

Truth or Myth?

Exposing Eight Common Myths
about
God, the Bible, and You

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According to *verses 25 and 26*, why should you follow these instructions?

According to *1 Peter 3:15–16*, what are your responsibilities to the unbeliever, and why?

God has given you the privilege of communicating the Gospel to a lost world. If you truly love God and are thankful for what He has done for you through Jesus Christ, you should be willing to do His will by telling others about Him. If you do not know what to say, you can simply give your *testimony*, which is the account of how you came to trust Christ as Savior.

Will you commit to God to be obedient by actively seeking

opportunities to tell others about Him? _____

FOR DISCUSSION

Can you recall any time in your life before you became a Christian that someone tried to share the Gospel with you? Tell about what happened, and how you responded.

If someone said to you, “I’m trying as hard as I can; I *hope* I will go to heaven,” what would you say?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *2 Corinthians 4:3–4*.

v. 4 _____

v. 5 _____

TRUTH #4—You don't give the Gospel to someone because you feel like it; you give it out of thankfulness and obedience to God.

Read *Matthew 9:36–38*. What does Jesus Christ say about the lost, and what does He command you to do?

Read *Matthew 28:19–20*. What were Jesus' last words to His disciples, and what was His promise to them?

TRUTH #5—To give the Gospel to someone, you do not have to be perfect or know all the answers.

Read *2 Timothy 2:22–26*. In *verses 22–25*, what instructions does Timothy give to you?

To the Student:

We appreciate your spiritual interest and hope you find this study helpful. Please read through these following facts and instructions, especially if you have never studied the Bible before. We believe it will make you more confident as you search for verses and learn your way around the different books.

1. The Bible is divided into two sections: the Old Testament and New Testament. The Old Testament was written before Jesus came to earth. The New Testament was written after Jesus died. The entire Bible is important and relevant for us today.
2. There are 66 books in the Bible: 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New. God gave us the Bible over a span of 1,600 years. He used over 40 men to write the Bible.
3. The Bible is God's Word to man (*2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21*). When we speak of God's Word, we are referring to the text of the Bible, not to any notes that men have added.
4. In this study the Bible verses are written in italics. When you see a verse such as *John 3:16*, this means the book of *John*, chapter 3, verse 16.
5. If you do not know where to find a book of the Bible, look in the Table of Contents. Normally this is in the very beginning of your Bible. The Old Testament books are listed first; the New Testament books are listed second.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away."
Mark 13:31

INTRODUCTION

Nobody likes to be fooled; we all want to know the truth. But what is truth? Pilate, the Roman governor of Judaea, asked this very question of Jesus. Philosophers and theologians have asked this question throughout the ages.

Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault [at all].
John 18:38

Yet, even though we might want to know the truth, the Bible says that people have a tendency to change God's truth to lies, and that there will be a time when people will turn away from the truth and instead begin to follow fables, or myths. So, how can you tell the difference?

Who changed the truth of God into a lie. Romans 1:25

And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.
2 Timothy 4:4

God's Word, the Bible, claims to be truth. It does not claim to contain all truth about all subjects, but it claims to speak the truth on every issue it addresses. If God says something about a subject, it is true. God is the God of truth.

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. John 17:17

[He is] the Rock, his work [is] perfect: for all his ways [are] judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right [is] he. Deuteronomy 32:4

This study exposes eight common myths about God, the Bible and you. We invite you to examine each myth and what God says about it. We encourage you to be like the people of Berea during the New Testament era; they were described as noble because they were willing to hear what the Bible said and then to read it for themselves to see if it was really true.

These [from Berea] were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.
Acts 17:11

Don't be fooled; don't believe in myths. Examine for yourself what God has said, and you can know the truth.

And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32

Remember that your job as an ambassador is to do the will of the One who has sent you. As you give the Gospel to others you must be careful to communicate only the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you have given the impression a person can do something other than trust Christ to be saved (e.g., clean up his life, go to church, say a prayer, walk an aisle) then you have not communicated the true Gospel of grace.

TRUTH #2—God expects you to *tell* the world; He does not expect you to save the world.

Read *2 Corinthians 4:3–4*. Why will some not respond to the Gospel?

