



HOW-TO-USE GUIDE

Discipleship Essentials Pathway

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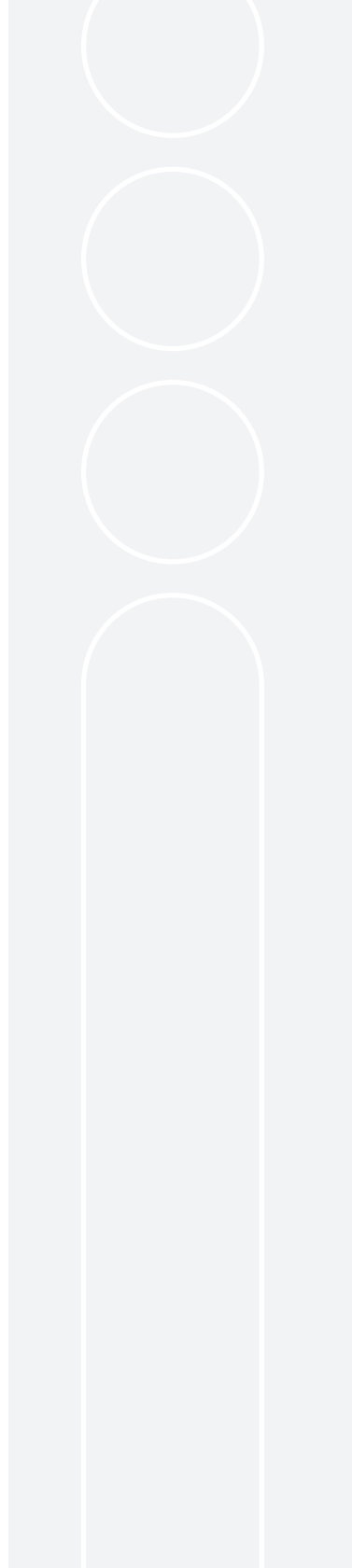
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Cover design: Farmshed Creative
Interior design: Farmshed Creative

Printed in the United States of America

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Introduction

To be a follower of Jesus means that we are to lead others to follow Jesus too. Contrary to the spirit of the famous “The Buck Stops Here” placard on President Harry S. Truman’s desk, Jesus’ desk placard might have said something like “You’re One Link in a Long Chain.” To be a *disciple* of Jesus is to be a *discipler* of others, just as Jesus told us in what is known as the Great Commission:

Then Jesus came to them. He said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.”

– Matthew 28:18–20

Often, when we think of people discipling to fulfill the Great Commission, we think of men and women discipling other men and women at coffee shops, a collegiate minister discipling students at the student union, or perhaps a church staff discipling its members on the church campus. All of that is true, of course, but one of the most important places for discipleship is our homes. As a Christian, God has called you to disciple others; as a Christian parent or guardian, He has called you to disciple your children. This is the central point of what God told His people, the Israelites, through Moses:

“The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them. Talk about them when you are at home. Talk about them when you walk along the road. Speak about them when you go to bed. And speak about them when you get up” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7).

This is your highest calling as a parent and family—and it’s what we want to help you with through the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*.

How to Use the Discipleship Pathway

The *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* is built on a framework of seventeen modules to be used one per year. Modules 1–6 are to be used for kindergartners through fifth graders. Modules 7–9 are to be used with sixth through eighth graders. Modules 10–13 are to be used with ninth through twelfth graders. And finally, Modules 14–17 are to be used with college-aged young adults. Throughout the seventeen modules, you will have the opportunity to engage with the core doctrines of the Christian faith and explore many practical aspects of following Jesus.

Each module contains twelve units, one for each month beginning in August and ending in July of the following year. Here’s how to use the *Pathway*:

The First Week of August

STEP ONE

Choose a day and time when it is easiest to block out about fifteen minutes for a family devotion each week. Many families find dinner or bedtime ideal times for family devotions. Of course, if you already have a regular family devotion time, that would be the best time to choose.

