
Foundations Manual

Week 1

The Godhead

To know God is the most important journey of your life! The problem is how we do, as limited finite humans know the infinite awesome God of the Bible?

A good place to start is to know that God is unknowable, unreachable by the human mind and understanding. Know that God is and always will be an awesome mystery beyond what our faculties can grasp.

Once you can accept this you have already taken a great step towards knowing our wonderful God. You need to realise that you can only know this awesome God as He chooses to reveal certain things about Himself to you. There are 3 things that will help you to receive from God revelation about His attributes. Remember that:

- God reveals Himself to us through faith and love, not through our reasoning
- God reveals Himself through Jesus Christ our Lord, through His Word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- God reveals Himself to those who diligently seek Him.

We would like to help you in your journey of receiving understanding from God about some of His attributes by listing to some of the things the Bible says about God. Remember that reading them is not enough to get to know God. Ask God to show you in your heart what they really mean.

We will start off with some of the general attributes of God, and then look at how God reveals Himself as God the Father, as God the Son and as God the Holy Spirit. This is commonly called the Trinity. It is important to know that all the Persons of the Trinity are God and all are one. (We will study this mystery of the Trinity further in one of the next levels in our Foundations Course)

1. Some general attributes of God

1.1	God is Holy	Ex 15:11; Is 6: 1-5
1.2	God is eternal	Rev 1:8; 4:8; 2 Peter3:8
1.3	God is immutable (unchanging)	Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8
1.4	God is omniscient (all knowing)	Heb 4:13; Ps 139:1-4
1.5	God is omnipotent (all powerful)	Mat 19:26; Job 42:2
1.6	God is omnipresent (present everywhere)	Ps 139:7 - 12
1.7	God is transcendent (far above all we can think)	Is 6:1,5; Is 57:15; Ps 139:6
1.8	God is just	Zep 3:5; Rom 2.:2
1.9	God is self-sufficient (He needs nothing or nobody)	Is 40.12 - 18
1.10	God is sovereign (He rules His universe)	2 Chron 20.:6; Deut 4.:39

A. God the Father

1. Some attributes revealed about God the Father

When Jesus introduced God the people, He introduced Him as God the Father. Our relationship as children of God is emphasized right through the New Testament. The Holy Spirit also draws us to the Father. (Rom 8:15,16).

2. Some characteristics of the Father:

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| 3.1. Intimate and involved. | - Ps 139:1-18 |
| 3.2. Kind and compassionate. | - Ps 103:8-14 |
| 3.3. Accepting and filled with joy and love. | - Zeph 3:17; Rom 15:7 |
| 3.4. Warm and affectionate. | - Isa 4:11; Hosea 11:3,4 |
| 3.5. Always with us and eager to be with us. | - Jer 31:20; Eze 34:11-16; Heb 13:5 |
| 3.6. Patient and slow to anger. | - Ex 34:6; 2Pet 3:9 |
| 3.7. Loving, gentle and protective. | - Ps 18:2; Jer 31:3; Isa 42:3 |
| 3.8. Trustworthy. | - Lamentations 3:22-23 |
| 3.9. Wants to give us full life. | - Jn 10:10 |
| 3.10. Full of grace and mercy. | - Luk 15:11-16; Heb 4:15-16 |
| 3.11. Tenderhearted and forgiving; open arms for us. | - Ps 130:1-4; Luk 15:17-24 |
| 3.12. Committed to our growth and proud of us. | - Rom 8:28-29;
2 Cor 7:4; Heb 12:5-11 |

B. God the Son - Jesus

"... became flesh, died on the cross and rose from the dead, and is seated now next to the Father".

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| 4.1 Son of God (thus also God) | - Jn 1:1; Mat 16:13-16; Heb 1:2,3,5 |
| 4.2 Creator with God the Father | - Col 1 : 16-17; John 1:1-5 |
| 4.3 Son of Man | - John 1:14; Phil 2:6-8; Heb 15-16 |
| 4.4 The Lamb of God | - John 1:29; Heb 4:15; Heb 9:22; Heb 10:19-22. |
- Holds all authority and power and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
- Heb 12:2; Efp 1:20-22; Col 2:15; Rev 1:18;
 Mat 28:18; Phil 2: 9-11.

1. The following are some other titles given to Jesus:

- 5.1. The Almighty - Rev 1:8
- 5.2. The Alpha and the Omega , The beginning and the end - Rev 1:7-8, 22:18
- 5.3. The Author and perfecter of our faith - Heb 12:2
- 5.4. The bread of Life - Jn 6:32
- 5.5. Chief Shepherd - 1 Pe 5:4
- 5.6. The Good shepherd - Jn 10: 11
- 5.7. The Bright Morning Star - Rev 22:16
- 5.8. Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace - Isa 9:6
- 5.9. King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords - 1 Tim 6: 14-16
- 5.10. Emmanuel , God with us - Isa 7:14
- 5.11. The Word - Jn 1:1
- 5.12. Faithful and true - Rev 19:13
- 5.13. I Am - Jn 8:58
- 5.14. Lord of All - Acts 10:36
- 5.15. The Rock - 1 Co 10:4
- 5.16. The true vine - Jn 15:1
- 5.17. The root of David - Rev 22:18
- 5.18. The Messiah - Jn 1:41
- 5.19. The lion of the tribe of Judah - Rev 5:5

C. God the Holy Spirit.

6.1. Deity proven by His names: - 1 Cor 6:11; Rom 8:15; John 14:16

6.2. Deity proven by characteristics :

Omniscience	- 1 Cor 2:10-11 (The creator)
Omnipresence	- Ps 139:7
Omnipotent	- Gen 1:2
Holiness	- Luke 11:13
Wisdom	- Isa 40:13
Truth	- 1 John 5:6
Life	- Rom 8:2

6.3. Deity proven by His Works:

Creating	- Gen 1:2
Inspiring	- 2 Pet 1:21
Begetting Christ	- Luke 1:35
Convincing men	- John 16:8
Regenerating	- John 3:5-6
Comforting	- John 14:16
Interceding	- Rom 8:16,27
Sanctifying	- 2 Thess 2:13