Read *John 6:44*. What must God do for a person to be saved?

Read *1 Corinthians 4:2*. What does God require of you as you tell others about Him?

TRUTH #3—It is normal for you to be fearful to give the Gospel.

If anyone would be a model for us, it would be the Apostle Paul. Read *1 Corinthians 2:1–5*. How does Paul describe his experience in preaching the Gospel?

v. 1–2 _____

v. 3 _____

relationship. The only way sinners can be reconciled to God is through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. It is very important to *know the gospel message well*. The Gospel is very simple. Can you remember where in the New Testament the Gospel is clearly defined (see Lesson Two, Truth #4)? Write the Scripture reference here:

In these verses, how does the Apostle Paul define the Gospel?

3. When you communicate the Gospel, it is helpful to know these five truths:

TRUTH #1—The pure Gospel is powerful.

Read *Romans 1:16–17*. How did the Apostle Paul describe the Gospel, and why?

Read *Galatians 1:6–10*. Paul wrote these verses to a church that had received some false teaching. These false teachers claimed that in order to be saved it was necessary to believe *and* to follow the law. What does Paul say about anyone who changes the message of the Gospel? What should be our goal in preaching the pure Gospel (v. 10)?

LESSON ONE

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT KNOWING HIM?

MYTH: “I CAN’T KNOW GOD; HE IS FAR AWAY AND IMPERSONAL.”

TRUTH: GOD HAS REVEALED HIMSELF AND HAS PROVIDED YOU WITH EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW HIM PERSONALLY.

A teacher asked his class one day to describe what they thought his father looked like. One by one, the students described how they thought his father looked according to the teacher’s appearance. Because the teacher was tall and dark-skinned, they assumed his father was the same. Because the teacher had brown eyes, they assumed his father had brown eyes. After making guesses about the father, the teacher revealed a photograph of him that surprised them all. Contrary to what seemed logical, the teacher’s father was short, light-skinned and had blue eyes.

Men and women throughout history have always tried to know God. You might look around at the world and try figure out if there is a God, and if He is there, who is He? What is He like? You may even conclude, after much thought, that there is a God. But you cannot know Him just by observing the world around you, because you lack the information you need to know Him. You may guess what He is like, and some of your guesses may be right. But, as in the case of the teacher’s father, it is likely that some of your guesses will be very wrong.

God Himself has provided the information you need to know Him in His book, the Bible. The Bible consists of 66 books and was written over a span of 1600 years. He chose about 40 different men to write different parts of the Bible. He revealed himself to these men and inspired them so they would not make any errors. He provided the Bible for us and reveals

Himself in it so we do not have to imagine what God is like—we can know for sure.

1. In order to know God, you must have *faith*. What does *Romans 10:17* tell you about faith?

The word *faith* means trust, or confidence. God has revealed Himself to man, but man cannot know God unless he trusts what God has told him about Himself in His Word, the Bible.

2. Read *2 Peter 1:20–21* and answer the questions.

According to these verses, where do the Scriptures *not* come from?

Where *do* the Scriptures come from, and by what method?

How can we have confidence in what God has said about Himself? The Bible itself tells us that it is *inspired*. The word *inspired* means “God breathed.”

The Spirit of God exerted supernatural influence over the writings; therefore, the Scriptures are totally trustworthy.

3. What does God teach us about Himself from the following verses in the book of *Psalms*? Read the verses and write every description of God you can find.

Psalms 22:28 _____

Psalms 25:8 _____

Psalms 86:5 _____

LESSON EIGHT

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT TALKING TO UNBELIEVERS?

MYTH: “FAITH IS A PERSONAL THING; I DO NOT NEED TO TALK ABOUT IT.”

TRUTH: GOD HAS CHOSEN TO USE PEOPLE TO TELL PEOPLE ABOUT HIMSELF. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST.

In Lesson Two we learned about how to be sure you are going to Heaven. We learned that Christ died and rose again, and that when you trust Him as your Savior, He will give you the gift of eternal life (*1 Corinthians 15:3–4; John 3:16*). This message is called the *Gospel*. The word *gospel* means *good news*. God has chosen men to spread the good news of the Gospel.