STEP TWO

During your family devotion time in the first week of August, open the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* book to August's content.

STEP THREE

Begin by reading the catechism to your family. A catechism is a method of instruction based on a question-and-answer format that has been used throughout church history. The catechism provides the main idea your family will focus on for the month. You may notice definitions or further inspections provided. These are provided to help your child or student learn these important terms or dive deeper into the topic.

STEP FOUR

Next, read the Bible story to your family from the *Pathway* book or a Bible. The NlrV is used in Modules 1 through 6. The NLT is used in Modules 7 through 13. The CSB is used in modules 14 through 17. This corresponds with translations used in New Vision's ministries.

STEP FIVE

Now, it is time to read the devotional to your family. Discuss the standing discussion questions.

STEP SIX

Next, find the memory verse and prayer prompt for week 1. These will provide your focus for the rest of the week. Begin by reading the memory verse a few times, inviting your child or student to say as much with you as possible. Then, close your devotional time in prayer, using the prompt as a guideline for what to pray about. Of course, you can pray about more than that, but at least pray about the topic provided.

That's it! You're done.

You will notice that each unit includes a concluding next step, challenging thought, or reflection questions. These are for you to use during the week and on the rest of the family devotion days of the month.

During the week, look for opportunities to talk about the main ideas of the catechism, Bible story, and devotional you covered. This is in the spirit of Deuteronomy 6:7's calling to talk about God throughout the day in our homes. The goal is to help your child or student keep God at the top of the mind and deep down in the heart. Also, continue working on memorizing the memory verse and praying for the topic of the prayer prompt. Bedtime each day might be the ideal time for this.

The Second, Third, and Fourth Weeks of August

STEP ONE

During your family devotion time on the second, third, and fourth weeks of the month, go over the catechism again, perhaps inviting your child or student to memorize it along with the memory verses.

STEP TWO

You do not need to read the Bible story or devotion again, but of course, you can if you want.

STEP THREE

Spend more time working on the memory verse. Add the week's additional verse.

STEP FOUR

Close your time in prayer, once again using the prayer prompts as your baseline.

The First Week of September

Once the calendar flips to September, it's time to move on to the next unit, repeating the process. Then, once July arrives, it will be time to get the next module to begin using it next August.

A FEW FINAL TIPS

If you have multiple children going through different modules, that's awesome! As a family, go through the lesson with the youngest child in the first week, and move to the second youngest the next week, and so on. Review together as needed, and turn your prayer prompts into a prayer list!

If you miss a family devotion one week, that's okay! Give yourself grace and pick back up next week. Consistency over the long term is the key to family discipleship.

As you and your family become more comfortable using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway*, encourage your child or student to ask questions. Dialogue is always better than monologue when it comes to discipleship.

If you are starting your journey using the *Discipleship Essentials Pathway* in the middle of the *Pathway*, you might consider backtracking to continue to learn! Consider diving into what you missed during Christmas break, Spring break, or the summer as a short-term intensive, covering one unit per day instead of a month, and forgoing memorizing the memory verses. Of course, there's also nothing wrong with starting right where you are and moving forward without ever looking back!

If you already have a family devotions plan, or if you find one along the way, feel free to couple it with the *Pathway*. Do both on the same day or perhaps choose a second day to stretch your discipleship efforts further throughout the week.

Note: You may be a student or young adult going through the Discipleship Essentials Pathway on your own. That is awesome! If you would like, continue through the Pathway on your own; but you may also consider doing so with a small group leader, friend, or mentor. This is also an opportunity to invite someone in your family to study with you. Feel free to reach out to the Student, College, or Young Adult Team for help or guidance as you walk through your own discipleship journey.

Icon Guide

CHALLENGING THOUGHT

A challenging thought encourages kids to think deeper about God's Truth and how to respond with trust, obedience, or action.

Example: "We should trust the Bible more than anything else, even when we don't totally understand it."



