

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Living free by
knowing the truth...

Volume 4

Biblical answers to common lies



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TEACHER'S GUIDE



1. We congratulate you for accepting the challenge of discipling new believers using *New Life in Christ* as your guide. The results of this study can produce eternal fruit.
2. Let the Bible always be your authority in answering the questions. The students should look up the Bible passages by themselves and try to answer the questions based on what the Bible says.

Some new believers need a brief orientation on how to find the references in their Bibles.
3. This manual may be used in many different ways. In most cases, you will study one lesson a week, encouraging the disciple to do all the assignments in each lesson.
4. Try not to let your sessions get too long. Keep an eye on your audience's attention span.
5. Encourage the students to answer the questions in their own words. Avoid copying the Bible word for word. Using their own words will help them to analyze the meaning of the texts studied.
6. Avoid preaching. Use questions to discover what the students understand and to stimulate active participation.
7. Prepare well for each session yourself. As the teacher, you should be familiar with the content and key concepts of each lesson.

Your preparation should include prayer for your students and for your own heart to be prepared for the lesson.

8. Try to have the students think about the practical implications for their lives. Help them to understand specific, practical applications.



Each lesson has sections marked by a STOP sign. These are designed for the student to stop and think about the implications of the lesson for their lives. Take time to meditate on these sections.

The assignments in the boxes at the side of each lesson are designed for this purpose. Make use of them.

9. Help students cultivate the habit of prayer. Teach them by praying together with them.
10. It is important to understand that discipleship is much more than studying the lessons of *New Life in Christ*. Discipleship implies a life change for the disciple.

This manual is just an initial help. The students need continual help in seeking to change their character, ways of thinking, habits, etc.
11. It is of the utmost importance that disciples learn habits like daily Bible reading, prayer, and Scripture memorization.

At the beginning of each lesson, take time to review the previous memory verse and ask them how the daily Bible study is going. Do not scold students who have not completed some of the assignments, but be sure to encourage them to finish.
12. Be sensitive to what God is doing in the disciple's life. Take time out of each session to answer any questions they might have, or to help with facing problems in their personal life.

Keep in mind that there are times when it is not possible to get to every question in the lesson because of lack of time. In these cases, choose the questions of most importance to discuss.

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32



METHODOLOGY

This book is dedicated to the study of some of the main lies that the world and the devil use to confuse us. We will see lies like: "I'm all alone," "I can't do it; it's impossible," "There is no justice in the world," "God can't forgive someone like me," "If only I had more money..." etc.

For each lie that Satan and the world tell us, we will give biblical answers that will permit us to live in freedom and holiness.



Step 1 Lies that bind us

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ Satan is the main cause of sin in the life of the Christian.
 _____ Non-believers often believe that our message is foolish.
 _____ Satan's main weapon is his use of witchcraft and the occult.

LIES THAT ENSLAVE US

Today we find ourselves in the midst of a great battle. Why are so many Christians discouraged and living defeated lives? Some are enslaved by their past, whether it is suffering caused by their own sin, or harm done by others. Some are incapable of dealing with their weaknesses, almost as if they were trapped by an outside force that does not allow them to be free of failure. What's going on?

- Going back to the Garden of Eden helps us understand the origin of our problems. Everything began with a simple lie. Genesis 3:1 says that the serpent was more _____ than any other of the wild animals. We can see how devious he was by the way he tricked Eve. What lies did the Serpent use in Genesis 3:1-7?
 v. 1 (compare with 2:16-17) _____
 v. 4-5 (compare with 2:17) _____
 v. 6 The fruit looked good but did it give Eve the wisdom she wanted? _____
- Was Adam any more innocent than Eve? Why? v. 6, 12 _____

- Today, the dialogue might go something like this:

- Satan:** *Aha, so God has forbidden everything, as if he doesn't want you to have any fun. Enough of all the boring rules; enjoy life, be happy. Relax, nothing is going to happen to you. Nobody believes in hell anymore. It's just an old fashioned way to scare you into keeping someone else's rules. Are you sure God really wants what's best or does he just want to control you? These rules restrict your freedom and limit your happiness. How do you expect to be happy with so many restrictions?*
- Eve:** *It looks so good. I want it and deserve it. Why should I deny myself? I'm not hurting anyone and besides; no one will know anyway.*
- Adam justified his sin:** *She did it, so why can't I? What's the big deal? Everyone else does it.*

It's not my fault, the woman you gave me as a wife gave it to me. I'm only human; how do you expect me to resist so much temptation? My friends will laugh at me if I don't go along with them.

- Eve:** It was just too hard to resist, and besides, Adam did it too.

**Satan promises the best,
but pays with the worst;**

**he promises honor
and pays with disgrace;**

**he promises pleasure
and pays with pain;**

**he promises profit
and pays with loss;**

**he promises life
and pays with death.¹**



The same thing happens today. Going back to the question of *why are so many Christians defeated?* One of the main reasons is that they constantly trip themselves up by paying attention to the lies of the devil and what the world tells them. When they fail to detect the deception, they unconsciously let the enemy direct their decisions and as a result, defeat is guaranteed. Often they don't even realize they are in trouble.

THE PARABLE OF THE COW

When an argumentative citizen seemed unconvinced, Abraham Lincoln said, "Well, let's see how many legs does a cow have?"

"Four, of course," came the reply disgustedly.

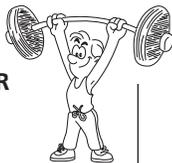
"That's right," agreed Lincoln. "Now suppose you call the cow's tail a leg; how many legs would the cow have?"

"Why, five, of course," was the confident reply.

"Now, that's where you're wrong," said Lincoln. "Calling a cow's tail a leg doesn't make it a leg." 2

Many people today mistakenly believe that everyone should decide for themselves what is good or bad. They say the Bible is too old fashioned to be useful in our changing world.

Even though our culture says something is OK; that doesn't mean it's really OK. Some believe that sin isn't sin just because they give it another name. Listen to others this week to see if you can find examples of this kind of thinking.



GROWING STRONGER

Read Luke 1-7
(one chapter per day).

Memorize John 8:44

"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies." NIV

"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it." NKJV

SATAN'S MAIN WEAPON

5. John 8:44 says the devil is a murderer who doesn't hold to the _____, because there is no _____ in him. He is a _____ and the father of _____.

Lies are the main weapon Satan uses to deceive, intimidate and enslave. While he does use things like witchcraft and demon possession, he can accomplish the same things with a simple lie. For example, if he can convince us that money will make us happy, we will be tempted to do whatever it takes to get more, even if we cheat or hurt others to get it.

6. Although Jesus spoke the truth, some did not _____. John 8:45 Why? Verse 47 says that whoever belongs to God _____ God's words, while those who do not belong to God won't listen, much less believe. When someone refuses to listen to God, they let the lies steer them toward evil.



Who are you listening to?

7. The world has a totally different perception of the truth than we do. How does a non-believer see the things of God? 1 Corinthians 2:14

Do they understand? _____

Our culture constantly makes fun of biblical values, seeing the gospel as narrow minded and outdated. Much of what the world teaches as "truth" is really a lie. Things don't work out well for them because their life is built on deception. They become slaves to the lies. For them there are no absolutes; instead they believe everything is relative, depending on the circumstances. Therefore everyone has their own truth. They refuse to submit to Biblical standards, believing that humans make the rules, not God.

8. On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 2:15 says that the spiritual person _____ all things. By examining all things, they are able to distinguish truth from error and make wise decisions. The lessons that follow in this manual warn us about some of the most common lies that we often hear. The best way to detect "lies" is to know the "truth" as it is revealed in the Word of God.



A practical application: When a Christian speaks the truth as revealed in the Scriptures, many will reject it because their minds are closed to the truth. They can neither accept nor understand the truth. The fact that the majority reject our message should not discourage us, but rather challenge us to keep swimming against the current of those popular beliefs which are based on falsehoods.

9. Start by jotting down three examples of lies that have affected you in the past.

- _____
- _____
- _____



Step 2 The truth that frees us

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ Most Christians are mature enough to not be easily fooled by false ideas.
- _____ If you practice sin, you become a slave to sin.
- _____ Biblical truth brings freedom.

