



elements of a healthy faith

WELCOME! I'M GLAD YOU'RE HERE!

Jesus is at the center of everything that matters.

There are a lot of different ideas about who Jesus is and what it means to follow him, but only God's word is the ultimate authority. The Bible is more reliable than our traditions and culture. The Bible is even more trustworthy than our thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

The goal of this class is to help you grow spiritually—to shape your beliefs and behaviors to be more like Jesus.

Everyone has a choice to follow Jesus or not. The World's way promises much, but delivers little. It ALWAYS leaves us unsatisfied and eventually spiraling out of control.

When we choose God's way, we discover:

- Abundant life (John 10:10)
- Confident assurance (2 Timothy 1:12)
- Unshakable hope (Hebrews 6:18-19)
- True purpose (Jeremiah 29:11)
- Inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8)
- Incomprehensible peace (Philippians 4:7)
- Fearless living (1 John 4:18)
- Empowering strength (Philippians 4:13)
- Total Fulfillment (John 6:35)

There is nothing more important in this world than your relationship with God. WAY TO GO by taking some time out of your life to invest in your faith!

No matter where you are “at” in your spiritual journey, his class has the potential to enhance your faith. It's my prayer that it will help prepare you for that time in the end when Jesus says, “Well done, my good and faithful servant...” (Matthew 25:21).

I'm committed to doing whatever I can to help you grow closer to God. If you need anything, don't hesitate to let me know.

Praying for your growth,

Jonathan Shepherd



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Getting Started

How to Get the Most Out of this Class

1. Expect to **GROW**

“Blessed are those who find wisdom, those who gain understanding.” (Proverbs 3:13)

“My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.” (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

2. Resist **DISTRACTIONS**

“...let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith...” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

3. Take **NOTES**

“Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.” (Acts 17:11)

4. Ask **QUESTIONS**

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God...” (James 1:5)

5. Consider **PERSONAL** implications

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22)



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Jesus

What is the Gospel?

1. The gospel is what we **COMMUNICATE** to others about Jesus.

“Our gospel” (1 Thessalonians 1:5)

“My gospel” (Romans 2:16; Galatians 1:6-9)

“A different gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4)

“The gospel” (Galatians 1:11-12)

DIGGING DEEPER

The original meaning of “gospel” referred to a messenger sharing the good news of a victory in battle. (ISBE, Gospel, vol. 2, 529)

2. The gospel is the **FOUNDATION** for true life.

“For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it.” (Mark 8:35)

“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” (John 10:10b)

“Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

3. According to the Bible, the gospel is the good news of **SALVATION** by **FAITH** in Jesus.

*“For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.”
(Romans 1:16)*

GOOD NEWS: it isn't **BAD NEWS!**

SALVATION: essential help for our **BIGGEST** problems.

FAITH: we cannot earn God's love, we can only **ACCEPT** the free gift. Placing our trust in God based on good reasons.

JESUS: fully God and fully human, he is the **SAVIOR** of the world. Jesus lived a perfect life, died a real death, resurrected, and ascended into Heaven. He will return again, at the end of time, to judge the world.



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Who is Jesus?

He is God.

*“The high priest said to him, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.” “Yes, it is as you say,” Jesus replied.”
(Matthew 26:63-64)*

He became a human.

“The Word [Jesus] became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” (John 1:14)

He taught with authority.

“They were amazed at his teaching, for he taught as one who had real authority-- quite unlike the teachers of religious law.” (Mark 1:22)

He healed the sick.

“Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.” (Matthew 4:23)

He hung out with the outcasts.

“That night Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to be his dinner guests, along with his fellow tax collectors and many other notorious sinners. The Pharisees were indignant. “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?” they asked his disciples.” (Matthew 9:10-11)

He got angry at the religious fakes.

“How terrible it will be for you teachers of religious law and you Pharisees. Hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs-- beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity.” (Matthew 23:27)

He was persecuted unfairly.

“The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally two came forward.” (Matthew 26:59-60)

He was tempted in every way.

“... for he [Jesus] faced all of the same temptations we do...” Hebrews 4:15

He never made a mistake.