If you have trusted Christ as Savior, you have the responsibility to tell others the good news of what Jesus Christ has done for you.

1. Read *2 Corinthians 5:20*. In this verse the Apostle Paul explains that after you have been saved Christ gives you a very important job to do for Him. According to this verse, what is your new position?

In this new position, what message are you called to give to others?

An *ambassador* is a representative, or messenger, to another country (not his own). His leader appoints him for a special job. His responsibility is not to accomplish his own agenda, but to do the will of the one who has sent him.

To be *reconciled* means to be brought back into a right

FOR DISCUSSION

How does the fact that the church is the body of Christ influence you as you look for and participate in a local church?

What are some ways a good, Bible-believing local church can benefit you?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *Hebrews 10:24–25*.

Psalm 86:10 _____

Psalm 90:2 _____

Psalm 92:15 _____

Psalm 99:9 _____

Psalm 116:5 _____

Psalm 119:68 _____

Psalm 135:6 _____

Psalm 139:1–5 _____

Psalm 145:3 _____

Psalm 145:17 _____

FOR DISCUSSION

Why do you think God chose to reveal Himself through the written word?

Is there anything in this lesson that has impacted you or challenged your thinking?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *Romans 10:17*.

LESSON TWO WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT GOING TO HEAVEN?

MYTH: "I COULD NEVER KNOW FOR SURE IF I WILL GO TO HEAVEN."

TRUTH: GOD HAS TOLD YOU VERY CLEARLY HOW YOU CAN BE SURE YOU WILL GO TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE.

You have already learned that you cannot know God unless He reveals Himself to you. The same is true for the question of how to get to Heaven. You do not want to risk being wrong on such an important matter. Moreover, it is not hidden from you. How to get eternal life is revealed clearly and simply in God's Word, the Bible. Is there any way you can know for sure you are going to Heaven when you die? It is often said, "All religions are the same," or "It doesn't matter what you believe, all religions lead to God." It is true that there are many similarities among religions. But what the Bible teaches on the subject of eternal life is actually the opposite of what is taught by every other religion in the world.

1. Eternal life is something God wants you to be sure about.

Read *1 John 5:13*. According to this verse, what can I know for sure?

2. In all other religions in the world, eternal life is based on something a person does in this life. Can you think of some things people might try to do to get to Heaven?

Acts 19:4-5 _____

Read *Romans 6:3-4* and *Colossians 2:12*. According to these verses, what does water baptism symbolize?

THE LORD'S SUPPER

In *Matthew 26:26-28* Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (also called *Communion* or *Eucharist* by some). According to these verses, what does the Lord's Supper represent?

Read *1 Corinthians 11:23-26*. Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper?

Read *1 Corinthians 11:27-30*. What warning do we have here concerning the Lord's Supper?

God has given us the church for the purpose of training believers for the work of the ministry. Believers should practice church ordinances as a matter of obedience. Baptism is a way for believers to publicly identify with Jesus Christ, and the Lord's Supper reminds believers of what Jesus Christ has done for them. Both ordinances picture to the unbelieving world the sacrifice Jesus Christ has made for us so that we may have eternal life.

5. God has given two ordinances as a function of the church: baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Neither baptism nor the Lord’s Supper has anything to do with salvation, because salvation is by grace, not by works.
 You should observe both, however, as a matter of obedience to God.

BAPTISM

Matthew 28:19–20 give us the last words that Jesus Christ spoke to his disciples before ascending into Heaven, where He is today. What did Jesus tell them to do?

The book of *Acts* tells about the early church. The following verses tell about various men who preached the Gospel during this time. When God’s Word was preached, what was the result?

Acts 2:41 _____

Acts 8:12 _____

Acts 8:36–38 _____

Acts 18:8 _____

3. Although their rules might differ, in all other religions there is always something the person must do to gain eternal life. These good things people do are what the Bible calls “works,” or “works of righteousness.”

Read the following verses. What does God say about man’s “works”?

Ephesians 2:8–9 _____

Titus 3:5 _____

4. We know from what God has told us that the way to Heaven is NOT by any good thing we can do. But before we can understand God’s way of salvation, we must understand and believe some other important truths He has told us in His Word, the Bible.

