

Pressed for



AND ETERNITY

**A brief study
about
How to become a Christian...
TODAY!**

Leader's Guide

SALVATION

Most people recognize the spiritual dimension; a higher power & creative force, but it is:

- vague
- un-defined or poorly-defined in their own mind
- weird

Human beings when left on their own to determine life's meaning and deeper purposes don't always know where to look. They pursue many roads in an attempt to discover spiritual truth but the roads often lead to a dead end.

- “Confusion” is the word that describes the spiritual state of most people.

This is not what God had in mind!

I. God revealed His will and purpose in:

A. The natural world

Romans 1:20

²⁰ For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities-his eternal power and divine nature-have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.

NIV

B. Scripture

2 Timothy 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

NIV

The basis of this study is: The Bible is God's “inspired” Word and as such is the way to discover life's deeper meaning and purpose.

II. The Bible

The Bible is a big book. It's actually a collection of books: 66 Books.

Question: "How does one make sense of it?"

A. See the Bible as having one story. It's the story of Jesus Christ.
The Bible is History or "His-story". His story has many facets...

- It's the story of man's predicament and need for Jesus Christ.
- It's the story of God's preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ.
- It's the story of Jesus Christ coming to the earth.
- It's the story of Jesus Christ revealing God's thinking and will through His teaching.
- It's the story of Jesus Christ dying on the cross for our sin and his resurrection.
- It's the story of Jesus Christ establishing His church on the earth.
- It's the story of how the church of Jesus Christ functioned on the earth as the "body of Christ".

B. Divide it up into smaller units.

Old Testament – 39 books [History, Law, Poetry, Writings of the Prophets]

New Testament – 27 books [Biographies of Christ, History, Letters from apostles to various churches, Prophetic].

Caution: Don't be overwhelmed by the Bible's size. Once you learn some basics it's very user-friendly.

To begin one's life as a Christian...

- Begin by reading one of the 4 biographies or Gospels of Christ [Matthew, Mark, Luke, John] in order to become a disciple [follower or student] of Jesus. You will learn the basic principles of the life as a disciple of Jesus [follower or student] and come to love Him.
- Read the book of Acts to see how Christ's church began and how to become a Christian. There are many examples.
- The remainder of the New Testament was written to provide the details of life as members of Christ's church with a final book,

Revelation, written to encourage Christians to remain faithful unto death because heaven awaits.

Question: "What about the Old Testament?"

The Old Testament is also God's Word and a vital part of "His-story". A study of the Old Testament is very profitable for our complete understanding of God and His will. However, it was written to people who were under a different system [The Jewish Law System] and as such is not directly applicable to Christians who live after Christ and live under grace.

C. Use it properly.

- a. There are attitudes and character qualities that must be present if God's will is to be seen:

-Integrity

2 Peter 3:16

¹⁶ He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

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-Humility

1 Peter 2:2

² Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, NIV

- b. There are rules of interpretation that must be followed so that wrong conclusions will not be reached.
1. Determine who is speaking, to whom he is speaking, in what period of Bible history he is speaking and for what purpose he is speaking.
 2. Each scripture should be interpreted in light of all other scriptures that touch on the subject.
 3. Let the obvious meaning govern unless the context forbids it.

III. SALVATION - means "being saved".

We know some things without ever having to be told. Among them are:

- "I've messed up!" "I'm a sinner!"
- "God is not happy with me! I've offended Him. I am lost! I am scared!"
- "My life is incomplete. I'm not happy!"

Jesus Christ is the answer to all of these thoughts and fears. The Bible explains all of the ways Jesus answers or deals with those feelings and realities. This is the "gospel".

- A. The Gospel is the "good news" of God's "grace". Grace means "the undeserved favor of God". The Bible teaches that we cannot work hard enough or in any way deserve being saved.

Ephesians 2:4-10

⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. NIV

- B. More precisely, the gospel is the proclamation of 3 truths.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4

¹ Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ² By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, NIV

Thus, the gospel is the proclamation of the truths:

1. Christ died for our sins.
2. Christ's body was buried.
3. Christ's body was raised on the third day.

-The effects of these three truths are momentous! They change everything

about life, sin, and death.

C. Because of these three acts we can:

1. Be forgiven of our past sin because Christ took the punishment we deserved.
2. Have new direction for our lives under a risen Lord.
3. Experience true joy and fulfillment for the rest of our lives knowing that we will live with God in heaven for eternity.

Question: "How does one start the process?" It's a legitimate question that comes from the realization that "things aren't right"; "I've messed up"; "I'm a sinner!"

Acts 2:37

³⁷ When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" NIV

D. The Bible phrase that describes one becoming a Christian is: "Obeying the Gospel."

2 Thessalonians 1:8

⁸ He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. NIV

1. Review: What is the gospel? Answer: The death, burial and resurrection of Christ. [1 Cor. 15:1-4]
2. To obey the gospel is to:
 - Die to our old ways of sin. [repentance]
 - Bury the old life. [baptism]
 - Rise to new life. [The Christian life]

Romans 6:1-13

¹ What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ² By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? ³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

⁵ If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. ⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin-
⁷ because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.

⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹ For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

¹¹ In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. ¹³ Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. NIV

The Book of Acts is called the “Book of Conversions” because it has so many examples of how people became Christians in Scripture. We can be Christians if we do the same things as they did. Though the wording is different in each example, **the pattern that develops is:**

- (1) An acceptance of the gospel message that Christ died for our sins, was buried but was raised alive on the third day making Him Lord of all.
- (2) A decision to change the direction of one’s life.
- (3) A declaration of Jesus as the Son of God and Lord.
- (4) Immersion in water for the forgiveness of past sins. [baptism=burial]
- (5) Rejoicing [always after baptism, never before.]
- (6) Being added by God to His church.
- (7) Functioning as a member of Christ’s body, the church.
- (8) Development in knowledge and understanding.

*Look over this list to see where you are.
Is there something[s] that you still need to do?
Can we help?*

Would you like to study further?

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