6.4. Deity proven by being associated with the other Persons of Trinity.

- Acts 5:3-4; Mat 28:19; 2 Cor 13:14

6.5. Not a force but a personality or being:

Intelligent	- 1 Cor 2:10-11
He has feelings	- Eph 4:30
He has a will	- 1 Cor 12:11
Teaches	- John 14:26
Guides	- Rom 8:14
Commissions	- Acts 13:4
Commands men	- Acts 8:2a
Intercedes	- Rom 8:26
Speaks	- John 15:26
Can be obeyed	- Acts 10:19-20
Can be lied to	- Acts 5:3
Can be resisted	- Acts 7:51
Can be revered	- Ps 51:11
Can be blasphemed	- Mat 12:31
Can be grieved	- Eph 4:30
Can be outraged	- Heb 10:29

Week 2

Salvation

- Outline:
1. Why should one be saved?
 2. What is the penalty of sin?
 3. Can man earn salvation?
 4. Is there then hope?
 5. God's provision of a saviour.
 6. What about other religions?
 7. Who can be saved?
 8. How can one be saved?
 9. Who are you now?

1. Why should one be saved?

God created man for relationship with Himself. After the "fall" sin caused a separation between man and God and enabled death to reign. God is holy and hates sin, but loves the sinner. Thus man needs to be "saved" in order to restore relationship with God.

- a) Sin separates " ... your iniquities have separated you from your God". (Isa 59:2)
Sin blinds. 2 Cor. 4:4
Sin corrupts the conscience. Tit 1:15
Sin corrupts the will. Isa 53:6
Sin enslaves. Rom 6:16

- b) Sin is universal
"There is no one righteous, not even one. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:10, 23)

All of mankind is party to sin:

i) By birth

☞☞ "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned ..." Rom 5:12

☞☞ "For, as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners ... "
Rom 5 19a

☞☞ "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me."
Psalm 51:5

Sin is our spiritual heritage as a result of the fall.

ii) By action

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Rom 3:23

2. What is the penalty of sin?

Divine judgement and death.

☞☞ Rom 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

☞☞ Eze 18:4b "... the soul who sins is the one who will die."

3. Can man earn salvation?

No! Man is powerless to save himself. We see that even our best effort is not good enough.

Isa. 64:6 *"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away".*

Salvation is a free gift available to all who desire to have a relationship with God.

Eph. 2:8 *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God".*

4. Is there then hope?

Yes! God took the first step towards reconciling mankind to Himself.

✍ John 3:16 *"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."*

✍✍1 John 3:16 *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us."*

5. God's provision of a Saviour

God required a blood sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin.

Heb. 9:22 *"In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness."*

In the Old Testament these sacrifices had to be made day after day, year after year *"because it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins"*. Heb. 10:4

When Adam and Eve sinned, God had already begun to put into effect His plan to provide a once-off sacrifice that would forever do away with sin (Heb 9:26) by providing the ultimate sacrifice in the bodily form of His only son Jesus Christ, because:

- i) Jesus was born of a virgin and therefore was not subject to sin passed on as a heritage (original sin). Rom. 5:12
- ii) Jesus himself committed no sin. Heb. 4:15b.

Jesus was pure in every way.

Jesus Christ was crucified at Calvary, shed His blood on the cross, once for all, to take away our sins.

Heb. 9:26 *"But now he has appeared once for all at the end of the age to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself."*

He paid the price in full; He purchased/bought us with His blood.

Rev. 5:9 *"You are worthy to take the scroll and to open the seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation."*

1 Pet. 3: 18 *"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."*

Jesus Christ is the only acceptable sacrifice before God for the forgiveness of sin, to reconcile man to God.

6. What about other religions?

There is no other way to God the Father, than through His Son, Jesus Christ.

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

☞☞ Acts 4:12 *“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”*

☞☞ John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

7. Who can be saved?

Potentially every human being. It depends on the response of each individual person to the revelation of God.

☞☞ 1 Tim 2:4 *“...God our saviour, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”*

☞☞ John 3:16 *“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.”*

8. How can one be saved?

- a) Admit that you are a sinner and in need of a saviour.
- b) Believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sins.
- c) Repent.

Repentance comes from the Greek word ‘metanoia’ which literally means, “to change one’s mind”. This means that repentance is not a state of remorse or feeling sorry, but rather a decision. It is an act of the will rather than an issue of emotion. Of course, the decision may be accompanied by great emotion, but repentance itself is the changing of one’s mind.

This changing of one’s mind, and consequently of the direction of one’s entire life, is firstly a recognising of one’s sinfulness and secondly a decision to live according to God’s revealed will for His chosen people.

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and let each of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.’” Acts 2:38a

Repentance involves

1. Remorse
 2. Restitution/restoring or giving back to its proper owner, or of making reparation to a person for loss or injury inflicted (Luke 19:8)
 3. Reformation: follow Jesus
- d) Ask forgiveness.
- 1 John 1:9 *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

- e) Invite Jesus into your heart.

Rev. 3: 20 *"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will go in and eat with him, and he with me."*

- f) Confess Jesus with your mouth.

Rom. 10: 9 *"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Rom 10:10 *"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."*

- g) Tell someone else.

Mt. 10: 32 *"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven."*

Mt. 10: 33 *"But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."*

Example of a "sinners" prayer:

Lord Jesus, I admit that I am a sinner. I believe that you died in my place to take away my sin. I repent of my sin. (Name them if you want.) I ask forgiveness for my sins. Lord Jesus, I want you to come into my heart and be my Saviour. I receive your free gift of salvation. I confess that you are now my Lord and Master. Thank you that you have forgiven me, that you have died in my place on the cross, and have made me your son/ daughter. Amen.

9. Who are you now?

When you received Jesus as Lord and Saviour of your life, something major happened to your spirit, it was reborn. 2 Cor 5:17 refers to being born again. It says that you are now a new creation. Jesus also said in John 3:3-8 that unless we are "born again" we cannot enter the kingdom of God.

To be "born again" or saved, also means that you are now...