“... he [Jesus] did not sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

“But you know that he [Jesus] appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.” (1 John 3:5)

He died, rose from the dead, and continues to live to this day.

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead...” (1 Corinthians 15:20)



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He made it possible to have a relationship with God.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:16-17)

He can sympathize with our struggles.

“This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses...” (Hebrews 4:15)

He loves us.

“May you experience the love of Christ, though it is so great you will never fully understand it.” (Ephesians 3:19)

What the Gospel Isn't

1. God's love and grace isn't gained by **DOING** good things.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Romans 5:1)

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8–9)

2. God's love and grace isn't **LOST** by our sins.

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38-39)

3. God's love and grace isn't an **EXCUSE** for constant disobedience.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

“Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves.” (1 Peter 2:16)

What's so Good about the Good News?

1. **ANYONE** can have a relationship with God.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)



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2. God wants **EVERYONE** to have a relationship with him.

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

How Should We Respond?

*Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the **obedience** that comes from **faith** for his name’s sake.” (Romans 1:5)*

TRUST God more than anything else and **FOLLOW** him.

BELIEVE God and **BEHAVE** according to his will.

Do you Believe Jesus is Your Lord?

The most important decision you’ll ever make is how you respond to Jesus and God’s free gift of grace.

A Sample Prayer of Faith in Jesus:

“Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me unconditionally. I have nothing to prove to you, I couldn’t earn your love even if I tried. I can’t be perfect, I don’t have the power. I’m sorry for the times that I’ve ignored you and gone my own way. I need you in my life and I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand you more and more, every day. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your free gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian and live a life that pleases you.”

Have you said all of these things to God?

IF YOU BELIEVE, YOU BELONG IN GOD’S FAMILY!

If you have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life, we urge you to tell another believer. Tell a pastor, we would love to answer any questions, offer encouragement, and share in the excitement of your new life!

Summary: The Gospel

The Gospel is the good news of **SALVATION** by faith in Jesus.



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The Church

Biblical Images of the Church

DIGGING DEEPER

In the New Testament, the original word for Church (*ekklesia*) literally means “congregation” or “gathering.”

A **FAMILY** where everyone belongs.

“Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household...” (Ephesians 2:19)

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith...” (Galatians 3:26)

“So you are no longer a slave, but God’s child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.” (Galatians 4:7)

God wants everyone to connect with other believers.
Without a church family, we are spiritual **ORPHANS**.

A **BUILDING** or temple in which God dwells.

“In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:21–22)

“...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood...” (1 Peter 2:5)

God is working in the world through the church. Without the church, we miss out on our TRUE PURPOSE.

BRANCHES connected to the vine.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” (John 15:5; See also Romans 11:11-24)

God sustains his people and enables them to bear fruit. When we are disconnect from the church, our lives are **INEFFECTIVE**.



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A **BODY** of interconnected parts.

*“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ... Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.”
(1 Corinthians 12:12,14; See also vv 15-31 and Ephesians 4:4–16)*

“And he [Jesus] is the head of the body...” (Colossians 1:18)

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.” (Colossians 3:15)

God loves variety and harmony. Without the church, we miss out on discovering our individual differences and unique **DESIGN**.

A **FLOCK** with Jesus as the shepherd.

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.” (John 10:11)

“... our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep” (Hebrews 13:20–21)

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32)

God leads and protects his people. Without the church, we are **EXPOSED**.

A **KINGDOM** wholly different from the world.

“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” (Colossians 1:13–14)

God saves his people from destruction and teaches us a new way to live. Without the church, we **REMAIN** unenlightened.

The **BRIDE** of Christ.

*“Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.”
(Revelation 19:7; See also Mark 2:18-20; John 3:29, 2 Corinthians 11:12; Ephesians 5:22-33)*

God loves his people—extravagantly. Without the church, we can feel **ABANDONED**.



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What do these images teach us?

1. The Church is everyone who has submitted to God's **AUTHORITY**.
2. We belong together because we are **BETTER** together.
3. Everyone has a **PURPOSE**.

