

What's this about - this is for real men
The Roadmap

I'm really glad you're here.

This book is for real men.

We're all wanting to work out how to do life.

We're searching for direction & meaning & fulfilment. We're wanting to do the best for our families. We want to be respected. And we all have challenges to face.

We instinctively know there has to be more to life, so we're searching for answers.

What's the purpose for my life?

How can I know what is the truth?

How can I have something solid to base my life on, something that's unshakable?

How can I become the man I was created to be?

These are foundational questions every man needs to answer. We have to know who we are & why we're here, otherwise we feel a bit lost & unsure. Part of what makes you a man is taking the responsibility to work out what you believe.

So let's not beat around the bush.

You can't find answers to these questions that make sense, if there is no God. If God isn't real then we've come from nothing & we're going back to nothing. We are random blobs spinning through space, we are accidents of chance. If that was true, then we have no purpose in this life & no hope for the future. (a)

But if God is real, then that changes everything. If God is real then He's the one who's created us. And He's the one who continues to sustain the whole universe. If God is real then we can't possibly know who we are, or why we're here, or how we should live, if we don't first get to know Him. If God is real then the very purpose of our lives must be to know Him.

Deep down everyone knows there is a God.

If we are honest, in the core of our being, we know God is real. Deep down we know there's more to life than this. Deep down we know there is someone who is much greater than we are. It's wired into the soul of everyone of us. So the real questions we need to ask are ..

- Who is God?
- And how can I know Him?

All other questions will be answered over time once you've answered these 2 questions.

Now if we want to know God, then we can't just make up what we want Him to be like, we have to know Him as He truly is. And we can't know God second hand, we have to know God for ourselves. Fortunately God has shown Himself to us.

I want to introduce you to Jesus.

Jesus is not like any person you've ever met. He's probably nothing like what you imagine.

To His friends Jesus was fiercely loyal, the most genuine & selfless, the most honorable man who's ever lived.

To all the crowds of people that crossed paths with Jesus, there was something deeply authentic about Him. His love was so real, so genuine, they couldn't help but be drawn to Him.

And the way He spoke, it was like He could see into their soul & answer their deepest questions. And His miracles were astonishing.

The way Jesus stood up for those abused & hurting was admirable, but the thing that stands out the most was the way He was willing to sacrifice for others. His compassion was relentless. His grace was limitless. His strength & bravery in the face of adversity was unstoppable. As a man He was powerful & inspiring & at the same time He was kind & merciful.

We know a person's true colours come out when they're under pressure. Even when Jesus was facing certain death, still His integrity was uncompromising. His courage ferocious. His forgiveness unending.

Jesus is far & away the greatest man who's ever lived.

And if you keep reading you'll see Jesus was much more than that. Because Jesus wasn't just a man. Jesus claimed to be God. And He backed it up. His perfect life, His teachings, His miracles, the 100's of prophecies His life fulfilled, His sacrificial death & His all-conquering resurrection; these all back up Jesus' claim to be God.

So knowing Jesus is the purpose of your life.

Through knowing Him, your questions can be answered. The truth you're searching for, the forgiveness for your past, the hope for your future is all found in Him.

And coming to know Jesus will change you. The more you know Him, the more every part of you will change for the better. And He won't only change your life, He wants to use you to change the eternal destiny of those around you also.

This is the greatest adventure you can have.

King David was the greatest King Israel ever had. And He had a massive army. But within that large army he had a small group of mighty men that he really trusted. They weren't necessarily the strongest or most highly trained warriors.

But they were men who would run into a fierce battle to save one of their mates.

They were men who would stand & fight when everyone else was retreating.

They were men who would fight until they had complete victory.

They were men of courage, men of honour.

They were the men who were willing to commit their very lives to their king.

God is looking for men like this. Men who aren't necessarily the biggest & flashiest.

But men who are willing to seek God with all their hearts.

Men who have the courage to confront their struggles.

Men who are willing to trust Him regardless of their circumstances.

God wants to make you this man.

So as you go through this book, I believe God is going to challenge you.

Why not decide right now?

Are you willing to open up your heart to Him?

Are you willing to allow Him to change your life?

Jesus is calling you to be one of His mighty men .. Are you up for it?

Let me pray for you as you start this journey.

Lord God, thank you that you know _____ (your name).

Lord you know all his questions, you know every thought he's ever had, you know everything that's ever happened in his life. And you created him so he can know you. Lord help _____ come to know you in a real way. Help him as he seeks you. Reveal yourself to him. Thanks that you promise that if we seek you with all our heart, we will find you.

(a) If you're not sure if you believe any of this yet, thanks for reading, keep seeking answers. You could look at 1340 .. Is God real? or 1345 .. Can I trust the bible? .. or 3a .. Who is Jesus?

This is a roadmap to becoming a disciple of Jesus

The Roadmap

Men are searching for answers.

How can I deal with hurts from my past?

How can I have genuine hope for my future?

How can I protect, love & lead my family? (or get prepared to do this)

Why is there a such difference between what I believe & how I live?

Why can't I get free from this sin?

How can I have authentic faith, faith that changes me?

Men need discipling.

We need to know not just how to be christian's but how to become mighty men of God.

Men who have the courage to confront the challenges in their life.

Men who are set free from their past & have a concrete hope for their future.

Men who know who they are & what their role is.

Men who will stand up & fight for their family.

God has created you to be this sort of a man. He has a plan for your life, you need to know how to live it.

This book is a roadmap.

Each day is a "step" towards discovering who Jesus is, how you can live as His disciple & how you can become the man God created you to be.

As we go through we won't pull any punches. We'll talk about real life things like ..

- growing strong, deep, genuine faith,
- overcoming porn & sexual temptations,
- receiving genuine healing & freedom from past issues,
- making a difference in the lives of people around you,
- building loving marriages, resilient families,
- equipping you to fulfil your role in God's Kingdom.

So where are you in your life right now?

If you're not yet sure what you believe, this is a good place to search for answers. Keep going.

If you've just started to believe in Jesus, this book is for you. As you read through & seek to know God each day, I pray you'll grow stronger in your relationship with Him. See if you can find someone who's already a believer to go through with you to encourage & stand with you.

If you're already a believer who's been following Jesus for a bit, I'm really glad you're here. You'll be encouraged to grow deeper in your faith also. But for you this book has another purpose.

This is designed as a tool to help you disciple another bloke.

If you're going to follow Jesus, then He wants to work through you to disciple other men. That's part of His plan for you. You get to walk alongside another bloke & show them how to know God in a real way. You show them how to listen to God's Word. You show them how to live for Jesus in their work, their marriage, their thought life, everything.

And this book is a tool to help you do that. As you work through each day

- it will focus you on God Himself,
- it'll highlight truths from God's Word
- & give you simple actions to obey.

Our aim is..

1. You will grow as a follower of Jesus,
2. You'll disciple another bloke from first believing in Jesus to being a mature man of God,
3. He will then also disciple other men.

You'll discover that nothing builds you up in your faith more than discipling someone else. Jesus commanded us to go make disciples & He promises to be with us as we do. So what are we waiting for? Let's encourage & build each other up, hold each other accountable & become disciples of Jesus together.

(learn more about discipling in 37)

So this is where the rubber hits the road.

You can't rush through & just read the words, that won't do you any good. But as you read if you allow the Holy Spirit to go to work on your heart, if you start to do all that God shows you through His Word, then He will change every part of your life.

Warning .. this book is not so you can have a devotional thought each day.

This is a challenge to surrender, it's a call to be obedient, it's a roadmap to grow men to be all God created them to be.

This is not an easy journey.

These days lots of blokes want everything to be quick & easy. So let me be up front, this is not going to be easy. This will take commitment. You have to be willing to put in time & effort. This is for real men. You have to be willing to open up your heart & seek God. You have to be willing to have your pre-conceived ideas challenged, your weaknesses exposed, your bad habits changed. But anything of great value has a cost. And I want to tell you, coming to know God is worth it a million times over. And remember the cost Jesus was willing to go through for you.

I know life can feel like a battle. Sometimes men feel like they're being pulled in 100 different directions. But God makes you a promise.

- If you will turn to Him & seek Him, you will find Him. *Jam4:8,2Chron7:14*
- God guarantees that if you'll trust Him, He will give you all the strength you need.
- He will reveal to you all the truth you need to build your life on.
- He will give you the Holy Spirit to guide you.
- He even promises up front that you'll still be standing when this battle of life is over. But you have to be willing to trust Him. *Eph 6:10-13, Jn14:17*

I know life can throw a lot at us. Work, family, problems, the future. But don't let anything distract you. If you sit back & do nothing your life will pass you by. Let's be intentional.

Choose to seek after God. Open up your heart to Him. If you hold back you'll miss out. It's time to get real.

God has the power to change your life. I know, He's changed mine & I've seen Him change 1000's of other men also. And when God changes a man, it doesn't just affect him, it impacts everyone around him.

Through the power of Jesus' victory on the cross & by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, **you can become God's mighty man.**

Commit yourself to Him, seek Him with all your heart.

You need this, our families are crying out for this, our nation is desperate for this.

So let's start this journey together by considering the greatest story ever told.

The greatest story ever told

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **Jesus went to the cross for me**

I want you to imagine that we're part of the crowd in Jerusalem in 30AD. We're here for the Passover. This is the biggest festival every year, people come from everywhere. The population swells from 50,000 to over 200,000. So the narrow & bustling streets are jam packed.

It's been going all week. Jesus has been out among the crowds, helping & healing people all day long. You know what Jesus is like. But now it's just after sunset on Thursday night & Jesus is having a feed with His 12 closest mates. And Jesus knows exactly what's going to happen to Him, so He lets His mates know.

Later tonight I'm going to be arrested. It's all a set up, they'll falsely accuse me. And tomorrow I will be killed. I know this is hard to understand but I'm doing it for you. I'm going to earn your forgiveness so you can be right with God again. But you guys are going to think they'll arrest you also, so you'll all abandon me.

But Peter, who was one of the main disciples says, even if everyone else deserts you, I never will. And all the other disciples vowed the same. But Jesus knew their hearts. Mt 26:33

After they finished eating, Jesus gets His mates & together they walk out of the city walls, into the night. Jesus was going to a spot He often went on the nearby hillside called Gethsemane. He wanted somewhere quiet to pray because He knew what was about to happen. And even though Jesus has known all along that He was going to end up being crucified, now that it's here it feels humanly overwhelming.

So He cries out to God. **My soul feels like it's being crushed.** So extreme was the emotional pressure, Jesus was sweating drips of blood.

He prayed, **if it is possible, take this suffering away from me. Yet I want to do your will, not mine.**

Jesus knew there was no other way, He knew there was no one else who could go to the cross. So He wasn't trying to get out of it. No, Jesus was acknowledging that humanly He didn't want to do it, because it was horrific, but He was saying that He would do it.

Jesus willingly chose to go to the cross. Because He knew He was doing it for us. He knew this was God's plan.

It's now very late, probably just after midnight. Because they're on a hill outside the city, it's pitch black. All of a sudden, across the valley the large gates in city wall swing open & torch lights start filing out.

Coming closer & closer is the sound of soldiers approaching, about 600 men. You can hear their armour & weapons clanging in the still of night.

Jesus had plenty of time to hide or run away. He knew they were coming for Him. But He didn't. He waits for them to get close & then He steps forward to meet them.

Who are you looking for? He asks

Jesus of Nazareth, the soldiers reply. Jesus simply says, **I AM.** This is the name God had called Himself previously. There must have been so much power in His words that all the soldiers fell flat on their backs.

They got themselves up. Then Judas steps out of this angry mob. He had been one of Jesus mates but now he comes up to Jesus to identify Him in the dark. He betrays Him.

He didn't have to do this, Jesus had already identified Himself, yet Judas still chose to.

Suddenly Peter gets a rush of blood & jumps forward with his sword & takes a wild swing. He sliced off the ear of the priest's young servant, probably the only unarmed man there.

Put it away, Jesus said. And proving yet again He was God's son, He reaches over & miraculously heals this guy's ear.

Jesus said, **Peter don't you think I am in control right now. I could have an army of angels here in a second. I'm allowing this to happen. I am going to do exactly what my Father wants me to do.** MT26:53

And just like JC had said, all the disciples freaked out & ran away. They abandoned Him.

Then the soldiers arrested Jesus.

Questions ..

Did you realise that Jesus always knew He would unjustly suffer & be crucified, yet He was willing to go through with it?

Did you realise that Jesus could have stopped all this happening, he could have called down armies of angels?

Have you ever felt abandoned?

Jesus knows what that's like

Jesus went to the cross for me

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. [Jesus went to the cross for me](#)

The soldiers arrested Jesus. They put a sack over His head & tie Him up with ropes. They drag Jesus in the pitch black of night back into the city to stand trial before the Jewish high council. These guys are the arrogant elite, just looking for an excuse to execute Jesus. So they make up lies trying to make Jesus look guilty, but it all falls apart & they contradict each other. Finally they just ask Jesus, are you the Son of God?

Jesus says again, **I AM.**

They totally freak & rush forward & start spitting in Jesus face. Then cowardly they blindfold Him & repeatedly beat Him with their fists. Then they get all the Roman soldiers to join in. The soldiers beat Him again & again. This goes on all night. Jesus face would have been smashed.

At daybreak they lead Jesus off to the Roman governor, Pilate, hoping he would give permission so they could execute Jesus. Again they make up lies, saying Jesus was trying to be an earthly king. Jesus said nothing.

So Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, a Roman appointed governor. Herod had wanted to meet Jesus so he could see a miracle with his own eyes. But Jesus did nothing.

If Jesus had told them what they wanted to hear or if he'd performed a miracle in front of them, they would have let Him go. But Jesus didn't answer their questions or do any miracles, because He wasn't wanting to be let off. He wouldn't let anything distract Him from going to the cross.

After interviewing Jesus, Pilate goes out to the crowd & said, I don't see what crime He has committed, I find Him innocent.

Lk 23:14

But the Jewish leaders get the crowd into a frenzy, they yell crucify Him, crucify Him. So Pilate gives in because he's gutless.

And He hands Jesus over to be flogged. I can't describe what this is like, if you've ever watched the passion of the Christ, to see the way they flogged Jesus makes me sick. They use whips that have sharp bits of metal & bone tied into the lashes, so with every lash it tears open His flesh, just rips Him apart. It's so severe it does internal damage so even His spine & organs are exposed. The blood loss is massive, it's impossible to describe.

We don't know how many times they flogged Jesus. The Jews used to limit it to 39 times because people often didn't survive this. But the Romans were sadistic, they had no limit, so we don't know.

Pilate did this to Jesus so He wouldn't survive long on the cross. It was convenient for Pilate & the Jewish leaders for this to be all over quickly.

Now it's the full light of morning. Pilate hands Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. They drag Jesus back to their own barracks & call in the entire 600 men again. These were Pilate's own bodyguards, the elite soldiers of the Roman army.

They wanted to humiliate & disrespect Jesus, so they stripped Him.

They ripped out His beard, the sign of Jewish manhood.

Is 50:6

They made a crown out of large thorns, 60mm long & they pushed it down into His already beaten head.

And to mock Him they put a fake robe on Him.

Then they spat all over Him, 600 soldiers spat on Jesus.

They had sticks & they kept striking Him around the head. Every blow would drive the thorns in deeper & deeper. But JC never made a sound, He never resisted .

Isaiah the prophet said Jesus face was so disfigured he seemed hardly human, from his appearance you would scarcely know he was a man.

Then when they finally tired of mocking Him, they led Him away to be crucified.

Jesus is made to carry His own cross. How He can even stand is unbelievable. To be paraded like this through the streets is degrading. Already severely injured, now having to get through the jostling crowd who are pushing & spitting on Him, finally He collapses. So the soldiers grab a guy called Simon from the crowd & make him carry the cross.

They go just outside the city to an ugly, stoney ridge, called Golgotha. It's where they regularly crucified people. The Romans were experts at this. They were like the nazi's, sadistic mongrels, they experimented because they wanted to make it excruciating but yet prolong the suffering.

When they get to the spot, before they put Jesus on the cross, they offer Him sour wine mixed with bitter herbs. This was actually a natural pain reliever, but Jesus refuses it. He won't dull the pain, He is going to pay the complete price.

Now it's 9 am, which is the time the first sacrifice is made in the temple each day.

