

GOD'S STORY

An exploration of God's love and intentions.

Discipleship Study 1



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GOD'S STORY DISCIPLESHIP COURSE I

ABOUT THE METHOD

The Course

This course is called "God's Story" and can be taught to both non-Christians or reviewed with a new Christian. **The goals are to get each student of Christ to: 1) Look closely at the Word of God, 2) Understand and Remember what is going on in the text, and 3) Do what the text teaches (see James 1:21-25).** It is intended primarily as an evangelistic study that not only opens the story of God to the seeker, but also teaches him or her how to study the Bible and implement its timeless teachings. As one author says, "we want to become architects of passion and purpose." This course is to begin that journey to helping your friend understand their purpose and become passionate about fulfilling it. My experience teaches that if the facilitator can lead the student to rely upon the Word of God and their reasoning ability, the student will not only fall in love with God, but will be eager to obey His teachings with a willing heart!

This study is designed to be self-directed and requires little reliance upon the "teacher" or discussion leader. Rather than relying upon the teacher for expertise, the seeker is taught to rely upon the Word of God. The facilitator is there to help them find answers to any additional questions and to keep the conversation moving. The facilitator also functions as someone to help hold the student of Christ accountable to the actions the student finds needing to be changed in his life from week to week as pointed out in the scriptures. While this is usually contrary to what we have been taught, part of being architects of passion and purpose involves letting go of control and learning how to release people. We must help each of our friends learn how to stand on their own and "work out their own salvation" while we offer them guidance and correction. This study is the first step in helping them walk before they run.

The Method

As previously stated, this is a primarily evangelistic study leading each student of Christ to: 1) Look closely at the Word of God, 2) Understand and Remember what is going on in the text, and 3) Do what the text teaches (James 1:21-25). In the very nature of the study, it becomes obvious that a facilitator is there to guide the discussion while the student dives into the Word in search for precious gems of applicable wisdom and understanding. It must be understood that this is not a lecture format and should not be treated as such. Following I will give general guidance as to how one might carry out a session.

Items Needed:

1. The study.

2. Pen or pencil.
3. Two Bibles (in case your friend does not own one).
4. An observer (it's always good to take someone with you who can learn how to study with a friend).

Parts of the Study Guide:

1. The overview. At the top of each guide, you will see the series name and lesson title followed by the objectives, scriptures covered, and assigned homework.
 - The facilitator will discuss only those passages labeled under “Scriptures” while those labeled “homework” are to be done by the student on their own to encourage further growth outside of your meeting. This results in helping establish a personal Bible Study habit.
2. On Your Own. These sections usually contain many of the questions discussed with the group as well as additional questions to be considered at home. Often times, it is helpful for the facilitator to have these sheets in hand to help guide the discussion. These questions are to be answered on the sheet and brought back at the next meeting time.
3. Next Meeting. At the end of each sheet there is a place to write when the group will meet next including the time, date, and place. It is very important to fill this out before anyone leaves.
4. Prayer and Share. At the end of lesson one there are three blanks to encourage each student to write down the names of those they want to share their findings with. This is to provide an avenue into learning how to pray for people as well as preparing them to share the Words of Life with others. By placing this in the first lesson, the student is already being taught, from day one, about God's expectation for them to become a light in the darkness.

Beginning the Study:¹

1. Group Interaction—Begin by “checking in” on your group members by asking questions like “What are you thankful for this week?”, “What needs do you or others have?”, or “How was your week?” This helps get everyone comfortable and leads to a time of Prayer and thanksgiving.
2. Prayer—Begin in prayer and specifically mention any thanksgivings, concerns, and struggles that came up in discussion. If others are comfortable, allow them to say their prayer as well.
3. Review Last Lesson (if applicable)—Find out what they learned last week and how they are doing at being accountable to God. Express the expectation of change by asking what changes in behavior or thought last week brought about in their life. Make sure to encourage

¹ Note that many of these suggestions are found in David L. Watson's introduction to the “Discovery Bible Method.”

- them that they are not alone and we are all here to help each other get closer to God and love Him as He loves us!
4. Sharing Reports—Ask how it went throughout the week telling their friends about the study and what they are learning from the Word of God. Sharing these experiences provides support, accountability, expectation, new ideas, and encouragement.
 5. Dive into the Word—It's now time to explain the study of the week. Begin by having them turn to the selected passage and move through the facilitator guide/homework guide.
 6. End with plans for sharing the study throughout the next week and set up the place, time, and date of your next meeting *before* anyone leaves.

I pray this study will bless you and your students as much as it has ours. Remember that we sow and God grows. It's important to allow God's Word to change and empower the individual and not only our lecturing. May God be with you as you seek people of peace to share the power of His Word with!

For further studies and information go to www.lakewoodlight.org or email Josh at joshfreeman01@gmail.com.