Elementary



Middle School



High School



College

NEXT STEPS

These activities help families apply biblical truths through real-life actions, play, or discussion.

Example: Playing "Red Light, Green Light" to teach obedience or entering a dark room to show the Bible as light.



Elementary



Middle School



High School



College

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

These open-ended questions help children connect the lesson to their own lives through family discussion.

Example: “What is your favorite Bible story?” “How does the Old Testament help us see our need for Jesus?”



Elementary



Middle School



High School



College

DEFINITION

Key biblical terms are simply defined to help children understand Scripture and devotionals.

Example: Sin: doing what God tells us not to do; not doing what God tells us to do.



Elementary



Middle School



High School



College

FURTHER INSPECTION

This section gives parents extra context to help explain the Bible story or key ideas more deeply with their children.

Example: “A Further Inspection” clarifies a tough concept, like showing how God guided the Bible’s human authors.



Elementary



Middle School



High School



College

Jesus' Death and Resurrection



Why are Jesus' death and resurrection so important? Jesus' death and resurrection are the heart of the gospel—the good news of what God has done through Jesus. In dying on the cross, Jesus paid the penalty our sins deserved. In his resurrection, Jesus overcame death's power. Together, they prove Jesus' power to save people from sin and death.



Definition

Gospel: in the Bible, literally “the good news” of Jesus Christ.

The gospel is this: when Jesus died on the cross, He paid the price for people’s sin and took God’s judgment for sin on Himself. When Jesus rose from the dead, He proved that He defeated sin and death once and for all. When we trust Him as Savior and Lord, we are forgiven of our sin and our relationship with God is restored.

Bible Story

¹ Brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the good news I preached to you. You received it and have put your faith in it. ² Because you believed the good news, you are saved. But you must hold firmly to the message I preached to you. If you don’t, you have believed it for nothing. ³ What I received I passed on to you. And it is the most important of all. Here is what it is. Christ died for our sins, just as Scripture said he would. ⁴ He was buried. He was raised from the dead on the third day, just as Scripture said he would be.

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin. And the power of sin is the law.

⁵⁷ But let us give thanks to God! He gives us the victory because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done.

— 1 Corinthians 15:1–4, 56–57 NLT

Discussion Questions

- 01** What do these verses tell us about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit?
- 02** What does this tell us about ourselves or other people?
- 03** Based on these verses and truths, what should I stop doing, start doing, or keep doing?

Devotion

Everyone likes to receive good news. What's some good news you have heard? Maybe you found out you made a good grade on a test. Or maybe your parents told you about an exciting trip coming up. Good news makes us happy and causes us to be thankful.

The Bible has the best good news of all—better than an exciting trip, a good grade, or a new toy. The Bible shares good news that lasts forever and truly changes our lives! The good news of the Bible is called the *gospel*, and it's

what God has done for us through His Son, Jesus.

So, what has Jesus done that is such good news? First, the apostle Paul teaches us that Jesus died for our sins, just as God had promised. God knew we would disobey Him and turn away from Him, but God loves us! And so He sent Jesus to live a perfect life in our place and die on the cross to pay the punishment we deserve. Jesus' death paid the price for sin.

Next, Paul said that Jesus was buried. Now, this may

not sound like good news. But it is because Jesus didn't stay dead. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. He defeated death! Jesus proved that He is greater than sin and death and showed that He has the power to give people new life in Him.

The gospel message is so important because it's the only way for people to be saved from sin and death. Without Jesus' death and

resurrection, we would remain dead in our sins, separated from God, and without any hope. But when we place our faith in Jesus, we are saved! We believe that He died for our sins and rose back to life. Those who trust in Jesus and what He has done are free from the punishment of sin and will live with God forever. Those who trust in Jesus have the greatest hope of all because nothing can ever separate us from God.

WEEK ONE

Memory Verse

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even if they die."
— John 11:25 NLT

Prayer

Praise God for Jesus' death and resurrection, which makes the way for you to be forgiven of sin and receive eternal life.