TRUTH #1 (*Romans 3:23*) All people have _____.

“Sin” means “to miss the mark.” God is perfect, and everyone in this world is imperfect.

Read *James 2:10–11*. Everyone in the world has sinned in some way. However, someone might argue, “At least I’m not a murderer,” or “I’m not as bad as my neighbor.” What does God say about this argument?

TRUTH #2 (*Romans 6:23a*) The payment for sin is _____.

Why would you receive payment (wages) after doing a job? You would receive your wages because it is what you deserve. In the same way, God tells us that because we have sinned, we deserve punishment. This punishment is spiritual death, which is separation from God in Hell forever.

You may be thinking, "God is love. He would not send anyone to Hell." But the truth is that God is perfect; He is a perfect Judge. A perfect Judge cannot overlook sin. Sin must be paid for.

TRUTH #3 (*Ephesians 2:8–9*) There is no way you could do anything good enough to save yourself.

Salvation is a _____ of God.

"But," you might object, "We have just said that God cannot overlook sin. How could He ever just give me a gift of salvation when I have not earned it?" This is a good question, which is answered in our next three important truths.

TRUTH #4 (*1 Corinthians 15:3–4*) These verses define the Gospel. Although you deserve to die for your own sins, Jesus Christ (Who is God Himself and never sinned) died for _____.

Read *Romans 5:8*.

When Christ died for you, He demonstrated His _____ for you.

Jesus Christ was your *substitute*. In other words, Jesus died *instead of you*. When He died on the cross, He took your place, was punished instead of you, and paid the penalty that was required for your sins.

TRUTH #5 (*John 3:16*) Whoever _____ in Jesus has everlasting life.

Notice this verse does not say, "Whosoever goes to church," "Whosoever is a good person," or "Whosoever tries to follow the Ten Commandments."

The word *believe* means *trust*. To have eternal life, you must place your trust *not* in anything good you have done, but *only in what Christ has already done for you*. You must believe Him

3. Read the following verses. What do they teach about the church?

Colossians 1:18 _____

Note: "He" refers to Jesus Christ (see verse 13).

1 Timothy 3:15 _____

4. In *1 Corinthians 12:12–27* the Apostle Paul discusses the *body of Christ*, which is the church. Read the following verses from this portion of Scripture and answer the questions.

How does Paul compare our physical bodies with the body of Christ (v. 12–14, 20)?

What point is Paul making about the body of Christ (v. 15–19)?

How do the verses about the physical body relate to the body of Christ (v. 21–24)?

What does Paul warn against, and why (v. 25–27)?

LESSON SEVEN

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT CHURCH?

MYTH: “I CAN READ THE BIBLE AND PRAY ON MY OWN; I DON’T REALLY NEED TO GO TO CHURCH.”

TRUTH: GOD HAS ESTABLISHED THE CHURCH AS THE WAY FOR YOU TO GROW AND SERVE OTHERS. IT IS VITAL THAT YOU JOIN A GOOD BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCH.

We have studied the importance of talking with God and allowing God to talk with us. To continue to grow spiritually, however, the Bible makes it very clear that you also need other believers.

God has given us the church as the primary means by which believers can gather for worship, instruction in His Word, and fellowship. Membership and personal involvement in a good, Bible-believing church is vital for balanced Christian growth.

1. Read *Hebrews 10:24–25*. In *verse 25*, what does the writer encourage you *not* to do?

2. Read *Ephesians 4:11–12*. *Verse 11* tells us that God has given various workers to His church. According to *verse 12*, what is the purpose of these workers?

Note: “Saints” means believers — those who have trusted Christ as Savior.

when He tells you that He has already paid for every sin you have ever committed.

TRUTH #6 (*John 1:12*) When you receive Jesus by believing in Him and accepting His free gift of salvation, you become a _____ of God.

Salvation is a gift that you can accept or reject. When you accept the gift, you will become His child and live forever with Him in Heaven.

5. If you were to die today, do you know for sure you would go to Heaven? You *can* know for sure if you will:
 - 1) Admit you are a sinner,
 - 2) Believe that Jesus died and rose again for you, and
 - 3) Receive His free gift of salvation by trusting Him as your Savior.