“GOD’S STORY”: DISCIPLESHIP COURSE 1

COURSE OVERVIEW

LESSON 1: GOD CREATES MAN

- ❖ Objectives:
 - To understand humanity was created as good.
 - To understand God loved us and provided for our needs.
 - To understand God gave freedom of choice.
- ❖ Scripture:
 - Genesis 2:4-24
- ❖ Homework:
 - Genesis 1:1-31

LESSON 2: SIN AND ITS ORIGIN

- ❖ Objectives:
 - Sin is choosing our desires over those of God.
 - Sin has consequences.
 - Sin comes from our evil intentions.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Genesis 3:1-13; 14-24
 - Genesis 6:5-8
 - Mark 7:14-23
- ❖ Homework:
 - Galatians 5:19-21

LESSON 3: EFFECTS OF OUR SIN

- ❖ Objectives:
 - To understand that sin severs our relationship with God.
 - To understand how sin personally impacts our lives.
 - To understand that we must deal radically with our sin just as God will.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Isaiah 59:1-2
 - Romans 7:13-25
 - Matthew 5:27-30
- ❖ Homework:
 - James 1:12-15

LESSON 4: GOD’S DESIRE FOR US

- ❖ Objectives:
 - To show God desires to bless us.
 - To understand how we obtain God’s blessing.
 - To learn how to actively seek God in our lives.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Jeremiah 29:11-14
 - Acts 17:26-27
 - Acts 8:26-40
- ❖ Homework:
 - Matthew 13:44-46

LESSON 5: GOD TAKES SIN PERSONALLY

- ❖ Objectives:
 - To understand that God sought to deal with sin personally.
 - To realize the love God has for us.
 - To begin to look at the example set by God.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Luke 2:1-21
 - Mark 1:9-11
 - Matthew 4:1-11
- ❖ Homework:
 - Luke 15:1-32; Mathew 18:10-14

LESSON 6: GOD ASKS US TO FOLLOW HIM

- ❖ Objective:
 - To understand how to follow God.
 - To understand the seriousness of our commitment to God.
 - To answer the call of God.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Luke 6:39-40
 - Luke 9:23-26; 57-62
- ❖ Homework:
 - Luke 14:25-27; John 8:31-32; Matthew 28:18-20

LESSON 7: GOD DEALS WITH SIN

- ❖ Objectives:
 - To understand the consequence of our sin.
 - To realize the enormous love God has for us.
 - To explain the hope found in the resurrection.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Isaiah 53
 - Matthew 27:22-50
 - 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
- ❖ Homework:
 - Matthew 28; Luke 24

LESSON 8: GOD RESTORES HIS FAMILY (YOU)

- ❖ Objectives:
 - To seek out God's gift and provision.
 - To understand our response to and acceptance of God's gift.
 - To commit ourselves to God on His terms.
- ❖ Scriptures:
 - Jeremiah 29:11-14
 - Luke 13:1-5
 - Acts 2:36-41
 - Acts 21:40-22:16
- ❖ Homework:
 - 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Acts 22:16
 - Will you commit to restoring your relationship with God and receiving forgiveness of your sins through repentance and immersion in the name of Jesus Christ?

GOD'S STORY STUDY

Additional study resources can be found in the Appendix beginning on page 24.

MY SALVATION JOURNEY

MY CURRENT UNDERSTANDING OF MY SALVATION

1. How were you saved? How old were you?
2. While we are saved by God's grace, what actions did you take to accept that salvation?
3. At what point during the process were you saved (i.e. when I said a prayer, when I was sprinkled, when I committed myself to listening to the church, etc)?
4. Were you baptized? If so, how were you baptized (i.e. sprinkled with water, as an infant, immersed in water, said a prayer, etc)?
5. At what point did you receive the Holy Spirit?
6. When did God forgive all of your sins?

“GOD’S STORY”: LESSON 1: GOD CREATES MAN

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - *To understand humanity was created as good.*
 - *To understand God loves and provides for our needs.*
 - *To understand that God gave us the freedom of choice.*
- ❖ *Scripture:*
 - *Genesis 2:4-25*
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - *Genesis 1:1-31*

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Genesis 2:4-25

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What good or bad stuck out to you in this passage?

 - b. Do you have any questions or is there anything you don't understand?

 - c. Why do you think God created man?

 - d. Why did God create woman?

 - e. In Genesis 2:25 it says, "They were not ashamed of being naked." Why do you think the author pointed this out?

 - f. What does the passage tell us about how God viewed humanity in the beginning?

 - g. How did God provide for the needs of the man and woman?

 - h. Re-read Genesis 2:16-17. Do these verses have any significance on our understanding of humanities freedom of choice?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do. For example, you might say, "I will trust that God made me good."

Read Genesis 1:1-31

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What did God think about His creation?