THE TRUTH THAT FREES US

Every day we are bombarded by popular beliefs. Everyone wants to tell us what to think. Who should we believe? It's urgent that we learn to distinguish between the voices of truth and the clamor of confusion and lies.

1. What did Jesus say would free us? John 8:31-32 _____
If the truth frees us, then what enslaves us? _____

2. How can we know the truth? John 8:31-32 _____
Holding fast to Christ's teachings will lead us to the truth. Sadly, many believers today live in ignorance of what the Bible teaches. They seldom read, much less study their Bibles. Instead they follow what others tell them and often end up confused. Even church leaders can be caught up in the confusion. On the other hand, there are those who know what the Bible teaches, but don't follow its teachings. They too end up badly.

3. Here's something to think about. One time a jail inmate said, "I'm thankful I was caught. When I was outside, I thought things were great, but now I see that was just ignorance. I was really a prisoner to sin. Here on the inside, when I read the Bible I have encountered true freedom, eternal life and peace."³

What does this story have to do with you? Although you might never have been in jail, are you really free? Those who were speaking with Jesus in John 8:33 claimed they had never been slaves to anybody.

How did Jesus answer them? John 8:34 _____



Have you ever felt the frustration of being enslaved by sin? Yes No

How much of your life is really based on the truth?

Which of the following statements apply to your life?

- I read the Bible regularly by myself.
- To be honest, my knowledge of the Bible is very limited.
- I don't like to judge others, so I don't feel qualified to say who has the truth.
- I think for myself. I evaluate what others say by comparing it with what the Bible tells me. Therefore I can discern who is telling me the truth.
- I let other Christians or those who teach in my church tell me what to believe. It's easier that way.

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

John 8:31-32



COUNTERING THE LIES WITH THE TRUTH

4. What is the first piece of our spiritual armor mentioned in Ephesians 6:14? _____
Why is that piece so important? How does it help us in spiritual warfare? _____

It's interesting to note that the last piece of the armor is the *Sword of the Spirit*, which is the Word of God where we find the truth. A sword is both an offensive as well as defensive weapon. It protects against the lies of the devil as it attacks lies with the truth.

5. What will help us to avoid evil ways? Psalm 119:104-105 _____
 If it wasn't for the Bible, we would not be able to detect the lies and flee from them. Verse 105 compares the Bible to a lamp which illuminates our mind to see the lies that will detour us from the path.
6. In light of the above, what did the Psalmist decide? Psalm 119:106 _____
 He didn't waver but confirmed his decision, and nothing would keep him from obeying. The scriptures should not only fill our minds, but must move us to put into practice what we read in them.

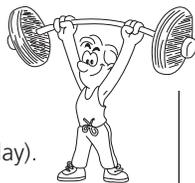
LIVING IN THE TRUTH

7. Philippians 4:8. What are we to do with the things that are true? _____
 Different translations word it differently, but we are to *think, meditate, or dwell* on what is true. What do you think it means to "meditate" on the truth of God's word? _____

8. 1 John 1:9-10 speaks about _____ our sins. Confession is telling the truth about our sin. When we stop trying to cover it up, we allow the bright light of the truth to shine.
 According to 1 John 2:4, anyone who says, "I know him," yet doesn't do what he commands is a _____ and _____. Once again, the emphasis is on obeying, not just knowing.
9. Ephesians 4:24-25 tells us to put on the new nature. This means to put off _____ and speak _____. Why? _____
10. Acts 17:10-11 says that the believers in Berea were more noble than those in other places. Not only did they receive the message but they also _____
 In what ways should we imitate the Bereans? _____

GROWING STRONGER

Read Luke 8-14
 (one chapter per day).



Memorize John 8:31-32

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." NIV

"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." NKJV



- If you aren't satisfied with your answers to the questionnaire on the previous page, what can you do? The answer is: abide in or hold on to the Word (John 8:31-32).
 - What do you plan to do this week to abide in the Word? _____

 - Abiding in the Word is more than just a quick reading of a passage. It's important to analyze the passage to understand what it says and what it means. But even this is not enough. There is another step.
 - After studying a passage, it is important to look for applications for your life. James 1:22 says it's not enough just to hear the word, you must _____

- At the end of your study, raise your eyes up to God and ask him: "Lord, what do you want me to do now in response to what I have read?"
- This workbook is dedicated to the study of some of the most common lies that the world and Satan use to confuse us. Beginning with Step 3 we will examine lies like: "I'm all alone," "I can't do it; it's impossible," "God could never forgive someone like me," and more. With each lie, we will look at biblical answers that will allow us to live in liberty and holiness.

Step 3 Lie: I'm all alone



Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ God is not interested in those who have not been faithful.
- _____ If you want to get ahead in life, you need to look out for yourself because no one else will.
- _____ There is always hope, even when everything looks dark and there doesn't seem to be any solutions.

A CURIOUS STORY

To point out how lonely people can be, Charles Swindoll mentioned an ad in a Kansas newspaper. It read: "I will listen to you talk for 30 minutes without comment for \$5.00."

Swindoll said, "Sounds like a hoax, doesn't it?" But the person was serious. Did anybody call? You bet. It wasn't long before this individual was receiving 10 to 20 calls a day.

The pain of loneliness was so sharp that some were willing to try anything for a half hour of companionship.⁴

THE LIE:

"I feel completely alone." "Nobody can help me." "Everyone has abandoned me." "I feel as if God were far away, or as if he has gone on vacation and left me." Even in the midst of a crowd, many feel alone, abandoned, fearful and desperate. Faced with loneliness, some fill their time with activities, friends and work to keep them from looking in the mirror and asking, "Does anyone care about me?" Others desperately look for consolation in the wrong places, in abusive relationships, in sex, alcohol or drugs.

THE ANSWER

Is it really true that you are alone? No! This is one of the most destructive lies of our times. How do we know it's a lie? The Bible is full of promises for the person who feels abandoned and alone. For example:

1. What does Isaiah 41:10 say to the person who feels abandoned and alone? _____

God promised this to a sinful and rebellious people. Although they did not deserve it, he was always there.

2. Why shouldn't you fear? Jot down the promises in Isaiah 41:10 and meditate on the meaning of each one.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____



How do you feel knowing that these promises are true? _____

And if you didn't know the promises or refuse to believe them, then what? _____

3. Psalm 23 has brought comfort to many over time. How is God presented in Psalm 23:1-3?

What is the work of one who shepherds sheep? How might it be different from that of a cattleman?

4. What assurance do we have when hard times come? v. 4 _____

5. Explain what God knows about your life? Psalm 139:1-5 _____

6. Why can't you escape from God's presence? Psalm 139:7-12 _____

7. How do these teachings in Psalm 139 make you feel? _____
8. Psalm 46:1-2 assures us that we are never alone in difficult times because God is _____. Therefore we will not _____ even though _____. *"The LORD Almighty is with us". v. 7*
9. Psalm 145:18-19 The Lord is _____ to all who _____. What can we expect when we call on God? v. 19 _____
Although God is near, those who fail to call on him live as if they were alone and abandoned. They don't receive comfort; instead sadness, fear and agony rule their lives. What a tragedy!



Are there times when you do not call out to God for help? Why?

- You don't realize that God is near because you don't know the scriptures.
- You don't believe he is near because you cannot see him.
- You don't want to call on God because you're unwilling to submit to him.

10. What do you do in uncertain times or when your future is in doubt?

When Joshua was about to take over leadership of the Israelites, they were about to enter enemy territory and conquer the promised land. He didn't know what would happen but he received some important advice:

Moses said: "The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." Deuteronomy 31:8

God said: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

11. How would these promises have motivated Joshua in uncertain times?

Neither Joshua nor the Israelites were alone. Not only did God promise to be with Joshua, to never leave him or forsake him, He also promised to go **before him, wherever he went.**

12. God is at our side. He is also **accessible** and has given us a **family** to which we can belong, the family of God. Ephesians 2:18-19 says:

"For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household"

How does it make you feel to know you are a fellow citizen with others from God's family? _____



When you feel alone you have two options:

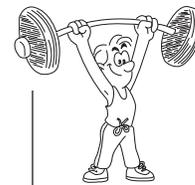
- Live as if you were alone, falling into depression and desperation.
- Look up and call out to the invisible God, accepting by faith that he is present in your life.

