-words>

Series C Unit 7 Lesson 1
Peter-Trusting God for Growth-Called to be a disciple

2 Peter 1:3a- *His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life.*

Truth: God will provide us with everything we need to live a godly life.

Response: Learn to depend on God to help me live a godly life.

In our electronic and digital world, we often have to activate something we have received in order to gain the benefits and power of that item – be it a credit card, online account, or computer program. For example, with a new credit card that comes in the mail, our name is on it and there is nothing else we have to receive, but to activate it for beneficial use, we have to call a number or connect online to actually activate the card for its intended purposes and values.

So also, when we have come to know Christ and gained membership into his kingdom and family, we have access to a new divine power. But that benefit is useless unless we chose to activate it. And the way that we do this confirming and activating is by growing in the knowledge of God (verse 3), adding to our lives the associated character qualities that define Christlikeness (2 Peter:6-8), and confirming our calling and election to Christ's family by the persistent hard work of increasing these virtues throughout our lives (2 Peter:10).

So also, we have a listing of character and behavioral qualities that define a person who is connected with Christ – or, to use the words of Christ himself, these are elements that describe the quality and connection we as branches have to the vine.

The list today even has a sort of “flow” to it. It begins with faith, which is trust >> to which we add goodness – the desire to do what is right >> and if we're to do what is right, we have to have knowledge of what is correct >> which helps us to have self-control, in that we are knowledgeable of a larger perspective on all things >> helping us to gain perseverance through whatever circumstances befall us >> and that ends up with an expression of a godly attitude and perspective >> helping us have a greater affection for other people who have great difficulties as well >> ending up as a person steeped in expressions of love. So see, it's not that difficult – just a step at a time! <https://devotionalstsf.org/tag/2-peter-13-11/>

Series C Unit 2 Lesson 1
Adam and Eve Sin

Romans 3:10- *As it is written, “There is no one righteous, not even one;*

Truth: God designs us to live a life of righteousness but we sinned.

Response: Recognize God's greatness through creation.

Paul outlines God's condemnation of the intent of man's heart. He details in sober terms the inner thoughts of man's mind and he records in stark language what God thinks of man's actions, man's attitudes, man's words and fallen man's sinful state:- as it is written, there is none righteous, no – not even one.

God's declaration of the whole of humanity is GUILTY. Guilty before God. Measured against the goodness of God.. humanity stands condemned. When compared with the righteousness of Christ Jesus our Lord, the whole world is guilty before God.

Imputed sin and inherited sin is the birthright of all mankind, for sin has affected every mans' genetic make-up and every woman born into this human race. We are not sinners because we sin – we sin because we are by birth – sinners – guilty before God:- for as it is written, there is none righteous, no – not even one.

Faith is not a meritorious work that we have performed, which makes us deserving of our salvation. Trusting Christ as Savior must never be viewed as an undertaking on our account, which has rendered us deserving of the righteous covering of Christ – for there is none righteous, no not one – not you nor me.

Faith must never ever be viewed as a ticket that has earned us a right to salvation.. NEVER. Salvation is simply God's gracious, unmerited, glorious, free gift to all who simply trust in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Salvation is a gift of God's grace alone – through faith alone in our Savior Jesus Christ our Lord.

<http://www.knowing-jesus.com/romans-3-10/>

Series C Unit 2 Lesson 2 Noah

Mark 16:15- *He said to the, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*

Truth: God wants us to tell the whole world the Good News of Jesus.

Response: Join God and tell the Good News of Jesus to others.

My sister Mary shared a life-changing experience that was a huge turning point for her and sharing her faith. She was sitting at the doctor's office in the waiting room and noticed a man across from her who had a look of anguish on his face as he waited for his name to be called. She said "hello" and they had a brief conversation. The Lord prompted her to share His love with this gentleman and to encourage him on whatever journey he was on but she hesitated for a second. "What if he gets angry with me? What if he thinks I am being nosey?" she thought for just a moment and then she was called back to a room. He was gone when she came out and she never saw him again.