 - b. Who was humanity created in the image of?

 - c. What does it mean to be created in the image of something or someone?

 - d. Genesis 1:28 reads, "God blessed them [humans]." What did He bless humans with?

 - e. How does this passage relate to the previous one (Genesis 2:4-24)?

 - f. What sticks out to you in this section?

 - g. What questions do you have?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do. For example, you might say, "I will enjoy God's blessings."

I'm so glad we were able to study together. Every time I read these passages I see something new and interesting that I missed the last time. Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

We all have people in our lives that might be interested in hearing these stories and learning from them. Try to think of 3 people you can start sharing our lessons with and write their names on the bottom of this sheet! Feel free to call me anytime on my cell at (518) 423-6224!

Three Friends I Want to Share This With:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

“GOD’S STORY”: LESSON 2: SIN AND ITS ORIGIN

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - *Sin is choosing our desires over those of God.*
 - *Sin has consequences.*
 - *Sin comes from our own evil intentions.*
- ❖ *Scripture:*
 - *Genesis 3:1-13, 14-24*
 - *Genesis 6:5-8*
 - *Mark 7:14-23*
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - *Galatians 5:19-21*

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Genesis 3:1-24

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What stuck out to you in this passage? Why?

 - b. What does this story tell us about humanity (ourselves)?

 - c. Why do you think Adam and Eve disobeyed God?

 - d. How did their sin impact their relationship with God and their innocence?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Genesis 6:5-10

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you think it meant when the text said “it grieved God to his heart?”

 - b. Why do you think was God upset at humanity?

 - c. What made Noah different from all the other humans?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? What lessons does it hold for you and I? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do. For example, you might say, “I will follow Noah’s example.”

Read Mark 7:14-23

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What is the main point of Jesus' teaching in this section?

 - b. What does this teach us about sin?

 - c. How does this relate to the story of Adam and Eve sinning? What caused their sin?

 - d. What are some sins you can think of that "come from the heart?"

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Galatians 5:19-21

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What questions do you have about this passage?

 - b. How does this selection relate to our study and relationship to God?

 - c. We all struggle with sin, which of these sins do you find yourself struggling with?

2. What do you struggle with in the passage? What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do. For example, you might say, "I will stop being jealous."

In reviewing your action items, what must you do *this week* in order to make those a reality and obey Scripture?

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

“GOD’S STORY”: LESSON 3: EFFECTS OF SIN

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - *To understand that sin severs our relationship with God.*
 - *To understand how sin personally impacts our lives.*
 - *To understand we must deal radically with our sin just as God will.*
- ❖ *Scripture:*
 - *Isaiah 59:1-2*
 - *Romans 7:13-25*
 - *Matthew 5:27-30*
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - *James 1:12-15*

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Isaiah 59:1-2

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What sticks out to you as interesting in this passage?

 - b. What does this tell us about why there is separation from God?

 - c. Why doesn't God hear or help some people? Does God want to help them?

 - d. In thinking back to Genesis 1 and 2, how does this relate to Adam and Eve?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Romans 7:13-25

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What stuck out to you or what questions do you have?

 - b. This passage teaches us 5 ways that sin impacts our lives:
 - i. Sin enslaves me (v.14)
 - ii. Sin confuses me (v.15)
 - iii. Sin steals my confidence (vv.18-19)
 - iv. Sin condemns me (vv.23-24)
 - v. Sin calls me to make a choice (v.25)

 - c. How do these points relate to Adam and Eve? What about to you?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Matthew 5:27-30

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What does this teach us about sin and its impact on us and God?

 - b. What is the main point of this passage?

 - c. How are we to deal with sin that is in our lives and why?
2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read James 1:12-15

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What questions do you have about this passage?

 - b. How does this selection relate to our current study and the severing of our relationship with God?

 - c. Thinking back to the previous lesson, what does this say about the passage in Galatians 5:19-21?

 - d. If we deal radically with our sin, if we purge it from our lives, what will the reward be according to this passage?
2. Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

In reviewing your action items, what must you do *this week* in order to make those a reality and obey Scripture?

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

Read Acts 8:26-40

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you find interesting in this passage?

 - b. How do we know the Ethiopian was seeking after God?

 - c. How did the Ethiopian respond to God's desire for him and why is he a good illustration of Jeremiah 29:11-14?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Matthew 13:44-46

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What questions do you have about this passage?

 - b. How does this selection relate to our current study and the response to God's desire for us?

 - c. What does this teach us about the treasures of God (or Kingdom of Heaven)?

 - d. How much did the treasure cost the man and why would he do such a thing?

2. Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

In reviewing your action items, what must you do *this week* in order to make those a reality and obey Scripture?