Decide between the two and remember: You are never alone!



AN INSPIRING STORY

Read the story of Elisha and the Syrians in 2 Kings 6:8-18, paying attention especially to v. 15-17. What is the main lesson you learn from this story?



GROWING STRONGER

Read Luke 15-21
(one chapter per day).

Memorize Isaiah 41:10

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." NIV

"Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." NKJV

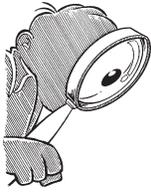
A Daily Surrender To Christ

Romans 12:1 exhorts us to surrender our bodies to Christ. The following prayer may serve as a model for this daily surrender.

*“Lord, I surrender myself to you.
Take my mind and what I think
Take my eyes and what I see
Take my ears and what I hear
Take my lips and what I speak
Take my heart, what I feel and my attitudes.
Take my hands and what I do
Take my feet, where I go
Take my body, it is your temple.
Fill me with your Holy Spirit.
I want to obey you.
I want to do your will.”*



From New Life in Christ, Volume 1, Lesson 4



Detecting and rejecting the lies.

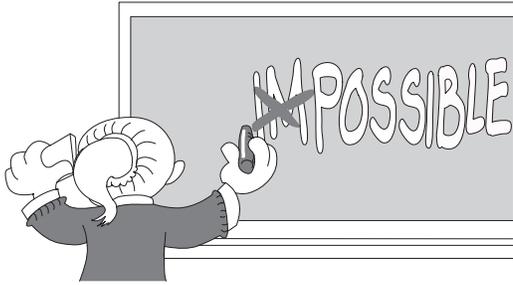
Principles to help you base your life on the truth instead of lies.

As you have seen in the previous lessons, a Christian can only be free if his life is based on the truth. Each lesson lays out a specific lie and then gives biblical answers to correct the effects of the lie on your life. Obviously, it is not possible to speak of every lie the devil invents, but we can learn to recognize and combat any lie when it presents itself.

What you believe determines how you will act. If you believe something is true, you will live as if it were true. For example, if you don't believe God is watching, you tend to live a reckless life. On the other hand, if you are aware that God is present, you tend to live righteously. If you believe you can't, you won't. If you see yourself as a loser, you will live like a loser. If you see yourself as a new creature in Christ, you will live in victory as a new person. If you believe something is false, you will reject it, even if it is true. The principles that follow will help you understand how to live in freedom and victory.

1. Learn to think biblically. This happens when you saturate your mind with the Word.
2. Do in depth Bible study, not just a quick reading of the Word. When you study the Bible regularly, you are creating a library in your mind full of biblical knowledge. As time goes by you will accumulate more and more resources to help you confront life's daily problems.
3. Live according to the scriptures you already know. Each day, apply what you have read to your daily life.
4. Cultivate the habit of questioning what you see and hear. Without becoming negative, or cynical, learn to examine everything in the light of God's Word. Continuously ask yourself: Is that true? What does the Bible say about that?
5. Think for yourself. Don't believe something just because someone (even a Christian) says its true, or because its popular.
6. What would Jesus do in your situation?
7. When you feel tempted, burdened, discouraged, doubtful or even enthusiastic, ask yourself:
 - What am I believing that makes me feel this way? Is it true?
 - Where do my current thoughts and my feelings come from? From God? The devil? My culture? Myself? My mom or dad?
 - Am I being pressured by someone to believe or act in a way that contradicts the Bible? How?
 - How might my current circumstances be distorting my point of view, for good or for bad?
 - What does God say about the beliefs that are popular in my culture?
 - Am I doubting something that the Bible clearly tells me is true?
 - Am I doubting what the Bible tells me because I can't see it or touch it?
 - What do I do if I don't like what the Bible says? What poor decisions might I be making because I am unwilling to submit to what the Bible tells me?
8. Meditate on the implications of your decisions. What will be the short term effects? Long term?
9. Are you aware that reality might be different than what you are currently seeing or feeling? God is sovereign and is present. With Him, anything is possible.

Are you willing to focus on what God can do or are you only looking at your present circumstances? Are you willing to trust God with your present circumstances and tell Him: "Lord, here I am, your servant, willing to do your will. I trust you for the things in my life that seem impossible. Even though I can't do it, you can.
10. Where might you be paying more attention to what people think than to what God says?
11. Make a list of negative messages (lies) that you hear. Next write a true statement to replace each negative message.



Step 4

Lie: It's impossible

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ There are times when nobody or nothing can help me.
- _____ When I feel responsible to solve all my problems by myself I am putting myself on the road to failure.
- _____ God's power manifests itself when I admit my weaknesses.

THE LIE

Have you ever found yourself in circumstances so difficult that you've said: *It's impossible. I don't see any way out of this. I might as well throw in the towel?* Perhaps you have tried to change your character but without success. Or you've said: *I've been a failure as a husband, mother, son...* Do you feel frustrated by your inability to achieve the victory in the Christian life that others seem to have attained? And the list goes on and on.

THE ANSWER

You can't, but God can! Isaiah 41:13 says *"Do not fear; I will help you."* Look and see all that God has done throughout history. For example, put yourselves in the shoes of the three Hebrew youths as they stood before the king of Babylonia, threatened with being thrown into a fiery furnace for disobeying the order to bow down to the king's idol. Read this inspiring story in Daniel 3:10-27 which tells how they risked their lives to challenge the king's edict.

1. Why were they unwilling to bow down to a false god even though their refusal put their lives in danger?
Daniel 3:17-18 _____
And the results? Read Daniel 3:19-27. God brought them out of the flames safe and sound, without even the smell of smoke on them.
2. What things in your present life seem impossible? _____
How does Romans 8:31, 37 make you feel? _____
3. What could be more difficult than the promise made to Mary, that she would have a son even though she was a virgin? The angel encouraged her by saying _____ Luke 1:37
4. If someone ever had the right to say *"It's impossible"*, it would be Mary, but instead, what was her answer?
Luke 1:38 _____



- We can say the same today when we confront "impossible" situations. We can ask ourselves: *"Am I going to believe that nothing is impossible for God, or will I focus on the problem and lose hope, give up, and give in to depression, anger or failure?"*
- What impossible situations are you facing today? Write them down on a separate sheet of paper, then go through the list saying: *"Lord, this looks impossible, but I believe that it is possible for you."*

5. What are the two commands in 1 Peter 5:6-7 for the person who worries?
v. 6 _____ Why? _____
v. 7 _____ Why? _____
6. Have you ever said: I have no money; how am I going to pay my bills? What did Jesus say in Matthew 6:25?
_____ Why? v. 26 _____

GROWING STRONGER

Read Luke 22-24 and Psalms 33-36,
(one chapter per day).

Memorize 2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. NIV

And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. NKJV



TO ENCOURAGE YOU

If you feel discouraged because everything just seems like it's impossible, read the following passages. They will inspire you.

Hebrews 11 talks about the heroes of the faith.

Daniel 6 speaks about Daniel and the lion's den.

Continue reading Matthew 6:26-32 where Jesus claims that God will provide for your daily needs. If he takes care of the birds and dresses the lilies with beauty, won't he provide for us who are worth so much more? Worry won't help us. It just saps our strength. God knows about all our needs.

7. What should we do first, instead of worrying? Matthew 6:33

To seek the kingdom of God means to submit moment by moment to the authority of Christ, your king. What does God promise when we submit to him? v. 33 _____

8. What did Paul say in Philippians 4:13? _____

In its context this passage speaks about finances. Paul had learned to trust God for his needs, whether he had money and whether he was in need. It also applies to other areas of life. With Christ, nothing is impossible.