WEEK TWO

Memory Verse

Christ also suffered once for sins. The one who did what is right suffered for those who don't do right. He suffered to bring you to God. His body was put to death. But the Holy Spirit

brought him back to life.
— 1 Peter 3:18 NLT

Prayer

Thank God for Jesus' suffering and for giving up His life so that we can have peace with God and eternal life.

WEEK THREE

Memory Verse

Then who can sentence us to death? No one. Christ Jesus is at the right hand of God and is also praying for us. He died. More than that, he was raised to life.
— Romans 8:34 NLT

Prayer

Ask God to help you live to the fullest for His glory because of the gift Jesus has given you.

WEEK FOUR

Memory Verse

I want to preach it because I'm not ashamed of the good news. It is God's power to save everyone who believes. It is meant first for the Jews. It is meant also for the Gentiles.

— Romans 1:16 NLT

Prayer

Ask God to help you share the good news of Jesus with others, helping them see God's love for them and how they can live with Him forever.



Challenging Thought

Explain in your own words why Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection matter. Think about why they each were needed and what they each prove.

Notes:

System Map

LEGEND

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College



Discipleship Essentials Pathway

Detailed Overview

Elementary Schoolers

- Kindergarten: The Bible
- First Grade: God
- Second Grade: Humanity
- Third Grade: Jesus
- Fourth Grade: Salvation
- Fifth Grade: Spiritual Growth

Middle Schoolers

- Sixth Grade: The Holy Spirit
- Seventh Grade: Identity in Christ
- Eighth Grade: Holiness

High Schoolers

- Ninth Grade: Evangelism and Missions
- Tenth Grade: The Church
- Eleventh Grade: Stewardship
- Twelfth Grade: Apologetics

College Students

- Freshman: Spiritual Design & Health
- Sophomore: Relationships
- Junior: The End Times
- Senior: Work

The Bible

What is the Bible?

The Bible is a special book. It is filled with true stories about God and His people. The Bible helps us learn who God is and how we can know Him as our friend. Every word in the Bible is good, and helps us learn and know how to live.

Bible Story

¹ My son, accept my words.
Store up my commands inside you.

² Let your ears listen to wisdom.
Apply your heart to understanding.

³ Call out for the ability to be wise.
Cry out for understanding.

⁴ Look for it as you would look for silver.
Search for it as you would search for hidden treasure.

⁵ Then you will understand how to have respect for the Lord.
You will find out how to know God.

⁶ The Lord gives wisdom.
Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.

— Proverbs 2:1–6 NlrV



God

Who is God?

God is the Creator and Ruler of everyone and everything. God is eternal, meaning He has always existed and always will exist, and God is Spirit. Everything exists for God's glory.

Bible Story

¹ In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

² The earth didn't have any shape. And it was empty. There was darkness over the surface of the waves. At that time, the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

³ God said, "Let there be light." And there was light.

⁴ God saw that the light was good. He separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light "day." He called the darkness "night." There was evening, and there was morning. It was day one.

— Genesis 1:1–5 NIV



Humanity

What does it mean to be made in God's image?

To be made in God's image means that, in some ways, we show others what God is like. Reflecting God's image brings God glory. Being made in God's image also means all people have value, dignity, and worth.



Definition

God's Image: All people are made in God's image and have been created to live in ways that show God's character and actions to the world. This does not mean we look like God; He is Spirit and has no body. But He made us to live like Him in special ways.

Bible Story

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

— Genesis 1:27 NIV



Jesus

Who is Jesus?

Jesus is the eternal Son of God. Everything was created by Jesus and for Him. He is the exact image of God, and through Jesus, we can know what God is like. God sent Jesus, the sinless Savior, to save people from sin and death.