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

**“GOD’S STORY”:
LESSON 5: GOD TAKES SIN PERSONALLY**

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - To understand that God sought to deal with sin personally.
 - To realize the love God has for us.
 - To begin to look at the example set by God.
- ❖ *Scriptures:*
 - Luke 2:1-21
 - Mark 1:9-11
 - Matthew 4:1-11
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - Luke 15:1-32; Matthew 18:10-14

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Luke 2:1-21

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you find interesting in this passage?

 - b. What does the angel mean in verse 11 by the word “Savior?”

 - c. Why do you think God loved us so much that he came to earth to live as one of us?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Mark 1:9-11

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. How was Jesus baptized (look to verse 10 for help)?

 - b. When did the Holy Spirit come to Jesus?

 - c. When did God announce that He was pleased with Jesus?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do. It may help to think of what examples Jesus sets for us in this verse.

Read Matthew 4:1-11

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What do you find interesting in this passage?

 - b. How does Jesus teach us to answer the temptations of the devil?

 - c. When considering where sin comes from (remember back to lessons 2 and 3), what do we have to do in order to resist temptation?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Luke 15:1-32

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. How does this relate to our current study and the love God has for us, His creation?

 - b. How did the son sin against his father and family?

 - c. What did it take for the son to gain forgiveness from his father?

 - d. What example does the father set for us?

2. Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Matthew 18:12-14

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. How does this selection relate to our current study and the love God has for us, His creation?

 - b. How does this relate to our study about the story of God?

 - c. What is the will of God for humanity (look in verse 14)?

In reviewing your action items, what must you do *this week* in order to make those a reality and obey Scripture?

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

**“GOD’S STORY”:
LESSON 6: GOD ASKS US TO FOLLOW HIM**

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - To understand how to follow God.
 - To understand the seriousness of our commitment to God.
 - To answer the call of God.
- ❖ *Scriptures:*
 - Luke 6:39-40
 - Luke 9:23-26, 57-62
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - Luke 14:25-27; John 8:31-32; Matthew 28:18-20

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Luke 6:39-40

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What makes a good student (one who is fully trained)?

 - b. How does this apply to following God?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Luke 9:23-26, 57-62

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What is Jesus asking a disciple to commit to?

 - b. What does it mean to deny oneself?

 - c. What area do you need to deny yourself in?

 - d. What is the point of Luke 9:57-62 and how does it relate to our study?

 - e. Jesus wants three things when it comes to following him:
 - i. That you accept the difficulties of following Christ (verse 58)*
 - ii. That you let nothing stop you from sharing your faith (verse 60)*
 - iii. That you are serious about leaving your old life (verse 62)*

2. What do these passages teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Luke 14:25-27

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What is the main point Jesus is getting at in this passage?

 - b. Why do you think Jesus wants you to love Him more than anything else?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read John 8:31-32

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. From this passage, what must you do to really be a disciple?

 - b. What does it mean to "hold on to His teachings" or "abide in His word"?

 - c. What happens when you hold on to the teachings (words) of Jesus?

2. Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Matthew 28:18-20

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What were the disciples told to teach others to do?

 - b. According to this passage, how were people to respond to Jesus' teachings?

2. Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

In reviewing your action items, what must you do *this week* in order to make those a reality and obey Scripture?

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

“GOD’S STORY”: LESSON 7: GOD DEALS WITH SIN

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - To understand the consequence of our sin.
 - To realize the enormous love God has for us.
 - To explain the hope found in the resurrection.
- ❖ *Scriptures:*
 - Isaiah 53
 - Luke 23; Luke 24
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - Matthew 28

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Isaiah 53

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. Isaiah 53 is a prediction of what will happen to Jesus. What was Jesus being wounded and punished for?

 - b. According to Isaiah 53:5-6 and 53:12, what were some of the benefits this punishment brought to God’s people?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Luke 23

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What did you find interesting in this chapter?

 - b. Why do you think Pilate gave Jesus up to be crucified?

 - c. Based upon all we’ve studied so far, why was it so important for Jesus to give his life?

 - d. What do you think about Jesus’ words in Luke 23:34?

2. What do these passages teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Luke 24

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. From this chapter, what do we learn about God's plan for humans?

 - b. Why was it so hard for some to believe Jesus raised from the dead?

 - c. Why does the passage say that the Christ had to die and rise from the death?

 - d. What was their response on seeing Jesus alive again and him going back into heaven?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

Read Matthew 28

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What were the disciples told to teach others to do?

 - b. According to this passage, how were people to respond to Jesus' teachings?

 - c. What are students of Jesus supposed to teach?

 - d. Earlier we discussed that we are to follow the example of Jesus, how does Jesus show us to be baptized?

 - e. What is the purpose of being baptized?

2. Using sentences beginning with "I will..." write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

In reviewing your action items, what must you do *this week* in order to make those a reality and obey Scripture?