Would you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior? _____
 You can simply pray to Him right now. Prayer does not save you. It is simply your way of telling Him that you are trusting what He has done for you. Tell Him you are a sinner and that you believe He died for you. Tell Him you accept His free gift of salvation that He has provided for you. Thank Him for the love He has shown for you by making a way to spend eternity with Him in Heaven.

FOR DISCUSSION

Has learning what God says about how to go to Heaven changed your thinking on the subject? How?

Some religions teach that salvation is a *bargain*, as opposed to a *gift*. What is the difference?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *John 3:16*.

LESSON THREE

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT MY RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM?

MYTH: “GOD ISN’T REALLY INTERESTED IN ME.”

TRUTH: **GOD LOVES YOU. HE HAS CHANGED YOU AND HAS PROVIDED A WAY FOR YOU TO HAVE AN INTIMATE AND SECURE RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.**

In the last lesson, we studied what the Bible teaches about eternal life. We learned that in all other religions, going to Heaven is based on what you must do for God. In the Bible, however, *true salvation is based on trusting what God has already done for you.*

When you trust Jesus as your Savior, all of your sins are forgiven (*Psalm 103:12*). You are saved (*Ephesians 2:8*); you can also say you have been *born again* (*John 3:3*). You become a child of God in that you enter into a father/child relationship with God Himself (*John 1:12*). This relationship cannot be reversed. This security you have in your relationship with God is what we will discuss in this lesson.

1. The only way to establish a relationship with God is through faith (belief, trust). What do the following verses tell us about those who believe?

John 1:12 _____

John 5:24 _____

2. When you trust Christ as your personal Savior, the Bible says you are *in Christ* (belong to Christ). God changes you on the inside and gives you a new life.

According to the following verses from *2 Corinthians*, how has God changed you if you belong to Christ?

What has He done for you (*2 Corinthians 1:22*)? _____

FOR DISCUSSION

God already knows what is in your heart. Why, then, do you think He wants you to pray?

Often Christians will claim that they pray frequently, yet they rarely spend time in God’s Word. Why would it be important to balance your prayer life with regular reading of the Bible?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *Philippians 4:6–7*.

Hebrews 4:16 _____

6. Read *Romans 8:26*. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in your prayer?

7. According to the following verses, what can hinder your prayers?

Psalm 66:18 _____

James 4:2-3 _____

1 Peter 3:7 _____

In summary: as you pray to God, you need to be sure that:
You are praying according to His will,
You are not praying "for show,"
You are humble, thankful, and yet bold to speak to Him,
You are relying on the Holy Spirit to help you in prayer, and
You do not approach God with known, unconfessed sin in your
life.

God wants you to talk to Him. Would you commit to spending time
daily with God in prayer? _____

How has He changed you on the inside (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)?

How has He changed your relationship with people (*2 Corinthians 5:18*)?

What is the new work He has given you to do (*2 Corinthians 5:20*)?

3. Read each of the following verses in the book of *Romans*. What does each verse tell you about the spiritual change that takes place in you when you trust Christ?

Romans 5:1 _____

Romans 5:19 _____

Romans 6:6 _____

Romans 6:18 _____

Romans 8:1 _____

Romans 8:10 _____

Romans 8:15-16 _____

Romans 8:17 _____

4. You might think that with all these changes in your life you will never sin again. But what does *1 John 1:8, 10* tell us?

5. The Bible tells you what to do about your sin in *1 John 1:9*.

After you sin, you should: _____.

After you confess your sins, God promises to _____

and to _____

_____.

To *confess* your sins means to say the same thing about them that God says—to agree with God. When you stop justifying yourself and admit that your sin is sin, God promises to forgive you.

6. Your Heavenly Father wants you to be secure in your relationship with Him.

Read *John 10:28–29*.

Speaking of His sheep (people who have believed in Him), Jesus says

He gives them _____ life, that they shall _____ perish,

and that no man is able to _____

_____.

7. Read *John 19:30*.

Right before Jesus died, He said,

“ _____ !”