And the cross is laid on the ground. Jesus is stretched out & nailed to the cross.

Questions ..

Did you realise how much humiliation & suffering Jesus went through?

Did you realise that Jesus could have been let off by the Roman governor if He'd answered their question or done a miracle?

Why would He choose to say nothing, do nothing?

The justice we deserved & the love we are given

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **We deserve judgement yet we are offered forgiveness & love.**

I want us to stop for a minute & think about what Jesus went through on the cross.

1. Firstly there's the physical pain we've described briefly, it was suffering beyond what we can comprehend.
2. But on top of that was the guilt. You & I know what it's like to feel guilt, that knot in pit of your stomach when you know you have let someone down, when you know you've done the wrong thing. But Jesus had never known that feeling, because He was perfect in every way. Jesus had never experienced guilt, until now. So worse than the physical suffering was the crushing weight of having all of our guilt, all of our shame, for all we have done, placed on Him at this one time. Remember just last night when Jesus was praying at Gethsemane & He said, **my soul feels like it's being crushed.** This is what He was talking about.
3. Thirdly, Jesus had poured out on Him all of the punishment that our sins deserved.

What's this about?

There's a reason you're alive. **There is a God. And He is loving & powerful & perfect.** He's more awesome than we can ever comprehend. And He's chosen to love us. In fact He created us because He loves us. He created us so we can know Him & have an amazing relationship with Him.

God wants you to know Him as He really is. He deserves to be recognised & respected as the as the one true Almighty God, who is sovereign & full of compassion & grace.

So He created us so we can know Him in a real way, where we can trust Him & honour & appreciate Him. That's our purpose in life, to have an unbreakable connection with Him, where He's our source of life.

Gen 1:1, Jn1:3, Col 1:16, Eph 1:4-5

But what have we done? Instead of acknowledging that God is God & giving Him the respect & loyalty He deserves, everyone of us has chosen to turn our backs on Him. We'd rather live for ourselves. So we pretend like God doesn't matter, like we're more important than He is. Instead of letting Him be God, we want to be our own god. That's sin.

And so we've both disrespected & rebelled against God. We want to control our own lives when only He has the right to be God.

I know lots of people who think, I'm a good person, I haven't done anything that bad.

This is what you've done wrong, this is the sin that we are all guilty of.

We haven't believed that He is the one true God, we haven't trusted Him with our lives. We haven't honoured Him. Instead we've rebelled against Him by living for ourselves

rom 3:11-12

Jesus said, **the world's sin is that it refuses to believe in me.**

Jn16:9

As men we have to be honest with ourselves. Every single one of us has chosen to do this.

This decision has consequences. Remember our life comes from God so when we cut ourselves off from Him, we're like a laptop that isn't plugged in, it's battery is just slowly dying. This is why our world is the way it is, when we've cut ourselves off from God, we've opened the door to evil & all its consequences; broken relationships, unfulfilled lives, even suffering & death.

And deep inside we all realise something's not right. But we either try to ignore it, or we try to fill the void with money or sex or the approval of others. Or we try to escape reality with grog or drugs. Or we try to fool ourselves that we're a "good person." But the truth is none of these approaches can take away our sin & make us right with God again.

God has done everything so we can know Him. So when we turn our backs on God, that's our choice, that's our sin, so we are accountable for it. And in doing this we cut ourselves off from God.

This breaks God's heart.

Because He doesn't want anyone to be separated from Him, because He knows the pain & brokenness that it will cause, because He deserves to be honoured.

Remember the most important fact, GOD LOVES YOU.

Our sin has become a barrier between us & God. So God hates it, He wants it dealt with properly, legitimately, so it's completely removed forever.

This rebellion, this sin against Almighty God demands justice. Someone has to pay in full to remove this debt. We can't just pretend it doesn't matter. God won't just sweep it under the carpet. He can't or He wouldn't be just, He wouldn't be God. And we would never be right with Him again. We'd be doomed to pay for our sin ourselves.

This is why the cross is such an incredible story.

Because on one hand, God is being absolutely just, the full penalty for our sin is being paid completely & removed forever.

But at the same time, God is being infinitely loving & gracious,

because Jesus Himself is taking the punishment. Jesus is taking our place.

Think about it. Jesus is the one we've ignored, He's the one we've disrespected & turned our backs on, He's the one we've rebelled against. Yet He's the one who was willing to come & die in our place.

And Jesus would have gone to the cross even if you were the only one person alive.

That's why it's called amazing grace.

Questions

- a. *Why had Jesus never experienced guilt before?*
- b. *What is the main sin that all mankind is guilty of?*
- c. *Why is the cross such an incredible story?*

Answers

- a. He had always been perfect.*
- b. We haven't acknowledged or trusted God.*
- c. God showed that He is completely just, our sin was legitimately paid for so we could be completely forgiven. At the same time He's amazingly loving & gracious, because Jesus paid on our behalf.*

Jesus clung to the cross for me

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **Jesus clung to the cross.**

Let's recap.

1. Jesus endured the physical pain,
2. worse was the crushing burden of guilt,
3. much worse was the punishment for our sins.
4. But fourthly Jesus also had to endure separation.

For all eternity Jesus had a perfect relationship with God the Father & with the Holy Spirit. But now for the first time that is broken.

Why? Because Jesus became our sin. He became cursed for us.

2cor 5:21 gal 3:13

So Jesus had to endure alone. He was abandoned so that we would never have to be.

When He cried out **My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?** He was actually quoting Psalm 22 which talks about God's people going through really hard times but how God the Father rescues them. Jesus quotes this now, He's really saying I know you will come & rescue me but why is it taking so long. I am enduring alone, please come & deliver me.

OK, let's picture the cross again

Remember JC has been beaten all night long, then flogged beyond what most men could bear. Now He's stretched out on the cross. And 150mm long nails were driven into Jesus wrists & feet.

Then the cross is lifted up with Jesus hanging on it & it's dropped into the hole.

The roman soldiers knew the tendons in His wrists would tear from the weight & as Jesus slumped He wouldn't be able to breathe. So it would force Him to push His back against the cross to support Himself to breathe. His back that's been torn apart by the flogging is now trying to grip onto the rough timber cross. He is struggling for every breath. This is excruciating.

Yet somehow through this pain, Jesus gathers the strength to speak a few words.

What do you think He says? **Father forgive them, they don't know what they are doing.**

Who is Jesus looking at when He prays this? The roman guards who've just nailed Him to the cross, the crowd who yelled "crucify Him," the jewish leaders who lied about Him & organised his execution.

The very people who put Jesus on the cross are the ones He's asking our heavenly Father to forgive.

So even as Jesus prays, how are these people treating Jesus?

They are shouting abuse. The crowds that welcomed Jesus a week ago, the ones He's been helping & healing all week, now they've come out of the city & are watching as Jesus as He hangs on the cross.

They shout at Him, if you really are the Son of God, then save yourself, **come down from the cross.**

Then the self-righteous jewish leaders join in, He saved others, but He can't save Himself. If you're the Messiah, **come down from the cross.**

All the crowds, all the jews, all the suffering, everything was tempting Jesus to **come down from the cross.**

But what they didn't realise is Jesus could come down from the cross anytime He wanted.
Remember He is God's Son.
He's been doing miracles everywhere.
He's the all-powerful King of Kings.
He has armies of angels at His command. He could snap His fingers & all this goes away.

Listen to me. Don't ever think Jesus was made to go to the cross. Don't ever think the roman soldiers forced Jesus onto the cross, don't ever think Jesus was held on the cross by the nails.

NOTHING in all the world could make Jesus stay on the cross, if He didn't want to be there.
But this is the great truth.

NOTHING in all the world could tempt Jesus to come down from the cross.

Jesus clung to the cross. He wouldn't let it go. He wouldn't loosen His grip. He wouldn't come down.
Jesus clung to the cross until He has paid the complete price.
Until all our sins were paid for,
until our guilt was washed away,
until our shame was done away with,
until He had taken all the punishment, that should have been on us, JN 10:18
until He'd been separated from the Father so we don't have to be.

Jesus clung to the cross until our relationship with God could be completely restored.

He did it because that was God's plan from the beginning, to bring us back to Himself.
And He did it out of love for you & me. And He did it out of obedience to His Father.

All the people, all the pain, all wanted Jesus to come down from the cross, but Jesus wasn't interested in saving Himself. **Jesus was there to save us.**

So we never have to doubt whether God loves us. The cross settles it forever.

Jesus clung to the cross for you & for me & I am so thankful that He did.
I desperately need Him every day to be my Saviour & my Lord

- to give me forgiveness & grace
- to heal my brokenness
- I need Him to set me free
- I desperately need Him, because through Him I can know my heavenly Father,
- Through Him I can know the Holy Spirit
- I desperately need Jesus & so do you

Acts 4:12 There is salvation in no one else. God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved, only Jesus.

Questions

What did Jesus say as the people shouted abuse?

Why did Jesus go to the cross?

How can I know Jesus & be forgiven?

The Roadmap

How do you respond to that kind of sacrifice, to that kind of love?

Don't make the same mistake as the people who watched Jesus hang on the cross, who didn't recognise Him for who He is.

Jesus is the true Messiah. He is the only one who can save you.

Jesus is the King of Kings. He's the only one who deserves to be King of your life

And Jesus makes us the most amazing offer. It's amazing because we don't deserve it at all.

He asks us to do 2 things.

1. If you will TURN from living for yourself, turn from your sin & turn to Him, you can ask Him to forgive you.

2. If you will BELIEVE in JESUS, not just that He was a real man,
 - a. but if you'll believe Jesus came from God so He's perfect,
 - b. if you'll believe He lived a perfect life & then sacrificed that life for you on the cross to earn your forgiveness,
 - c. if you'll believe that He rose back to life & He deserves to be Lord of your life.

Then Jesus will forgive all your sins & He'll make you a new person. He will make you right with God our Father again, (not because of anything you've done but because of what Jesus has done.)

Jesus will restore your relationship with God back to the way it was supposed to be from the start. And this relationship starts now & will go on forever in heaven.

This is the amazing offer Jesus makes to you. So I've got to ask you, are you willing to do that?

Are you willing to surrender your life to Him & ask Him to be your Lord?

Will you bring Him your sin, your hurts, your brokenness, your arrogance?

Will you stop living for yourself?

Will you believe in Jesus? Will you trust Him with your life?

It's a choice you can make right now. Jesus offers us the great swap, where He'll take all we deserve, our punishment & separation from God. And He'll give us all He deserves, forgiveness & a right relationship with God.

All you have to do is come to Jesus, He'll do the rest. Just pray to Him & say ..

- a. Jesus, please forgive me for turning my back on you, for not recognizing that you are God. Please forgive me for all my sin & brokenness. I turn from all of that.
- b. From now on Jesus I do believe in you.
 - i. I believe that you came to earth as God's Son.
 - ii. I believe that you died for my sins.
 - iii. I believe that you rose again to eternal life.
 - iv. I believe that you have now forgiven me & you have made me right with God again.
- c. Jesus, I surrender my life to you, I declare that you are my Lord, Amen

Rom10:9-10..Mk 1:14-15..Jn3:16-17..5:24..Acts 2:38..Jam 4:8-9

If you've prayed this prayer then there's a party going on in heaven right now. God is so filled with joy that you've come back to Him. I'd love to connect with you & encourage you as you follow Jesus.

Can I encourage you to read the next devotional straight away, it's important you hear this.

I can be absolutely certain Jesus has forgiven me

The Roadmap

If you have committed your life to Jesus, that is genuinely awesome, your life is changed forever.

Truth to believe .. You can be absolutely certain that your sins are forgiven & your relationship with God is restored.

But you need to be aware, the devil will try & make you feel insecure. He'll whisper lies to you. He'll try to undermine your faith. So let me give you 3 reasons why you can be sure Jesus has saved you.

1. **Because none of this is dependent on you, it's all guaranteed by God.** Father God was the one who chose to love you before you were even alive. Jesus was the one who chose to come & take your place on the cross before you ever knew about Him. Now the Holy Spirit has come into your heart & made this real. God is the one who's done all of this by His choosing. So when the devil says, you're not worthy, you can say, God doesn't accept me because I'm worthy, He accepts me because Jesus is perfectly worthy on my behalf.

Rom5:6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. ⁷ Now, most people would not be willing to die for an upright person, though someone might perhaps be willing to die for a person who is especially good. ⁸ But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. ⁹ And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. ¹⁰ For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. ¹¹ So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

2. **Because you only have to look to the cross.** The cross forever proves how much God loves you. The fact Jesus was willing to go to the cross for you, proves His love for you. The fact that He was willing to suffer on your behalf, again shows how much He loves you. The cross forever demonstrates that our sins have been paid in full. It clearly shows us God's heart for us. So you never have to doubt, does God love me? You never have to question, is all of this real? You never have to wonder, was this for me? You only have to look to the cross.
3. **Because God has chosen to adopt you.** I have 5 kids. None of them chose to be my kids, they were born my kids. There's nothing that will ever change that now, they are my kids for life.

God says that when you come & trust in Jesus, then He adopts you into His family. He literally makes you one of His kids. Why would God want to describe it like this? He is showing the kind of relationship He wants to have with you. God wants you to relate to Him as your perfect Father. That's because He wants you to have the deepest, closest, most trusting relationship.

Now some of us have had good fathers, but we have to be honest some have had absolute mongrels.

God is unlike any human father. Don't compare Him with your earthly father, even if your old man was a good bloke. God is completely different. He is absolutely trustworthy, completely dependable. The bible tells us He loves us with an unimaginable love. He promises that He will never abandon us & nothing can separate us from Him. God is next level, that's why He wants us to know Him for who He is.

He is the only perfect Father.

So let me ask you .. Do you genuinely believe that God loves you?

I'm not asking do you think He loves the world, but are you absolutely certain that God loves you?

Because He does.

Our human minds aren't able to comprehend God's love because it's not normal. We have never experienced anything like it anywhere else

Every one of us has been let down, hurt, rejected. We all have trust issues & it's so easy to project these onto God. But I'm here to tell you,

our heavenly Father is like no one else. He can be trusted like no one else.

^{Eph 1:4} Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. ⁵ God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

This verse never ceases to amaze me.

We are known by God, we are loved by God, we are chosen by God. That didn't start when we were born. God chose to love you before He even created the world. And because He loved you, He chose to create you.

God doesn't want us to be unsure of how He feels, that's why He reveals Himself as our perfect Father.

That's why in His Word He tells us again & again that He loves us & takes pleasure in our relationship.

That's why He sent Jesus to demonstrate His love & grace to us.

That's why He sends His Spirit into our hearts.

He wants us to know exactly how He feels towards us.

He never wants our relationship to be distant or unsure.

He says, I chose you, I created you, I'm committed to you.

A father loves his kids because they're his kids.

God adopts us, because He chose to love us. It's all dependant on Him, so it's guaranteed.

Action to obey .. Pray, Lord Jesus I thank you for forgiving my sin. Thanks that you have made me right with God again. Father God, thanks for adopting you as His son. Holy Spirit, please fill my heart with the Father's love.

Trust that Jesus has saved you & Father has adopted you into His family.

Going deeper..Rom5:5-11,8:15-17..Eph1:4-5..Jn1:12

I can now know Jesus in a real way

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. I can now know Jesus in a real way

If you & I could go back in time, if we could have watched the way Jesus lived, how He genuinely connected with people, I think we'd be amazed. To see how everyday people were drawn to Jesus. Young, old, men, women, people broken & hurting, individuals, large crowds. There was something about Jesus that people knew they needed. They didn't ever seem to feel threatened or judged because somehow Jesus' heart for them was so obvious, His unconditional love & His grace was so genuine that people couldn't help but come to Him. This is the real Jesus.

What is amazing is that we can know Him also.

When Jesus went to the cross for me & you, He has made it possible that we can have a relationship with Him now. We can truly know Him, not in a physical way but in your heart. If you genuinely prayed the prayer in 7 then your relationship with Jesus has already started.

This is the most unbelievable opportunity.

Because it's only by knowing Jesus, by trusting in Him, that you are now forgiven.

It's only by knowing Jesus that you can now know God as your Father.

It's only by knowing Jesus that you can now be filled with the Holy Spirit.

It's only by knowing Jesus that you can know for certain that you will enjoy eternity in heaven.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth & the life, no one can come to the Father except through me. Jn 14:6

Your relationship with Jesus is the key to all this.