Next Meeting Day, Time, and Place: _____

Please review this lesson between now and the next time we meet together. Bring this sheet back with you so that we can discuss any further questions or insight you might have!

**“GOD’S STORY”:
LESSON 8: GOD EXTENDS HIS GIFT TO YOU**

- ❖ *Objectives:*
 - To seek out God’s gift and provision.
 - To understand our response to and acceptance of God’s gift.
 - To commit ourselves to God on His terms.
- ❖ *Scriptures:*
 - Luke 13:1-5
 - Acts 2:36-41
 - Acts 21:40-Acts 22:16
- ❖ *Homework:*
 - 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Acts 22:16

ON YOUR OWN:

Read Luke 13:1-5

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. How is one restored to God according to this passage?

 - b. What does it mean to repent?

 - c. What is the consequence of not repenting?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions this passage calls you to do.

Read Acts 2:36-41

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What was Peter’s reply when the crowd asked what they should do?

 - b. What was promised if they did what Peter commanded?

 - c. Why do you think the crowd was convicted?

2. What do these passages teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions this passage calls you to do.

Read Acts 21:40-Acts 22:16

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. What struck you as interesting in this passage?

 - b. Why did Paul need to be baptized?

 - c. Why do you think baptism is so important in the life of a disciple?

2. What does this passage teach you to do? Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions this passage calls you to do.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11

1. On this sheet, think about and answer the following questions:
 - a. Paul mentions two kinds of grief (or sorrow). What are they?

 - b. What do you think is the difference between worldly and Godly sorrow/grief?

 - c. What words does Paul use to describe Godly sorrow?

 - d. Which sorrow do you relate too and what is the Bible teaching you should do with it?

2. Using sentences beginning with “I will...” write down actions that this passage calls you to do.

3. **Are you ready to accept the gifts of God on His terms? Why?
When do you want to be immersed in water?**

As we've studied the Story of God, we have noted that not only does God desire a relationship with us; God went out of His way extending the gift of life and resurrection to you. According to Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 22:16, one must be baptized for forgiveness and the acceptance of God's Holy Spirit. Baptism brings about these gifts of God.

APPENDIX

RESOURCES

On the following pages you will find resources for further study and discussion when needed.

NEW TESTAMENT CONVERSIONS

Acts 2:1-47	The Conversion at Pentecost
Acts 8:9-13	Simon the Sorcerer
Acts 8:26-40	The Treasurer of Candice (Ethiopian Eunuch)
Acts 9:1-19	Saul the Persecutor
Acts 10: 1-48	Cornelius and his family
Acts 16:11-16	The Purple Dealer (Lydia)
Acts 16:16-34	Philippi's Prison Guard
Acts 18:7-8	Crispus and the Corinthians
Acts 19:1-7	A Dozen from Ephesus
Acts 22:2-16	Paul Revisits His Conversion