9. Which of these variations of the phrase, "It's impossible," apply to you?

- I cannot forgive.
- I can't be patient.
- I don't believe God will forgive me.
- I don't believe God can use me.
- I will never have good friends.
- I can't overcome temptation.
- I feel like a failure.
- I can't change, this is just the way I am.
- I will never be a victorious Christian.
- My family problems are unsolvable.
- I can't overcome my addiction to pornography.
- I see no hope for solving my money problems.
- I can't get good grades in school.
- Other _____

10. Thinking about the above list, meditate on 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. Why did Paul rejoice in his weaknesses? v. 9 _____

v. 10 For when I am _____ I am _____

11. On whom does victory depend? Me God

When you feel responsible to solve your own problems you condemn yourself to failure. It is not a question of your capacity to overcome by your own efforts. God says, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul allowed God's power to rest on him. To live in grace is to depend on God instead of your own resolve.



IT'S TIME TO DECIDE

Check the following statements you agree with.

- I'm willing to say: When I am weak, then I am strong". 2 Cor. 12:10
- I will not focus my attention on my problems or limitations, rather on God who says "Do not fear; I will help you". Isaiah. 41:13
- I believe I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Phil. 4:13
- I am willing to trust God with my circumstances and tell him: "Lord, here I am, your servant, ready to do your will. I trust you for the things that seem impossible in my life. I can't solve my problems but you can".





Step 5 Lie: I can do it

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- If I try hard enough I will be saved.
- If I try hard enough, I can be a victorious Christian.
- There are ministries today that are based more on the will power of determined men than on the power of God.

This lie deals with the problem of self-sufficiency. When you say: *"I can do it; I'm capable; I'm better than others..."* you are trusting in yourself instead of the power of God.

"I CAN DO IT" AND SALVATION

What can you contribute to your salvation? Can attending church, praying to the Virgin or stopping a bad habit save you? Many say: *Do what your religion demands and you will go to Paradise.* Requirements vary from one religion to another, but they are all based on works. They are selling the lie: *You can do it if you work hard enough.*

1. Are you capable of contributing anything to your salvation according to Romans 3:10, 20, 23-24?

2. If you work hard, can you save yourself? _____ Ephesians 2:8-9 Why? _____
_____ What is "grace"? _____

Salvation is a free gift from God. It cannot be bought, only accepted by faith, or rejected..

3. Galatians 3:10-11 says those who try to be justified by the law (self effort) are under a _____ because they do not continue to do _____ that the law demands. No one can obey the Ten Commandments 100%. If salvation depended on works, nobody could ever reach it. Thank God it's by faith, not works.



How many sincere and "good" people today are under a curse because they believe the lie: *"I can do it."*

"I CAN DO IT" AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

If you can't contribute anything to your salvation, what about your Christian life? What place do works and personal effort play? Although Salvation does not depend on works, there is no doubt that good works are the fruit of being saved. Ephesians 2:10 says we were *"created in Christ Jesus to do good works"*. ***The point isn't whether good works are important, but rather: Where do they come from? Is the Christian life a matter of trying harder or of letting God work in you and through you?***

4. Go back to 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 that you studied in the last lesson. At the beginning of the chapter, Paul mentions a vision he had of what no one else had ever seen. But then he was given a thorn in his flesh which caused great suffering. Although he asked God to remove it three times, it was still with him.

What was the purpose of his trial? 2 Cor. 12:7 _____

When someone has special abilities, it is easy to let pride take over: *"Look at me. I'm very capable. I'm better than others."* God allows weakness in our lives to remind us that we can't do anything without him.

5. That's why Paul said in 2 Corinthians 12:10 *When I am _____, then I am _____.* Weakness is an effective way to remind us of our limitations and to temper our pride.
6. Galatians 2:20-21. I have been crucified with Christ, It is no longer I who _____, but _____ lives in me.



"Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me." John 15:4

DIGGING DEEPER

Read the book of Galatians to better understand what the true gospel is. Learn how to live in grace and avoid legalism.

Now I live by _____ in the son of God. It's a lie to say, "I can do it" when the essence of the Christian life is letting Christ live through me.

What determines my relationship with God? v. 21 It isn't about what I do for God, but what Christ has done for me.

7. In John 15 Jesus said that he is the vine and we are the branches. What do verses 4-5 teach about the idea that "I can do it"?

What does it mean to "abide" or "remain" in Christ? _____

8. James 4:6-7 Who does God oppose? _____ Instead of saying, "I can do it, I'm capable," what should my attitude be before God? v. 7, 10 _____

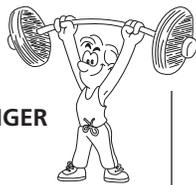
9. Sometimes there is rivalry between churches or ministries, but in the end, who causes growth? 1 Corinthians 3:4-6 _____

10. 1 Corinthians 3:11-15 illustrates the ways Christians build their lives. Some, trusting in God's power, build with gold, silver and precious stones. Others who trust in their own efforts build with wood, hay and straw. What will happen in the end? _____

We will all appear before the judgement seat where fire will reveal whether we built our lives in the power of the Spirit or in the flesh. Many say: "I'm capable and talented." You can do a lot in the flesh, even build ministries that seem successful, but think about what will happen when God examines everything.

11. Some grade their church on its size, the bigger the better. Do you think this is a good way to measure the success of a ministry? Why?

Some ministries are the work of God while others are monuments to men.



GROWING STRONGER

Read Exodus 1-7
(one chapter per day)

Memorize John 15:5

"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." NIV

"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." NKJV

"I CAN DO IT" – LEGALISM OR GRACE?

12. When the Christian life becomes a life of human effort, it becomes "another gospel" which is repulsive to God (Gal. 1:6-8). Paul dealt with this problem of legalism in the book of Galatians. Some wanted to require new gentile believers to submit to circumcision and other practices of the law. Something similar happens today:

- Some believers feel superior to others who don't follow their lists of prohibited activities. They criticize others and shame them instead of motivating them in love to do good. Their Christianity is basically negative.
- Others are proud of never missing services, or of fasting, praying or reading their Bibles more than others. They try to impress God and others with their works.

13. Many Christians depend on themselves and their "Christian works" thinking: "If I just work hard I can do it." Thinking about what you have learned in this lesson, what is wrong with that kind of thinking?



Step 6 I'm afraid

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ Feeling that God is far away brings fear to our lives.
 _____ Sometimes things aren't what they seem to be at first glance.
 _____ To "fear God" means to be afraid of him.

All of us experience fear at times. Check which of the following things are causing fear in your life.

- Fear of rejection Fear of death Fears about the future Fear of failure
 Fear of God's judgment Fear of enemies Fear of the devil Fear of being laughed at
 Fear of what others will say Fears about health issues Fear of never finding love
 Fear of not being able to pay your bills Fear that God will not hear you Other _____

GOD: THE REFUGE FOR THE JUST

1. Psalm 11 speaks about a moment of terror. When David's friends saw that his enemies had arrows on their bowstrings ready to fire against the just, they advised him to flee to the mountains like a bird. v. 1-2

David was indignant. How did he respond? v. 1 _____
 Since David looked at God as his refuge, he could not imagine fleeing

2. David asked what righteous should do when it seems like their world is crumbling around them? v. 3
 Think about how you react in a crisis. What was David's answer for times of crisis? v. 4 _____

At first glance his answer doesn't seem to relate to his situation, but take a second look. David was saying **that things aren't as they appear**. It may seem like evildoers are in charge of our world, or that our situation is impossible, but the **reality is different**: God, is still sitting on his throne and sees everything.

What is God doing? v. 4 Is he up there biting his fingernails, not knowing what to do? _____

The sovereign God exists, sees everything and rules. He's still in charge of our world even if we can't see him.

3. Read v. 5-7. Although it looks like evildoers are winning, in his time God will judge them. Then, what can the just expect? v. 7 _____

The New American Standard Bible, like many translations says "The upright will behold His face."

4. What is the remedy for fear? Psalm 46:10-11. _____



- Meditate on the implications of these verses for your life. God exists. He sees everything. He is over all the earth. He is with us. He is our refuge. What more could we ask? _____
- Are you fearful? What or who do you fear? _____

- Is there really a God who reigns over everything? Yes No Can he see everything? Yes No
 Does he stand with you? Yes No Do you really believe this to be true? Yes No

- Think about this: When you look around and only see problems, remember that what you see is not the whole picture. God is in charge, not people or our circumstances. If that's true, what is there to fear?