Paul understood how valuable this was.

⁷ *I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done.* ⁸ *Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.* Phil3:8

Knowing Jesus is the greatest privilege you can have in life.

Having a relationship with Jesus isn't something that's abstract, this is real. You can actually experience a deep, ongoing relationship with Jesus. You can know for certain that Jesus is there for you, He's always by your side. So you can speak or pray to Him anytime. As you open up your heart to Him you can experience the love of God embracing you. You can feel the weight lifted off you as you're forgiven. You can know His unbelievable peace in your heart & mind.

If you're like me, you've been searching for meaning & purpose all your life. Now all of a sudden you find your purpose in life is to know Jesus & experience life with Him.

And the unconditional love & acceptance you've been craving, now you find out He's been offering it to you all along.

And as men we've been desperately hunting to have something certain, something concrete to base our lives on. Now we discover that Jesus is the truth we've been searching for. He's the bedrock we can build

our lives on. He never changes. You can feel so secure when you know Jesus. He will never let you down, He'll never get sick of you. The forgiveness for your past, the hope for your future is all found in Him. It's true, Jesus is the greatest.

In next couple days we'll look at some of the evidence for believing in Jesus. But far beyond all the evidence for Jesus life, far beyond all the evidence for why you can believe the bible,

I can say that I know Jesus. I've experienced Him come into my my life. I know for certain He is real.

So now that you've started to get to know Jesus, don't stop. This is only the beginning. Let's get to know Jesus better.

Action to obey .. Pray, Lord Jesus, I commit to getting to know you. Thanks that I can know you in a real way. Holy Spirit, will you reveal Jesus to me more each day.

Going deeper..Jn 14:1-7..Phil3:7-11

This step is short so you can do 10 also.

The RoadmapBonus .. **my daily commitment**

So now that you've started to get to know Jesus, don't stop. This is only the beginning. If you want to become the man God created you to be, let's get to know Jesus better.

My commitment .. Every day I'll spend time with God.

This is how I grow in my relationship with Him. Knowing Him is my purpose in life. He's my first priority. Nothing will change you more than spending time with God each day. We'll discuss this more in (12a).

So every day as we journey together..

- We're committing to **believe** every truth that God shows us from His Word.
- We're committing to **obey** everything He asks us to do.

It's a 1 to 1 ratio. We have to know the truth & we have to live it. If He asks us to pray, we'll pray. If He shows us a lie we've been believing, we'll kick it out & replace it with truth. If He shows us we have a wrong attitude, we'll change it. We won't go to the next "step" until we're believing & obeying what He's already shown us. We won't fool ourselves by merely hearing God's Word, we'll do what it says. *Jam1:22*
This is crucial if I want to be His disciple. Jesus said *make disciples .. teach them to obey* *Mt28:20*

So every day as I read another "step" in this roadmap, I'll do these 4 things.

- 1. Seek God** Before I start I'll pray & ask God to speak to me, I'll open my heart to Him.
- 2. Be accountable** Have I started to do what God has already shown me?
- 3. Allow God to speak to you through His Word**
What do these verses reveal about God?
What does it tell me about myself? How should I respond to God?
What truth is He showing me, I'll believe every word.
- 4. Obey** I'll make a plan to start doing what God has shown me today.

Spending time with God is the most important habit to form.

Motivation is what gets you started. But habit is what keeps you going. Jim Rohn

You have to make a decision, set time aside to be with God. Set up an alarm or do whatever you have to do to make this part of your daily routine.

What you do on a daily basis is who you become.

And we know God wants to meet with us. *Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Jam4:8*

Action to obey .. I make a commitment today to spend time with my God everyday.

I commit to believe every truth He shows me from His Word.

I commit to obey everything He asks me to do.

Truth to believe .. We can know the real Jesus. He doesn't change.

If you want to know what Jesus is like now, you only have a look at who He has always been. Because He doesn't change.

Let me describe Jesus for you.

Firstly don't compare Him to anyone else because there is no one like Jesus. He's in a completely different league. So don't project your doubts or distrust onto Jesus, just honestly look at His life. Everything about Jesus is exactly what you've been looking for.

That's why people were drawn to Jesus. His love was so real. His heart for people so genuine. And Jesus character shone through in everything He did. He stood up for the downtrodden. His integrity was uncompromising. His courage unstoppable. His bravery unflinching.

He's definitely the most compassionate person to ever live, hugging lepers, healing the abused, loving the unlovable. Being willing to give of Himself again & again. And all of it was totally undeserved. Jesus has such pure motives, genuine grace & mercy.

This is such a reassuring part of Jesus nature. Because often we can still be a bit insecure. You're probably still asking, why would Jesus let me come to Him? I don't deserve it, I'm so unworthy. But Jesus demonstrated over & over that His heart for people wasn't based on whether they deserved it or not, it was based purely on His grace & love for them. Jesus loves us because at His very core, He is love. He chooses to love us. His love is relentless & irresistible.

And He's so accepting, He is absolutely trustworthy. He will never leave you or let you down. Jesus is totally dependable.

He's peaceful, when you come to Him you feel His peace.

Jesus is the kind of man that makes women & children not only feel safe around Him but protected. And He's the kind of man that other men aspire to be like. They want to follow Him, to give their allegiance to Him. He is a true leader.

Jesus is definitely the most fiercely loyal person ever.

He's the most patient. We saw that in the way He kept hanging in there with the disciples.

The way Jesus related to people, His heart was perfect. In fact He's the only perfect one, that's why He can offer us forgiveness.

Jesus had strength & power that we can't even begin to comprehend, yet He used that power & strength to help others.

And He can also strengthen you. So no matter what gets thrown at you, He can help you.

He has such authority. He always does what He promises.

Jesus is the ultimate overcomer, He is the all conquering King. So He can set you free, He loves to set men free from their guilt & shame.

He wants to redeem you, not condemn you.

When Jesus speaks it's life-changing. He speaks truth with love & authority, it's so reassuring.

The way He was willing to sacrifice for others, He's undeniably the most loving person to ever draw breath.

His love is overwhelming.

But if you really want to know who Jesus is .. Just look at the cross

The cross forever shows who Jesus truly is. I can't comprehend Jesus bravery in going to the cross, His unbelievable courage to endure on the cross, His moral integrity to withstand all the opposition. The cross demonstrates His justice, His compassion, His holiness. Most of all the cross demonstrates Jesus love for you. When you look at the cross you can never doubt or question His love for you, it is forever settled. This is who Jesus is.

And He's still the same. Because He's eternal & perfect, He will not change

So the same love & tenderness that Jesus felt when He created you & me, He still feels towards you.

The same protective caring heart that He has always shown toward you, He still feels.

The same intensity of love that Jesus felt while He was enduring the cross, He still feels for you today. He forever will. This is who Jesus is.

So we need to get to know Jesus.

If you want to find out who Jesus is, you could search youtube or listen to someone on insta or you might even ask your family, but make sure whenever you're searching for truth, **you come to the actual source of truth.**

1. God has clearly shown us who Jesus is in the bible. We have to search there first.
2. And we can ask Jesus Himself, Lord Jesus, please show me who you are.

1Chron28:9 promises If you seek him, you will find him.

Action to obey .. Pray, Lord Jesus, please show me who you really are. Show me your character, show me your heart, show me in your Word (bible). I promise I will seek to know you more each day.

Truth .. You can trust the evidence for Jesus.

Believing in Jesus is not a blind leap of faith, it's a step of faith based on evidence. I want to give you some of the evidence now as a foundation for what you believe. And also so you can share this with other blokes, so they can come to know Jesus for themselves.

Jesus only lived for 33 years. The first 30 yrs he spent in his village, only the locals knew Him. His father was a builder so He became a builder. Because their village was on a hard ridge with virtually no timber, most homes were constructed out of stones, this was back breaking work. Jesus only spent the last 3 yrs ministering to people. He never travelled more than 200kms. He never went outside of his country, yet He has changed the entire world completely. And 2000 yrs later He's still the most important figure in history.

Thankfully Jesus life was recorded in detail by the men who followed Him. And this was His plan, Jesus wanted to show us who He is. This makes sense. If God wanted to let us know who He is, what better way than to reveal himself in a way we could understand, as a human being like us.

Some people say 'maybe Jesus didn't even exist.' That's clearly ridiculous, no serious historian would dare suggest that Jesus didn't exist because there's overwhelming evidence. The basic facts of Jesus' life, when & where He lived & how he died are all agreed upon.

Even though Jesus lived 2000 yrs ago, because He was a real historical figure, we have a lot of evidence for all we know about Him.

1. We have historical evidence from first century historians like Tacitus, Suetonius, Josephus who wrote about Jesus. This evidence is from outside the bible.
2. We have archeological evidence. We have lots of artefacts that all line up with the gospels, including the events surrounding Jesus death.
 - a. Peters home in Capernaum,
 - b. fishing boat on the sea of galilee,
 - c. synagogue at Magdala in galilee where Jesus would have visited,
 - d. in fact they found almost an entire town so well preserved it's call Israeli Pompeii,
 - e. in Jerusalem the pool of Bethesda & Siloam,
 - f. the garden of gethsemane,
 - g. the high priest's home where Jesus was put on trial.

I've been to all these places. You can go retrace Jesus steps yourself.

3. We have the evidence in the gospels. These were written by men who followed Jesus, they were eye witnesses to His life. And these gospels were initially read by people who had also been with Jesus. They had watch Jesus live with their own eyes & would have disputed the gospels accuracy if anything wasn't true. This makes the gospels even more credible. And among ancient texts, the gospels are considered incredibly accurate. One of the greatest ever textual critics, F. J. A. Hort, said this: 'In the variety and fullness of the evidence on which it rests, the text of the New Testament stands absolutely and unapproachably alone amongst ancient prose writings.'

4. We have the evidence from Jesus own life. Firstly His teachings. Starting with the people in His day right up till now, people have always been drawn to Jesus' teachings. They are like no other. They are life-changing. Despite everything around us constantly advancing, in over 2000 yrs no one has ever improved on Jesus teaching. Everything He said is unchanging truth. Most of the values our nation is built on were based on His teachings. Jesus showed complete understanding of the human nature & total insight into the character of God. His wisdom & insight is something only God could have.
5. Then you have Jesus love for those who were struggling. He fed the hungry, healed the sick. He stood up for those treated unjustly. He was even willing to put his arm around lepers. His capacity to love is something only God has.
6. Then you have His faultless life. Jesus never did the wrong thing, He was morally perfect. Now if I claimed that my family would laugh at me & remind me of something I'd done wrong today. But the men who followed Jesus fulltime said He never sinned. Even Jesus enemies couldn't find fault with Him. Jesus faced endless temptations, opposition & hardship, yet He was perfect in every thought, every motive, every action. This is something only God could achieve.
7. Then you have His character. The real test of character is when we're under pressure. When Jesus was being tortured, how did He respond? Even as He was suffering unjustly, hanging on the cross, even as people were still spitting in His face, Jesus was praying: 'Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing.' His capacity to forgive & show grace is something only God has.
8. What about all the prophecy fulfilled by His life. No one else in the history of the world has had a whole collection of books written about them before they were born. Jesus fulfilled over 300 prophecies including many that were outside His control, like where He was born & how He would die.
9. Then there were His miracles. Thousands of people saw Jesus with their own eyes do things that no human can do. He walked on water & He didn't sink. He commanded storms to stop & they did. He healed people from all types of diseases & they recovered instantly. He told cripples to walk & blind people to see & they did. He even yelled out to a bloke who'd been dead for 4 days & the guy got up & came to Jesus. The whole town had been at this guys funeral & now he was standing alive in front of them all. These people were alive when the gospels were written & could verify it. With every one of his miracles and in every one of his sermons, Jesus was demonstrating something that no other human being could ever claim—that He was in fact God.
Mt8:24-27,9:6-7,Jn2:1-11,11:38-44
10. And the greatest piece of evidence of all is when Jesus came back to life 3 days after dying on the cross. There is lots of evidence for the resurrection. We'll talk in detail about this another time soon. But when Jesus rose again it proved everything He'd ever claimed about Himself was true. He was God's Son, His sacrifice was perfect, He did overcome sin & death. All of it was proved true by His resurrection. 1 Cor15:14-19

We know from all this evidence that

- a. Jesus was a real man
- b. the gospels are an accurate record of His life
- c. Jesus backed up His claim that He is God

Action to obey .. Trust in Jesus, that He is the Son of God.

Pray, Jesus I just want you to know that I trust you. I declare that you are God, you are the Lord of Lords & King of Kings, You are supreme above everything. I trust in your perfect life. I trust in your death & resurrection. I want to know you more each day.

Going deeper..Jn1:10-14..11:17-45..1 Cor15:14-19

Jesus deserves to be Lord of all

The Roadmap

Truth .. You can't go halfway. Jesus deserves to be Lord of all.

One day when Jesus was with His disciples, He asked them, who do people say I am?
They said, well some think your prophet, some a good teacher.

This sounds pretty much like what people still say today.
Some think Jesus was a good bloke who's grown into a legend.
Some think He was a great teacher, but He's irrelevant now.

But thinking like that doesn't stack up, Jesus life was too amazing. There is too much evidence as we discussed yesterday. His virgin birth, His perfect life, miracles, revolutionary teachings, sacrificial death, all the people who saw Him after He'd risen from the dead & the billions of people who have claimed to have had an encounter with Jesus since. You can't pretend like Jesus was an ordinary person.

But some people don't want to acknowledge that Jesus is God, because that would mean they should surrender their life to Him. So they pretend like they can go halfway & just say Jesus was a great teacher. But there is no halfway with Jesus. **Jesus claimed to be God.** He was crucified for saying this. So He's either a completely deluded nut job & there is no truth in anything He said. Or He is God.

You can't go halfway.

That's why Jesus didn't let Peter off the hook. Peter had told Jesus what other people thought, but Jesus wanted to know what Peter believed. So He said to Peter, **who do you say I am?**

Peter said, you are the Christ, you are God who has come to save us

For me personally, I believe the evidence is overwhelming that Jesus is who He claims to be. On top of that I can show you the lives He transforms everyday, I can tell you how He has changed my own life.

Can you honestly look at Jesus life & just dismiss Him as being a fraud, definitely not.

I believe Jesus is God. I've come to know that for myself not just because of the evidence, but because I've come to know Jesus.

I can't prove His existence in a science lab. But I don't have to. Jesus asks us to believe in Him, to trust Him. Like any good healthy relationship it has to be based on trust.

Here's how it works. You consider the evidence, but then you have to make a decision. Do I choose to believe in Jesus? If you do then that initial belief drops from your head to your heart. All of a sudden you know who Jesus is, you know that He is God, you know that HE's alive.

This has been the experience of millions of Christians over the last 2000 years. This has swept across the world and it's still happening. Today there are hundreds of millions of Christians, from every nation, from every type of background. They all speak of their encounter with the risen Jesus.

Today Jesus is asking you & I the same question He asked Peter, who do you say I am?

This is still the most important question there is. And every one of us has to answer it for ourselves. Because one day soon each one of us will stand before Jesus, (either when we die or when He returns.) He's not going to ask us "were you a good bloke, or did your good stuff outweigh your bad stuff?" He's not going to ask "did you leave the world a better place, or did you try to do good? He won't ask any of that.

Actually He won't ask you anything. Because Jesus already knows your heart.

For people who have decided, I knew there was something about Jesus but I didn't want to take the time to get to know Him. I was too busy with my own things so I just ignored Him.
Or I didn't want to give up my selfish pleasures, they meant more to me than Jesus.
Or I knew Jesus was God, but I didn't want to hand over control of my life to Him.
For those people Jesus will say, you didn't want to know me, you chose not to come to me for forgiveness, so now you'll have to live with your decision forever, go away from me. Mt7:23, Rev20:12-15

But if like Peter you recognise that Jesus is God. If you've asked Him to forgive you & you have started to believe in Him, then the bible tells us that your name is already written in His book of Life. And it will never be removed, you can be absolutely assured.
Now you do know Jesus, not in a physical way but in your heart. You mightn't yet be able to explain it, but you know He is real.
You can say, **I know Jesus!** He's my Lord & my Saviour. I've given my life to Him.