MAKING IT PERSONAL

As you consider these powerful images, how do they make you feel? How do you think God is calling you to "be" the church?

How does the Church Impact My Faith?

1. A church helps me **CENTER** my life around God.

"They worshiped together at the Temple each day..." (Acts 2:46, NLT)

"Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

"Glorify the LORD with me; let us exalt his name together." (Psalm 34:3)

2. A church helps me **CONNECT** with other believers.

"In the same way, even though we are many individuals, Christ makes us one body and individuals who are connected to each other." (Romans 12:5, GW)

*"Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister."
(1 John 4:21)*

*"Be devoted to each other like a loving family. Excel in showing respect for each other."
(Romans 12:10, GW)*



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3. A church helps me **CULTIVATE** spiritual growth.

*“Whoever walks with wise people will be wise, but whoever associates with fools will suffer.”
(Proverbs 13:20, GW)*

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Ephesians 4:15–16)

“Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

4. A church helps me **CONTRIBUTE** something back

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up” (Ephesians 4:11–12, NIV)

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” (Ephesians 2:10)

*“For we are co-workers in God’s service; you are God’s field, God’s building.”
(1 Corinthians 3:9)*

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

5. A church helps me **COMMUNICATE** God’s message

*“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. **And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us.**” (2 Corinthians 5:18–20)*

“You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14–16)



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THE MESSAGE:

“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:14–16, *The Message*)

Biblical Fellowship

“God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
(1 Corinthians 1:9)

Following Jesus means being in **relationship** with him and other believers.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”
(Acts 2:42–47; See also 4:32–36)

DIGGING DEEPER

In the New Testament, the original word for fellowship (*koinonia*) literally means “to share with someone in something” (TDNT).

As a fellowship, God’s people:

Share **NEEDS**

“... serve one another humbly in love. For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.” (Galatians 5:13–15)

“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2)



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Share **STRUGGLES**

“I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.” (Romans 15:30)

“And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.” (2 Corinthians 1:7)

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective ... My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” (James 5:16, 19–20)

“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9–10)

Share **PRAYER**

“And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord’s people.” (Ephesians 6:18)

Share a common **MISSION**

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19–20)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

*“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you **stand firm in the one** Spirit, striving **together as one** for the faith of the **gospel**” (Philippians 1:27)*

Share **INSTRUCTION**

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship...” (Acts 2:42–47)

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.” (Colossians 3:16)

“... that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other’s faith.” (Romans 1:12)



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Share material **RESOURCES**

“John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”” (Luke 3:11, NIV)

“They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need.” (Acts 2:45)

Share RECONCILIATION and **FORGIVENESS**

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23–24)

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” (Colossians 3:13)

Summary: The Church

The church is the connected **BODY** of believers who worship God, share struggles, and celebrate blessings.



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Personal Worship

The Bible

“Revelation is the **DISCLOSURE** by God of truths at which people could not arrive without divine initiative and enabling.” (New Dictionary of Biblical Theology)

DIGGING DEEPER

The Hebrew and Greek words for revelation literally mean uncover or reveal.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them.

Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth.

The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple.

The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart.

The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.

The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever.

The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous.

They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb.

By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. **May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.**

(Psalm 19:1–14)

Images the Bible Uses to Describe Itself

RAIN

*As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: **It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.** (Isaiah 55:11-12)*

MILK

*Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, **so that by it you may grow up in your salvation...** (1 Peter 2:2; See also Hebrews 5:11-13)*



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FOOD

*"When your words came, I ate them; **they were my joy and my heart's delight...**"
(Jeremiah 15:16)*

*"Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not **live** on bread alone, but **on every word that comes from the mouth of God.**" (Matthew 4:4)*

LAMP

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." (Psalm 119:105)

MIRROR

*"Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and **immediately forgets** what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that **gives freedom**, and **continues** to do this, **not forgetting** what he has heard, but **doing it**--he will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:23-25)*

SEED

*"For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of **imperishable**, through the living and enduring word of God." (1 Peter 1:23; See also Mark 4:1-20)*

SWORD

*"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of **the Spirit**, which is the word of God." (Ephesians 6:17)*