- a) Forgiven: Rom 8:1 *"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."*
- b) A new creation: 2 Cor. 5: 17 *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"*
- c) A child of God: 1 John 3: 1 *"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!"*
- d) One of those who has His Spirit in their hearts: Gal 4:6 *"Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'"*
- e) A son and heir: Gal. 4: 7 *"So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir."*

3. Why must we be baptised?

a) Jesus commanded it.

Matt. 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

b) Jesus Christ set the example.

Matt. 3:13-16 "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. But John tried to deter him, saying, 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfil all righteousness.' Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptised, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased'."

Luke 6:40 "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher."

c) i) The apostles commanded it.

Act 2:28 "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit'."

ii) Early church examples:

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| 1. | The first converts in Jerusalem | Acts 2:37-41. |
| 2. | The Samaritans | Acts 8:12-13 |
| 3. | The Ethiopian Eunuch | Acts 8:36-38 |
| 4. | Paul | Acts 22:16, Acts 9:17 - 18 |
| 5. | Cornelius and household | Acts 10:33-48 |
| 6. | Lydia and household | Acts 16:13-15 |
| 7. | The Philippian jailer | Acts 16: 31-34 |
| 8. | Crispus and other Corinthians | Acts 18:8 |

d) We prove our love.

1 John 5:3 "This is love for God; to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome."

4. What are the prerequisites?

a) Repentance

Acts 2:38 states clearly that repentance must precede baptism.

b) Faith in Jesus Christ: *Mark 16:16 "Whoever believes and is baptised will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned."*

5. Who must be baptised?

- a) We have already seen that baptism is a command for every believer in Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, new believers were normally baptised almost immediately after being saved.

Acts 2:41 "Those who accepted his message were baptised, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."

- b) What about infant baptism?

- i) Babies cannot repent (Acts 2:38) and have faith in Jesus Christ.
- ii) Jesus was not baptised as an infant (read Matt 3:13-17 again). Jesus was dedicated to the Lord. (Luke 2:22)
- iii) Children who are old enough to understand the gospel and are able to exercise personal faith can be baptised.

6. When must we be baptised?

Upon conversion, as soon as possible. *Acts 22:16 "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptised..."*

7. How must we be baptised?

- a) By immersion as already discussed.

- b) We baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Matt 28:19 "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

8. Where to now?

Water baptism is part of the beginning of your walk in Jesus Christ. We see in Acts 2:42, that the new believers who were added to the church did not settle back into complacency. Being new in their knowledge and experience of Jesus Christ, they moved on to the things that would build up their faith.

Acts 2:42 says "They devoted themselves a) *to the apostles' teaching,*
b) *to the fellowship,*
c) *to the breaking of bread and*
d) *to prayer."*

How can you do the same?

- i) Come to church regularly.
- ii) Join a cell group.
- iii) Pray often!

Week 4

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

- Outline:
1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
 2. What is the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
 3. What will change in your life after this baptism?
 4. How do I receive this baptism?
 5. What about speaking in tongues?
 6. How do I remain full of the Holy Spirit?

*"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who... will **baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.**" (Matthew 3:11)*

The Bible speaks of both water baptism and Spirit baptism as natural and necessary experiences following conversion. Although sometimes misunderstood, it is scriptural, and essential for all believers who desire a closer relationship with Jesus, and for those who desire to be used more effectively by Him. It will be difficult either to understand or to desire this event in one's life if one does not first have some knowledge of who the Holy Spirit is and what He does. We need thus to begin by "introducing" the Holy Spirit.

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?

a) His person

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14)

The Holy Spirit is not some sort of impersonal force. Rather, He is a being or person which the Bible speaks of as "him" and "his", not 'it' and 'its'. The Bible shows him possessing the characteristics of a person.

These include:-

- intelligence and thought
- speech and language
- feelings and emotions

and performing the actions of a person, such as:-

- leading
- guiding
- working
- giving
- fellowshipping
- convicting
- teaching
- comforting
- counselling
- praying, etc.

(John 14:16 - 18, 26; John 16:7, 13 - 14)

The Holy Spirit is not less than God, but fully God. He is called God directly and referred to God indirectly by having God characteristics (1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 5:3-4) and by performing or sharing in the works of God.

For examples of these, refer to Week 1: God the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is both a personal and a divine being. We either have the Holy Spirit or not (one cannot have half a person); and we will no longer ask, "How much of the Holy Spirit do I have?" but "How much does the Holy Spirit have of me?"

Other insights into the person of the Holy Spirit may be gained from the many names by which he is called in scripture and from the symbols used for him (fire, wind, water, oil and the dove).

b) His work

As part of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit is involved in all the works of God. He played a special role in creation, revelation, God's dealings with Israel and the incarnation of Christ. He is involved in the church: he indwells it, unifies it, gives gifts to its members for the edifying of the body, ordains and equips its leaders and stirs it to mission.

Perhaps the most notable work of the Holy Spirit is his involvement in the life of the individual believer. Even before conversion, it is the Spirit that convicts a person and draws him to Christ (**John 6:44, 16:8-11**). At the moment of conversion it is the Spirit that regenerates the person's spirit and causes him to be born again (**John 3:5-8, Titus 3:5**). From that moment on, every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit (**Rom. 8:9**); and is sealed by him. The indwelling is like a deposit guaranteeing the full payment (of salvation) at Christ's return (**Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30, 2 Cor. 1:22**).

After conversion, for the rest of his life, the Spirit walks with the believer, assuring, sanctifying, fellowshiping with, leading, guiding, teaching, inspiring and giving gifts to him. We could say that the Holy Spirit bears primary responsibility for the individual believer, carrying and transforming him from convicted sinner to presented saint.

This is precisely the introduction to the Holy Spirit that Jesus gave us in **John 14:16-18**. He is our Comforter / Counsellor / Advocate (there is no precise English translation for the Greek *parakletos*), one who walks alongside, advising every step of the way.

Now that we know who the Holy Spirit is and what he desires to do in and through us, we will be more able to understand and to desire and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

2. What is baptism in the Holy Spirit?

It is important to understand there is a difference between receiving the Holy Spirit at salvation and being filled by Him while receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Beyond the indwelling of the Spirit, which is for every believer there is a tangible occasion in which the Holy Spirit comes upon and fills them. This anointing, empowering and equipping helps both for life (to be able to live the life God wants us to) and ministry (to be able to do the things He wants us to).