Further Inspection

Jesus has always existed, just like God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was a spiritual being from eternity past, until He came to earth and was born as a baby. When He was born, He remained fully God and became fully man. When he came to earth, He was named Jesus, also known as *Immanuel*, which means “God with us.” Jesus is alive today and reigning in Heaven, and He is still fully God and fully man.

Bible Story

¹⁵ The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can’t be seen. The Son is first, and he is over all creation. ¹⁶ All things were created in him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can’t be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. All things have been created by him and for him. ¹⁷ Before anything was created, he was already there. He holds everything together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, which is the church. He is the beginning. He is the first to be raised from the dead. That happened so that he would be



far above everything.¹⁹ God was pleased to have his whole nature living in Christ.²⁰ God was pleased to bring all things back to himself. That’s because of what Christ has done. These things include everything on earth and in heaven. God made peace through Christ’s blood, by his death on the cross.

— Colossians 1:15–20 Nlrv



Salvation

How can I be forgiven of my sins and follow Jesus?

Being forgiven of your sins and becoming a follower of Jesus means admitting that you are a sinner, repenting of sin, and putting your faith and trust in Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Jesus made a way for us to be forgiven through His death and resurrection. When we believe in Jesus, God forgives our sins, gives us a new life, and invites us to follow Him.



Definition

Repent: To turn away from sin and turn toward God.

To repent is to change your mind about sin and agree with God that it is wrong. Then, you can change the way you live by turning from sin with God's help.

Bible Story

¹¹ Jesus continued, "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger son spoke to his father. He said, 'Father, give me my share of the family property.' So the father divided his property between his two sons.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son packed up all he had. Then he left for a country far away. There he wasted his money on wild living. ¹⁴ He spent everything he had. Then the whole country ran low on food. So the son didn't have what he needed. ¹⁵ He went to work for someone who lived in that



country. That person sent the son to the fields to feed the pigs.¹⁶ The son wanted to fill his stomach with the food the pigs were eating. But no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "Then he began to think clearly again. He said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough food! But here I am dying from hunger!'"

¹⁸ I will get up and go back to my father. I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven. And I have sinned against you."¹⁹ I am no longer fit to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"While the son was still a long way off, his father saw him. He was filled with tender love for his son. He ran to him. He threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer fit to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.'²³ Bring the fattest calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate.'²⁴ This son of mine was dead. And now he is alive again. He was lost. And now he is found.' So they began to celebrate."

— Luke 15:11–24 NIV



Spiritual Growth

How do I grow as a follower of Jesus?

To grow as a follower of Jesus means to become more like Jesus in every area of our lives. It all begins with putting faith and trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Then, we grow by staying connected to Jesus.



Further Inspection

Spiritual Growth is the process of gradually becoming more like Jesus. It's about growing in your faith, deepening your relationship with God, and allowing the Holy Spirit to change you from the inside out. Spiritual growth is a lifelong journey that brings us closer to God and helps us live in a way that honors Him.

Bible Story

¹ "I am the true vine. My Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch joined to me that does not bear fruit. He trims every branch that does bear fruit. Then it will bear even more fruit. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain joined to me, just as I also remain joined to you. No branch can bear fruit by itself. It must remain joined to the vine. In the same way, you can't bear fruit unless you remain joined to me.

⁵ "I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me. ⁶ If you don't remain joined to me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and dries up.



Branches like those are picked up. They are thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain joined to me and my words remain in you, ask for anything you wish. And it will be done for you. ⁸ When you bear a lot of fruit, it brings glory to my Father. It shows that you are my disciples.

— John 15:1–8 Nlrv



The Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God. He is spirit, meaning He has no physical body. He lives inside believers and is God's power within us. The Holy Spirit has many roles, including giving spiritual gifts to every believer.

Bible Story

⁵ "But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. ⁶ Instead, you grieve because of what I've told you. ⁷ But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Advocate won't come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God's righteousness, and of the coming judgment. ⁹ The world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me. ¹⁰ Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. ¹¹ Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

¹² "There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can't bear it now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. ¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. ¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'"

— John 16:5–15 NLT



Identity in Christ

Who am I?