A few days later, Mary looked up from her desk at work and noticed an older gentleman wandering up and down the aisles in the store. As she helped him find what he wanted, she sensed his loneliness and immediately felt in her heart that she needed to share Jesus. Mary felt the Lord's urging: "Go talk to this man. Encourage him. Share the Good News." Once again - unsure of exactly what to say - she hesitated. As the man walked out of the store, the Lord gently spoke to her heart: "Please...don't let there be a number three." Her mind instantly went back to the gentleman in the doctor's office days before and now to this man leaving her store.

Immediately she confessed her disobedience to the Lord by not sharing His love with these two gentlemen and resolved from that day forward that she would share her Savior with everyone she met.

God gives us so many opportunities to share Him with people around us. Don't let anything stop you from sharing Jesus. "Please...don't let there be a number three."

http://www.nancyhughes.com/devotionals-Number_Three.html

Series C Easter 2

Matthew 28:6- *He is not here; He has risen just as He said. Come and see the place where he lay.*

Truth: Jesus came back to life after He died for my sins.

Response: Believe in the resurrection of Jesus and will celebrate the reason for Easter.

A few years ago on April Fool's Day, we found out Judy, our receptionist, won \$5000 from Tim Horton's Roll up the Rim contest. On the morning of April Fool's Day, Judy told us she had won \$5000. At our staff meeting on April's Fools Day, Judy told everyone that she won \$5000. We were so happy for Judy, who is so honest and who is so trustworthy, that she won \$5000 on April Fool's Day that we were all simply stunned an hour later when she concluded our staff meeting with the words, 'April Fools!' Even though we were all aware that it was April Fool's Day, even though we all joked about it being April Fool's Day, even though we all had openly spoken about April Fool's Day, we were all completely shocked when dear, honest, trustworthy Judy ended our staff meeting with the words 'April Fools!'

It must have been the same for the disciples with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection: even though they knew about resurrection, even though they all had discussions about the resurrection, even though Jesus repeatedly told them about His resurrection, they were all completely shocked when the angel met them with the words 'He is risen', the ladies (and later the other disciples) were so surprised. It would be the same effect as us hearing 'April Fools!' The ladies had gone to the tomb to anoint Jesus' corpse as part of a burial ceremony. Even though Jesus' followers should have known He would rise from the grave, they believed he was dead; just like we believed Judy had won \$5000. April Fools! You thought He was dead but He has risen!

Here we are today, two millennia later, trying to answer the same questions. Who is Jesus? What do we believe? Do we believe that Jesus is God's own Son and that He rose from the grave? And if so what are we going to do about it?

<http://sheepspeaks.blogspot.com/2015/04/week-27-matthew-281-6-belief.html>

Series C Easter 1

John 3:16- *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

Truth: God loves me so much that He sent Jesus to die for my sins so I can have eternal life.

Response: Recognize that Jesus died for my sins. I will begin a relationship with Jesus if I haven't already.

When it says in John 3:16, God so loved the world—He is talking about all the different races and people worldwide irrespective of where they live on planet earth or what race they are.

So loved— that He gave—we can tell how much a person loves by the price of the gift. I am not just talking monetary value but rather how much of a sacrifice it was for the giver to give the gift.

Whoever believes in Him.” God picked something simple that all could do. The gift of salvation was not just for the rich or else only the rich could go to heaven.

“Should not perish”—the best definition I could find is; “To be separated from” for the word perish. God created man to have fellowship with. God has since labored to get man to the place where He could have a relationship with Him. In Christ there is, and will continue to be an eternal fellowship with God Almighty. The ones that “perish,” are separated from God and will never know the love He will show to those who believe in Him and love Him. We will never be “separated” from our Lord and Savior.

“Have everlasting life”—that is present tense. If we have accepted Jesus as our Savior we have everlasting life. John 3:18 says; “He who believes in Him is not condemned.”

John 3:16 has been termed “The gospel in a nut shell” and it really sums up why God went to all the effort to create man. Thank you, Lord, for Your great Salvation!