Results of obedience: _____

Matthew 7:7

God’s requirement(s): _____

Results of obedience: _____

Philippians 4:6–7

God’s requirement(s): _____

Results of obedience: _____

5. God has given you many commands and promises concerning your prayer to Him. Read the following verses and summarize in your own words what God is teaching you about prayer.

Psalms 145:18 _____

Matthew 6:7 _____

Colossians 4:2 _____

1 Thessalonians 5:17–18 _____

In verse 29a, what does God say is His goal is for you?

What does *Romans 8:28–29* have to do with prayer?

Verse 29 describes what “good” means in verse 28. What you see as good and what God sees as good for you may be two different things. You need to keep this truth in mind as you strive to pray according to His will. You need to be willing to accept even the very difficult trials that come into your life and be confident that He has allowed these trials to help you to become more like Jesus Christ.

3. Read *Matthew 26:38–39*.

Jesus is your ultimate example of praying according to the will of the Father. In *verse 38* we learn of the anguish He was going through as He faced the judgment of God on the cross. Even though He knew what was going to happen to Him, what did He pray to the Heavenly Father in *verse 39*?

4. What other requirements does God give you for effective prayer to Him? Read each verse. On the first lines write what God requires of you as you pray to Him. Next, write what the result will be when you approach God in prayer as He has commanded.

2 Chronicles 7:14

God’s requirement(s): _____

Results of obedience: _____

Matthew 6:5–6

God’s requirement(s): _____

What did Jesus mean when He said, “It is finished?” He did not mean His life was finished, because three days after His death God the Father raised Him from the dead, and Christ was alive again (*John 20:1–9*). Jesus showed himself to many people to prove He truly was alive (*John 20:20, 27, 29; 21:1, 12–14*).

When Christ said, “It is finished,” He meant that *He had made the full payment for the sins of the world; the work of salvation was complete*. Christ rose from the dead three days after His death; His resurrection proved that He (God the Father) was satisfied with the payment Christ had made.

Does salvation have anything to do with man’s works? _____
Therefore, since you can do nothing to earn salvation, do you think there is something you can do to cause you to lose it? _____

FOR DISCUSSION

When you trust Christ as your Savior, you begin a new, personal relationship with Him. How is this relationship similar to your earthly father/child relationship? How is it different?

Do you think it is important to be confident that you have a secure relationship with Christ? Why or why not?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *John 5:24*.

LESSON FOUR

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE?

MYTH: “IF I BECOME A CHRISTIAN, THEN I WILL NOT HAVE ANY MORE PROBLEMS AND STRUGGLES.”

TRUTH: AS A CHRISTIAN YOU WILL STILL HAVE TROUBLES, BUT GOD GIVES YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED IN THE BIBLE TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEMS AND STRUGGLES OF LIFE.

God has said that everyone in the world has sinned (*Romans 3:23*). We are all born sinners (*Psalms 51:5*). We are born with a sinful nature; we are naturally inclined toward evil. Children do not have to be taught to do wrong; instead, they must be trained to do what is right. We need laws, courts, policemen, and locks on our doors. The Bible calls our sinful nature the *old man*, or *the flesh*. Before a person trusts Christ, he is a slave to this old nature; he is a slave to sin.

When you trust Christ and receive His free gift of salvation you receive a new nature from God. The Bible calls this new nature the *new man*. Christ now lives in you (*Colossians 1:27*). You might wonder why there is a struggle inside of you even after you have trusted Christ. Your struggle comes from the many tendencies and habits you have in you that make it easy to act like the *old man* is still in control.

So, how can you possibly live the Christian life? In God’s Word, the Bible, He has given you everything you need to live a life of victory (*2 Peter 1:3*). Even though you may experience spiritual struggles, you are able to conquer sin through the power of the Holy Spirit. You are no longer a slave to sin. Whereas before you could not please God, now you have the potential to become like Christ and to live a life that is pleasing to Him.

LESSON SIX

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT PRAYER?

MYTH: “I DON’T NEED TO PRAY, BECAUSE GOD ALREADY KNOWS WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN.”