You are created by God, intentionally designed and made with a purpose: to bring Him glory. You are made in His image to reflect His nature and character to the world around you. You are infinitely valuable, and God loves you.

Bible Story

¹³ You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb.

¹⁴ Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.

¹⁵ You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.

¹⁶ You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed.

¹⁷ How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered!

¹⁸ I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand!

And when I wake up, you are still with me!

— Psalm 139:13–18 NLT



Holiness

What is biblical purity?

When the Bible speaks of purity, it most often means to be “free from sin.” God desires all people to be free from sin; in fact, we must be pure to be in a relationship with God. The only way to be pure, however, is through faith in Jesus Christ, who was pure and perfect in our place. Believers, then, are to pursue a life of purity in response to the example and calling of our Savior.



Further Inspection

Most people think purity refers to physical boundaries, but it goes far beyond that. Purity means pursuing a life entirely devoted to God, where we listen to His commands above all else.

Holiness and purity are similar biblical concepts. They both tell us to stay away from evil things in the world. The Bible tells us to be “holy” (Leviticus 20:26; 1 Peter 1:15–16), meaning we are not to give in to sin and instead, we are to follow God’s ways. Purity, especially in our hearts and minds (Psalm 51:10; Matthew 5:8), is being clean from evil thoughts and being fully devoted to God.

Bible Story

¹ The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. ² For he laid the earth’s foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths. ³ Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy



place? ⁴ Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. ⁵ They will receive the Lord’s blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior. ⁶ Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.

— Psalm 24:1–6 NLT



Evangelism and Missions

What is evangelism?

Evangelism is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Jesus instructs His followers to make disciples of all nations. As such, we are commanded to share the gospel with others.



Further Inspection

What is Christian missions? *Missions* are when we take the gospel and share it with the lost world around us, often outside of our normal operating space. Missions can take place across the street or around the world.

What is a mission trip? A mission trip is an organized, gospel-centered community service effort by followers of Jesus, churches, and organizations. A mission trip can last anywhere from a few days to multiple years.

Bible Story

⁹ If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. ¹¹ As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” ¹² Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. ¹³ For “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”



¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"

— Romans 10:9–15 NLT



The Church

What is the church?

The church is the community of faith consisting of believers in Jesus Christ. It includes all Christians, from the beginning of the church through today and continuing until He returns. The church is also known as the “body of Christ” with Jesus as its head, or leader.



Definition

Church: In the New Testament, the word that is often translated into English as “church” is *ekklesia*, which means “called-out ones.”

The church consists of all who have placed their faith in Jesus and have been called out from the world to live differently, for the great purpose of sharing the gospel with others.

Bible Story

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. ¹⁸ Now I say to you that you are Peter (which means ‘rock’), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. ¹⁹ And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.”

— Matthew 16:17–19 NLT



Stewardship

Who is the owner of all things?

God is the Creator and owner of all things. As such, He has the sovereign authority to give as much or as little as He pleases. Whatever God gives to a person should be received with deep gratitude and joy and used ultimately for God's glory.



Definition

Stewardship: Using and managing all resources God provides for His glory and the good of His creation.

Everything belongs to God, so we should use what we have well. God has given us what we have, and He owns it. We are called to be good stewards of what we have.

Bible Story

¹ The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him. ² For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths. ³ Who may climb the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his holy place? ⁴ Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies. ⁵ They will receive the Lord's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior. ⁶ Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob. ⁷ Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter. ⁸ Who is the King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord, invincible in battle. ⁹ Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors,



and let the King of glory enter.¹⁰ Who is the King of glory? The Lord of Heaven’s Armies— he is the King of glory.

— Psalm 24:1–10 NLT



Apologetics

What is apologetics?