<https://dinosdevotions.wordpress.com/2013/05/21/john-316/>

Series C Unit 2 Lesson 3 God Calls Abram

Jeremiah 29:11a- *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you...”*

Truth: God knows all about my life and He has plans for me.

Response: Seek and trust God's plans rather than trying to get my own way.

Jeremiah 29:11 speaks of love and promise, of hope and comfort, of joy and peace, of forgiveness and restoration. Read at face value, they are so special, but read and understood in its original context, they take on an even deeper meaning.

Chapter 29 is actually written as a prophetic letter by Jeremiah to the elders, priests, prophets and all the people who had been exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. God had told Jeremiah to tell the people that although God had allowed them to be taken as captives by the hand of King Nebuchadnezzar, for their rebellion towards God through idol worship to pagan gods, He had a plan to bring them back home and continue the promise He made to Abraham; that they (the Israelites) would be His chosen people, and through them, the Savior of the world would be born.

Simply put, although the people had sinned and were living in the consequence of that sin, God in His grace was already planning their salvation. Captivity was not their home or purpose. He reminds the people that His plan for them is not one of disaster but of good, not for desolation, but of a good future, a hopeful future, a future that God Himself had already planned.

You too may be going through a situation that seems like there is no end to your suffering. But God says to you, as He said to the Israelites, that His plans for you are not for disaster, but for good, to give you a future and a hope. Your suffering will not last. God is already planning your route home, your salvation and your resolution. Put your trust in Him. He has good things for you.

<https://adailydevotional.com/tag/jeremiah-2911/>

**Series C Unit 3 Lesson 1
Friendship-Abraham and Lot**

1 John 4:11- *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

Truth: God loves us and we should love others.

Response: Be a friend-love others.

The eternal God loves us in three tenses: past, present and future – for He is the same yesterday today and forever. It is a divine love that cannot be compared with the inadequate love of fallen man, but is a love so penetrating, that He sent the unique, and only begotten Son of His love to be the propitiation for our sins. That single act of the Father should stagger us to the core of our being.. that God sent Christ as a gift of His grace.. to be made a curse for us – so that we might be made the righteousness of God, in Him.

But having redeemed us He sent His Spirit to abide in our heart and day by day, seeks to transform us from ugly, bitter, antagonistic sinners into good, obedient and mature sons of God, having the same, godly nature as the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself.

But His love extends into the never-ending, eternal future, for no eye has seen, nor ear has heard – nor has it entered into the imagination of man the glories that God has prepared for those who love Him. Since the eternal God loves us in three, staggering tenses – we ought also to love one another.

<http://www.knowing-jesus.com/1-john-4-11/>

**Series C Unit 6 Lesson 3
Prayer-Forgive like God-Unforgiving Servant**

Matthew 6:14- *For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

Truth: God will forgive me if I forgive others when they do wrong to me.

Response: Pray and ask God to help me forgive others.

The question of genuine forgiveness is one of eternal importance. And why is it, you may ask, so crucial that Christians forgive? For starters, Jesus' statement in today's text is quite a compelling reason, for "if you do not forgive others...neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Suffice it to say then, we had better make sure we are forgiving "our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Here's the bottom line: forgiveness is such a central element to Christianity that it is an indicator of salvation! Not that we are saved by any works of our own, such as forgiving others, but that when we are reconciled to God through Christ, our new life will be marked by grace giving and forgiveness.

Remember, our sin was exchanged for Jesus' righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21), our wrong for His right, our injustice for His justice. God meets our rebellion and pride with grace in and through the person and work of Jesus. Those to whom grace is extended should also extend grace, and those to whom forgiveness is extended should also extend forgiveness.

Forgive as you have been forgiven. Not because it's easy, but because it's at the core of who you are in Christ.

<http://shortdailydevotions.com/matthew-614-15-be-a-grace-giver/>

Series C Unit 6 Lesson 2 Prayer-Confess to God-Jonah

1 John 1:9- *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Truth: God will forgive me if I confess my sin.

Response: Talk to God when I sin and ask Him to forgive me.