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Sometimes the Lord calms the storm. Sometimes he lets the storm rage and calms his child.⁵

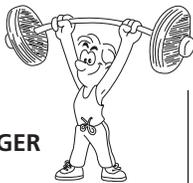
In your current situation, do you feel that God is calming the storm or calming you as you pass through it?



SO HOW DOES GOD SEE US?

Do you need to be afraid of God?
Romans 5:1

When you trusted Christ as Savior, you were justified, declared righteous based on Christ's blood. Instead of accusing you, he forgives you. Romans 8:28-39 emphasizes that he is on our side, not against us



GROWING STRONGER

Read Exodus 8-14
(one chapter per day).

Memorize Psalm 34:7

"The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them." NIV

"The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them." NKJV

5. What do the following passages teach about fear and how to overcome it?

Proverbs 29:25 _____

Psalm 18:1-2 _____

John 16:33 _____

6. Does God ever get tired of hearing from us? Psalm 71:3

7. In Psalm 34 (below), underline the words and phrases that are the most helpful in overcoming your fears. Take time to meditate on each one.

Psalm 34:4-9, 14-17

- 4 *I sought the LORD, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.*
- 5 *Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.*
- 6 *This poor man called, and the LORD heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.*
- 7 *The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.*
- 8 *Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.*
- 9 *Fear the LORD, you his holy people, for those who fear him lack nothing.*

- 14 *Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.*
- 15 *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry;*
- 16 *but the face of the LORD is against those who do evil, to blot out their name from the earth.*
- 17 *The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them; he delivers them from all their troubles.*

* Other comforting passages are Psalm 91 and 1 Crónicas 28:20



- In this lesson you have read many passages to help you deal with fear. Which thoughts or ideas have caught your attention the most?

- On a separate sheet, make a list of negative messages (lies) that you hear. Next write a true statement to replace each negative message.



Step 7

But...everyone else does it.

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ Christians are called to live differently than others.
- _____ The world offers a lot of fun, but it does not last.
- _____ Many Christians are strange, as if they came from another planet.

THE LIE

"Everyone does it, why should I be different? It can't be that bad if it is so popular." Friends of those who want to live a holy life sometimes say: *"Don't be a fanatic, relax, enjoy life. Do you think you are better than us?"* Being different is uncomfortable. It's not easy to swim against the tide. We might follow the world due to peer pressure; but other times we do it because sin looks like fun, and we don't think about the consequences.

1. List some examples of common practices in our society that people justify by saying "Everyone is doing it."

THE TRUTH

2. How does Romans 12:2 contradict the lie that says "...it's OK because everyone else does it?" _____

God hasn't called you to copy the world's ways, but to be transformed into a new kind of person who is different. If your friends scoff because you are a believer you could respond: *"Yes, I'm different! So what? I've chosen a different path. I have a higher calling."*

3. To be different, it is necessary to renew your _____. v. 2
How can you renew your mind? _____

- One way to transform your thinking is to allow biblical truth to replace the lies you have learned from the devil and the world during the course of your life (Psalm 119:11). Your mind needs to be reprogrammed in order for you to be light in the darkness instead of just adopting the world's way of thinking. That is precisely why this manual was written, to help you identify the lies and exchange them for the truth.
- Romans 12:1 gives another way to be different: Present your body to God as a living sacrifice. Pray and surrender all of yourself to God, to do his will instead of the world's bidding. How? See *"A Daily Surrender to Christ"* on page 12.

4. What does Matthew 7:13-14 say about the person who wants to be like everyone else. Where does the *wide road* lead? _____



The Salmon

In the cold waters of many rivers the salmon swim. They are born in freshwater streams, but migrate downstream to the sea. Not all of them survive the trip, but those that reach the ocean grow to huge sizes. After several years at sea, instinct calls them to return to the stream where they were born.

The trip home is hard, as they fight the current, rapids, predators and other obstacles. When a waterfall blocks their path they jump over and over until they reach the top. At last they reach their destination, where they lay their eggs and die, giving rise to a new generation.

What if the salmon didn't want to swim against the current? It would remain at sea, unable to reproduce, bringing the end of their species.

What happens to believers who won't swim against the world's current?

Be like the noble salmon. Persevere against the current and everything the world throws at you.

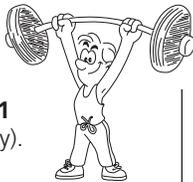


When you want to do something, yet are not sure if you should do it or not, ask the following questions:

- ✓ What would Jesus do?
- ✓ What does your conscience say? If your conscience is clear, why then are you trying to justify your behavior by saying... "everyone does it"?
- ✓ What does the Bible say?

GROWING STRONGER

Read Exodus 15-21
(one chapter per day).



Memorize Romans 12:2

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will." NIV

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." NKJV

5. Write down some areas in your life where you are feeling pressured to mold yourself to the world. Be specific: _____

6. 1 Peter 2:11 compares believers to _____ and _____
Explain what it means to see yourself as a sojourner or foreigner.

STOP *As a sojourner, the believer is different from others because he is just passing through this world. Meditate on how that will effect your life.*

How should you live? v. 11 _____

Abstaining from evil desires isn't optional. These desires combat against your soul like parasites, slowly sucking away your spiritual energy.

7. Why should you live well? v. 12 _____
Believers are called to behave in a way that won't give unbelievers an excuse to criticize them, but rather cause them to praise God.

8. In Philippians 2:15-16, God calls you to live a blameless life in the midst of a _____ culture, like shining lights for all to see. Hold fast to God's word, allowing it to always be your guide. *Do you accept the challenge to shine?* Yes No

STOP *Think of a practical way you could shine for God today? What is it?*

9. Psalm 1 tells us how to live in evil times. What things do righteous people avoid? Psalm 1:1 _____

10. In contrast to the wicked, how do the righteous live? Psalm 1:2?

How much time do you dedicate to the Word? _____

11. Psalm 1:3-4. Those who meditates on the Word are like a _____ planted next to a river, strong, stable and fruitful. The wicked who follow others are compared to _____ that is blown away by the wind.

STOP • *Now close your eyes and imagine the tree next to the river and the chaff driven by the wind. See the huge difference between them?*

- Which represents your life now, the tree or the chaff? _____
- Which would you like to be? _____
- Have you been listening to bad advice, or following bad examples? Explain: _____
- Make a personal plan to meditate on the Word day and night so as to counteract the world's influence. Write your plan on a separate sheet.

Step 8

There's no justice in the world



Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ Sometimes the wicked prosper more than the righteous.
- _____ One day the wicked will have to pay for their deeds.
- _____ It's not worth it to do the right thing when you can do better doing evil.

THE LIE

When you look around, it would be easy to conclude that there is no justice in our world. We see suffering, crime, injustice, poverty and corruption. The lie we will study in this lesson expresses itself in different ways: *"Why do evil men prosper when the righteous suffer? It's unfair. The forces of good are losing the battle. It's not worth trying to do the right thing when doing evil brings greater rewards."*

THE TRUTH

It's true that the wicked outnumber the righteous, but that should not surprise us. The most popular path, with the most traffic is the one that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14). Why do the good people suffer at the hands of evildoers? Is it true that evil pays better than doing good? What attitude should the righteous take in the light of so much injustice?

Psalm 37 is key to finding answers to these issues. Read the whole Psalm and answer questions 1-8.

1. What are the righteous commanded to do in v. 1? _____

Why do you think a good person would envy the wicked? _____

2. Is it true that sometimes the wicked prosper? Yes No Then why shouldn't the righteous envy the wicked? v. 2 _____

3. Use three different colors to underline the following themes that are found in Psalm 37:

- What God commands the righteous to do.
- What will happen to evildoers.
- What God promises to those who do good.