TRUTH: JUST AS GOD WANTS TO TALK TO YOU THROUGH HIS WORD, HE WANTS YOU TO TALK TO HIM THROUGH PRAYER.

In Lesson Five you learned about the importance of reading your Bible. You must allow God to talk to you regularly. Another critical part of your relationship with God is the discipline of *prayer*. To have a relationship with God, you must talk to Him (pray to Him) regularly.

God has commanded Christians to pray; He wants you to communicate with Him in prayer just as He communicates with you when you read His Word. In this lesson, we will discuss the importance of prayer. As you get to know God better by spending time in His Word you will become more effective in your prayer life. You will also learn of how God has instructed you to approach Him in prayer and how you must not do anything to hinder your prayers to Him.

1. Read *1 John 5:14–15*.

What confidence do you have regarding prayer? _____

2. Read *Romans 8:28–29*.

Verse 28 contains a promise for you. What is this promise?

Every time you read the Bible, you need to promise God that:
 When He shows you truth, you will believe it;
 When He shows you His will, you will do it; and
 When He shows you your sin, you will confess it and forsake it.

It is important to have a quiet place and a particular time set aside to read the Bible. Can you think of a particular place and time you can meet with God every day? Commit to God that you will be faithful to meet with Him daily so He can speak to you through His Word, the Bible.

I, _____, commit to set aside a time and place to read the Bible daily.

Time: _____

Place: _____

FOR DISCUSSION

Many Christians claim to pray often, but they rarely read the Bible. Although prayer is essential for the Christian, why is it also important to balance the prayer time with the reading of God’s Word?

In what ways has reading God’s Word changed your life?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

1. In the previous lesson we learned that a major spiritual change takes place in the person who trusts Christ as personal Savior. While discussing this change in *Romans 6*, the Apostle Paul makes a conclusion about how a Christian must change his thinking.

Read *Romans 6:11*. Once a person becomes a Christian, how should he view himself? _____

2. In the book of Galatians, the Apostle Paul compares the works of the flesh (the *old man*) with the fruit of the Spirit (the *new man*). Read Galatians 5:16–23 and answer the following questions:

What are you commanded to do, and why (v. 16)? _____

What is the relationship between the old nature and the new nature (v. 17)? _____

What are the works of the old man, the flesh (v. 19–21)? _____

What is the fruit of the Spirit (v. 22–23)? _____

3. In the book of *Ephesians*, the Apostle Paul gives us three steps to change.

Read *Ephesians 4:22–24* and complete the following.

STEP #1 (v. 22): You are instructed to _____
_____.

In this verse, how does Paul describe the old nature?

STEP #2 (v. 23): You are instructed to _____
_____.

STEP #3 (v. 24): You are instructed to _____
_____.

In this verse, how does Paul describe the new nature?

God’s purpose for you is to grow and change to become more like His Son, Jesus Christ (*Romans 8:29*).

4. Read *Romans 12:1–2*.

In v. 1, what is the believer urged to do? _____

According to v. 2, you should *not* be _____
_____.

7. When you have your daily devotions, there are some things you can do to make your time the most profitable.

A) *Psalm 119:18* tells us what you should pray every time you open God’s Word.

You should pray that God would _____

B) Read *John 16:13*. When you read the Bible you need to acknowledge that the _____ must guide you; you cannot understand it on your own.

C) Read *Psalm 119:105*. This verse describes God’s Word as a _____. Tell God you are open to receive the light He wants to give you through His Word.

Often God’s lamp will give you only enough light for the very next step. He wants you to trust Him to direct you by His Word, step by step, in your daily life.

8. There are many different ways to study the Bible. The following are three suggestions that will help you get started.

A) Read one chapter in the book of *Proverbs* each day. There are 31 chapters in this book. Read the one that corresponds to the day of the month. For example, on the first of the month read *Proverbs 1*, on the second day read *Proverbs 2*, etc.

B) Read verse by verse through the Bible by reading a portion of the Old Testament, followed by a portion of the New Testament. Try to read through the Bible in a year.

C) Study one book of the Bible at a time. Many find the book of *John* a good place to start.

v. 4 _____

- 4. Some people claim that since the Bible was written so long ago it is not relevant to us. What does the following verse tell us about the value of the Bible to us today?