A little boy visiting his grandparents was given his first slingshot. He practiced in the woods, but he could never hit his target. As he came back to Grandma's back yard, he spied her pet duck. On an impulse he took aim and let fly. The stone hit, and the duck fell dead. The boy panicked. Desperately he hid the dead duck in the wood pile, only to look up and see his sister watching. Sally had seen it all, but she said nothing.

After lunch that day, Grandma said, "Sally, let's wash the dishes." But Sally said, "Johnny told me he wanted to help in the kitchen today. Didn't you Johnny?" And she whispered to him, "Remember the duck!" So Johnny did the dishes.

Later, Grandpa asked if the children wanted to go fishing. Grandma said, "I'm sorry, but I need Sally to help me make supper." Sally smiled and said, "That's all taken care of. Johnny wants to do it." Again she whispered, "Remember the duck." Johnny stayed while Sally went fishing.

After several days of Johnny doing both his chores and Sally's, finally he couldn't stand it. He confessed to Grandma that he'd killed the duck. "I know, Johnny," she said, giving him a hug. "I was standing at the window and saw the whole thing. Because I love you, I forgave you. But I wondered how long you would let Sally make a slave of you."

Poor Johnny! He suffered needlessly. He let himself be held captive by his own failure to confess and seek forgiveness. We do the same thing. No matter what you have done, or how you have failed, God knows. He was watching all the time, ready for you to come to Him and pour your doubts, fears, failures and sins before Him. My friend, don't run *from* Him, run *to* Him. God's love forgives and it will set you free.

<http://www.ccesonline.com/dev/godsloveforgives.htm>

Series C Unit 3 Lesson 2 Abram and Isaac-Tested

Proverbs 14:12- *There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death.*

Truth: God has plans for us and we need to follow them. When we choose to go our own way it causes trouble.

Response: Ask God to help me make wise choices.

Proverbs 14:12 is such a humbling verse because as humans, we often think we have such great knowledge and wisdom. But God says that human wisdom leads to death.

That's what makes living the Christian life so difficult sometimes. There are so many choices out there that look good and seem to make sense, but they do not lead us to the narrow way that is the only road to eternal glory in heaven.

To the human way of thinking, it seems common sense that if you try hard to be good and don't kill anyone or commit any other horrifying crime, then you're one of the better candidates for citizenship in heaven. This may seem right to many people, but this kind of thinking leads to destruction because the only way to heaven is to abandon our efforts at good works and trust Christ alone for salvation.

We don't get voted into heaven, nor will we make it because we come out looking pretty good in comparison to others. Only the blood of Christ shed on the cross to forgive sin can qualify us for heaven.

Take time today to thank God for His great gift of salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ...and make sure you aren't traveling the road that the world thinks is right.

Take time today to check the "road" you're traveling—and make sure you are heading toward Christ.

<http://resources.jackgraham.org/resource-library/devotionals/take-time-today-to-check-the-road-youre-traveling-and-make-sure-you-are-heading-toward-christ>

Series C Unit 3 Lesson 3
Honesty-Abraham Lies to King Abimelech

Psalm 34:13- *Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies.*

Truth: God wants us to speak the truth.

Response: Tell the truth.

How would you describe the way you talk? Are your words positive, constructive, comforting, supportive, and uplifting? Or are the words that come out of your mouth most often cutting, negative, and hurtful?

Psalm 34:13-14 (NIV) says, “Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.”

The Bible makes it very clear in Matthew 12:36 (NIV) that we need to be careful about the things that we say: “I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

We all need to give a little more thought to what we say before we say it. “Biblical speech” involves applying God’s Word to our lives daily. It means we allow the principles of scripture to influence our words and how we use them. It means we build people up, we use words of challenge in loving ways, and we use words of grace.

According to God’s Word, our behavior and our words should reflect our devotion to God. We need to pay attention to the way we conduct ourselves! Our words impact our lives, the lives of others, and our relationship with God. Commit yourself to studying God’s Word and applying his principles to your speech.

http://thoughts-about-god.com/blog/hb_what-i-say/

Series C Unit 6 Lesson 1
Prayer-Talking to God

Jeremiah 29:12- *Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.*

Truth: God hears us and listens to us.