MY ATTITUDE WHEN FACING INJUSTICE (continue in Psalm 37)

4. What should you do instead of envying the wicked? v. 3 " _____ in the Lord and _____." This verse says it all. Instead of living with envy, anger, complaining or vengeance, your attitude should be to focus on doing good. "Doing good" includes all that the Bible commands us. The tendency of many believers is to focus on the injustice and use it as an excuse for our bad behavior. But God says, "leave it to me, I'll take care of it." (Romans 12:19). Your responsibility is to do what is right, no matter what.

5. What else does God ask us to do in the following verses? v. 4 _____

v. 5 _____

v. 7 _____

v. 8 _____

A STORY OF HOPE

Imagine a city under siege. The enemy that surrounds the city will not let anyone or anything leave. Supplies are running low and the citizens are fearful. But in the dark of the night, a spy sneaks through the enemy lines.



He has rushed to the city to tell the people that in another place the main enemy force has been defeated; the leaders have already surrendered. The people do not need to be afraid. It is only a matter of time until the besieging troops receive the news and lay down their weapons.

Similarly, we may feel we are surrounded by the forces of evil, disease, injustice, oppression, death, but the enemy has actually been defeated at Calvary. Things are not the way they seem to be. It is only a matter of time until it becomes clear to all that the battle is really over. ⁶

“A little while, and the wicked will be no more; though you look for them, they will not be found. But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy peace and prosperity.”

Psalm 37:10-11

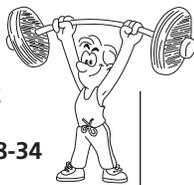
GROWING STRONGER

Read Deuteronomy 28-34
(one chapter per day).

Memorize Psalm 37:9

“For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.”
NIV

“For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.”
NKJV



WHAT GOD PROMISES TO THE JUST

6. What will God do for those who obey him? Psalm 37

v. 4 _____

v. 6 _____

v. 11 _____

v. 28 _____

7. What does v. 16 say to motivate us? _____

WHAT GOD PROMISES TO THE WICKED

8. What will happen to the wicked? Psalm 37:9-10 _____

v. 13 The Lord _____ at the wicked, for _____

v. 14-15 _____

v. 20 The wicked will perish, they will vanish like _____, as if they had never existed..

9. Should we seek vengeance? Romans 12:19 Why? _____

10. According to Revelation 19:11-16, how will history end?

11. Meditate on the following statements and discuss them with others.:

- ✓ It is hard to accept that sometimes evildoers continue to prosper and enjoy a long life. Where is God's justice? Why doesn't he strike them down now? We don't know why he holds back but God is in charge, and will judge each one in due time. See Romans 12:19
- ✓ The evil ones are compared with grass (Psalm 37:2) that dries up and with the smoke that vanishes. Even those who live to old age will have to leave their riches and power behind. The only thing that awaits them is the judgement of a holy and just God.
- ✓ Additionally, things aren't really as they appear. It seems like the wicked have everything, but do they live in peace, or are they controlled by envy, greed, jealousy, pride and fear?



- Share with your group a difficult situation that you are currently facing.
- Remember Psalm 37:3 **Trust in the Lord and do good.**
- Don't let injustices or any other circumstances turn you into a bitter or envious person. Keep on doing good, leaving those who do evil in God's hands.
- If you are in an abusive relationship, ask God for wisdom and seek advice from a mature Christian. There is a place for resistance.



Step 9

God will never forgive someone like me

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ There are many sins that God isn't ready to forgive.
- _____ Although I have confessed my sins, I still feel guilty. God probably hasn't forgiven me.
- _____ I don't deserve God's forgiveness.

THE LIE

This lie takes several forms: *What I've done is just too awful. How can I ever be forgiven? I'm not worthy; how can God love someone like me? I'm afraid that I'm a lost cause. God has given me so many opportunities that I've not taken advantage of. I can't believe he would give me another chance.*

THE TRUTH

This lie, like so many others is a mixture of truth and lies. On the one hand, a person is correct in saying that they aren't worthy. They recognize their still sins, and feel they don't deserve God's forgiveness. They have come to believe that there is no remedy for their sin. Why? Perhaps because there is so much wrong with their life, or because they keep on committing the same sin over and over. Perhaps they feel incapable of overcoming their weaknesses. This person probably believes that God will forgive others who sin less, but not him or her.

1. Where do the doubts come from? Revelation 12:9-10 describes one of Satan's main tactics. Verse 9 says that Satan _____ the whole world. Verse 10 calls him the _____ of our _____, who _____ them before _____ day and night.

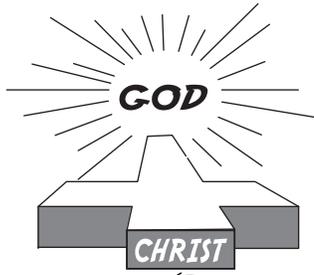
Although he is not able to fool God with his accusations, he often convinces us with his lies. He is right when he says we have sinned, but lies when he says our sins are too many or too great to be forgiven. If we believe this, the enemy will paralyze us with remorse and doubt.

2. What is God's attitude toward sinners? Ephesians 2:4-5 God is rich in _____. Even when we were dead in sin, he made us alive. By _____ you have been saved.

The words mercy and grace are like two sides of the same coin:

- **Mercy:** *God's compassion that moves him to hold back a punishment we deserve.*
- **Grace:** *God's great love that moves him to give us a gift we do not deserve, pardon.*

3. Read Romans 8:31-39. Instead of accusing us what does God do? v. 33 _____
Instead of condemning us, what is Christ doing now? v. 34 _____
What can separate us from God's love? v. 38-39 _____
4. So, what does God want? Punish us Forgive us God is on our side! He wants to forgive us and give us peace. He is not playing "hide and seek" with believers. We don't have to beg or try to convince him to forgive us. He already decided to forgive us and wants to restore us to fellowship.
5. What happens when we receive Christ? Romans 5:1 We are _____
and have _____.



In the shadow of the cross



God sees me as righteous through the blood of Christ

Justified by faith means God has declared us righteous based on the work of Christ. This is not because we are worthy or without sin, but rather because God credited the righteousness of Christ to our account. It is based on the finished work of Christ on the cross, independent of our own righteousness.

How does God see us now? Romans 8:1 says, *“there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* In spite of our weakness he declares us righteous. He doesn’t see our sins, but rather Christ’s blood that covers them



- Have you accepted Christ as your savior? Are you in the shadow of the cross? _____
- If not, is there anything to stop you from doing it now? _____
- Is there any sin that the blood of Christ does not cover? _____
- Can God forgive someone like you, even with your many faults? _____

CONFUSION ABOUT GOD’S PROMISE

6. What does 1 John 1:9 promise? _____

Confession means _____

7. If God promises to forgive us and cleanse us from all evil, why is it that some believers still feel guilty after confessing their sin?

- What do you think the problem is? They weren’t sincere
 God didn’t forgive them They failed to accept God’s forgiveness
 They need to believe that God has forgiven them. Other

Perhaps they feel the problem might be lack of sincerity or that God does not want to forgive them. The real reason for continuing to feel guilty is that they have focused on their sin instead of on the blood of Christ. They believe the lie that their sin is unforgiveable or that it will require some sort of penitence to be forgiven. They are going by their feelings rather than what God has said. They believe the lie: *“If I don’t feel different, maybe God didn’t forgive me.”*



- Ask yourself: What is greater, the power of my sin or the power of the blood of Christ? _____

- Learn the following healthy habit: After confession, get into the habit of consciously receiving God’s forgiveness. You could pray this way:

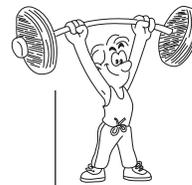
“God, I have confessed my sin, believing that Christ paid my punishment with his death. I don’t deserve your forgiveness, but I accept it. I believe 1 John 1:9, that you have forgiven me. I will continue to live as if that were true because it is. I refuse to keep beating myself up with guilt or believe the lie that you don’t want to forgive me.”

- Close your eyes and try to imagine yourself standing in the shadow of the cross as shown in the drawing above. Give thanks to God for declaring you righteous through Christ’s blood. Your forgiveness is based solely on the finished work of Christ on the cross. You don’t need to do anything except receive it.

WHAT COLOR IS THE WALL?