Romans 15:4 _____

- 5. In *1 Thessalonians 2:13*, the Apostle Paul expresses his thanks for the people of Thessalonica. Read the verse carefully and answer the following questions:

How did the people accept the Word of God? _____

What promise is in this verse for the person who believes (has trust, confidence) in God's Word? _____

- 6. Read *Job 23:12b*. What does Job say about the importance of God's Word?

Most likely you would not think of neglecting the needs of your body. But you should be even more concerned with the needs of the unseen part of you (the soul, or spirit) that will live forever. You should spend time studying God's Word every day. This is called "daily devotions." During this time, you should not only let God talk to you by reading the Bible, you should also talk to Him in prayer. We will discuss prayer in the next lesson.

but *should be* _____

If you do what is said in *verses 1 and 2*, what will be the result in your life (see the very last part of *verse 2*)?

- 5. In *2 Corinthians 5:9*, what does God tell us the Christian's goal in life should be?

Note: In the King James Version, "That . . . we may be accepted of Him" actually means, "That we may please Him."

Everyone is born with a sinful nature. But when a person trusts Christ for salvation, he receives a new nature, which enables him to live a life pleasing to God. God's purpose for the Christian is to grow to become more like His Son, Jesus Christ. Because the believer has a new nature, God has given him the ability to live a life of victory through the power of the Holy Spirit.

FOR DISCUSSION

Even though a Christian is given a new nature, why do you think it is sometimes so difficult to live the Christian life? Do you think the difficulty comes from inside of us, or from our environment?

What is the most important truth in this lesson that you need to apply to your life?

MEMORY VERSE

Write out *2 Corinthians 5:17*.

LESSON FIVE

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT THE BIBLE?

MYTH: “READING THE BIBLE IS REALLY NOT ALL THAT IMPORTANT.”

TRUTH: **YOU WILL NEVER KNOW HOW TO PLEASE GOD IF YOU DO NOT KNOW HIM WELL, AND YOU WILL NEVER KNOW HIM WELL UNLESS YOU ALLOW HIM TO TEACH YOU ABOUT HIMSELF THROUGH HIS WORD.**

God gave us His Word so that we can trust Him for salvation. But we also need the Bible in our everyday lives. After you become a Christian you need the Bible so you can know God, have a close relationship with Him, and live a life that is pleasing to Him (*2 Corinthians 5:9*).

The Bible says that once you have trusted Christ as your Savior you are adopted into God’s family (*Romans 8:15–17; Galatians 4:4–7; Ephesians 1:5*). Think for a moment about your earthly father/child relationship. If you were adopted into a family that you had never met, at first you would not know anything about your new father. You could try to imagine his personality and what he looked like. But even if you thought for a long time, you would probably still come up with a distorted picture of him in your mind. Imagine that you wanted to give your new father a gift the weekend you were going to meet him. Even if you really wanted to please him with a perfect gift, it would be nearly impossible. With no knowledge of his personality, likes, dislikes, etc., you would have no idea where to start. What you might do is give him something that *you* like, hoping he would be pleased with it.

Reading the Bible is vital because there is no way you can know about God unless He tells you about Himself. Studying about Him in the Bible is the only way you know His personality, His likes, and His dislikes. We

cannot know how to please Him if we do not know Him well. The better we know Him, the more we can please Him with our lives and have a close relationship with Him.

1. Read *2 Timothy 3:16*.

According to the first part of this verse, how was the Bible (all Scripture) given to us? _____

According to the second part of this verse, in what four ways is the Bible profitable (useful)?

- 1) For _____.
(It teaches me what is right)
- 2) For _____.
(It teaches me what is wrong)
- 3) For _____.
(It teaches me how to make it right)
- 4) For _____.
(It teaches me how to keep it right)

2. Read *2 Timothy 3:17*.

What is the purpose of learning and applying to your life what the Bible teaches?

Note: Here, the word “perfect” means complete. The picture is that of a thoroughly equipped vessel, fit for sailing as well as for rescuing others.

3. Read *2 Peter 1:2–4*. In your own words, summarize these verses:

v. 2 _____

v. 3 _____