Response: Talk to God every day and know that He is listening to me.

Roughly 60 percent of Americans claim they pray daily. Another nearly 20 percent claim to pray weekly. Those stats suggest a significant amount of praying is going on. Yet there is also evidence that what we call “prayer” doesn’t fit God’s definition or expectations.

Dig a little deeper and we find that many are going through the motions, and feel frustrated about prayer even as they try to practice it. Some people “pray” without actually addressing God. Many who do voice their prayers are talking to someone they don’t even know. To them, God is a complete stranger they might turn to for help if things get bad enough. How sad and empty prayer must feel for so many—including many of us.

As we develop the core disciplines of a sincere faith, we must include work on prayer. Even those of us who have grown up around praying people need instruction. And who better to learn from than Jesus Christ. Our failure to pray rarely rises from lack of technique or subject matter. Often we fail at prayer simply because we don’t keep at it. We try to pray and quickly give up—yet prayer is the breathing of our spiritual life. Just as we can’t afford to stop pulling air into our lungs, so we also can’t survive spiritually without the healthy respirations of prayer.

By giving us a model, Jesus wasn’t inviting rote repetition; He was offering a healthy pattern. Just as He taught His disciples, so He is willing to teach us all things (John 14:26)—including how to pray.

<http://jamesmacdonald.com/teaching/devotionals/2014-03-17/>

Series C Unit 5 Lesson 3 Jesus Raises Lazarus

John 14:6- *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Truth: Jesus is the only way to God.

Response: Begin a relationship with Jesus so you can see God.

When life deals us a blow; when all around us seems to fall apart; when what we know to be the truth is not what others know; when the storms rain upon us, Jesus tells us, "I am the way and the truth and the life."

I am the way – Some of you may have lost your way. Maybe you feel off life's path. The purpose and plan for your life seems to have been tossed aside and nothing makes sense. Jesus is calling you. He is telling you that He is the way. You are not lost. Follow Him.

and the truth – I've been there too. People are saying one thing and you know the truth and it isn't what they are saying. Know that Jesus has the truth and He will help you reveal the truth. His way is the best way. Don't fret, just put it in His hands to handle.

and the life – Sin is death. Jesus is life. Even if there weren't a Heaven or Hell, I'd still follow God. His way makes sense. His way brings peace, comfort, understanding, and goodness. Jesus came so that we would have life. It is His promise to us.

No one comes to the Father – A very important truth in salvation, Jesus is the way to the Father and we do not get to Heaven except through Him.

It is a simple verse and one many know by memory. Living it out, is not simple. Think about what Jesus is to you today. Take Him at His word – He is the way; He is the truth; He is the life.

<https://michaelfranklinministries.com/category/devotions-john-146/>

Series C Christmas 1

Luke 2:10- *But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you Good News that will cause a great joy for all the people."*

Truth: God sent Jesus to earth to show us His rescue plan.

Response: Understand that Jesus came to earth to rescue the world and me.

Have you ever watched the end of a great sports contest? At the final buzzer, the winning team and their fans go crazy because their team has won. The angel appeared to the shepherds and said their good news was full of great joy. The news the angels brought to us is about winning. The news the angel brought was about Jesus. The news was about His mission to help us win at life in our present moment no matter what we face. The good news was also about the joy of winning eternal life in our great tomorrow when we see Jesus face to face.

There is so much defeat in life. There is so much pain, suffering, misery, and agony. However, when the final buzzer sounds, if we have accepted Christ into our hearts, there will be a Super Bowl-sized celebration in Heaven. Think of the greatest joy you could ever experience. Now multiply that joy by millions extended out into the infinity of time. That is the joy God has waiting for you in Heaven.

We have a hard time thinking of the great joy of Heaven because some of us have little of it here on earth. We also have a hard time thinking of the great joy of Heaven because when we lose someone in death we are overcome with sadness and grief. However, the sadness and grief belongs only to those left behind. To those who God calls home, who are alive in Christ' arms, there is joy beyond our ability to understand. In this life, regardless of our circumstances, when we place our lives in Christ hands we can find joy.

http://www.findthepower.com/dailydevotions/DevFindingJoyLuke2_10.htm

Series C Christmas 2

Luke 2:11- *Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.*

Truth: God sent Jesus to be the Savior of the world.