Jesus, the perfect God-man, was surely indwelt by the Holy Spirit from birth, yet he needed to be anointed by the Spirit (to receive him in a fuller and different way) before

he began his public ministry (**Matt. 3:16**). The disciples seemed to receive the Holy Spirit before Jesus ascended to heaven (**John 20:22**) and yet had to wait in Jerusalem for a subsequent powerful infilling of the Holy Spirit before embarking on their public ministry (**Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4-5 & 8, 2:1-4**).

The Samaritans believed (were converted) when Philip preached to them and were, therefore, from that moment, indwelt by the Holy Spirit (**Acts 8:12**). Yet Peter and John still found it necessary to pray for them to “receive the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit had not yet come upon them” with this subsequent infilling and empowering (**vv. 14-17**).

Paul (**Acts 9:17**) and possibly Apollos (**18:24-26**) and the Ephesian disciples (**19:1-6**) also experienced a filling subsequent to conversion.

John the Baptist predicted that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit (**Matt. 3:11, John 1:33**). Jesus clearly identified this subsequent powerful anointing as the baptism in the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5**). “Baptism” (which means immersion) is here used figuratively: in water baptism we are literally immersed in water. In Spirit baptism the experience is sometimes so overwhelming and transforming that it is as if we are being immersed in the Holy Spirit.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit brings totally new dimensions of God’s presence, person and power into our lives. We cannot fulfil the life or ministry God intends for us without it. We can receive it directly after conversion (**see Acts 10:44**): one does not first have to ‘graduate’ as a Christian and become good enough. Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift from a good God (**Luke 11:13**).

3. What will change in your life after being baptizes with the Holy Spirit?

- Sense of God's approval. Remember what happened with Jesus following His baptism in the Holy Spirit. There was a voice from heaven saying "this is My beloved Son" (**Matt 3:16-17**).
- The Bible comes alive and opens up (**John 14:26**).
- Prayer and worship becomes one of the most wonderful experiences in your relationship with him. Prayer and worship moves from ritual to something alive and meaningful (**John 4:23,24; Rom. 8:26; Ps. 5:11**).
- You will find that a new love is shed abroad in your heart, both for God and for people (**John 15:12; Rom. 5:5**).
- The fruit of the Spirit as mentioned in **Gal. 5:22,23** (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control) become a reality through your walk in the Spirit (**vs. 25**).
- The doorway to power and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are opened, enabling you to witness for Christ in a new and powerful way (**Acts 1:8**).

4.How do I receive this baptism?

While being baptized in the Holy Spirit is a profoundly supernatural experience, we should not make it something mystical and spooky. Here are some simple requirements to help us receive:

a) **Convert**

We must be born again believers. The Holy Spirit will not empower or fill someone in this way whose life is not already given over to God (**Acts 2:28,39**).

b) **Believe**

We must honour and seek the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Particularly, we must believe in the baptism of the Holy Spirit and in our need of it. Believe that Jesus will baptize you when you ask Him to (**Luke 11:11-13**).

c) **Surrender**

To be full of the Spirit is really to be controlled by the Spirit. If we want to be completely filled, we must surrender every part of our lives to God.

d) **Thirsting or hungering for the Holy Spirit** (**Matt. 5:6; John 7:37-39**)

e) **Ask**

Ask Jesus to fill you with the Holy Spirit. If somebody else prays for you, agree with that prayer (**Luke 11:11-13; Matt. 3:11**).

f) **Relax and receive in faith**

In a conscious act of surrender, let the Holy Spirit have full control of your body, mind and spirit. This does not involve losing control of yourself, nor does it mean you must become blank or passive in your mind. Receive the Holy Spirit in faith. If you feel something, great! If you don't - also fine. Remember, you receive in faith! (**Gal. 3:2,5,14**).

g) **Thank him**

Thank Jesus for the gift of His Holy Spirit that He has given you (**1 John 5:14-15**). Praise Him. If at this point you hear strange sounds and words in your mind speak them out in faith. This is the start of "speaking of tongues". (See the explanation on speaking in tongues in the following section.)

Apart from these general guide lines, there is no prescribed way to seek/receive this baptism. People can be baptized when they are on their own, or when they are in a small group being ministered to, or when they are simply part of a congregation on which the Spirit is moving. It can be helpful to have people encouraging, guiding and praying for you but this is by no means obligatory. Those ministering may exercise the laying on of hands (this is a scriptural pattern for imparting the Spirit) but again this is not a prerequisite. Any Christian can minister the baptism of the Holy Spirit (**Acts**

9:10 & 17) as long as they are sincere (**Acts 8:21**). They need not to be a leader. But those ministering are always merely a channel: Jesus is the baptiser; He asks the Father for the Holy Spirit and pours Him out on us.

There is an infinite variety of ways that the Spirit comes on people and in the way people respond/manifest (**John 3:8**). He comes as a mighty wind but also as a gentle breeze, as a powerful wave but also as gentle dew. That there is often a marked spiritual, emotional, mental or even physical impact when the Spirit comes upon us should not surprise us: our finite being is being encountered and filled by the infinite God! But the response differs from person to person: some laugh, others cry, some are quiet; others are boisterous, some testify particularly to joy, others to peace or love or freedom, etc. Remember that we received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in faith, and that we should not get into a crisis if "nothing happens" immediately. You will definitely see a change in your life in the following few days.

5. What about speaking in tongues?

Various spiritual gifts may be given to the believer when baptized in the Holy Spirit. People often begin to speak in tongues (one of the gifts) at the time of being baptized (**Acts 2:4, 10:44-46, 19:6**). Something needs to be said about this gift in any study of Spirit baptism.

All spiritual gifts, while exercised by the individual, are given for the strengthening of the church. Tongues has a public and a private use. It is impossible to exaggerate the blessing of this 'private' speaking in tongues. It edifies the believer (**1 Cor. 14:2 & 4**) and greatly heightens both worship (**John 4:24**) and intercession (**Rom. 8:26**).