It is common to describe things by their color. For example...“the white building with the black gate.” But if we think about it, the building is probably not white. Why? If it is made of concrete block the real color of the wall is gray, the color of concrete.

We call it white because we see the white paint that covers the wall. In like manner we, being sinners, have been covered with the blood of Christ. What God sees is a saint, declared righteous by the blood.



GROWING STRONGER

Read Joshua 1-7, (one chapter per day).

Memorize Romans 5:1

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” NIV

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” NKJV



Step 10

I can't take it. Why do we suffer?

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- If God were with us, we wouldn't have so many problems.
- God does not want his children to suffer. Suffering is always caused by sin or by lack of faith.
- Trials are a reason to rejoice because they help us mature.

THE LIE

When something bad happens, it is common to hear: *Where is God? I don't deserve this. I can't take it anymore. Why are all these trials coming my way? If I'm God's child, why does he treat me this way?* In moments of pain, everyone wants to know, *Why?* There aren't easy answers, but the Bible does have a lot to say about it.

THE TRUTH

- God has never abandoned you. He's always at your side. Hebrews 13:5-6
- Do you deserve this? Often you won't understand why, but it's important to know that nothing happens by accident. There is a plan for everything. Romans 8:28-29
- Why do you suffer? there are many reasons, but it is important to remember one thing: ***The most important question is not "Why?" but "How should you respond when you suffer?"***
- When something bad happens there are two options: You can become depressed or angry; or you can take it as if it were a school to build your character. 1 Peter 5:10 tells us that after you have suffered a little while, God *"will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast."*

A GOSPEL WITHOUT PAIN?

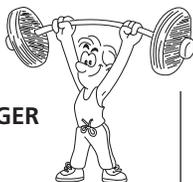
Many teach that God's will is that His children should never suffer. They claim suffering is the result of a person's own sin, or due to lack of faith. They preach an easy gospel, without pain. But, what does the Bible say? We will see that everyone suffers; even the just, but our suffering isn't necessarily the result of God's wrath. We shouldn't be surprised when we suffer; that's just normal.

1. In John 16:33 Jesus said: I told you these things so you might have _____. In this world you will have _____ but _____. I have _____.
2. Is it true that God does not want you to suffer, and if you do suffer it is always caused by your own sin?
2 Corinthians 11:23-28 _____
1 Peter 4:12-14 _____
Verse 14 says specifically that Christians sometimes suffer just because they are believers. Have you ever suffered for being a Christian? _____ Share your experience with the group.
3. How should you respond to suffering? Write down the two things mentioned in 1 Peter 4:19.
_____ and _____

Instead of complaining, look at your troubles as an opportunity to grow. Growth occurs when the believer turns all his circumstances over to God and keeps doing good, even in the midst of his pain.

TESTED BY ADVERSITY

- *Have you noticed that trees that grow alone, subject to wind and drought, are the strongest, while those which grow protected in the forest are weaker?*
- *A clay vessel is weak until it passes through the fiery kiln.*
- *If the steel of a knife blade is not tempered by fire, it will never be able to hold a sharp edge.*
- *Someone asked C.S. Lewis, "Why do the righteous suffer?" "Why not?" he replied. "They're the only ones who can take it." ⁷*
- *"Today the church must have people who have not been offended or destroyed by their sufferings, a people who are not cast down, dejected, full of questions, but holding fast to His love, proving Him faithful in all things - patient, enduring, strong in faith. They are to be an example to the weak, to be a source of true comfort and consolation" ⁸*
- *Trials are medicines which our gracious and wise Physician prescribes because we need them; and he proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires. ⁹*



GROWING STRONGER

Read Joshua 8-14
(one chapter per day).

Memorize John 16:33

"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." NIV

*"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."
NKJV*

Sometimes suffering is the direct result of your rebellion. Suffering might be God's attempt to get your attention, so examine your life. Repent if needed. But how great is God! He doesn't give up on you, but wants to restore you. He disciplines his children in love until they return to Him (Heb. 12:5-6).

WHAT DOES GOD WANT TO ACCOMPLISH WITH SUFFERING?

4. Is there a plan for your life or are you just drifting alone? Romans 8:28

5. The apostle Paul could speak about suffering from his own experiences. Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-12 to understand his point of view. What's the purpose of our weaknesses? v. 7 _____

- What attitude did Paul express in v. 8-9? _____

6. Some say: "If God was really with me, this would not have happened." How should you respond to trials? James 1:2-4 _____
Why? _____

7. What other purposes for suffering are given in 2 Corinthians 1?
v. 4, 6 _____
v. 8-9 _____

SUMMARY

- ✓ **Suffering should not come as a surprise.** If Christ and the apostles suffered, can we expect any less? Those who preach a gospel without pain are preaching fantasy, not the true gospel.
- ✓ **There is a plan.** Everything works together for good. God never leaves us. We are hard pressed but not crushed, persecuted but not abandoned.
- ✓ **Suffering is like a school to teach compassion.** The world is full of suffering people. Who will comfort them? Those of us who have passed through trials have been prepared to console others.
- ✓ **Suffering teaches us to depend on God instead of ourselves.**
- ✓ **Suffering is an opportunity to grow.** It helps to mold and polish us. Trials teach us things we could never learn any other way.
- ✓ **Suffering can be God's call to examine your life and repent if needed.**
- ✓ **Our reaction to trials determines whether we will be strengthened or whether we will sink into resentment, depression and sadness.**



• **Write** down on a separate sheet the trials you face now.

• **Pray** over each trial like this:

Lord, show me if there is sin in my life that needs to be confessed. I put myself into your hands during this trial and commit myself to continue doing good. I refuse to become discouraged or bitter because of what is happening to me. May these days be my school for compassion. I expect to receive your comfort and to comfort others in the future. Amen



Step 11 If only I had more money...

Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ It's impossible to be happy without lots of money.
- _____ Some things you can't see are more important than money.
- _____ We can learn to be content with little or with wealth.

THE LIE

Like other lies, this one takes various forms. *Money is everything. The most important thing is to live comfortably, with all the stuff I want. Money will make me happy and solve my problems, etc.* But money isn't the only thing for which people are looking. Besides wealth, some seek security in sex, fame, friends, a career, etc.

The rich say: *My bank account is what makes me feel important and secure. I'm "somebody" now that I have money, a career, fame, friends.* On the other hand, the poor say: *I'm nobody because I don't have what others have.* From the list below choose the things you would most like to have.

- | | | | | |
|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial security | <input type="checkbox"/> A nice home | <input type="checkbox"/> A good car | <input type="checkbox"/> Sex |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intelligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Promotions in my career | <input type="checkbox"/> Good food | <input type="checkbox"/> Fame | <input type="checkbox"/> Friends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> Good body, figure | <input type="checkbox"/> Athletic ability | <input type="checkbox"/> Talent | <input type="checkbox"/> Power |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stylish Clothes | <input type="checkbox"/> Computer, smart phone | <input type="checkbox"/> Good grades | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Are there more important things than those listed above. Examples? _____

THE TRUTH

1. Is it wrong to want the things listed above? _____

Although there is nothing wrong with wanting to live well, if you only focus on material things, what happens when you lose them? For example, if a woman feels secure because of her good figure, will she still be happy when the years bring wrinkles and some extra pounds? _____

2. The following passages express a different point of view. What is it?

Luke 12:15 _____

Mark 8:36 _____

2 Corinthians 4:18 _____

3. What would you say to someone who says: *"I'm someone because I have money and influence"*?

4. Write down elements of your current life that will last forever: _____

Now, elements of your current life that will not last forever: _____

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

Meditate on the following passages and the answers they give to materialism

“The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God endures forever.”

Isaiah 40:8

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. “ Colossians 3:1-3

5. What dilemma do believers face every day? Matthew 6:24

6. What solution does Matthew 6:19-21 present to this dilemma? _____

7. What are some ways to store up treasures in heaven? _____

CONTENTMENT

8. Are you content with what God has given you? Is it really possible to be content? What had Paul learned about money? Philippians 4:11-13

v. 11-12 _____

v. 13 _____

When Paul said “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” he was talking about the ability to be content and carry on whether or not he had plenty of money or was in need.