PORTRAITS OF CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF JOHN

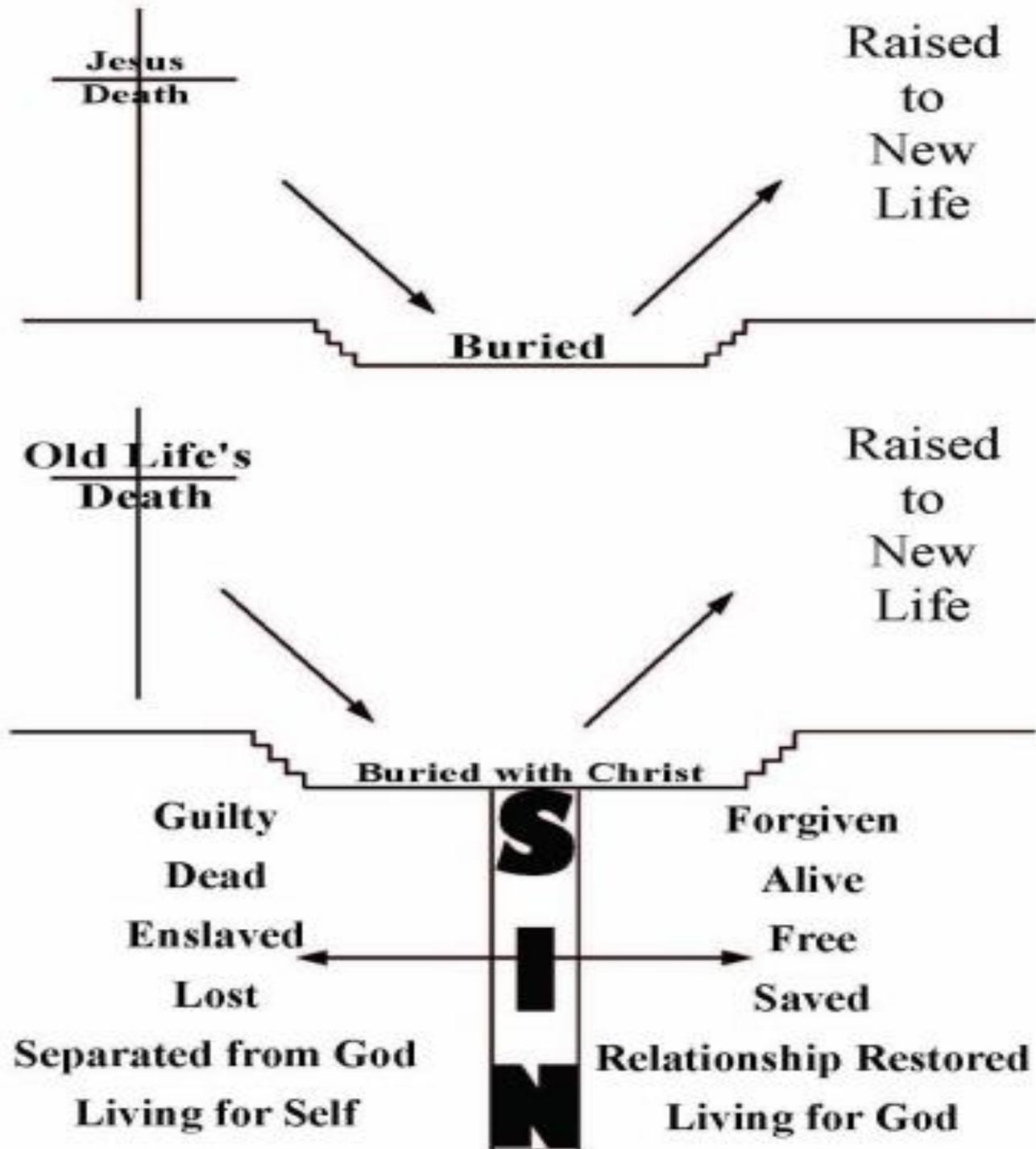
Verses	Description
1:1-14	Son of God
2:1-10	Son of Man
3:2-21	Divine Teacher
4:7-29	Soul Winner
5:1-9	Great Physician
6:32-58	Bread of Life
7:37	Water of Life
8:3-11	Defender of Weak
9:1-39	Light of World
10:1-16	Good Shepherd
11:1-44	Prince of Life
12:12-15	King
13:1-10	Servant
14:1-3	Consoler
15:1-16	True Vine
16:1-15	Giver of Holy Spirit
17:1-26	Great Intercessor
18:1-11	Model Sufferer
19:16-19	Uplifted Savior
20:1-31	Conqueror of Death
21:1-17	Restorer of Penitent

PARABLES OF JESUS

Lamp under a bowl	Matthew 5:14-15
Wise and foolish builders	Matthew 7:24-27
New cloth on an old garment	Matthew 9:16
New wind in old wineskins	Matthew 9:17
Sower and the soils	Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23
Weeds	Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43
Mustard Seed	Matthew 13:31-32
Yeast	Matthew 13:33
Hidden Treasure	Matthew 13:44
Valuable Pearl	Matthew 13:45-46
Net	Matthew 13:47-50
Owner of house	Matthew 13:52
Lost sheep	Matthew 18:12-14
Unmerciful servant	Matthew 18:23-34
Workers in the vineyard	Matthew 20:1-16
Two sons	Matthew 21:28-32
Tenants	Matthew 21:33-44
Wedding Banquet	Matthew 22:2-14
Fig Tree	Mark 13: 28-29
Faithful and wise servant	Luke 12:42-48
Ten Virgins	Matthew 25:1-13
Talents	Matthew 25:14-30
Sheep and Goats	Matthew 25:31-46
Growing seed	Mark 4:26-29
Watchful servants	Mark 13:35-37
Moneylender	Luke 7:41-43
Good Samaritan	Luke 10:30-37
Friend in need	Luke 11:5-8
Rich fool	Luke 12:16-21
Unfruitful fig tree	Luke 13:6-9
Lowest seat at the feast	Luke 14:7-14
Great Banquet	Luke 14:16-24
Cost of discipleship	Luke 14:28-33
Lost Coin	Luke 15:8-10
Lost (prodigal) son	Luke 15:11-32
Shrewd Manager	Luke 16:1-8
Rich man and Lazarus	Luke 16:19-31
Master and his servant	Luke 17:7-10
Persistent widow	Luke 18:2-8
Pharisee and tax collector	Luke 18:10-14