Scripture does not record that people spoke in tongues on every occasion when they were baptized in the Spirit. On most occasions one could make that assumption that they did. We cannot insist that people must speak in tongues to demonstrate that they have been baptized in the Spirit. Tongues is a gift generously given. Why is this?

- (1) Other gifts edify the church and so not every believer has to have them in order to benefit from them. The private use of tongues edifies the individual (**1 Cor 14:4, Jude 20**) and so every believer needs to have it in order to benefit from it.
- (2) Paul wished that all would speak in tongues (**1 Cor. 14:5**): he would not have said this if it were not possible.
- (3) Jesus said we could have it. Jesus knows best that we need it, even if we don't agree. (**Mark 16:17**)

If we don't have this gift we can seek it from God. If it is true that every Christian can speak in tongues, and if the blessing to be gained from this gift is as has been described, then, as with the baptism itself, it would just be nonsensical not to seek and receive this gift. Our attitude should not be "Do I really have to speak in tongues?" but "If God's got something for me I want it!"

Ask God for this gift as you ask him to baptize you in the Holy Spirit. God won't force this speech through your closed and immobile mouth! Speaking in tongues is a

partnership between the Spirit and the believer. You speak in tongues as the Spirit enables (**Acts 2:4**). So yield your speech faculties to God. Begin to pray to him in your mother tongue and make a decision of faith to stop speaking in your home language at a certain point and to launch out with the new words the Spirit gives you. Some are released into fluent tongues quickly; others stumble at first and have to persevere. In all cases we have to work at it, and grow in the gift as time goes on. But we have started on a lifetime of blessing.

6. How do I remain full of the Spirit?

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is only the beginning of the Spirit-filled life. The Greek tense of Paul's instruction to "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (**Eph. 5:18**) is "keep on being filled". This shows that being filled with the Spirit is an ongoing, indeed lifelong, pursuit.

We need to be "refilled" constantly, because, as one wise guy cracked, "We leak!" This happens:

- A. positively: when we minister we impart (give out) some of the Spirit (**Luke 8:46**);
- B. negatively, because when we sin we grieve the Holy Spirit and deny him control (remember: to be full of the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit);
- C. neutrally, because simply by living in this world with all its pressures and demands, we exhaust our fuel supply.

Also, new situations demand a new anointing/filling. This ongoing filling takes place in two main ways:

- (1) Gradual and imperceptible daily refilling that takes place through spending time with God (privately and corporately) and by walking in step with the Spirit and giving him control at each point (Paul may have had this kind of filling in mind in **Eph.5**).
- (2) Tangible filling at a particular moment similar to what was experienced when you were first baptized with the Spirit.

To insist that this can only happen once is both to contradict scripture (**Acts 2:4 cf 4:31**) and to unnecessarily deny yourself of further blessing and equipping. Through both gradual filling and further immersion experiences we need to seek for the rest of our lives to "keep on being filled with the Spirit". In doing so we can be and do all that God desires for us. The Spirit-filled equals the Spirit-controlled life. We learn to grow in our relationship with the Holy Spirit and with time get to know Him better.

PRAYER

Outline:

1. What is prayer?
2. Do we have free access to God our Father?
3. Why should we pray?
4. Examples of prayer in the Old Testament.
5. Examples of Jesus praying.
6. Jesus' teaching on prayer.
7. How should we pray?
8. Practical steps in starting your prayer life

1. What is prayer?

A dictionary will give you a rather dry definition of what prayer is, but the Bible gives an epic picture of it being a dynamic communion with the living God - whom Jesus showed is our loving Father. The same God who walked with Adam in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day (**Gen 2-3**) desires our close fellowship today.

Jesus says in **Mark 12:30** that the most important commandment is to "love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." Genuine prayer is thus everything to do with relationship and nothing to do with religion or ritual - it's a love relationship involving dialogue with God.

Man is the crown of God's creation, made in his image, for fellowship with him. "I will take you as my own people and I will be your God" (**Ex 6:7**) echoes like a refrain throughout scripture.

2. Do we have free access to God our Father?

The Bible shows us that through Adam's disobedience we are born sinful and that sin separates us from God (sin cannot come near his holiness). But God so loved us that he sent his son Jesus to die for us on the cross. Jesus' death makes atonement for our sin and gives us direct access to the Father (**John 3:16 & 17**).

While we were still sinners God reached out to save us. How much more now that we are believers, co-heirs with Jesus, is our heavenly Father concerned about us.

In the Old Testament, only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies, i.e. gain access to the presence of God, and then only once a year after complex ritual requirements had been completed.

In the New Testament, Christ's death gives all who believe in him direct access to God's presence. The book of Hebrews explains why priests are no longer necessary as mediators between us and God. The resurrected Jesus, our great High Priest, now seated at the right hand of the Father, is our mediator. He gives us confidence to come boldly to the throne of grace to "receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

John 1:12 says of Jesus: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." It is an awesome thing when we

realize that the Creator of all things desires to have a personal relationship with us, that he knows us by name.

John 20:17 says: "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." What an awesome privilege to be able to come to the Creator of the universe and be received as his child.

3. Why should we pray?

Isaiah 55:6 encourages us to: "Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near."

Eph. 6:18 urges: "And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests."

Phil. 4:6 says: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Col. 4:2 exhorts: "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful."

1 Thess. 5:16-18 says: "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances."

- Throughout scripture we see God desiring a relationship with his people. We need to pray because without communication there is no relationship.
- Throughout scripture it is clear that God desires us to ask of Him. (**Matt. 7:7-8, Matt. 9:37-38, John 14:13-14, 1John 5:14**) Even though He knows what we need, He still says that we should ask. This teaches us to use our faith and put our trust in Him.
- We need to abide in Christ for without him we can do nothing (**John 15:5**), and we do this through a life of increasing prayer.
- As we pray in the Spirit, he helps us to align ourselves with God: "This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words." (**1 Cor. 2:13**). As we pray in the Spirit we build ourselves up (**Jude 20**) and edify ourselves (**1 Cor. 14:4**).
- Prayer moves God's hand and changes us and circumstances. In prayer we find grace to forgive, courage to admonish, strength to persevere and zeal to run the race God has placed before us.
- We are in a spiritual battle (**Eph 6:10-19**) and the moment we stop praying we lose ground. If we want to win the battle we need to pray. Through prayer we open gates and strike the winning blow.
- Generally God will do nothing until we have prayed.