And when you stand before Jesus, you won't have to say anything. Because He knows your heart He will say to you, come & be with me forever in heaven, come into my Kingdom. Well done, good and faithful servant, come share in my joy! Mt25:23, Jn14:3, 2Pet1:11

You can't go halfway. Jesus is either completely true & He deserves to be your Lord. Or He's nothing. Choose this day whom you will serve, if God is God, then follow Him
Jesus is either Lord of all of you, or He's Lord of none of you.

Action to obey .. Declare who Jesus is to you.
Jesus is the Messiah sent to rescue me from my sins
He is God come in the flesh
He is my all-conquering King who has set me free
I surrender my life to Jesus as my Lord

Going deeper.. Rom10:9-10..Mt 16:13-17..Col1:15-23

Jesus is the only one who can make me right with God

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **Jesus is the only one who can make me right with God**

Today I want to give you some truths & some verses so you can check out for yourself what's true.

- God loved me & so He sent Jesus to save me.
For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. John3:16
- Jesus didn't come to condemn me but to save me.
God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. John3:17
- Jesus is God the Son, so He didn't inherit a sinful nature like I did, He is perfect & the only one capable of saving me.
*The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. Lk1:35
And you know that Jesus came to take away our sins, and there is no sin in him. 1John3:5*
- Jesus came to earth & went to the cross in my place, as my substitute, He paid for my sins so I can be made right with God.
For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. 2Cor5:21
- Jesus is the only one who can rescue me out of darkness & give me freedom.
*For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins. Col1:13-14
For Jesus is the one referred to in the Scriptures .. There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved. Act4:11-12*
- On the cross, all that I deserved was put on Jesus (punishment for my sin, separation from God) & now because of the cross, all that Jesus deserves is put on me (His holiness, His right standing with God).
This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. Col 1:21-22
- Jesus life was perfect, His sacrifice was complete.
By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place. And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house, let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him. For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water. Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Heb 10:20-23

Jesus is the kind of high priest we need because he is holy and blameless, unstained by sin. He has been set apart from sinners and has been given the highest place of honour in heaven. Heb 7:26

- Jesus rose back to life proving His life was perfect, proving His death was the complete & acceptable sacrifice for my sins, proving He is God's Son & proving everything He said is true.
Therefore he is able, once and forever, to save those who come to God through him. He lives forever to intercede with God on their behalf. Heb 7:25

Action to obey .. Trust in Jesus. Trust all that God's Word says about Him. Think about these truths, if you've been believing lies instead, (like Jesus doesn't really want to forgive you, you should still feel guilty,) kick them out in Jesus name. Then replace the lie with truth. Read each truth & verse out loud & declare, this is truth, I believe in Jesus Christ my Lord.

Going deeper.. If you're able, look up a couple of these verses in the bible yourself.

Bonus .. Trinity

What I'm about to say is a bit deep & we'll unpack it more another time.

Everything about God is more incredible than we can comprehend. And that's a good thing. He is infinite in every way. He is Almighty God. So He's not limited to our understanding of Him. Every part of Him is way bigger & better than we could ever wrap our minds around. The last few days we've been talking about Jesus, but there are 3 that are all God.

1. There's God the Father,
2. There's Jesus, who is God the Son,
3. & there's God the Holy Spirit.

Each one is fully God & while they are 3 individuals, they're inseparable, they're one God. They have the same heart, the same character, the same motivations. Each one is all-powerful & eternal. So all that Jesus is, the Father is & the Holy Spirit is. It's easiest at this stage to think of them as 3 individuals who are all God.

And so we have the privilege of getting to know each one. Tomorrow we want to look at how we can know God as our Father. In a few days we'll think about knowing the Holy Spirit.

Truth to believe .. I can know God as my Father

Just like you can know Jesus in a real way, you can now know God the Father in a real way. You can have a relationship with Him. When Jesus was teaching us how to pray the first thing He said we should start with is to call God, my Father. So Jesus tells us we can know God as our Father.

So what is He like?

I want you to imagine a little girl who's just learning to walk. She's holding her father's hand as she takes her first few steps. All her little fingers are wrapped around just one of his. It's a beautiful picture of trust. This is how God wants us to be with Him.

Every single one of us is born with a deep need to be loved, accepted & to belong. We especially want this from those closest to us, those we should be able to trust the most.

God says that when you come & trust in Jesus, that He adopts you into His family. He literally makes you one of His kids.

Why would God want to describe it like this? He is showing the kind of relationship He wants to have with you. He wants you to have the deepest, most trusting relationship with Him. God wants you to relate to Him as your perfect Father.

Now I know that even mentioning fathers can stir up all kinds of emotions. No human father is perfect. We've all been let down to some degree by our father. Many have been hurt, some have been terribly wounded. If this is you, I'm genuinely sorry. God is aware of the heartache & pain that's in this world.

If you are carrying a father wound, God wants to heal that wound. Then God as your father can make up for all you've previously missed out on. Even if your father was the best, he's still just a man. God as our Father is a million times better.

So don't ever compare your experience of your own father, with God. God has, none of the weaknesses, none of the hang-ups, none of the limitations. Don't project your hurts or distrust onto Father God.

Our heavenly Father is like no one else. He can be trusted like no one else.

God is infinitely better in every way. He is absolutely trustworthy, completely dependable. He loves us with an unimaginable love, beyond anything we can comprehend. We've never experienced anything like it anywhere else.

He promises that He will never let us down & nothing can separate us from Him. God is next level. That's why He wants us to know Him for who He is.

God wants to be your perfect Father.

And He can give you all the things that only a perfect Father can.

- Unconditional love
- Totally acceptance
- Complete trust

- Absolute security
- He'll never let you down
- He'll always do what's best for you

God wants to meet these core needs for you. And the truth is only God is capable of meeting them. You set yourself up for heartache when you try to rely on another human to meet these core needs. They can't. They are broken just like you are. And then you're left with unfulfilled needs & instead you fill up with disappointment & hurts.

How does God become our Father?

When we come to Jesus & believe in Him, when we ask Him to forgive our sin, that's when He gives us new life, it's a fresh start, we are born again. That's when God adopts us into His family & we can come to know God as our Father. That's why JC said, *no one comes to the Father, except thru me.* Jn14:6

To all who believed and accepted Jesus, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn, not with a physical birth .. but a birth that comes from God. Jn 1:12-13

Let me ask you, why do you think God wants to be called Father?

Remember at the start we imagined a little girl holding her dad's finger. If there were other blokes around & this little girl yells out daddy, everyone hears her & looks but she is only calling one bloke. When this little girl calls out daddy it only means something to him.

God chose the name Father because it's personal. Only His child can call Him Father.

Again & again God is showing us how much He wants genuine relationship. Being a Christian really is having a personal, growing relationship with Almighty God. A relationship based on trust.

God wants us to relate to Him as our Father

- because He wants you to rely on Him,
- because He wants to demonstrate to you that He is always trustworthy.
- He's wanting to show that He is for you, He's on your side. He wants what's best for you.
- He is strong to protect & lead you.
- He wants to be your Father.

Action to obey .. Tell God that you trust Him to be your Father. That you are so appreciative that He is your perfect Father. Each time you pray, call Him "my Father."

Go back to the list of core needs, thank your heavenly Father that He will meet each one of them for you.

Going deeper..Gal4:4-6..Rom8:38-39..Jn1:12-13

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **God is our perfect Father**

Just like we want to know Jesus better, we also want to know our Father better. So what is our heavenly Father like?

Firstly He's just like Jesus. They have the same character, the same heart.

Jesus radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God. Heb1:3

Jesus said, I and the Father are one .. Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father .. Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Jn10:30,14:9-11

Secondly, we only have to look in the bible because our Father clearly shows us what He's like there & we know He doesn't change.

So let's describe our Father ..

- **He is absolutely trustworthy** .. *Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we profess, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.* Heb10:23
- **He's always approachable** .. *we can approach God with confidence, so we can receive mercy and find grace to help us when we need it most.* Heb4:16
- **His patience never runs out** Ps106:1
- **With Him you always feel secure & at peace** Phil 4:7
- **He's unbelievably kind** Eph 2:7-8
- **He's compassionate** .. *The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He is like a father to His children, tender & compassionate to those who fear him.* Ps103:8-13
- **He's generous & self sacrificing** John 3:16
- **Your Father knows you completely** .. while on one level this scares us, yet it's one of our deepest needs, is to be completely known. But sometimes we try to hide who we really are thinking God might pull away from us if He discovers what we are really like. As if we can hide. God knows your thoughts before you think them, your words before you say them. He knows everything about you but He still chooses to love you like the perfect Father. This should give us great confidence to always draw close to Him. Ps139:1-3 Lk 15
- **He is loyal & faithful** .. *The faithful love of the LORD never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin fresh each morning* Lam3:22-23
- **Merciful & forgiving** .. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* 1 Jn 1:9
- **He has a perfect memory** .. every time you call for Him, every time you seek Him, He remembers them all. Every time you thank Him, every time you spend time with Him, every time you worship, He will remember for eternity. Is49:15
- **He's strong so He's dependable, He does what He says** Ps 24:8
- **He is genuinely good** .. *there's no end to His goodness* Ps 136:1
- **He's the perfect Father, making up for when our own father has let us down** Ps 68:5

- **He desperately wants us to come back to Him ..** That's why JC told the story of the Prodigal father. His son had run off & wrecked his life. His father saw him while still a long way off and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. Lk 15:20-24
- **He always has His hand on us, He never lets us go** Ps139:10
- **He never leaves us, this is so reassuring ..** *Don't be afraid, for I am with you. Don't be discouraged, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you, I will hold you up with my victorious right hand.* Is41:10
- **He loves us enough to correct us ..** You might have a hard time with this, especially if your old man disciplined you out of anger rather than love. But God's not like that .. *The Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."* Heb12:3-11
- **Everything He does is motivated by grace** Eph2:8-9
- **He has your best in mind** Rom 8:32
- **He's sovereign so we know we can trust Him** Ps 103:19
- **Protective ..** *God alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God, and I trust him* Ps 91:1-2
- **Patient** 2Pet3:9
- **Provides ..** Your Father knows what you need even before you ask him. Mt 6:8
- **He cares for us** Mt6:26
- **Our Father is love ..** *See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called His children, and that is what we are!* 1 Jn 3:1
- **We never have to earn His love....** *But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!* Eph2:4-5
- **Nothing can ever separate us from His love** Rom 8:38-39
- **Last way I'd describe Him is Abba ..** this is the name Jesus called Father God. In Jesus' time it was a name only used within a family & it meant you were very close. It conveyed deep respect & total trust. This is what Jesus called His Father and it's how we can know Him now also.

Gal 4:4 But when the right time came, God sent his Son... to buy freedom for us... so that he could adopt us as his very own children. ⁶And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father."

Why does God want us to know Him as Father? Because it describes how He wants to love us, He wants to be our Father. He adopts us into His family.

So the third way we can know what our Father is like, is we come to know Him ourselves. As we spend time with Him we get to know Him better. That's the great thing about relationship, we get to experience what He's like. Then we can tell others, this is my Father, I know Him.

Go back thru this list & highlight the 3 descriptions that mean the most to you at this moment.

Action to obey .. Pray, Thank you that I can call you my Father, that you want to have the deepest most trusting relationship. I worship you for being my perfect Father. Choose to know Him more each day.

Going deeper.. read the verses of the 3 descriptions you highlighted

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **I can have a relationship with the Holy Spirit**

If you could go back in time, can you imagine what it'd be like to hang out with Jesus? Imagine the look on Bartimaeus the blind guy's face as he saw for the first time when Jesus healed him. Or the astonishment of the crowd of 5000 when Jesus fed them with just a few small scraps. Or seeing how people hung off every word when Jesus told them parables. Jesus was truly amazing so the question I'm putting to you seems wrong to ask. What would be better than being able to hang out with Jesus in person?

The last conversation Jesus had with His disciples before He went to the cross we can read in John 14. They've just shared the last supper together. Now it's late at night & they're outside the city walking in the dark as they go towards the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knows that once they get there He'll pray for a bit & then He'll be arrested. So right now as they walk is His last opportunity to speak with them & prepare them to go on without Him.

And Jesus is telling them that they'll grow even stronger in their relationship with Him, despite the fact that physically He'd no longer be with them. It sounds impossible.

He's also getting them ready to start telling other people about Him. As these people come to believe in Jesus He wants them to grow into disciples. Actually Jesus plan is for these new disciples to go & make even more disciples, generations of disciples that will carry His message all over the world. This has continued all the way up to us today.

Who can Jesus give them that will enable all of this to happen?

Jesus makes an amazing promise to His disciples & to us. He says He'll send the Holy Spirit to be with us.

Jesus says in Jn16:7 It's for your good that I go away, because if I don't go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

Remember my initial question? Jesus tells us it's better to have the Holy Spirit living inside us than to have Him with us in person. Why's that?

Like Jesus, the Holy Spirit is God. They have the same character, same heart, same power. But unlike Jesus who was a physical man, the Holy Spirit isn't restricted by physical limitations. He's a spirit so He can be with us 24/7. He knows every thought in our mind. He can speak direct to our heart. He can transform us from the inside out. He can give us strength to overcome. All this & He promises He'll never leave us. *Jn 14:6*

Jesus is both fully God & fully man. And while He was on earth He had the limitations of being a normal man. He could only be in one place at a time. But now the Holy Spirit can live in all christians, millions of believers all over the world, all the time. This is a game changer for God's Kingdom.

Now the disciples had heard Jesus speak a little about the Holy Spirit & a couple of them had seen the Holy Spirit come down when Jesus was baptized, but they didn't know the Holy Spirit for themselves. I'm sure they had lots of questions just like we do.

So who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit isn't just a power or a force, He's a person. He's an individual with a will, intelligence & feelings. He has the ability to love & show compassion. He can see & think & hear & speak & desire just like any person can. But we need to remember that like Jesus, He's also much more than a normal person. He's divine, He's God, so everything about Him is perfect.

Jesus tells us more .. Jn 14:16-17

*¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another, the advocate, **to help you and be with you forever.** ¹⁷ He is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn't looking for him and doesn't recognize him. But you know him, because **he lives with you and will be in you.***

Just like we can know Jesus & our Father in a real way, we can now know the Holy Spirit in a real way. He will dwell in our hearts & be with us always. He will open our eyes so we can see the truth. He will reveal Jesus & our Father to us. He will help & strengthen us. This is God bringing us closer, giving us more access. It's an amazing privilege. We can experience a deep, ongoing relationship with the Holy Spirit.

The promise of the Holy Spirit is for everyone. Acts2:39

God wants to be with us. We can be filled & indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We can have God Himself come & live in us & empower us to live. This closeness of relationship with God has never been known before. And now it's available to everyone.

Action to obey .. Pray, thank you Father for the Holy Spirit. Thanks that I can trust Him & open myself up to Him just like I do with you & Jesus.

Going deeper..Jn14:16-17..2Pet1:20-21..Act2:38-39

I can know the Holy Spirit in a real way

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **I can know the Holy Spirit in a real way. I can trust Him absolutely.**

We can trust the Holy Spirit just like we trust Jesus. We know what Jesus is like, we've seen His life. We've seen how He loves kids & how He has compassion. We've seen His courage & strength. Jesus is the living embodiment of grace & justice. Well that's exactly what the Holy Spirit is like. The Holy Spirit feels exactly the way Jesus feels about everything. He acts exactly the way Jesus acts. The Holy Spirit is gentle & powerful, patient & holy, just like Jesus. In fact God's Word even describes the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of Christ."

We can only know the Holy Spirit because of what Jesus accomplished on the cross. Four times in the gospels Jesus tells us that He is the one who'll baptise or fill us with the Holy Spirit. So we can trust the Holy Spirit the same as we trust Jesus.

And we trust our heavenly Father.

One of the amazing things about the trinity is that while each is distinct, they're inseparable. They are one God. All that the Father is, Jesus is & equally the Holy Spirit is. So we can trust Holy Spirit the same as we trust Father.

And we trust God's Word. It is perfect & the source of truth. Who is the author? The Holy Spirit.

2Pet1:20-21

So what does your life look like when you're filled with the Holy Spirit?

Well the best example is Jesus. The bible says Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit, led by the Holy Spirit. He received, was baptised in & was anointed by Holy Spirit.

To be Spirit filled is to live like Jesus.