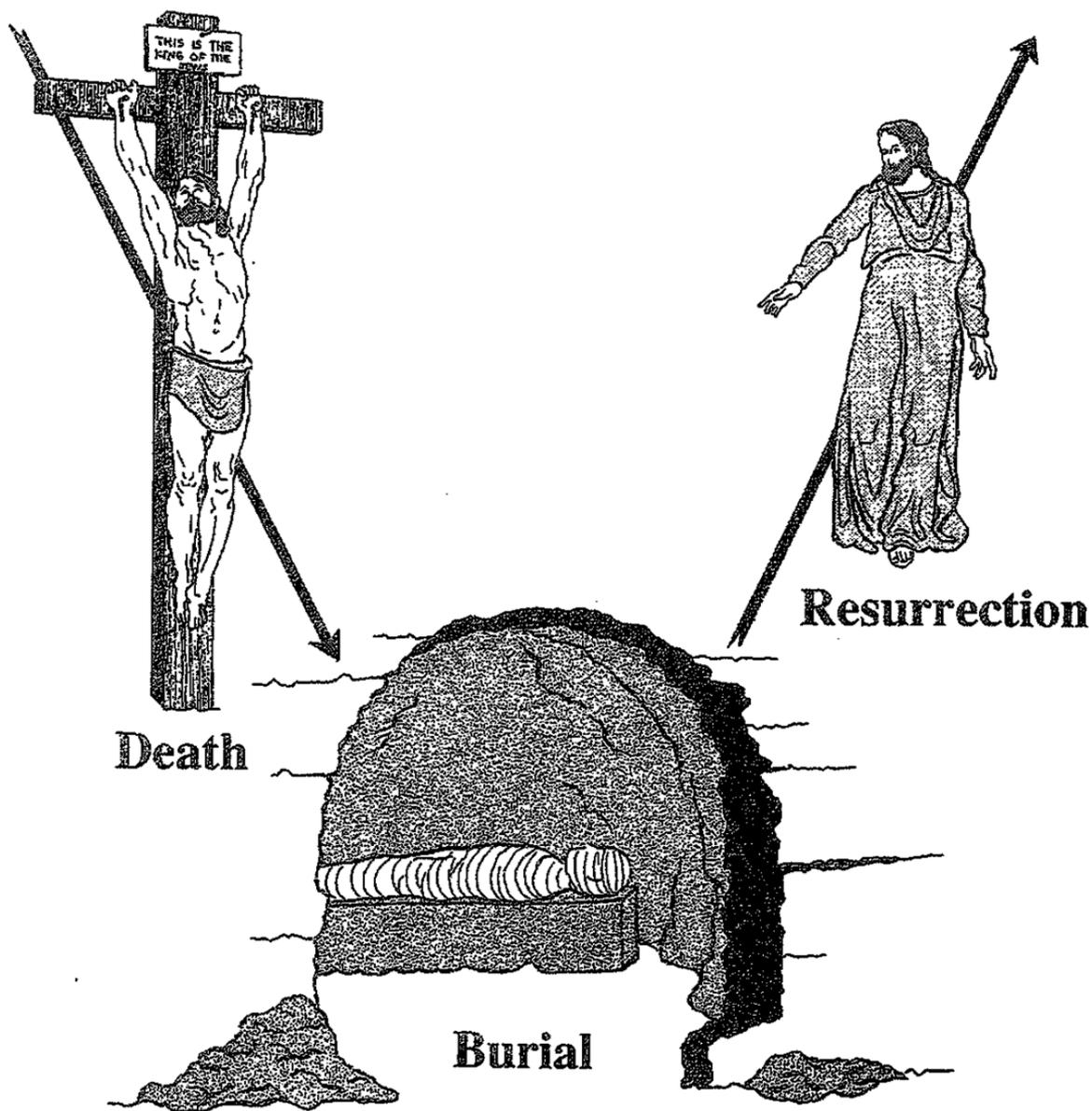
Baptism

A participation in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:1-6)



the Gospel enacted

I CORINTHIANS 15:3-4



WHAT PEOPLE BELIEVED ABOUT BAPTISM (AND HOW IT IS ACCOMPLISHED)

“Blessed are those who, placing their trust in the cross, have **gone down into the water**....We indeed **decend into the water** full of sins and defilement. However, we **come up**, bearing fruit in our heart, having the fear [of God] and the trust in Jesus in our spirit.” *Barnabus* (c. AD 70-75)

“Concerning baptism, baptize in this manner: **immerse** the believer **into living water** if possible. If living water is unavailable, immerse into stagnate water.” *Didache* (c. 80-140)

“Before a man bears the name of the Son of God, he is dead. But when he receives the seal, he lays aside his deadness and obtains life. **The seal, then, is the water. They descend into the water dead**, and they arise alive.” *Hermas* (c. 150)

“At our birth, we were born without our own knowledge or choice, but by our parents coming together....In order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and **may obtain in the water the remission of sins** formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe....And in the name of Jesus Christ...and in the name of the Holy Spirit.” *Justin Martyr* (c. 160)