Remember: The devil does not have a problem with us talking about prayer, unless we start praying!

4. Examples of prayer in the Old Testament

✕Abraham	Gen 18:22
✕Jacob	Gen 32:24
✕Moses	Psalm 90
✕Joshua	Josh 10:12
✕Hannah	1 Sam 1
✕Elijah	1 Kings 18:36
✕Hezekiah	2 Kings 19:14
✕Jonah	Jonah 2:1

5. Examples of Jesus praying

✕In secret	Luke 5:16
✕In public	John 11:41
✕In solitary	Mk 1:35, Matt. 14:23
✕Through the night	Luke 6:12
✕Before daybreak	Mark 1:35
✕During crises	Matt 26:36-44
✕After His baptism	Luke 3:21
✕Before choosing disciples	Luke 6:12
✕With loud cries and tears	Hebr 5:7
✕On the cross	Luke 23:46

6. Jesus' teaching on prayer

✕Friend going to borrow loaves	- importunity	Luke 11
✕Woman and unjust judge	- tenacity	Luke 18:1-8
✕Pharisee and tax collector	- humility/penitence	Luke 18:10-14
✕Unmerciful servant and debt	- charity/forgiveness	Matt 18:21
✕Jesus speaks of praying in secret and with simple, unpretentious words	- simplicity	Matt 6:5, 23:14
✕Stand firm, watch & pray for 1 hour	- intensity	Mk 14:38, Matt 26:41
✕Two or three agreeing in his name	- unity	Matt 18:19
✕When you pray, believe you have received	- expectancy	Matt 6:6
✕We should ask the Father in Jesus' name	- name of Jesus	John 16:24,26

7. How should we pray?

Christ is our pattern. Paul says "...imitate me as I imitate Christ." In **John 8:28-29** Jesus says: "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."

We need to do the same, understanding that prayer is essentially a heart turned towards God at all times. Paul urges us to pray without ceasing.

Scripture shows people praying in many different ways:

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) With intelligible words | Neh 1:5-11 |
| b) In a tongue | 1 Cor 14:2 |
| c) With groans | Rom 8:23, 1 Sam 1, Ex 2:23 |
| d) In song | Psalms |
| e) With cries | Hebr 5:7, Matt 27:46 |
| f) Silently | Neh 2:4 |
| g) In poetry | Psalms |

Jesus taught in **John 16:24,26** that we should ask the Father in his name. We can now go directly to the Father in the name of Jesus. Jesus has prepared the way for us.

Hebr. 4:16 also says that we can approach God in confidence and boldness. His arms are open wide for his children!!

8. Practical steps in starting your prayer life

Spending time daily with God in prayer is important as it builds our relationship with Him. Every Christian must be encouraged to make his or her personal prayer time with God our Father a priority. Building your prayer life has endless rewards, but know that it will take sacrifice.

Many people battle with praying for an extended time period. Do not let this worry you; it is better to pray regularly/daily for short periods than to pray once in a while for a long session.

The following is a simple program that you can use in helping you to spend about 20 minutes in prayer daily.

- Spend the first 5 minutes in praise and worship. The Word says that we should come before the Lord in joyful songs. Use a tape or CD player if it will help.
- Use the next five minutes to talk about yourselves. Use this time to bring your needs and desires before God in prayer. If need be, repent of your sins and receive His forgiveness.
- In the next five minutes pray for the people close to you. During this time pray for your spouse, children, family, church, friends, etc.
- Use the last five minutes to pray for the nations. A recommendation would be to pray for one nation per day.

Remember that the above-mentioned steps are just suggestions and not an unbreakable law. Be flexible and also be aware of the Holy Spirit's guidance. He will guide you and teach you!

Week 6

Faith

Outline:

- i. What is faith?
- ii. Why have faith?
- iii. The difference between faith and hope
- iv. How do we get faith?
- v. The measure of faith
- vi. The increase of faith
- vii. Examples of people with faith

Mark 9:23 “..... Everything is possible for him who believes.”

This means that through faith, everything that is possible to God, becomes just as possible to us.

1. What is Faith?

Hebr. 11:1 “Now faith is the assurance (the confirmation, the title-deed) of the things (we) hope for, being the proof of things (we) do not see and the conviction of their reality - faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses.” The Amplified Bible.

Other religions say that we can make something true by believing it. We can't create reality with our minds, only God can.

Faith is choosing to believe and acting upon what God says, regardless of feeling or circumstance. Believing something does not make it true, but because God's word is true, we therefore choose to believe it!

Faith gives reality and proof of things unseen, treating them as if they were already objects of sight rather than of hope.

2. Why have faith?

Hebr. 11:6 “And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.”

Matt. 17:20 “He replied, “Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

3. The difference between faith and hope

Faith is in the heart, whereas hope is in the mind.

Rom. 10:10 “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.”

1 Thess. 5:8 “But since we belong to the day, let us be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet.”

Faith and love are the breastplate, and the breastplate protects the heart. Hope is the helmet and it protects the head or mind.

Faith is in the present and hope in the future. Faith is substance, something that is already here, hope is an expectation, something that looks toward the future. Christian hope is nevertheless sure and certain.

4. How do we get faith?

- a. From God **Heb 12:2a** "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."
- b. From the Bible **John 20:31** "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."
- c. From man **Rom 1:11-12** "I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong-- that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith."
- d. From prayer **Jude :20** "But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit."

5. The measure of faith

Rom. 12:3 "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you."

God actually gives every person an amount or deposit of faith to begin with.

6. The increase of faith

Faith can grow! 2 Thess 1:3 "We ought always to thank God for you, brothers, and rightly so, because your faith is growing more and more, and the love every one of you has for each other is increasing."

We need to develop this faith God has already given within us. Faith is like a seed. Our faith increases as we feed ourselves by reading and believing and receiving His word.

Rom 10:17 "Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."