*"For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it **judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**" (Hebrews 4:12)*

FIRE and HAMMER

*"Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says: "Because the people have spoken these words, I will make my words in your mouth a fire and these people the wood it **consumes.**" (Jeremiah 5:14)*

*"...Is not my word like fire, declares the Lord, and like a hammer that **breaks** a rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29)*



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Why the Bible Continues to Be Significant

1. The Bible is divinely **INSPIRED**.

“All Scripture is God-breathed ...” (2 Timothy 3:16)

2. The Bible is **PRACTICAL** for day to day faith decisions.

“... and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(2 Timothy 3:16–17)

3. The Bible is **HISTORICAL**, not mythical or fictional.

“Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,” (Luke 1:1–3)

4. The Bible is **AUTHORITATIVE** as the ultimate source of truth.

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17)

DIGGING DEEPER

For further reading about the reliability of the Bible, check out [The Canon of Scripture](#), by F.F. Bruce.

Summary: The Bible

The Bible is like a **LOVE LETTER**, (drawing us closer to God) and a **PLAYBOOK** (showing us how to live).



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Prayer

1. Our prayer life is determined by what we **BELIEVE** about God.

“... anyone who comes to him must believe that [God] exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” (Hebrews 11:6)

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” (Matthew 7:7–8)

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,” (Ephesians 3:20)

2. Prayer can be defined as “**simple communication** with God.”

“And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.” (Matthew 6:7–8)

4. What can you say to the God who knows everything—the good, the bad—about us? **ANYTHING.**

“You have searched me, LORD, and you know me.” (Psalm 139:1)

“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23–24)

5. God answers prayers according to **HIS WILL.**

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us.” (1 John 5:14)

“You do not have because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.” (James 4:3)

6. Prayer draws us **CLOSER** to God.

““Come now, let us settle the matter,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.”” (Isaiah 1:18)

“Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.” (James 4:8)



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Two Prayers worth Memorizing

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.
Impress them on your children.
Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road,
when you lie down and when you get up.
Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.
Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*

Matthew 6:9–13

“Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

DIGGING DEEPER

For further reading about prayer, check out [Letters to Malcom, Chiefly on prayer](#), by C.S. Lewis

How to Have a Meaningful Time with God

1. Pick a place with minimal **DISTRACTION**.

“But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, “Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!”” (Luke 10:40)

2. Choose a **TIME** when you are at your best.

“Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. “Simon,” he said to Peter, “are you asleep? Couldn’t you keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”” (Mark 14:37–38)

3. Begin with **PRAYER**.

“Two men went up to the temple to pray ... But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’” (Luke 18:9–13)

Adoration
Confession
Thanksgiving
Supplication (ask)



elements of a healthy faith

4. **READ** God's Word

"Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11)

5. **REFLECT** by meditating and/or journaling.

"My eyes stay open through the watches of the night, that I may meditate on your promises." (Psalm 119:148)

6. **SHARE** with someone (or be ready to).

"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." (Colossians 3:16)

7. **DEVELOP** a habit without creating a ritual.

"“Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence." (Colossians 2:21–23)

"So then, the word of the LORD to them will become: Do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that; a little here, a little there— so that as they go they will fall backward; they will be injured and snared and captured." (Isaiah 28:13)



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Giving Back To God

1. When God created us, one of the tasks we were given was to **SUBDUE** and **RULE** the earth.
“God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”” (Genesis 1:28)

This gift isn't ownership, it is **STEWARDSHIP**.

“Everything under heaven belongs to me.” (Job 41:11)

“You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:11)

2. Question: Do you own **YOUR STUFF**, or does **YOUR STUFF** own you?
“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:19–21)

3. The grip of materialism is broken by **SURRENDER**.
“Do not lay a hand on the boy,” he said. “Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.”” (Genesis 22:12)

4. Giving back to God is an act of **WORSHIP**.
“He said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.”” (Matthew 22:21)

“I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God.” (Philippians 4:18)

DIGGING DEEPER

In Scripture, tithing meant giving 10% of all crops to the Levites and priests (they had no land of their own). Over time, the tithe included all kinds of income.