The bible uses all these different words (filled, baptised, led, anointed, etc) to describe the Holy Spirit being in Jesus life. It uses all same words to describe the Holy Spirit being in our life. Because our human words are limited we struggle to describe what Almighty God is like & how He fills our life with His presence & His power. So the bible uses these words interchangeably, but it's describing one reality, one relationship that we can now have with the Holy Spirit.

Act1:8,2:4,17

Does the Holy Spirit come to live in us when we first believe in Jesus, or does that happen later?

Yes to both.

We have the Holy Spirit the instant we give our lives to Jesus. We know this because we can't come to know Jesus without Him. It's the Holy Spirit who opens our eyes, shows us our sin, shows us how much we need Jesus, shows us how much Jesus wants to save us. He even gives us faith so we can believe. So the Holy Spirit is with us from the start. We're promised this.

And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit. Eph1:13

also Tit3:3-6, Jn3:3-6, 16:8-10, 1Cor2:9-14

But then we can grow deeper in our relationship with Him. As we surrender more, as we open up more, we can receive more of Him. In Acts 2:4 all the believers who were at Pentecost were filled with the Holy Spirit. But then some weeks or months later in Acts 4:8 Peter was filled even more. Then in 4:31 all the believers were filled more. That's why Eph 5:18 commands us to *be filled with the Holy Spirit*. It's means to keep on being filled, to be filled to overflowing. It's to be an ongoing, deepening relationship.

What's it like to be filled?

For some the Holy Spirit comes with a feeling of peace & gentleness & overwhelming love.

Martin Lloyd-Jones (respected Welsh preacher) describes feeling like a small child walking along holding his father's hand, feeling secure, when all of a sudden his father reaches down & picks him up in a warm embrace. This deep assurance of the Father's love is what the Holy Spirit does.

For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.
Rom5:5, Gal5:22-23

For others you feel so full of joy, so full of energy, so full of the Holy Spirit that He starts to overflow out of you, through worshipping or speaking new languages, just like at Pentecost. *Act2:1-6, 19:1-10*

Let me give you a practical illustration of what it means to be filled with Holy Spirit.

HOME

Imagine you are a really big house with heaps of rooms. When you become a Christian, the Holy Spirit comes to live in your heart, He comes in the front door.

But He doesn't want to stand waiting just inside the front door. He wants you to ask Him to come into every room of your life, He wants to fill you completely. But here's the deal, the Holy Spirit won't come into a room, He won't fill that room unless you allow Him to clean up the mess you've made, unless you give Him complete control of that room.

So it should be a constantly growing relationship. The Holy Spirit is already inside our life, but then He knocks on the door of a room in our life He doesn't yet control. If we will open the door He will clean out all our garbage so He can fill that room of our life, we will experience Him on a deeper level.

Then after a bit, He'll knock on another door, then another. He's always in our life. He's gradually filling more of us as we surrender to Him.

Action to obey .. Thank Father & Jesus for sending the Holy Spirit. Tell the Holy Spirit that you trust Him. Ask for your heart to be filled with the Father's love.

Going Deeper..Tit3:3-6..Rom5:5.. Act2:1-6,4:29-31 .. Gal5:22-23

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. The Holy Spirit empowers me to live

Quick recap. The meaning of life is to know God. This is what life is all about. So our relationship with Jesus, with our heavenly Father & with the Holy Spirit, our relationship with God should be our highest priority. We want it to grow deeper & stronger all the time. And even though we can know Him more each day, because He is infinite, because He is awesome beyond our comprehension, there's always more of Him to know, there's always more to value about Him. He is so good. Knowing God really is the most fulfilling, most rewarding experience, the greatest honour we can have in life.

So that's another reason the Holy Spirit is so important. Our limited human minds can't comprehend God, so it's the Holy Spirit who reveals Jesus to us, He's the one who reveals our Father to us. *John 16:13-15*
In fact in everything to do with our relationship with God, the Holy Spirit helps us. He helps us to worship, to pray, to know God's will, to understand God's Word, to comprehend spiritual truth. *1Cor2:12*

But there's more. Because we get to have the Holy Spirit Himself live in us. Knowing Him, learning to trust His leading, having Him with us always, it is such a deep & rich experience, Rom 8 describes it as a foretaste of heaven. It's the Holy Spirit who encourages us & gives us love, joy & peace. He convicts & challenges us. He comforts & supports us. He gives us the strength to overcome temptation.

We really can't do anything spiritually in our own strength. But with the Holy Spirit's help, we are enabled & empowered to live for Jesus. Is it any wonder Jesus wants us to get to know, to learn to depend on, to value & trust the Holy Spirit.

Listen as Jesus tells us what the Holy Spirit will do in our life.

14:16 .. The Holy Spirit will always be with you,

14:17 .. He'll open your eyes so you can see the truth,

14:18 .. He'll never leave you,

14:19 .. He'll reveal Jesus to you & give you new life,

14:20 .. He'll make you feel connected to Jesus,

14:26 .. He'll teach you everything you need,

14:27 .. He'll give you genuine peace, peace that this world can't give,

15:26 .. He'll tell you all about Jesus,

16:8,9 .. He'll convict you of sin, particularly when you haven't trusted God,

16:10 .. He'll remind you how Jesus was perfectly righteous & that only He can be our Saviour,

16:11 .. He'll remind you that without Jesus you'd have to pay for your sins on our own,

16:13 .. He'll guide you into all truth.

So we have a choice.

We can be hesitant, reluctant to give Him control, not open ourselves to Him, not ask to be filled.

Or we can simply trust Him. We can invite Him to fill us. We can surrender to His leading. Remember the Holy Spirit is God, you can absolutely trust Him. Gal 5:25 says to walk in step with the Spirit. That means follow Him every step of the way. Allow Him to lead your life. Listen & obey everything He tells you.

I want to give you one more example.

OCEAN

Imagine the Holy Spirit is like the powerful ocean. Getting to know the Holy Spirit can be a bit like going to the beach.

We can stand up on the sand & just look at the waves. We can realise the power of the ocean without being in the water. We can watch from a distance what the Holy Spirit does.

Or we can go just into the edge of the water, let our feet get wet. We can open up to the Holy Spirit just a little. But we're still keeping most of ourselves out of the water.

Or we can go out into the water up to our waist. Here we can feel the waves push us back & forth. We can allow the Holy Spirit to control us a bit, we can feel His power working around us. But we're also still trying to stand on our own 2 feet.

Or we can swim way out the back. We can intentionally swim out past where we can touch. Here our whole body is carried along by the power of the waves, we are totally immersed in the ocean. When we are out the back all we can do is surrender & allow the waves to carry us wherever they want. This is what it's like to be filled by the Holy Spirit. And it's amazing.

Remember, the promise of the Holy Spirit is for everyone.

Acts2:39

We can be filled & indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We can have God Himself come & live in us & empower us to live. This depth of relationship with God has never been known before. And now it's available to everyone.

Action to obey ..

Are you willing to invite the Holy Spirit to fill you?

1. Jesus says to simply ask your heavenly Father to send you the Holy Spirit. *Lk11:13*
2. When you ask, believe that you will be filled. Receive Him in genuine faith. We don't have to understand everything, we just have to trust. All of our relationship with God is based on faith. *Gal 3:2*
3. This isn't essential but often in the bible when someone is asking for more of the Holy Spirit, they'll get another believer to pray with them. If you've got someone like this you trust, this is a good thing to do.

Act8:17,9:17,19:6

Tell the Holy Spirit you are willing to swim way out the back we're you're totally immersed, where you give yourself completely to Him. Empty yourself of yourself, so you can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Get ready for peace, power, joy & overwhelming love.

Going deeper..Jn14:12-21,26-27..Gal5:16-25

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **God wants to forgive me**

Wouldn't it be great if once you started to follow Jesus you were never tempted, or you never thought the wrong thoughts again, or you never doubted.

But that's a bit like saying, wouldn't it be good if you never made a mistake in your life ever again.

Unfortunately it's impossible because we're human.

God knows how weak we are.

The Lord does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. For his unfailing love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west. The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him. For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust. Ps103:10-14

How reassuring is that. God knows we'll make mistakes. And He still loves us with an unfailing love, even when we fail Him. He is tender & compassionate, even when we don't deserve it.

So don't get discouraged. Setbacks happen. Keep focused on Jesus.

If you are in a mountain bike race & you're riding down a trail & half way down you hit a tree root & fall off, you don't have to walk all the way back up the mountain to start again. Instead you get back on your bike & keep riding.

This is how Jesus is with us. He wants us to be genuinely sorry for sinning against Him, to confess our sin & receive His forgiveness. Then we need to get back on our bike & keep going.

This doesn't give you an excuse to go on sinning, it's the opposite. This means for the first time we can be free from our sin. Now we can come to God for forgiveness so we're free from the guilt & shame that's weighed us down & we can come to Him for the strength we need to overcome our sin.

Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? Rom2:4

God loves forgiveness. We know for certain He wants to forgive us.

God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. Jn3:17

We know that Jesus' perfect sacrifice is more than enough to forgive all our sins when we first give our lives to Him. And it's more than enough to keep on forgiving us. We all need that.

The devil hates forgiveness so he'll do everything he can to make you doubt, to load you down with guilt, to undermine your faith. Guilt & shame & lies are his favourite tools.

So when we sin often we can experience 2 different kinds of guilt.

Firstly there's bad guilt. This feels like shame. It whispers that you should stay away from God & hide because He doesn't want to forgive you. You should feel bad about yourself. How could God forgive you? You don't deserve to be forgiven.

This guilt is from the devil & is always tempting us to go away from Jesus & to doubt His forgiveness.

That's how you can identify it. Reject this type of guilt.

Rom8:1

Then there's good guilt. The phrase the bible uses is "feeling convicted." This is from the Holy Spirit & He shows us that we need forgiveness & is always encouraging us to come to Jesus for forgiveness. He encourages us to deal with our sin properly so our relationship is restored. We should accept when the Holy Spirit convicts you by coming to Jesus & asking His forgiveness.

The bible wants us to be clear regarding forgiveness. So here's some Do's & Don'ts.

- Don't fool yourself that you'll never sin again. Until you get to heaven you're still human.
- Don't fool yourself that your sin isn't that bad. Our sin cost Jesus His life, we need to be sorry.
- Don't fool yourself that you can just keep on sinning as much as you like. If you do that you're saying you're selfish pleasures are worth more than Jesus. That's an insult to who He is. And it shows you aren't genuinely wanting to follow Jesus. Ask His forgiveness & commit to following Him again.
- Don't let the devil lie to you saying, God doesn't really want to forgive you. We know He does, Jesus willingly went to the cross for you.
- Don't let the devil lie to you saying, you're not worthy of being forgiven. In God's eyes you are because Jesus took your place. We receive the forgiveness Jesus deserves.
- Don't let the devil isolate you. Don't allow distance come between you & God, instead come closer to Him. Don't let distance come between you & other believers. Instead support each other. Hold each other accountable.

Now the do's.

- Do confess your sin, including the motivation behind it. Be genuinely sorry & ask Jesus to forgive you.
- Do trust Jesus has forgiven you.
- Do trust His sacrifice was perfect.
- Do trust He continues to love you.

Did you know Jesus was tempted? He was actually tempted more than any person who's ever lived, but He never gave in. So Jesus understands the struggles we face. But more than that we can come to Him for help when we need it most.

This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. Heb4:15-16

Tomorrow we'll look at how we confess.

Action to obey .. Have you been believing any "bad guilt" or lies, kick them out of your head now & replace with truth. Read Ps139:23-24 & ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there's anything you need to confess.

Going deeper.. Ps103:10-14.. Rom2:4..Heb4:15-16

Truth to believe .. **Jesus perfect sacrifice has paid for my sin & broken sin's power.**

What should you do when you sin?

1. Firstly, own up to your sin, acknowledge it's against God.

We have to recognise that when we sin, we haven't just made a mistake. We've sinned against God. When we choose to sin we're saying it's worth more to us, we'd rather have the sin than have God. That's why the bible calls this being unfaithful to God. It's important to recognise this. We aren't just broken & need healing, we've sinned so we need forgiveness.

2. So confess it to Jesus & ask His forgiveness.

There is only one way to deal with sin & be forgiven, that's to give it to Jesus. You can't do anything yourself to make up for it. Jesus' sacrifice was so perfect, so complete that when Jesus forgives us, our punishment is removed, the guilt is done away with, we are cleansed whiter than snow & we are restored back to God. So there's no sin that's too bad for Jesus too forgive. It truly is the most amazing thing, we should never take it for granted.

3. Jesus promises that He will forgive you, so receive His forgiveness in faith.

Listen to what 1Jn1:9 says .. *But if we confess our sins to him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.*

Jesus doesn't forgive us because we are good enough or because we promise we'll never do it again. Our forgiveness isn't dependent on us at all. Rather when we confess, Jesus forgives us because He is faithful & just. It's all dependent on Him. Because He is faithful, He chooses to always love us.

Because He is faithful, He will always forgive us whenever we come to Him genuinely.

And He is just, He has already paid the complete price for our sin, so we can be legitimately forgiven.

Don't ever doubt Jesus.

I know that sometimes the hardest bit is forgiving yourself. But if Jesus has forgiven you, don't you think you should also.

4. Ask the Holy Spirit to help change your heart & mind so don't keep making the same mistake.

We aren't sorry for our sin if we have no intention to stop doing it. I'm not saying you won't do it again, I know I have. But if you are genuinely sorry you'll want to stop. Now we can't do that in our own strength. We need the Holy Spirit. With His help we can start getting rid of our old sinful desires & replacing them with Godly desires. This is exactly what we need, to be changed from the inside out. And when we're tempted we can ask the Holy Spirit for the strength to overcome. We can rely on Him moment by moment. He's always with us. And He'll change our hearts.

Before we'd struggle in our own strength, but that sets us up to fail. Now as we rely on the Holy Spirit, that sets us up for increasing success.

5. Then commit to being obedient again.

Jesus has paid the penalty for our sin, so we can be forgiven. But He doesn't then leave us on our own, destined to struggle again & again with the same sin. Jesus has also broken the power of sin in our lives, so it no longer controls us, we're no longer in slavery.

Now by the Holy Spirit's power working in us, we can have increasing victory over sin. We no longer have to give into temptation or be weighed down with guilt. Now the Holy Spirit can give us His strength. We can overcome.

Here's a key. Don't just clench your fists & say to yourself, I'm not going to do this sin. That just focusses your mind on thoughts of that sin. Instead choose to do an action, that is the opposite that will bring Jesus honour.

For example, if you're tempted to be discouraged & negative, instead worship God, focus on how good God is & all He's done for you.

If you're tempted to be selfish & live for yourself, instead choose to do something totally undeserved for someone else.

Doing things like this totally changes the focus of your mind. And it turns the temptation into an opportunity to grow stronger. We won't get there overnight, it will be a journey, but more & more this is the direction we are headed.

God is light, and there is no darkness in him at all. So we are lying if we say we have fellowship with God but go on living in spiritual darkness.

If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

1Jn1:5-9

Action to obey .. confess your sin

- 1. Own up to your sin, acknowledge it's against God**
- 2. Confess it to Jesus, ask His forgiveness**
- 3. Jesus promises that He will forgive you, so receive His forgiveness in faith.**
- 4. Ask the Holy Spirit to help change your heart & mind so don't keep making the same mistake.**
- 5. Commit to being obedient again.**

Going deeper.. 1Jn1:5-10..Rom6:1-11

What is getting baptized about?

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **Getting baptised demonstrates I trust in Jesus.**

All through the New Testament, when people came to believe in Jesus, they'd get baptised.

Why? What does it mean?

The Word of God is where we always go to find what God says about anything.

The first guy to go around baptising was a bloke called John the Baptist. He'd been especially appointed by God to prepare the way for Jesus to come. Lk1:11-17..Is40:3-5

Then John went .. preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. Lk3:3 Mk1:4

So when you get baptised you're saying in front of everyone that you're turning away from your sin (that's what repenting means) & instead you are turning to God for forgiveness.

And John was always pointing ahead to Jesus.

I baptize with water those who repent of their sins and turn to God. But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am—so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Mt3:11

So then Jesus comes along. Now He didn't have any sins to confess & He'd never turned away from God. But Jesus still got baptised because He wanted to be obedient to His Father. Mt 3:13-15

When you get baptised you're being obedient, you're willingly surrendering.

As Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens opened & the Spirit of God descended on Him so everyone could see. And God His Father spoke from heaven so everyone could hear, *this is my dearly loved Son, who brings my great joy.*

For Jesus, His baptism was all about relationship. He was showing the relationship He had with His Father & with the Holy Spirit. We've already talked about how we can also have a relationship with all 3.

So Jesus tells us to be baptised in the name of the Father, Son & the Holy Spirit. Mt28:19

So when you get baptised you're also saying in front of everyone that you know God your Father, you know Jesus your Lord & you know the Holy Spirit who is always with you.

Then we see the disciples & the early church baptising people. They had learned about baptising from Jesus so of course they did it the same as He did.

Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Act2:38

What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord. Act22:16

Baptism also is showing on the outside what Jesus is doing on the inside, that He's washing you clean.

Then in Romans 6 Paul gives us more insight.

He says that when you come to believe in Jesus & give your life to Him, a miracle happens. Jesus unites with us. He brings us into relationship that's so deep, it's like we're inseparable, it's like two become one.

So when Jesus died on the cross, because we are united to Him, it's as if our old sinful self was crucified there with Him. Because we are united, His sacrifice & death became ours.

And when Jesus came back to life, because we are united to Him, we also receive His resurrection power & new life. So Jesus' power to overcome sin & death becomes our power to overcome sin & death. Jesus' new life becomes our new life. We'll explain this more later but it's a gamechanger.

So baptism is a demonstration of being united with Jesus.

As He died, so we die to ourselves.

As Jesus was raised to new life so we are born again to new life

Rom6:3-4

When you think about it, getting baptised is like a funeral & the miracle of having a baby & a wedding all rolled into one.

Firstly it's like a funeral. When we are baptised we identify with Christ's death. We're saying we're dying to sin & our old self.

Secondly it's like the miracle of having a baby. We celebrate being born again into new life with Jesus. And because we are united, His new life becomes ours.

And thirdly it's like celebrating a wedding. Baptism is a public demonstration of this new relationship we have with Jesus, two have become one.

When you get baptised you're saying you belong to God. It's like a steer getting branded, I belong to Him forever.

It means so much, it's a powerful demonstration of our trust in Jesus.

When you get baptised you're making a stand, you're saying in front of everyone ..

1. I'm turning away from my sin.
2. I'm turning to God for forgiveness.
3. Jesus has washed me clean. I go under the water to symbolise cleansing & forgiveness.
4. I belong to Jesus. I'm being obedient & I'm surrendering to Him.
5. I now know God as my Father, Jesus as my Lord & the Holy Spirit who is always with me.
6. Through being united with Jesus, I've died to my old self. I go under the water to symbolise dying to self.
7. Jesus has given me new life in Him. I come up out of the water to symbolise the new life I have in Jesus.

Action to obey .. Go through this list again. Is all of this true for you? Then according to God's Word you should be baptized.

Going deeper..Mt3:11-15..Mt28:18-20..Rom6:3-4

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **Getting baptised demonstrates I trust in Jesus.**

God's Word records for us many examples of people getting baptised. Let's learn from God's Word. We'll look at who gets baptised, when & where it happens, who does the baptising, how they're baptised & most importantly why.

In Acts 8:26-38 Philip meets a high up government official, the treasurer for Ethiopia, & he tells him all about Jesus from God's Word. As they were going along, this treasurer sees a creek & says, why can't I be baptized now? *"You can," Philip answered, "if you believe with all your heart." And the treasurer replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."* So Phillip baptised him right there & then.

Who?	Bloke who just heard about Jesus.
Who baptised?	Philip, the guy who shared Jesus with him.
When?	Straight away.
Where?	In a creek or lagoon by the road side.

Jesus miraculously appeared to Paul while he was going to Damascus & he was blinded. Three days later a local believer visits & prays for him. As soon as he was healed Paul got up & was baptised. *Act 9:18..22:16*

Who?	Ex murderer who'd had a vision of Jesus.
Who baptised?	Ananias, a local believer who came & prayed with him.
When?	3 days after the vision, as soon as he was healed.
Where?	Doesn't say.

Paul & Silas were beaten up & thrown in jail. But despite their hardship they were singing worship to God. God sends an earthquake & the jail doors fly open. The jailer assumes the prisoners have all escaped so he's goes to kill himself, (back then if a prisoner escaped the jailer would be executed.) But Paul yells out, stop, we're all here. So this jailer realises these blokes have something he needed. And that night he & his whole family came to believe in Jesus & were baptised immediately, even though it was the middle of the night. *16:22-34*

Who?	Jailer (used to torture people) & his whole family.
Who baptised?	Paul & Silas, who shared Jesus with him.
When?	Immediately.
Where?	Doesn't say, somewhere close to his home.

Peter is preaching to some foreigners. They believed in Jesus, received the Holy Spirit & were baptized. *10:44-48*

Who?	Roman officer & his household.
Who baptised?	Peter who shared Jesus with them.
When?	Same day.
Where?	Doesn't say, but in Caesarea so probably in the surf.

At Pentecost Peter is preaching & .. *Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all. Act2:41*

How could 3000 be baptised in one day?

There were lots of baths used for cleansing around the temple (up to 200.)

Did the 12 disciples do all the baptising?

They couldn't do so many people in so many spots in one day. There had to be many people doing the baptisms (probably the 120 followers of Jesus who'd all been preaching that day.)

Who? 3000 people.

Who baptised? The bible doesn't specify but probably all 120 of Jesus followers from the upper room.

When? Straight away.

Where? Somewhere in Jerusalem close to upper room, so the pools & mikveh's around the temple.

More baptism stories 8:12,16:15,18:8

Now some people have differing views on how baptism should be done, but this isn't a dealbreaker. The most important thing is to always go to God's Word for truth. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak through the Bible rather than debate about it.

Let's summarise.

Who can get baptised?

Anyone who chooses to turn from their sin & believe in Jesus. You don't have to be perfect or know everything, you just have to trust in Jesus. *Lk3:12*

When?

As long as you know why you're getting baptised, pretty soon after believing in Jesus. Most examples in the bible range from immediately to few weeks later. *Acts16:33*

How?

Example in the bible is by going under water. *Mk1:9-11*

Where?

In any water, doesn't have to be flash. *Act8:36*

Who can baptize?

Another believer, the bible doesn't say it has to be someone "ordained." The example in the bible is usually the person who leads them to believe in Jesus. In the verses we looked at Philip, Ananias, Peter, Paul & Silas all baptised others (probably also the 120.)

It's important that new believers should become part of a healthy church. So the disciples would gather other believers around to witness the baptism & to welcome the new believer into the church, (unless there was no one around.) *Act2:41..Act10:47-48..16:15*

Here's the most important question.

Why should you get baptised?

Because Jesus commanded us to. He said everyone who wants to be His disciple will get baptised. *Mt 28:19*
It doesn't make you a believer, but it's something you do to show you are.
It's what we see all through the New Testament.

Jesus went around baptising *Jn3:22*
John the Baptist did lots of baptising *Jn3:23*
The disciples, Paul & the early church all did.

Why should you get baptised?

Because Jesus loves when we commit to Him. Especially in front of others, He knows we really mean it when we do this. He loves when we're willing to be obedient. This is exactly what we're doing when we get baptised.

And when Jesus was baptised, He received the Holy Spirit in greater measure, that's why He was then empowered to live the way He did. When we are baptized, if we willingly open our hearts we can be filled in greater measure with the Holy Spirit. We should ask for this. *Lk11:13*

But someone is coming soon who is greater than I am, so much greater that I'm not worthy even to be his slave and carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. Mt3:11..Lk3:16..Act2:38

So what is it like to be baptised? It might be a quiet step of obedience. It might be an overwhelming experience of the Holy Spirit's presence. It will always be a reassurance of God's love.

When we're baptised we're saying, I've been forgiven & washed clean. I've died to self & now have new life. I belong to Jesus. I'm branded His for life.

Action to obey .. *What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away by calling on the name of the Lord. Act22:16*

If you haven't already, get baptised. Speak to another believer you trust about this today.

Going deeper..Acts8:26-38..16:22-34..Mt1:5-8

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. God created you for relationship. This grows as you spend time with God each day.

God has created you for relationship. So He invites you to spend time with Him each day. This is how you grow your relationship with Him.

You can grow deeper with God as your Father.

You can trust Jesus more as your Lord.

You can follow the Holy Spirit closer.

This is the most unbelievable opportunity, we get to know God in a real way, there is nothing else in life like this. It should never be something you "have to do" but something you want to do.

Who in this world is most precious to you? Wife, girlfriend, grandchild, best friend?

Is spending time with them a job you have to do, or is it something you look forward to? Be careful how you answer, if you're referring to your wife you might get in trouble.

So why do we sometimes think spending time with God is a job? Maybe it's because we've taken the relationship out of it.

If we are just reading the bible because we're supposed to, it'll be hard work.

If we are just going through the motions praying, it will seem lifeless.

But if we will come & meet with God, if we come to tell Father how much He means to us, if we bring the deepest needs in our heart to Jesus in prayer, if we listen as the Holy Spirit speaks to us through God's Word, then I can tell you it is life giving like nothing else. For me, as my relationship with God has grown deeper, this has become the best part of my day.

It will always involve discipline like any important part of our life. We have to be intentional. But it must always be relationship, we have to meet with God. And the fact that it costs us something is a good thing. With sacrifice comes reward. The more you are willing to seek God, the more God reveals Himself to you.

And I think the most amazing part of all this is that God wants to spend time with me. He wants to spend time with you. He's not busy rushing off to do something else. He's not reluctantly meeting you because He should. God genuinely likes spending time with you.

Listen to R T Kendall.

"I cannot imagine a greater motivation to pray than that God enjoys having me in His presence. He enjoys my company. He delights in listening to me! He doesn't get bored with my repeated requests.. He never makes me feel stupid. There is no rejection, only total acceptance."

Total acceptance. That's something only a perfect Father could give.

Listen to how God says it.

Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you," declares the LORD. JER 29:11-14

Jesus said .. *Whoever really loves Me, will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and will reveal Myself to him. I will let Myself be clearly seen by him and make Myself real to him.* Jn 14:21

David knew God wanted to spend time with Him
My heart has heard you say, "Come and talk with me." And my heart responds, "Lord, I am coming."
Ps 27:8

Do we hear what God is saying. He's our perfect Father stretching out His arms to us, saying He is waiting to meet with us. He's waiting for us to connect with Him. He wants to be our source of faith, hope, contentment, joy, & life.

What else is there in our life that is more important?

These days we want things quick & easy. We read a couple verses or a 2 min devotion and rush off into our day & don't give God another thought. The tragedy of this is that we are missing out on growing closer to God.

Our God is so awesome, so magnificent, so infinitely perfect in every way. We don't need anyone or anything else. He can meet and overflow the deepest needs of our hearts.

So how do we spend quality time with God? Just by doing it.

- Go somewhere there's no distractions, shut everything else out. Having a set place & time is good. When you come there your heart & mind know this is the spot, let's meet with God.
- Get your motivation right. You're here to seek God with all your heart.
- Focus only on God .. I'm speaking only to You, listening only to You, desiring only to know & meet with you

Spending time with God should involve 3 parts (easy way to remember, 3 legged stool)

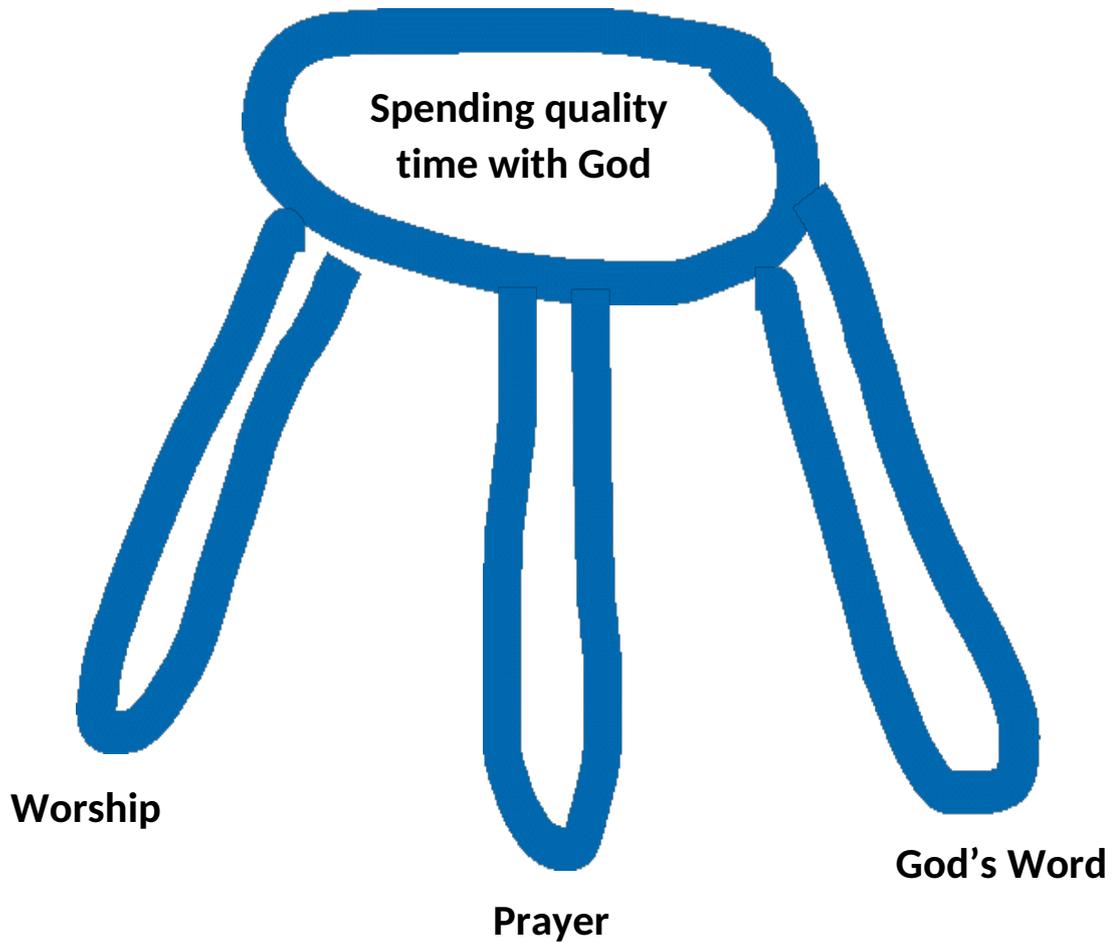
1. Worship
2. Prayer
3. Word

We're going to unpack each of these over the next few days.

Should it be morning or evening? Whatever is your best time. Anything we offer to God should always be our first & best.

The greatest miracle is my God wants me to come into His presence, God wants me to meet with Him. He's waiting for me. He's waiting for you.

Action to obey .. I will make it my priority to spend quality time with my God each day.

The Roadmap

Spending quality time with God is our greatest privilege in life & it's vital for our relationship with Him. Each day it should involve 3 parts.

1. **Worship**
 - a. Worship is telling God how much you love, respect, value & honour Him.
 - b. Worship had to be genuine & wholehearted.
 2. **Prayer**
 - a. Have a constant conversation with God.
 - b. Read God's Word & pray it back to Him.
 3. **God's Word** .. ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through God's Word. Always ask 2 questions.
 - a. What does this say about God?
 - b. How should I respond?
- Get your motivation right. You're here to seek God with all your heart. Focus only on Him. I'm speaking only to You, listening only to You, desiring only to know & meet with you.
 - Have a set place & time, go somewhere there's no distractions, shut everything else out. When you come there your heart & mind know this is the spot, let's meet with God.

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **We can be deeply connected to God.**

Remember the last conversation Jesus had with His disciples. They were walking in the dark outside the city because Jesus was going to the olive grove where He often prayed. It wasn't that far, but this was His quiet place. Jesus wanted to get ready because He knew that very soon He'd be arrested & go to the cross.

So now as they were walking is His last opportunity to prepare His disciples. Jesus tells them about two things they'll need to keep going. Two things we also need. We've already looked at John 14 where Jesus explains how He'll send the Holy Spirit to come into our lives. What an unbelievable privilege having Him live in us is.

Now in John 15 Jesus gives us a parable to describe the kind of relationship He wants have with us.

Jesus says, I am like a grapevine & you are like branches.

You can imagine they were probably walking past grapevines as Jesus told them this illustration.

If you stay connected to me, I will stay connected to you.