7. Examples of people with faith

- i) The Roman Centurion - Matt 8:5-10
- ii) Woman with blood disease - Matt 9:20-22
- iii) Two blind men - Matt 9:27-29
- iv) Lame man - John 5:6-9

The Bible / Bible Study

Outline:

1. What is the Bible?
2. What we believe about the Bible.
3. 10 Reasons why we should study the Bible.
4. Some guidelines in studying the Word.
5. Spending Time with God. (Quiet Time).

1. What is the Bible?

The Bible is a library of 66 separate books bound together, written by approximately 44 different human writers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, over a period of nearly 2000 years.

(2 Peter 1 : 20-21)

The Bible is made up of the Old Testament (covenant) and the New Testament (covenant). The Old Testament was originally written in the Hebrew and Aramaic languages, and the New Testament in Greek. From these original documents we have our modern day English language translations. There are several different versions of the Bible today, the New International Version (NIV), Revised Standard Version (RSV) and the New King James Version (NKJV) being the most popular.

What about the use of Bible references?

To help find specific parts of scripture, translators have broken the books into chapters and verses. This is just to help us find our way around the Bible. The original writers didn't put them there.

Bible references can be abbreviated, eg. 2 Cor 5:17 refers to the 2nd book of Corinthians, chapter 5 verse 17. We can find a list of the books and their abbreviations in the front of the Bible.

2. What we believe about the Bible

- To us the Bible is of extreme importance since it is the purest, clearest and most detailed account of God's revelation to us concerning his character, salvation plan and other truths. In the words of Nigel Day-Lewis, "The Bible is the divinely inspired, infallible and inerrant record of all God's revelation to mankind, and it is our final authority in all matters of life and doctrine. It contains everything we need to know for salvation, and nothing can or must ever be subtracted from or added to it". The fact that the Bible is divinely inspired can be thoroughly substantiated by apologetic study.
- Because the Bible is God's inspired and perfect revelation to man, we must give it the highest possible authority in our lives. Writings, prophetic utterances or spiritual leading which contradict the Bible can't possibly be of God since they differ from God's unchanging truth.

- Since the Bible has absolute authority in the Christian's life, it follows that we should give priority to studying it as much as we can, so that we may access the thoughts, the emotions and even the very heart of God.

3. 10 Reasons why we should study the Bible.

- a) It shows us God. (2 Pet 1 : 20-21)

There is no easier, better or surer way of getting to know God than through his Word. He has revealed his attributes clearly throughout the Bible and only by reading it will we find out what he is like.

- b) It renews our minds. (Rom 12:1-2 ; 2 Pet 3:1)

We live in a sin-sick world, which is constantly squeezing its sinful values into our minds. Our thoughts determine our actions; therefore it is necessary to ensure that we keep filling our minds with God's thoughts. One of the best ways to find God's thoughts is by reading his word.

- c) It is an aid in spiritual warfare. (Eph 6:13, 17; Mat 4:1-11)

It is described as the sword of the Spirit and it is therefore a weapon of warfare against the devil. We need to learn to use it the way Jesus did when he was tempted in the desert.

- d) It is a foundation for life. (Mat 7:24-27)

Behind God's word is his faithfulness. If we build our lives according to God's word, we will not succumb to the storms of difficult and trying times because God's faithfulness to his Word will uphold us. NB! The key is to live it, not just to hear it!

- e) It equips us for good works. (Eph 2:10; 2 Tim 3: 16-17)

God has prepared good works for us to do but unless we are equipped and prepared for them we won't fulfil them as we are supposed to. By reading and studying God's Word we become equipped to fulfil God's purposes.

- f) It shows us ourselves and reveals our sin. (James 1:21-25; Heb 4:12)

When we read the Word, we see the standards of living that God has set and we also become painfully aware of the areas in which we fall short. It is like looking into a mirror and seeing that our appearance is not presentable. This enables us to change and adjust our lives, so that we can become the people and live the lives that God wants.

- g) It purifies our lives from sin. (Jn 15:3; Eph 5:26; Jn 17:17)

Having been made aware of sin in our lives, there is no better way to get rid of it than by seeing what God has to say and how He feels about the particular sin involved. This way, we learn to hate sin as passionately as God does, and as a result, our lives will be purified.

- h) It prevents us from sinning. (Ps 119:9; 1 Jn 2:1)

Not only does God's Word reveal our sin and purify us from sin, it also acts as a tool to prevent us from sinning in the first place. If we are fully loaded with God's Word and are confronted with temptation, we will be much more likely to emerge victoriously.

- i) It enables us to preach and teach. (2Tim 3:16-17; 4:2; 1 Pet 4:11)

When we know the Word of God and that what we are preaching and teaching is founded on the Word of God, then we are able to speak with confident authority because we know that God's faithfulness is backing us up.

- j) It builds faith. (Rom 10:17)

Because God is faithful, we know that his Word is true. God can never fail to keep his promises. Thus by reading God's Word we gain greater assurance and confidence to trust Him.

Without the Bible we would be without revelation, truth or foundations and ultimately godless.

4. Some guidelines in studying the Word.

A wrong approach to reading the Bible can discourage the greatest enthusiast. However, a correct approach can greatly enhance any individual's Bible study times and avoid unnecessary discouragement. Some helpful hints follow:

- a) Read Book by Book.

i) Select the book that you desire to read.

ii) Establish the historical setting of the book. When you understand the political, cultural and spiritual context in which the book was written you will be able to understand the contents of the book much more easily because you can begin to identify with the author and recipients. Some recommended reading to help in this regard is the NIV Study Bible, ITCC Bible Surveys or the Lion's Handbook of the Bible.

iii) One should then proceed to reading the book through systematically, rather than reading selected portions or jumping back and forth at random. This way you will be able to follow the author's train of thought and it will prevent you from using verses out of their context or making them say things that the author never intended.

iv) Remember that the Holy Spirit inspired neither the chapter and verse numbering system nor the paragraph headings. They were simply added in for the sake of easy reference, and sometimes the thought that the author wants to communicate can be hijacked if we stop reading at the end of a chapter or paragraph. It is best to look for a clear indication in the text that a particular thought has run its course and that a new one is about to be developed before we stop reading.

b) Textual Studies.