5. Give according to your convictions, not your **PLANS**.
“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:6–8)



elements of a healthy faith

Shared Worship

The Lord's Supper

1. Celebrating the Lord's Supper is an **ESSENTIAL** form of Christian worship where believers eat bread and drink juice (or wine, in some churches) as a symbol of Jesus' death on the cross.

"While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." (Matthew 26:26–28)

2. We celebrate to **REMEMBER** Jesus.

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." (1 Corinthians 11:23–24)

3. We celebrate to **PROCLAIM** the gospel.

*"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."
(1 Corinthians 11:26)*

4. We celebrate with **THANKFULNESS** to God.

"For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26)

5. We celebrate our calling to be a **SERVANT**.

*Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. ... **I am among you as one who serves.**" (Luke 22:25–27)*

7. We celebrate to **EXAMINE** the condition of our heart.

*"Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup."
(1 Corinthians 11:28)*

8. We celebrate with **HOPE** in the return of Jesus.

"I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29)

9. We celebrate in **FREEDOM**.

"And when I come I will give further directions." (1 Corinthians 11:34)



elements of a healthy faith

Baptism

1. Baptism is the obedient act of a **BELIEVING** Christian who wants to publicly confess their personal commitment to Jesus Christ. It is the symbolic WASHING AWAY of one's old, sinful past and the RISING again to LIFE, God's way. The act of baptism can be defined as an outward expression of an inward decision.

2. Baptism illustrates Jesus' **DEATH**, BURIAL and RESURRECTION.

"Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... and He rose again." 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4

*"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." (Romans 6:4)*

"...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." (Colossians 2:12)

3. Baptism illustrates **NEW LIFE** as a Christian: trusting and obeying Jesus.

"By our baptism then, ... we may live a NEW LIFE." (Romans 6:4)

"...for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." (Galatians 3:27)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

4. Baptism **DOES NOT** make you a Christian.

Baptism is a demonstration that you already believe. It is important to understand that baptism does not "save" you. You are "saved" only by your faith in Jesus.

Why do we get baptized?

1. To follow the example set by **CHRIST**.

". . . Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river." Mark 1: 9

2. Because Christ **COMMANDED** it.

"Jesus said, Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19-20)



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3. It **SHOWS** that I'm a believer.

"Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized." (Acts 18:8)

When is a good time to get baptized?

As soon as you BELIEVE! THERE IS NO REASON TO DELAY! Every disciple of Jesus ought to be baptized. As soon as you have decided to trust Christ with your life, you can and should be baptized. If you're waiting until you're perfect, you'll never be ready.

"Those who believe ... were baptized ... that day!" Acts 8:35-38

Worshiping Well with Others

(getting the most out of the weekend worship service)

1. Be **CONSISTENT**.

"Do not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing..." (Hebrews 10:25)

2. Be **AWARE**.

"Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other." (Deuteronomy 4:39)

3. Be **HUMBLE**.

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if only you would hear his voice," (Psalm 95:6-7)

4. Be **READY**.

"Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown." (Mark 4:20)

5. Be **POSITIVE**.

*"Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations."
(Psalm 100:4-5)*

6. Be **INVOLVED**.

"I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me." (Psalm 13:6)

"Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men." (Acts 17:11-12)



elements of a healthy faith

7. Be **AUTHENTIC**.

“Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.” (John 4:23–24)

8. Be **RESPONSIVE**.

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” (James 1:22)

SHARED WORSHIP SCORECARD

Be **CONSISTENT**

Have I been to church regularly?

Be **AWARE**

Did I acknowledge God’s presence?

Be **EXPECTANT**

Was I ready for God to act?

Be **HUMBLE**

Did I come looking to be served?

Be **READY** (????)

What was the posture of my heart?

Be **POSITIVE**

Was I filled with joy?

Be **INVOLVED**

How did I engage?

Be **AUTHENTIC**

Are there any self-deceptions I need to release?

Be **RESPONSIVE**

What are the implications for me? My friends?

(cut that out and put it some place you’ll look at before going to church)