“Christ has redeemed us by being crucified on the tree and by purifying us **in water**.” *Justin Martyr* (c. 160)

“...receive repentance and remission of sins, **through the water and bath** of regeneration...many come to be born again.” *Theophilus* (c. 180)

“But there are some of them [Gnostics] who assert that it is unnecessary to bring persons **under the water**. Rather, they mix oil and water together...this they maintain to be the redemption.... Other [heretics], reject all these practices.” *Irenaeus* (c. 180)

“Being baptized, we are illuminated.... **Bathing, by which we cleanse away our sins**.” *Clement of Alexandria* (c. 195)

“When **entering into the water**, we make profession of the Christian faith in the words of its rule.” *Tertullian* (c. 198)

“...the spirit is physically **washed in the waters**, and the flesh is spiritually **cleansed in the same water**.” *Tertullian* (c. 198)

“It makes no difference whether a man **is washed in a sea or a pool, a stream or a fountain, a lake or a trough**...All bodies of water...attain the sacramental power of sanctification.” *Tertullian* (c. 198)

“By the **bath of regeneration**, they were born as new-borne [Christians].”
Origen (c. 245)

“The blessed apostle [John] sets forth and proves that baptism is that by which the old man dies and the new man is born, saying ‘**He saved us by the washing** (word is actually ‘to dunk’ but it doesn’t translate well) of regeneration.’” *Cyprian* (c. 250)

“In the **bath of saving water**, the fire of Gehenna is extinguished.” *Cyprian* (c. 250)

“Nemesianus of Thubunae said: ‘The baptism that heretics and schismatics bestow is not the true one.... In the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ spoke with His divine voice, saying, ‘unless a man is born again **in water and spirit**, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’...Therefore, **unless they receive the saving bath** [in the catholic church], they cannot be saved.’” *Seventh Council of Carthage* (c. 256)

“Our salvation is founded in the baptism of the Spirit, which is **associated with the submersion of water**.” *Treatise on Re-Baptism* (c.257)

“For in no other way could the church conceive believers and give them **the new birth though the bath of regeneration** [that is baptism], except by Christ emptying Himself for their sake.” *Methodius* (c. 290)

“Those who are born again **by the bath** receive...His holiness and glory.”
Methodius (c. 290)

Infant Baptism Teachings

“The delay of baptism is to be preferable. Especially in the case of little children. For why is it necessary? Let the children come while they are growing up. Let them come while they are learning and learning where to come. Let them become Christians when they are able to know Christ. Why does the innocent period of life need remission of sins [for it has none]?” *Tertullian* (c. 198)

Note that we are not the first to ask the question about whether a child should be baptized. However, notice that even 160 years after Christ it is understood that children [and infants] have no need for baptism yet. Infant baptism was first proposed by a teacher in AD400 (that was 370 years after Christ!)-which was deemed heretical--and it was not widely practiced until the plague during the Middle Ages.

Baptism By Sprinkling?

This did not occur until after AD 700 (over 690 years after Christ). In 753 A.D. Pope Stephen III (notice that it is NOT the Bible or God giving the OK but it is a human being) legislated that “in cases of necessity” pouring water on the head

“was acceptable.”² The practice came to be called clinical or hospital baptism. Stephen III deemed it to be OK only when an individual was deathly ill and unable to be submerged in the water. We see the next major discussion of sprinkling almost 700 years later in 1311 A.D. In 1311 A.D. (1,279 years after Christ) A council of bishops meeting at Ravenna in Italy voted that either sprinkling or immersion was acceptable for everybody.³ The practice of sprinkling then took over universally in Catholicism (except in the Greek Catholic Church), and has since spread into some Protestant denominations. It’s important to remember that sprinkling was created by humans and NOT by God.

NOTICE

As you read through the first section, make note that they are arranged chronologically. As you read further, you are getting farther away from the time of the New Testament. Notice the consistency in teaching for several hundred years after Christ. Notice that baptism was understood to be adult submersion in water from the time of Christ until 1,279 years after Christ’s resurrection. This brings up the following questions to consider:

- 1) Are we to rely on the teachings of Christ or on those of an individual or “church system?”
- 2) What do we follow when tradition, feelings, and mentors teach something that is wrong and not found in the Bible? Which are we to obey?
- 3) When did sprinkling first become accepted?
- 4) Why do you think it’s important to realize when man creates something instead of God?
- 5) Is it sinful to ignore the command of God for a tradition made by a human?
- 6) If every example of baptism in the New Testament is by going completely under water, if Jesus was baptized as an example by going under water, and if Christians for hundreds of years have followed the Biblical pattern (meaning they denied sprinkling and infant baptism), what keeps you from obeying the same teachings of the Bible?

² EDINBURGH CYCLOPEDIA, III, 245-246

³ George A. Klingman, CHURCH HISTORY