i) It is important to note that the Holy Spirit anointed the authors of the Bible as they wrote in their native language (OT - Hebrews and Aramaic; NT Greek) and that the English translations that we have today cannot always communicate the full richness of the thoughts expressed in the original language. It is sometimes helpful, therefore, to access the original languages.

ii) The value of conducting a textual study is that we are enabled to “mine out” the richness of God’s revelation by taking any portion of Scripture (usually quite short) and, with the use of the Strong’s Concordance, Vine’s Expository Dictionary and other helps, accessing each important word and finding out what the full meaning of the original word is. This gives us a clearer understanding of what the author wanted to say.

c) Topical Studies.

i) The value of a topical study is that we are able to gather together all the Scriptures relating to that topic we choose. When we have read everything that the Bible has to say about a particular topic or theme we will have a much clearer idea of what God thinks and feels about it.

ii) The modus operandi is simple: Choose a topic/theme and look up the word(s) in a concordance. A concordance gives an exhaustive list of all the Scriptures that contain the word. The find or search function in your “Bible” software enables you to perform the same function, just much faster and easier. Read each reference in your Bible, placing them in their context and making notes of any important points or themes that develop. Finally, you might want to arrange the material in a logical order and file it for easy reference.

d) Devotional Reading.

i) It can be very enriching to take a short portion of Scripture and read it through slowly, thoughtfully and prayerfully. With this approach, the main objective is to take the Scripture and apply it in our lives.

ii) The main questions you need to ask from the text are:

- What can I learn about God?
- What does it (the text) require of me?
- Where am I falling short?
- What is the Holy Spirit saying with regards to this Scripture?
- How can I apply it in my life?

More about devotional reading in the next section.

5. Spending Time with God. (Quiet Time)

In this section we will look at some practical advice to combine your devotional Bible reading into your “quiet time” or your special time that you have daily with our heavenly Father. Remember that the time that you spend with God should be based on relationship, rather than form or ritual. Be always flexible to follow the Holy Spirit’s leading. The following points should therefore be seen only as a guideline and not as inflexible rules.

a) Start with the Proper attitudes.

When you come to meet with God in your quiet time, you should have these attitudes.

- Expectancy: Expect to have a good time of fellowship with Him.
- Being Still: Don’t rush into God’s presence. Quieten your mind from the rush and thoughts of the world and start focussing on Him.
- Alertness: Get wide-awake before you start. If your time with God is in the mornings and you battle to awake, consider going to bed earlier!
- Willingness to obey: This attitude is of utmost importance. Choose beforehand to obey whatever God wants you to do.

b) Select a specific time.

Select a time that will work for you, whether once, twice or three time a day. Give God the best part of the day when you’re freshest and most alert (Ps 5:3; Dan 6:10; Mark 1:35). General rule: The best time is when you are at your best! Remember that your best time may be different from someone’s else.

Whatever time you set, be consistent at it. Psychologists tell us that it usually takes three weeks to get familiar with some new task or habit; it takes another three weeks before it becomes a habit. Have you made it past the six-week barrier?

How much time should I spend with the Lord?

- Start small! If you have never had a consistent quiet time before, start with ± 10 minutes and let it grow gradually. It is better to be consistent with a short time than to meet for an hour every other week.
- Don’t watch the clock! This can ruin your quiet time faster than almost everything else.
- Don’t emphasise quantity, emphasise quality - it is what you do during your time that is important. Remember the aim is to build a quality relationship with the Lord!

c) Choose a special place.

Choose a place that is secluded where you can be alone, where it’s quiet, and where you won’t be disturbed or interrupted. Ideally the place ought to be special and sacred.

d) Follow a simple plan.

It is recommended that you have with you the following items:

- Bible.
- Notebook. - For writing down what God shows you, and for making a prayer list.
- Songbook. - This is to help if you want to sing in your praise time.

The following 6 -point plan is only a suggestion and should not be viewed as the only method. Be flexible.

i) Relax.

Be still for a minute; don't come rushing into God's presence and start speaking immediately. Wait on God. (Ps 46:10; Isa 30:15; 40:31). If there are nagging thoughts shouting for attention, write them down in your notebook. This will help focussing your attention on Christ, rather than on yourself and your needs.

ii) Request.

Pray briefly asking God to cleanse your heart and guide you into the time together. Ask God to speak to you through his Holy Spirit.

iii) Read a section of scripture.

This is where your conversation with God begins. He speaks to you through his Word and you speak with Him in prayer.

Read your Bible:

- Slowly:** Read a small passage of scripture. Don't race through it.
- Repeatedly:** Read the passage over and over until you start to picture it in your mind.
- Without Stopping:** Don't stop in the middle of a sentence to go off on a tangent and do a doctrinal study. Remember your goal here is not to gain information, but to feed on the Word and get to know Christ better.
- Aloud but quiet:** This helps improve your concentration by seeing and learning what you are reading.
- Systematically:** You'll understand the Bible better if you read it as it is written - a book or a letter at a time.
- To get a sweep of a book:** Try to survey a whole book to see the context, before going into small detail. This is especially true if you have never read a specific book. Afterwards go into detail as mentioned above.

iv) Reflect, meditate and memorise.

Meditation is “seriously contemplating a thought over and over in your mind. It is not blanking of the mind”. So take the scripture that you have read and ask God to specifically speak to you.

Asking questions like, “Is there a command to be obeyed?”, “What does it reveal of God’s character?”, “ How can I apply it in my life?”

Memorise the verse(s) that is particularly meaningful to you.

v) Record.

Record what God has shown you. This helps you to remember what God has revealed to you and to apply it to your life.

vi) Prayer.

After God has spoken to you through his Word, speak to Him in prayer. This is your part of the conversation with the Lord.

e. What if I miss a day?

Don’t worry about it if it only happens occasionally. Don’t go on a guilt trip.

Romans 8:1 “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

Don’t be legalistic, because missing one day does not make it a flop. Don’t give up. If you miss a meal, it does not mean that you should give up eating because you’re inconsistent. You simply eat a little more at the next meal and go on from there. The same principle is valid with your quiet time.

When all is said and done, you must realise that you are in a spiritual battle, and you can only succeed by the power of the Holy Spirit of God. So pray that God will strengthen you, and depend on Him to help you develop this habit for His glory.