Apologetics is the use of Scripture, theology, logic, and reason to defend the Christian faith. While evangelism can be thought of as advancing the gospel as if we are on offense, apologetics is more of defending the gospel from attacks or denials as if we are on defense.



Definition

Apologetics: The intellectual defense of the Christian faith.

When most people hear *apologetics*, they think of apologizing, or saying that you are sorry. But that is not what this word means. Instead, it comes from a Greek word that means “defense,” like what a lawyer provides a defendant at a trial.

Bible Story

¹ Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was Paul’s custom, he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. ³ He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, “This Jesus I’m telling you about is the Messiah.” ⁴ Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women.

— Acts 17:1–4 NLT



My Spiritual Design and Health

What are spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts are abilities or talents given uniquely to each believer by the Holy Spirit to help build up and encourage the church. These gifts include teaching, service, wisdom, and prophecy. It is every believer's responsibility and privilege to use their spiritual gifts to serve the body of believers.

Bible Story

¹ Now concerning spiritual gifts: brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware. ² You know that when you were pagans, you used to be enticed and led astray by mute idols. ³ Therefore I want you to know that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus is cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

⁴ Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different ministries, but the same Lord. ⁶ And there are different activities, but the same God works all of them in each person. ⁷ A manifestation of the Spirit is given to each person for the common good: ⁸ to one is given a message of wisdom through the Spirit, to another, a message of knowledge by the same Spirit, ⁹ to another, faith by the same Spirit, to another, gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another, the performing of miracles, to another, prophecy, to another, distinguishing between spirits, to another, different kinds of tongues, to another, interpretation of tongues. ¹¹ One and the same Spirit is active in all these, distributing to each person as he wills.



¹² For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ Indeed, the body is not one part but many.

— 1 Corinthians 12:1–14 CSB



Relationships

What is the meaning of marriage?

Marriage is God's gift to men and women and is designed to reflect the covenant love between Jesus and His church. It is a lifelong union between one man and one woman that displays the gospel through love, sacrifice, and faithfulness.



Definition

Covenant: in the Bible, a sacred, binding agreement given by God, based on His faithfulness; a promise.

Unlike a contract, which either party can break, a covenant is rooted in God's unchanging character. It often includes a divine promise and commitment, as seen in God's covenants with Abraham, the Israelites, and ultimately through Jesus' new covenant with the church, which was proven by Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (see Luke 22).

Bible Story

²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord, ²³ because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of the body. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives are to submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷ He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.



²⁹ For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, ³⁰ since we are members of his body. ³¹ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. ³² This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ To sum up, each one of you is to love his wife as himself, and the wife is to respect her husband.

— Ephesians 5:22–33 CSB



The End Times

What is eschatology?

Eschatology is the study of how the world as we presently know it will end and how God's eternal kingdom will be ushered in. Eschatology includes beliefs about Christ's return, final judgment, the new heaven and earth, hell and the Lake of Fire, and eternity.



Further Inspection

The study of the "end times" can be one of the more mysterious and most debated topics in Christian theology. For this reason, some tend to shy away from it. However, eschatology matters because it involves truths that help us live the Christian life today as we look toward what is yet to come for the world and for us as followers of Jesus.

Bible Story

¹ Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² I also saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared like a bride adorned for her husband.

³ Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God's dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.



⁵ Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.”

— Revelation 21:1–5 CSB



Work

How should Christians approach work?

God has called us to worship in every aspect of our lives, including our work. As believers, we are to dedicate our work to the Lord, using whatever it is to bring Him honor and glory. We can do this by enjoying our work, putting in full effort in what we do, maintaining humility and integrity in the workplace, and being an example of Christ to our colleagues.



Definition

Work: Work includes what we do for our vocation and how we create, steward, grow, learn, and affect our community, family, and friends. Work has always been a part of God's design for humanity as a part of His creation.

Bible Story

⁵ Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

⁷ Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, ⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death— even to death on a cross.

⁹ For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow— in heaven and on earth and under the earth— ¹¹ and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

— Philippians 2:5–11 CSB





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