Response: Join God and tell others about Jesus.

We love gifts during Christmas. We love seeing the package delivery truck pull up in front of the house, and we eagerly hop down the stairs to answer the door. Once inside, the package is immediately ripped open and whatever was contained inside is put to quick use. Many times, when we begin using the new product, (if it's a good one that is), we discover many features we never knew it had! Sometimes, things turn out to be even better than we had anticipated.

The same is definitely true with God, he is infinitely better than we anticipate. But, we still try to keep God in a "God Box" and think of him in terms of the nifty features he comes with. In reality he wants us to let him come bursting out of the box and show us how much more he is. God did this with the shepherds. He told them they would find a baby, who would save the world, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a feed trough. That is thinking outside the box! More than likely, they had their own "God Box", likely with the savior being a military dictator-type. But, God burst that paradigm and displayed his abundant mercy and compassion. When He got out of "the box", he showed them that He is a God who reaches out to those that no one else wants to. Shepherds weren't considered the most moral. In fact, they didn't often go to church because sheep needed to be constantly tended, and they couldn't even testify in court. Yet, they were the first to hear the good news of the Savior's birth. This was no accident!

As you read your Bible, don't let your preconceived notions of who God is interpret what you read. Instead, let scripture and the Holy Spirit guide you in the characteristics of God. Let God break out of his box in your life today and show you who He really is. Remember, His thoughts and ways are not ours (Isaiah 55:8).

<http://shortdailydevotions.com/luke-21112-unboxing-god/>

Series C Unit 5 Lesson 2 Jesus Walks on the Water

Matthew 14:27- *But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

Truth: Jesus is always protecting us so we don't need to be afraid.

Response: Hold on to Jesus even when life is hard.

Does life frighten you? Do you feel surrounded by those who would do you harm—computer hackers, dishonest business people, and even neighbors who take advantage of you? The easiest thing in this type of environment would be to hide behind the walls of our homes and protect ourselves from the dangers that lie in wait.

But Jesus called His disciples to something different. He asked them to have courage and strength in the face of some very frightening situations. When Jesus walked on the water toward them as they sailed across the sea, He asked them to believe that this ghost-like figure was really their Savior. He asked them to go out in pairs and preach in His name. And finally, He asked them to go to Jerusalem with Him for His final days.

The opportunities that God wants to bring your way will take courage. When faced with opportunities that frighten us, we should remember that God makes us strong in our weakness. God uses the very challenges that make our knees tremble to use us for greatness, and as His hands and feet on earth. Step out today in courage, no matter what you're facing, and know that God has you.

<http://shortdailydevotions.com/matthew-1427-a-call-to-courage/>

Series C Unit 5 Lesson 1 Jesus Heals Paralytic

Matthew 7:8- *For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

Truth: God wants me to ask for Him and look for Him.

Response: Come to Jesus and ask Him for help.

In today's text Jesus says, "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you." In Greek, the verbs translated as "ask," "seek" and "knock" are all rendered in the present active indicative. (I hope you are taking notes, as there will be a quiz later.) The imperative means that these are commands, and being cast in the present active indicates that they are to be repeated actions. In other words the sense of the passage is "keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking." However, at some point, we apparently take it upon ourselves to stop; apparently thinking we have done it enough.

In this lesson, Jesus goes on to tell us that our heavenly Father certainly knows how to give us good things, when we ask. However, what does a father give to those who ask nothing? If we are not interested enough in the relationship to be actually involved in it, what are we expecting God to do? If we know all that we need to know, do we really expect the relationship to grow?

We are to be life-long disciples of Jesus Christ. I promise you that none of us will ever know all that we need to know. You will never max out on your knowledge of the Bible. If you are not involved in a Bible study or Sunday school class, find one and get involved. It is imperative that we keep on asking, keep on seeking and keep on knocking.