9. Why can you be content or satisfied with what you have? Phil. 4:19

10. In Matthew 6:25-35 Jesus promised to supply our basic needs like food and clothing. He concludes in v. 33 by telling us to seek first

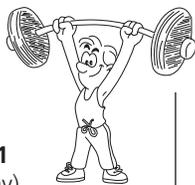
_____ and _____

and all these things shall be _____

11. Some mistakenly take these and other passages as promises of economic prosperity and riches. However, is that what they say? They never promise prosperity; rather they guarantee that God will supply our basic needs. Didn't Paul specifically say in Philippians 4:11-12 that he was content whether he was in need or whether he was living with abundance?

The important thing is not how much money one has, rather the peace in knowing that God will always give him enough for a contented life.

GROWING STRONGER



Read Joshua 15-21 (one chapter per day).

Memorize Mark 8:36

“What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? ” NIV

“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?” NKJV



What makes you feel secure or happy? Are you content?

- When someone believes that material things are what matter most, he builds his life on a foundation that will disappear with the passage of time.
- Have you swallowed the lie that material things are the only things that are real or of value?
- If your bank account is what makes you feel important, it is not nearly as important as you think.
- Instead of making your life a quest for money, seek first God's control over your life. Doing this, he will take care of the rest of your needs.

Step 12

All religions lead us to heaven



Answer TRUE (T) or FALSE (F)

- _____ The most important thing isn't what you believe, but that you are sincere.
- _____ It would be like treason to go against the religious traditions of my family.
- _____ There are many paths that lead to heaven.

IS IT TRUE THAT ALL RELIGIONS LEAD US TO GOD?

It is common to hear people say that there are many roads to heaven. They say that the most important thing is to be sincere in the practice of your religion and to tolerate other beliefs. Others say it is enough to just love others regardless of what church you attend.

All of this sounds great and it is very popular to think this way. It's easy because it allows you to choose the beliefs you like and reject those you don't. But, what does the Bible say? What did Jesus teach?

1. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus, who was a very religious man? Was he accepting of the way Nicodemus practiced his religion? John 3:1-3 _____
2. According to Jesus, who can get to heaven without going through Him? John 14:6 _____
Does this passage lead you to believe that the truth is something that is always changing depending on the times, circumstances or popular opinion? _____

When people accuse Christians of being close minded for believing that Jesus is the only way to heaven, we must remind them that this is not our idea, but what Jesus himself taught. It is interesting to note that many who claim to be so open minded are tolerant of everything except the true gospel.

3. Does the Bible leave the door open to the idea that all religions take us to God? Why or why not?
Acts 4:12 _____
Exodus 20:3-4 _____
Galatians 1:8 _____

4. The different world religions have very different beliefs. What is the difference between the Gospel and any other religion?

The Gospel

- The gospel is God, reaching down from heaven to reach humanity.
- The gospel is based on the finished work of Christ instead of on the works one might do. Salvation is completely free.

Religion

- Religions are human effort to reach God.
- Although the requirements vary from group to group, religion requires men to earn their way to paradise through their works.

5. Why isn't the idea of reincarnation as taught by Buddhism or Hinduism compatible with the biblical teaching of what happens after death?

Once the devil was walking along with one of his cohorts. They saw a man ahead of them pick up something shiny. "What did he find?" asked the cohort.

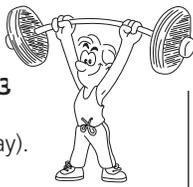
"A piece of the truth," the devil replied.

"Doesn't it bother you that he found a piece of the truth?" asked the cohort.

"No," said the devil, "I will see to it that he makes a religion out of it." 10

GROWING STRONGER

Read Joshua 22-23 and Psalms 37-41
(one chapter per day).



Memorize Acts 4:12

"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved." NIV

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." NKJV

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

In light of 1 Timothy 2:5, what do you think about these phrases taken from the Rosary?

Hail Holy Queen: "...Turn then most gracious advocate, Thine eyes of mercy toward us,...."

Hail Mary: "...Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."

"You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions." Mark 7:8

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ." Colossians 2:8

6. Christians believe in only one God while others like Hindus and Animists believe in many gods or spirits. If one religion contradicts another, is it possible that both are true? _____

SHOULD I FOLLOW THE TRADITIONS THAT MY PARENTS GAVE ME?

- 7. • It obviously depends on what traditions you are talking about. Some traditions are biblical and good, others not so much. Some are just neutral.
- Many times the decision to follow Christ requires one to break with some aspects of his past.
- Often a new Christian's family or friends will consider them odd or even traitors to their religious heritage. There will be opposition, scoffing and persecution.
- Remember the teaching of the two paths in Matthew 7:13-14? The majority were on the wide path that lead to destruction.
- What you must remember is that on judgment day, you will have to give an account to God, not to your parents or relatives. (Revelation 20:11-15)



You could paraphrase Mark 8:36 this way: What good will it do to make your family and friends happy, yet forfeit your soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

8. What brought Jesus into conflict with the religious leaders? Mark 7:9

9. How many mediators are there between God and man? 1 Timothy 2:5

_____ What is a mediator? _____

Do you believe that the Virgin Mary can mediate for us? _____

We stray from the truth when we pray to any other person except the God of the Bible, or whenever we follow any religion not based on the Bible.

YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS OTHER RELIGIONS

10. What does 1 Peter 3:15-16 command? _____

What should your attitude be towards those who question your faith?

11. What was Jesus' attitude towards the lost? Why? Matthew 9:36-38



- *You need to have firm convictions about what you believe and why. Don't be upset if others accuse you of being close minded. Remember that Jesus himself said that he was the only way to heaven.*
- *When you speak to those of other religions, express yourself with compassion and courtesy, never with scorn or sarcasm.*
- *The goal is not to win arguments, but to win souls.*

Quotes:

1. Thomas Brooks, quoted in *Lies Women Believe And The Truth That Sets Them Free* by Nancy DeMoss
2. Bits and Pieces, July, 1991
3. From a personal conversation of the author with the prisoner.
4. Author unknown
5. Author unknown
6. Richard J. Mouw, Uncommon Decency, p. 149-150.
7. C.S. Lewis
8. David Wilkerson - Why do the righteous Suffer, Sept. 26, 1988
9. John Newton
10. Klyne Snodgrass, Between Two Truths - Living with Biblical Tensions, 1990, Zondervan Publishing House, p. 35.

<p>Step 10 John 16:33</p> <p><i>"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 7 Romans 12:2</p> <p><i>"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.."</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 4 2 Corinthians 12:9</p> <p><i>But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.</i> NIV</p> <p><i>And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 1 John 8:44</p> <p><i>"You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.</i> NKJV</p>
<p>Step 11 Mark 8:36</p> <p><i>"What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?"</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 8 Psalm 37:9</p> <p><i>"For those who are evil will be destroyed, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"For evildoers shall be cut off; But those who wait on the Lord, they shall inherit the earth."</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 5 John 15:5</p> <p><i>"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.."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.."</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 2 John 8:31-32</p> <p><i>"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. 32 And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."</i> NKJV</p>
<p>Step 12 Acts 4:12</p> <p><i>Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.</i> NIV</p> <p><i>Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 9 Romans 5:1</p> <p><i>"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 6 Psalm 34:7</p> <p><i>"The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>"The angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them."</i> NKJV</p>	<p>Step 3 Isaiah 41:10</p> <p><i>"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."</i> NIV</p> <p><i>Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.</i> NKJV</p>

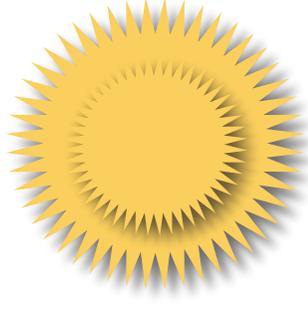
Certificate

This certificate is presented to

_____ who has satisfactorily completed all the lessons of this manual

New Life in Christ Volume 4
Living free by knowing the truth
Biblical answers to common lies

*“If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.
Then you will know the truth,
and the truth will set you free..” John 8:31-32*



Instructor

Date