<http://www.sundayeducation.com/2011/05/22/ask-see-knock-matthew-77-14-daily-devotional/>

Series C Unit 4 Lesson 1 Jesus' First Disciples

Matthew 4:19- *"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you to fish for people."*

Truth: Jesus is asking me to follow Him.

Response: Follow Jesus' example and tell others about Him.

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew to be His disciples, all He said to them was, "Follow Me." Peter and Andrew had heard Him teach before; that was not the first moment they had laid eyes on Jesus or heard what work He was about. Yet at the moment of calling, Jesus said only a few words.

The hearts of Peter and Andrew were already prepared to answer His call; they immediately left their nets and livelihood and went with Jesus. The two disciples had an extreme sensitivity to the Spirit of God. They were able to recognize the difference between God's prompting and the urging of their hearts.

Peter and Andrew also possessed a mind-set of service. The New Testament had not yet been written, but their lives exemplified these verses about their Savior: "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:5-7 NASB). They were ready to sacrifice anything for the cause of Christ, even the security of a known future as fisherman.

Jesus Christ gives you the same call: "Follow Me." It does not matter where you are in life. All that matters is that you adopt your own plans to His.

<https://devotionalforthewordpress.com/2012/09/13/following-jesus/>

Series C Unit 4 Lesson 2 Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

John 3:3- *Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*

Truth: Jesus tells us that He is the only way to heaven.

Response: Begin a relationship with Jesus so I can go to heaven someday.

In John chapter 3 we find an intriguing dialogue between Nicodemus, one of the seventy-one Sanhedrin (Jewish judiciary council), and Jesus. Nicodemus was seeking clarification concerning salvation, and he could not at first wrap his head around Jesus' statement that one needed to be "born again".

His thinking was stuck upon a person's physical birth, but in his misunderstanding he can bring to our remembrance a crucial fact of life; every person, no matter how successful, famous, or renowned they may become in this life, began it in the same fashion.

We each have a mother, a father, and a physical birth, period! Every person alive is born in one exclusive fashion, and as Jesus would later explain, so too is everyone "born again" in the same exclusive fashion.

For Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). No matter how great or small a person is in the world's eyes Jesus is the only way to God. Every man is alike, every person dead in their sin. Regard Jesus higher than any person, for "in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

<http://shortdailydevotions.com/john-33-every-man-equal/>

Series C Unit 4 Lesson 3 Parable of the Lost Sheep

Luke 15:7b- *...there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who do not need to repent.*

Truth: God and the angels rejoice in heaven when a sinner repents of sin.

Response: Begin a relationship with Jesus so I can go to heaven someday.

A number of years ago Hurricane Katrina messed up a lot of lives down in the Gulf of Mexico. One of those lives that was tossed upside down was Scrub, a cat. During that mighty blow, Scrub was separated from his family. Yes, searches were made, but the truth was Scrub had disappeared.

Now, flash forward five-plus years. A Gulfport, Mississippi, woman was concerned. For months she had been feeding a gray-and-white cat. Now, with a cold snap coming on, she was downright worried. It was that worry which had her pack up the cat and take it to a local animal shelter. The shelter scanned the cat and found he was carrying an implanted microchip. The microchip enabled them to call the cat's original owner, Jennifer Noble. With some enthusiasm they told her that her lost cat Scrub had been found. I don't have to tell you there was great rejoicing in the Noble house as Scrub settled in, even sleeping the first night with one of Noble's boys.

This isn't so very much unlike the Scripture that says there is joy in heaven over a sinner who repents. There is joy because when a sinner is brought to repentance by the Holy Spirit and when he is given faith, he is brought home to a grateful family. When a sinner is touched by the Savior's sacrifice, everything changes for that individual. They are no longer on their own. They have a Brother, a Father, a family of faith. When a sinner is led to place his faith in Jesus, that individual receives the blessings that Jesus' life, death and resurrection bestow upon all who believe. When a sinner acknowledges Jesus as Savior, he is brought to a home that has been waiting for him for a very long time.

<https://www.lhm.org/dailydevotions/default.asp?date=20101230>