Jesus keeps emphasizing this phrase (10 times). If you will stay connected to me, I will stay connected to you. Just like a branch gets its sap, gets its nourishment, gets its very life from being continually connected to the vine; that's how we should be with Jesus.

A branch can be healthy & growing & producing fruit only while it's connected to the vine. But snap a branch off, disconnect it from the vine & instantly it's not growing. And pretty soon it starts to wither. We aren't made to do life on our own. We are created to do life connected to God.

Listen to how different bible translations express this phrase.

stay joined to me & I will stay joined to you (cev)

get your life from me & I will live in you (nlv)

remain in me & I will remain in you (nlt)

abide in me & I will abide in you (esv)

Jesus is saying to us, everything you truly need in life you can find in your relationship with me.

- Your identity as God's Son,
- your acceptance & right standing before God,
- the unconditional love you crave,
- the deep sense of belonging,
- your purpose in life,
- forgiveness for your past,
- hope for your future, all come from knowing me.

It's only as you stay connected, as you find your life in me, as you allow me to live in you, that's how all this increasingly flows into your life.

It's where you seek me with your whole heart, where you are totally dependant on me everyday.

Just like we need to eat to nourish our physical body, so we need to be connected with Jesus to nourish our spirit.

So we're not just talking about having a 3min devotion & then living any way we want. Branches don't do so well when they plug into vine for 3mins but spend the other 23hr 57min detached, doing their own thing, slowly withering.

We are talking about having a living relationship with Almighty God, that is 24/7. Where we are constantly connected to Him, constantly aware that He is with us, constantly wanting to live in a way that honours Him.

And to grow & strengthen that connection we need to set aside some time each day to really focus on Him. It's where we spend quality time with God,

- worshipping,
- praying
- & listening to His Word.

We're going to unpack each of these 3 ways we connect over the next few days. This is crucial. This is how you grow, it's how you get the power to do life.

Jesus tells us Himself in this passage.

- We need to stay connected to Him .. v4,5,7,9
- We do that by getting into God's Word .. v3,7
- By talking to God in prayer .. v7
- By being obedient .. v10
- By abiding in Jesus love .. v9

Now like always, Jesus is upfront with us & clearly lays out what will happen depending on whether we stay connected to Him.

- Anyone who doesn't stay connected will eventually wither .. v6
- If we only connect a little we'll be stunted & not produce much fruit .. v5
- But if we stay connected & abide in Jesus, then God will produce heaps of fruit in our lives .. v2,4,5,8 (fruit is always good, we'll discuss it more another day)

Just think for a moment what an unbelievable opportunity this is. We get to connect with Almighty God. This is 24/7 living relationship. He wants to be our source of everything we truly need, of life itself.

What else could be more important?

Jim Rohn has a great saying. Motivation gets you started, but habit keeps you going.

Be motivated to start a good habit today. Start abiding with Jesus. Get into God's word. Talk to Him in prayer. Be obedient to what He shows you. Abide in Jesus' love. Keep connecting with Jesus throughout your day.

How important is it?

I don't know anyone who is strong in their faith, who doesn't spend quality time with God each day. What an unbelievable relationship Jesus is inviting us to have with Him.

Action to obey .. **I'm going to stay connected to Jesus.**

Going deeper..Jn 15:1-11

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **I can know God from His Word.**

The bible isn't a roadmap for life, even though it does give us direction.
It's not a self-help book, even though it can completely change us.
It's not a book of knowledge, even though it's full of wisdom.
If we read it for the wrong reason we'll miss it's whole purpose.

What is the purpose of the bible?

The bible is God revealing Himself.

God says, this is who I am. This is how I want you to know me.

In the bible God reveals that He is Almighty & powerful, yet also compassionate & loving. He shows us that He is too great, too amazing for us to comprehend, yet He keeps giving us insights into His character. He shows us that He is perfectly holy & absolutely just, yet He chooses to offer us grace even though we never deserve it. It's God coming to forgive & redeem & invite us back into relationship. He pours out His kindness just because He is a good Father. We will never get to the end of knowing our God.

So this is really important. When God tells you to get into His Word, He's not asking you to read a book.

He's asking you to spend time with Him.

This is how we get to know our God as our Father.

This is how we get to know Jesus as our Lord.

It's how we come to know the Holy Spirit.

Jn5:39

The bible is all the truth about God we need. And it has absolute authority because God spoke it.

You must realize that no prophecy in Scripture ever came from the prophet's own understanding, or from human initiative. No, they were moved by the Holy Spirit, and they spoke from God.

2Pet1:20

All Scripture is God-breathed ..

2Tim3:16

For me this is massive. Knowing that every word in the bible came from God Himself gives me total confidence. It means it's absolute truth. It means I can base my life on this.

I have faith in my God & He has spoken His Word, so I know it is true.

I know my God is eternal, so His word will not change.

I know my God is all powerful, so every word will come to pass.

I know my God is trustworthy, so I can believe every word.

And my God knows me personally, He has spoken this to me.

The bible is my bedrock, it is unshakably true and infinitely valuable.

As a gift to us, God has written His Words down in human language. This way we can't leave bits out or put our own spin on it. He's written it down as a safeguard for us, so we keep what He says straight. So it's direct from God, it's perfect.

And even though it's written down it is just as alive & real, just as much from Him, as if He were speaking it right now.

God's word is living & active, because our God is living & active. This is His word, we can never separate it from Him.

Now lots of people know truths from the bible, probably more than ever before. So why are so many still struggling? Why are so many not being completely changed?

Understanding the bible correctly is obviously super important, we can't know God without it.

But you can study the bible without getting life from it, because it's not words that give us life, but God Himself. If you just read God's Word to get knowledge, then you are missing it's whole purpose. We read God's Word to find God Himself.

I have a beautiful photo of my wife. Even when she's not with me I can look at it & be reminded exactly what she's like. But I don't have a relationship with the photo, I have a relationship with my wife.

God speaks His word to us so we can know Him in a real way.
God uses the bible to lead us to a deep and satisfying relationship with Him.
The bible reveals God, so the goal is always God Himself.
The bible calls this seeking God with all your heart, or pursuing God.

Jesus said, *"No one comes to me, except the Father draws him"*

Jn6:44

Even the desire to seek God, comes from God. Likewise even the faith to believe in God, is a gift He gives us. So this is all His grace.

Rom3:11,24

But we have to respond. He will put the desire in our heart, but then we have to seek Him with all we have. He will give us a spark of faith, then we have to choose to believe in Him. God reveals Himself & we respond by seeking Him.

Our heavenly Father wants us to want Him, to respond to Him by trusting Him.
He never forces Himself on us. He desires relationship.

So each day as we come to God's Word, the purpose isn't to read a certain amount, or to understand a certain amount. The purpose is to meet with Jesus. The purpose is to meet with our Father. The purpose is to meet with the Holy Spirit.

You can't do that just with your mind. You have to seek God with all your heart.
We have to be open for the Holy Spirit to encourage, challenge, convict, build up. You have to be open to being changed. Then you can ask the Holy Spirit to help you live that out all through the day.

Action to obey .. I'll spend time getting to know God from His Word each day.

Going deeper..2Tim3:15-17..2Pet1:12-21

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **God's Word is all I need to know & follow Jesus.**

One of the most important things you can do as a disciple of Jesus is to get into God's Word every day. This is vital. It's the main way God reveals Himself to you. It's the main way He grows you as a believer. You might not always understand every bit, that's ok. It still has the power to change you because it's the very words of God. It's not a normal book. It is God speaking. So every word is true, every word is dependable, every word is life-changing.

Is40:8,Mt24:35

In the bible we see that God is all powerful, He created this world just by speaking.

We see our heavenly Father's love for you is unending, He chose to love you even before He created you. And He promises to always love you.

We see His grace demonstrated in Jesus. This is so good we can hardly comprehend it. Even when we had turned our backs on God & ignored Him, He sent the one He loved the most, His Son Jesus to come & take the punishment we deserved so we could be restored to Him again.

The bible is rich & deep because God is showing us who He is. But it's also totally relevant to your life today. God has a plan & a purpose for your life, so He shows you how to live as a man of God & how to lead your family.

The bible is all we need to know & follow Jesus. It's all the truth we need for faith & life.

The bible is our source of truth. So don't just believe anything I say, or anyone else for that matter without checking it out. Always see for yourself what God says.

1Thes5:21

Now if you don't regularly get God's Word into you, you won't grow. You'll be forgiven, but you'll stay a spiritual baby. But if you'll come to God's Word each day, if you'll allow the Holy Spirit to speak it into your life, then you'll grow into the man God created you to be.

2Tim3:15-17 says God's Word ..

- Shows you how to be saved by trusting in Jesus
- Is God-breathed, so it carry's the authority of God
- Teaches us what is true
- Makes us realize when we've gone off track
- It corrects us when we are wrong
- Teaches us to do what is right
- God uses it to prepare and equip us for all He wants us to do.

So keep reading God's Word.

Even as you go through this book, you can read the verses at the bottom of each "step" in *going deeper*. If you're able can I also encourage you to start reading some of God's Word every day. We've included some tips in "reading plan."

Here's one tip to help you get the big idea of whatever you're reading in God's Word.

Picture a sword. As you read ask yourself these 2 questions.

The large blade of the sword is pointing up. **What does this say about God?**

The small handle is pointing to us. **How should I respond?**

1. What does this say about God?

Remember our purpose is to meet with God.

So come spend time with our Father. Come spend time with Jesus. Come spend time with the Holy Spirit.

And let's ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what God's Word is saying. He's the one who inspired God's Word.

Jesus said He's the great teacher. He'll reveal spiritual truth to us. *Jn14:26*

Often when I'm reading the bible a verse will jump off the page at me. All of a sudden I'll get it. It will speak to my heart. I'll see more of God. What's happening is the Holy Spirit takes the written word & speaks it to our hearts so it becomes the living word.

So everytime we read the bible, we should ask the Holy Spirit to speak to us. If we aren't intentionally listening to Him then we're missing out on His insight & understanding. *1Cor2:10-12*

2. How should I respond?

By believing & obeying.

Because it is God's Word, when we see a truth, we believe it with all our hearts.

Because it's God's Word, when it commands us to do something, we make sure we obey.

1 Thes 2:13 .. we never stop thanking God that when you received his message from us, you didn't think of our words as mere human ideas. You accepted what we said as the very word of God—which, of course, it is. And this word continues to work in you who believe.

Heb 4:2 .. For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.

We have to believe God's Word in faith. We have to live God's Word in obedience. Otherwise it doesn't change us. If you don't believe or don't obey, you'll miss out on the power of God's Word working in your life.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires of the heart.

God's Word penetrates deep in our heart. It can bring stuff to the surface for forgiveness & healing we weren't even aware of.

Getting into God's Word is where you'll grow, be challenged, encouraged & built up. This is where the rubber hits the road. It's part of the 3 legged stool of spending quality time with God each day.

Don't miss out on all God has for you.

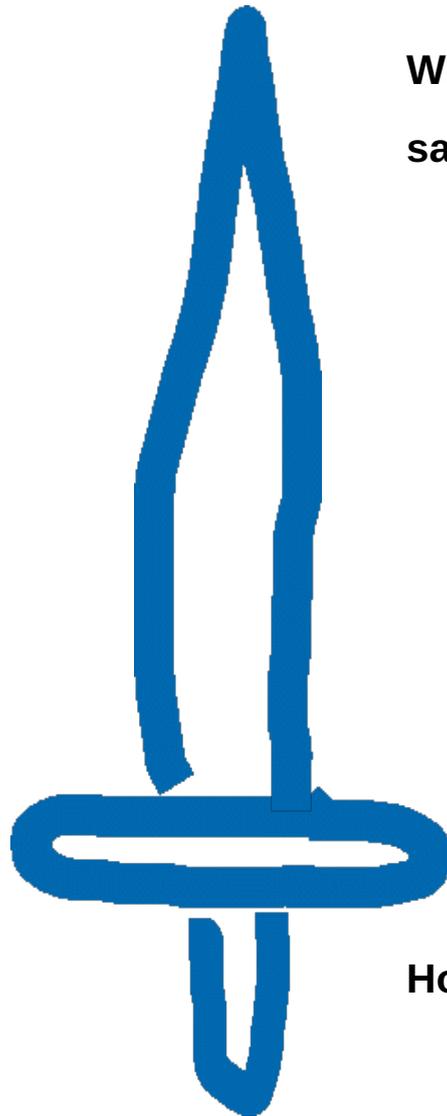
Action to obey ..

Everyday I'll come to spend time with God as I read His Word.

I'll ask the Holy Spirit to show me .. what does this say about God?

How should I respond? I'll believe & obey everything God shows me in His Word.

Going deeper..2Tim 3:10-17..2Pet1:16-21..Ps19:7-11..1Cor2:10-12

The Roadmap

**What does this
say about God?**

How should I respond?

Picture a sword, the large blade, the most important part of the sword is pointing up to God.
The small handle is pointing to us.

The bible is God revealing Himself, so we should always ask,

1. What does this say about God?
2. Then how should I respond to Him?

Remember our purpose is to meet with God.
And we respond by believing & obeying.

Practical stuff

If you've already got a bible it will be great, if you're looking for one the New Living Translation is a good version to read. Start reading one of the gospels, Luke is good. You can look at our reading plan section for more tips.

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. **I get to speak with God in prayer & He hears me.**

How do you ride a bike? Can you explain how your brain coordinates your muscles so you can balance, or the physics that generate forward propulsion. No, I can't either.

But my 4 yr old grandson can jump on his bike & just ride. He doesn't need to understand all the concepts, he's learnt to ride by having a go. As a believer some things you learn by doing.

Today we want to pray. And the only way you'll learn to pray is by doing it. So let's not complicate it.

Imagine a small toddler running up to their dad with their arms out, talking in their own baby language.

The dad doesn't really care what the little one is saying, just as long as they come to Him.

That's how God is with us. We don't have to know how prayer works, God just wants us to come to Him.

We can come confidently because we know He wants to spend time with us. And you can tell God whatever is on your heart. You can pray in faith knowing He hears you.

It might feel a bit different at first because you can't see that He's listening. But He definitely is. *Ps116:1-2*

If you're not sure how to pray, it's all good. Even Jesus' own disciples weren't sure. So they asked & Jesus gave them & us a prayer that we can follow as an example. So here's what we'll do, we'll look at each phrase in Jesus prayer, then we'll pray about that phrase, you can pray along as well.

So Jesus started by saying, *when you pray*. He didn't say if, but when. He couldn't imagine believers who wouldn't want to pray, because this is how we connect with God. Prayer is the lifeblood of our relationship. *Mt6:5*

So Jesus said, when you pray, you have to make this a priority, go & speak with your Father. *Mt6:6-8*

Pray like this ..

1. **Our Father, who is in heaven**

Ok, let's pray

Thank you God that I can call you my Father. This is your personal name, this is how you want me to know you, it means you love me & I trust you. It is such a privilege to know you as my Father, that I can be your son. Thanks for adopting me into your family, thanks for the security that I'm yours forever. You are my rock. Thanks that I know you'll protect & care for me as only my perfect Father can.

And I acknowledge that you rule from heaven. You are God over all. You are all powerful, holy & eternal. So I worship you Father.

2. **Honoured be your name**

Father I respect you, you are so great & awesome you deserve all honour & glory. I recognise that you are Almighty God. There is no one like you. I value & admire & appreciate you. I worship only you. Father I also want others to recognise how great & worthy you are.

3. Your Kingdom come

Father we know that everyone that recognises Jesus as King becomes part of your Kingdom. Thanks that Jesus is now my King. I come under His authority. I live to serve Him. Father I also ask that many other people will come to know Jesus & be saved & set free.

4. Your will be done on earth as in heaven

Father I thank you that your will is always best. Thanks that you want me to believe in Jesus, you want me to believe & obey your Word, to make disciples, to speak with you in prayer, just like I'm doing now. You want me to worship you, to walk in step with the Holy Spirit, to pray for my family. Father I commit to doing your will.

5. Give us this day our daily bread

Father I rely on you for everything. Please provide my physical needs, my health & strength so I can live for you.

6. Forgive my sins, as we forgive those who sin against us

Father forgive me when I still sin. I need your forgiveness so much. And I'll never forget how much Jesus has already forgiven me. So the least I can do is to forgive others. You know I can't do that in my own strength, I need your help.

7. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil one

Father I ask for your protection, your deliverance, your freedom, & your overcoming power.

8. For yours is the kingdom, the power & the glory, forever & ever

Father God, I worship you again because you alone are worthy. I trust you completely. I thank you that I can pray in Jesus name. Amen.

That's it. You've just prayed one of the most powerful prayers. Now the most important thing is to keep praying. It can be anytime, God's always listening. It doesn't have to be these words. God wants it to come from your heart. But make sure as part of your quality time with God each day you spend some time praying. Tell God how much He means to you.

David said .. *Accept my prayer as incense offered to you, and my upraised hands as an offering.* 141:2

Action to obey .. I will spend time praying to my Father every day.

Going deeper..Mt6:5-18

Truth to believe .. **Praying brings you closer to God.**

God doesn't need us to pray to Him, He already knows what we'll say. But God wants us to pray because He wants us to connect with Him. Praying brings you closer to God, it grows your relationship with Him.

That's why Jesus prayed. He was connecting with His Father. God wants us to pray, to completely rely on Him, to align our life with Him. We need to see praying as a great privilege. We get to come close to Almighty God. All true prayer is about wanting more of God.

So I really want to encourage you to keep praying. You can pray anytime. You can have a constant conversation with God. It invites God into every part of your day.

But I'll keep saying, it's vital you spend quality time with God each day. Time focussed only on Him, where you worship, pray & get into God's Word. Then afterwards you can go to work or whatever you're doing & you're good to go because you've connected with God & you can stay connected throughout your day. He's breathed life into you, given you His grace, His courage, His strength.

You know the amazing thing, tomorrow morning God's waiting to meet with you again, with new strength, new grace, even deeper relationship. Don't miss out on it.

Let me give you 3 practical tips.

1st tip .. Set aside a "place" to pray

For a long time now I've had a set place where I pray, my office. But it can be any room, a spot in the shed, somewhere outside. The bible talks about having a special just to pray, where there's no distractions, you're there for no reason except you want to meet with God.

Here's what's good about it. When you meet with God regularly in a certain spot, it's like you don't have to get ready. When you go there your mind & your spirit know that this place & time is set apart, I'm here to meet God.

Can you pray while you're driving or doing something else? Sure we can pray anywhere. But we need to give God our undivided attention.

Can we pray anytime? Sure, but we should give God whatever is our best time. For me, I find the time where I focus the most is praying in the morning just before the sun comes up. I don't have thoughts from the day running through my head so I can focus.

Jesus had a place. Even though He travelled around a lot, He consistently prayed on His own, at night, so no distractions. But His place was on the mountainside. Wherever He was, He'd go out to a nearby mountain.

Moses had a place, he had a little tent set up outside the main camp.

Daniel had a place, he prayed in the upstairs room of his home.

2nd tip .. Pray out loud, even when you're on your own.

I know you're saying, God can hear your thoughts. But if I'm praying in my head, they're thought prayers, so it only takes another thought to come along & interrupt me. But if I'm using my voice to speak to my heavenly Father, I'm not so easily distracted. I'm concentrating on what I'm saying so my mind doesn't wander as much. And there's power in speaking out loud my trust in God.

3rd tip

George Mueller is one of my heroes. We'll tell his story another time but he was the bloke God used to rear 20,000 orphans & plant a heap of churches. He never asked anyone for money or even told them what they needed, he just prayed. His whole life was a demonstration that God answers prayer. But even George confessed that he often struggled to really focus his thoughts on God. That is until God showed him something. This is my paraphrase of what he said,

"I used to get up of a morning & I began to pray as soon as possible. But often I'd spend 15min on my knees with my mind wandering, before I really began to pray, before I felt God was with me.

This doesn't happen to me now. Now from the start I read God's Word & my heart is nourished by the truth & this brings me to experience fellowship with God, so I speak to my Father about the things He shows me in His precious Word."

George Mueller discovered how to have a conversation with God. He would let God speak through the Word, then George would pray it back. George would read a line or a few verses, then he would pray about what God had just said. This developed a deep sense of communion with God. Praying through a passage of Scripture transformed His daily experience with God.

This is exactly what we did yesterday. We read a phrase then prayed it back to God. Praying as we read God's Word is a great way to have a conversation with God.

3 practical ideas

1. set aside a "place" to meet with God
2. pray out loud
3. have a conversation with God, read the Word & pray it back

Action to obey .. I'll prioritise praying with my God each day.

Going deeper..Ps 27:4-8

Truth to believe .. **God is looking for men who willingly choose to worship Him.**

I want to start today with a confession. For a long time I didn't really get worship, it didn't make sense to me. I knew that God's Word said we should worship, I obviously knew God deserved it. But why would Almighty God, who has all the stars in the universe to demonstrate how great He is, why would He want someone like me to worship Him?

And what is real worship anyway?

Worship is giving God the honor He deserves

True worship is when I see God as He truly is, when I start to acknowledge His greatness. It's when I see the power of the cross, when I sense His heart for me, His grace towards me. It's when I'm overwhelmed by His holiness & unconditional love for me, that's what motivates worship.

Worship is telling God how much He means to me

Worship is saying , Lord I want to honor you because you are Almighty God, because you are infinitely good & absolutely trustworthy. I want to worship you because you are my Father, so I want to come closer, I want to know you deeper. Father I trust you, I surrender to you, I love you, I worship you.

True worship always comes from your heart.

Worship is from your heart to God's heart.

So it's no wonder I'd felt disconnected previously when I worshipped, my heart wasn't totally in it. Now reading God's Word was different for me. I'd experienced that change my heart, I understood the power in that. But I hadn't yet seen the power in worship, I hadn't experienced how worship could change me. And I didn't really get why God desired it so much, somehow I missed His heart in it all.

Then I read .. *Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, **for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.*** Jn4:23 nkj

I realised, God doesn't need our worship, He's not even after the worship itself. God is looking for worshipers, men who will say, you are Almighty God & you are my God, so I choose to honour you. I trust you. I choose to worship you with all my heart.

The majestic trees & mountains, the sunrise breaking over the horizon, all the stars in the whole universe give God honour because that's what they're created to do. But God desires men who willingly choose to honour Him with all their heart, because He alone is worthy. This is true worship.

Worship & prayer is how we communicate with God. It's how we relate to Him.

We were created to know & love God. We were created to worship Him & bring Him honour.

So if you aren't worshipping God & focussing on how awesome He is, then you won't be growing in your relationship with God as you should. You'll feel unfulfilled & everything will feel out of alignment.

Because mankind is created to worship, we will always worship something. So if we don't commit to worshipping the Lord, we'll start to worship something else instead. Rom1:21-23

That's why the devil is constantly trying to distract us. He doesn't want us to focus on God & His greatness. He doesn't want us to grow closer to God. The devil knows that if he can get us to constantly focus on ourselves, what we're doing, our pleasure, our insecurities, if he can capture our attention, then soon he'll start to capture part of our hearts.

We know God loved us first, He came for us, His love found us before we ever loved Him. God moved toward us first. Worship is us moving toward God, it's our response to His love.

And don't think for a second that worship is in any way soft or feminine. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Psalms are like the worship book of the bible & they were written by the Goliath slaying, warrior king David.

Worship is bowing & giving honor to our all powerful God. There is nothing soft about acknowledging that He has all power, all authority, all strength, & that He is our source of our power, authority & strength.

Worship changes our perspective. It lifts the attention off ourselves & our problems & shifts our focus onto our unshakable, faithful and all-powerful God.

We said yesterday that a warrior kneeling before His King was a really good picture of worship. Why don't you picture yourself in this position.

Come & focus on Jesus, recognizing how great He is.

Humble yourself before Him, come only for His honour.

Commit your life to Him, be willing to lay down every part of your life for Him.

Action to obey .. I will start spending time worshipping God each day.

Going deeper..Jn4:23..Ps95:1-7..Heb10:22

Truth to believe .. **It's my privilege to worship God every day.**

I will exalt you, my God and King, and praise your name forever and ever.

²*I will praise you **every day**; yes, I will praise you forever.*

³*Great is the Lord! He is most worthy of praise! No one can measure his greatness.*

Ps145:-31

Everyday we should have an intentional time of worship, when we cut out all distractions & come to God so we can tell Him how much He means to us, so we can come close to Him, so we can feel His heart for us. Because then all of our life flows from our relationship with Him.

Worship is how we communicate our love & respect for who God is.

When I realised this, it changed how I worshipped. Men, it is our greatest privilege to be able to come to God, to know that He accepts us, that He loves us totally, that He welcomes us to come to Him.

Then we can worship Him for who He really is. We can declare His power & grace & how He is magnificent & deserves all glory.

If you're not sure how to worship, that's ok, just like praying you only learn by doing. Like riding a bike, it's not until you get on & start pedaling that you actually start to get somewhere. God just wants you to come to Him.

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. Deut6:5

This is how we worship our God, with all our heart, with all our will, all our emotions, all our mind, with every thought, all our strength, with every part of our body. Nothing is more empowering than bowing before the King of Kings & Lord of Lords & acknowledging His power, His authority, His greatness & His heart for us.

Pray .. Jesus, you are so worthy, you deserve us to worship you with everything we are. Holy Spirit we ask you to help us to worship, the way our Lord deserves us to worship Him

So let's make worship an essential part of our "abiding" every day, it's an important leg of the stool. As you spend time with God, worship Him, speak with Him in prayer & listen to Him as you read His Word. Set aside a time & a place.

It's great to have genuine worship songs saved on your phone, you can play them & sing along. It's important that you worship, you don't just listen to someone else worship. Or you can read through bits of God's Word that worship Him, like Ps 145. Or you can worship by telling God how much He means to you.

So let's keep it simple. These are a few things to remember. I'll give you a summarized list down the bottom.

1. Remember who we come before, God is infinitely Holy & powerful & worthy. He's also our perfect Father just wanting us to come to Him. We worship an audience of one, God alone, no one else. Picture yourself as a warrior kneeling before His King.
2. Remember 2 things,
 - a. worship has to be genuine (God sees your heart)
 - b. worship has to be wholehearted (no holding back)
3. Invite the Holy Spirit to come & enable your worship. I regularly ask Him to help me worship the way my God wants me to worship. If you get hold of this it will change the course of your life. Don't think, how do I feel like worshipping God? That's self-focussed & so isn't really worship. Instead think, how does God want me to worship Him?
 - a. does He want you to sit quietly & focus only on Him & tell Him how much He means to you,
 - b. or does He want you to get on your knees & bow before His majesty,
 - c. or does He want you to praise Him & declare His greatness at the top of your lungs as you sing,
 - d. or does He want you to throw up your hands honouring Him, exalting Him. In the bible God led His men to worship Him in all of these ways & more.
4. Tell God what He deserves to hear & make it personal. Lord I honour you, I trust you, I seek you, because you are (then list all the reasons). Worship who He is. Creator, Loving, Dependable, Compassionate, Holy, Just, Infinite Almighty God.

Remember, God isn't after how good you sing or anything like that. He's after your heart. If you come to God with all your heart to worship Him, He's like a proud Father who's overjoyed just because you're there with Him.

Action to obey .. I will spend time worshipping my God each day

1. **Remember who you worship.**
2. **Get your heart right before Him.**
3. **Invite the Holy Spirit to lead & enable your worship.**
4. **As you worship, tell God how much ..**
 - **you love Him,**
 - **you respect Him,**
 - **you value Him,**
 - **you honour Him.**

Going deeper.. Ps145..Heb12:28..Deut6:4-5..Rom1:21-23

Truth to believe .. Greater is He that is in me than the one who is in the world

1Jn4:4

Life can feel like a constant battle. And when you give your life to Jesus, that doesn't all go away magically. It can actually feel like the battle gets more intense. To understand this we have to go back to the beginning.

God has always been Almighty God. He reigns eternally as the King of heaven. And He chose to create this world & He created us so we could know & love Him, so we could be His people and He would be our King. And so we were part of His Kingdom.

But then Adam & Eve rebelled against Him. They wanted to control their own lives. And everyone of us has chosen to do the same. We've ignored God, pretended like He didn't matter, we've rejected God as our King.

But way back before us, someone else had defied God's authority. The devil who was only ever a created angel, had decided he wanted to be god himself. He was so deluded by his own pride that he had the audacity to challenge Almighty God. His arrogance & deceit was an insult, so God who has all power & all authority as the rightful King, He kicked the devil & his evil offshoots out of heaven.

Now when we choose to stop recognising God as our King, that means we are no longer under His protection, no longer part of His kingdom. Instead we've allowed sin to come into this world. We've allowed the devil to lie to us, we've allowed him to corrupt our hearts, we've allowed him to influence us.

When you look at our world around us & you see the brokenness everywhere & you read 1 Jn 5:19 *"the world around us is under the control of the evil one,"* you realise this is real. The devil is having a field day destroying people's lives. When people choose to live without God, they have no defences against him & he'll do whatever he can to wreck them.

So there is a battle going on. But it's not like an eternal struggle where the outcome is uncertain. Nothing could be further from the truth. The devil is not a rival for God. His defeat is certain. God is sovereign, all powerful & infinite. The devil is nothing in comparison.

So God the Father sent Jesus into our world. Jesus came as a human, so He could so He could be our substitute & earn our forgiveness. But Jesus came as the all-conquering King.

Right from when He was born, Jesus lived His entire life perfectly, without ever giving into sin. So He defeated the power of temptation.

Then when Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice on our behalf, because He was perfect, He could pay for all of our sins & so earned our forgiveness. He defeated the power of sin & of guilt.

Then because He was perfect, death had no hold on Him so He rose back to life. He defeated the power of death & hell. Jesus has conquered it all.

When Jesus was on the cross, even though the devil & his evil forces threw everything they had against Him, Jesus completely & totally defeated them, & has rightly condemned them to eternal punishment, so their time is running out.

And the devil knows he's defeated. He knows his time is short. He knows that because of Jesus, he no longer has any legal right to try & control anyone who belongs to Jesus.

But he also knows that not all christians know or believe this. If he can keep them ignorant & doubting of all that Jesus accomplished, then he can keep deceiving & intimidating them long after he lost his authority.

So make no mistake. Jesus is the all-conquering King. He re-established God's kingdom. He's reasserted God's authority on earth. Jesus Himself became the way for us to come back to God, because He can forgive our rebellion & can restore our relationship with our heavenly Father. When we come to Jesus, He brings us back under rightful rule of a good & holy God.

So the battle going on now isn't to decide who will win, Jesus already has, that's set in stone. The battle now is for our hearts & minds. The battle is whether we will believe in God & surrender to Him as our rightful King, or we'll continue to believe the devil's lies & allow him to influence & destroy our lives.

The devil no longer has any control in our lives, unless we give it to him. But he can create all sorts of havoc if we let him.

He does have influence over people who don't know Jesus. He tries to blind them from the truth. But Jesus wants to use us to show people what a victorious life looks like, He wants to use us to rescue people from the devils influence & bring them into relationship with Jesus as their King.

And ultimately He will bring the whole world back into His Kingdom and to do that He will completely destroy the devil & his domain of darkness.

In the end, every single person will acknowledge that Jesus is King. They will have to when they meet Him face to face, every knee will bow & every tongue will confess, Jesus is Lord.

Action to obey .. Pray

- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you any area of your life that you've allowed the devil to influence you.
- Lord Jesus, I worship you as the all-conquering King. On the cross, you defeated the devil. You have all authority. I submit to you as my King.

Read Eph 6:10-20 today & again tomorrow.

Going deeper..1Jn4:4..Eph6:10-20..Col2:13-15

Truth to believe .. Greater is He that is in me than the one who is in the world

1Jn4:4

You are going to get pushback. Expect it, don't worry, God's got this, trust Him.

Be aware, we are in a battle

- our enemy isn't the government or social media, it isn't other religions or people who don't know Jesus yet.
 - This is a spiritual battle against the devil & his evil forces.
 - It's a battle for your heart & mind & for your family. He's trying to drag you away from Jesus.
 - The devil knows which buttons to push, he'll whisper lies of doubt, of guilt, he tries to wear you down.
- ✓ But we don't have to be intimidated because God is **infinitely** more powerful.
 - ✓ God is wanting us to learn to trust Him moment by moment.
 - ✓ He promises to give you all the strength you need.
 - ✓ He promises to give you armour to protect you.
 - ✓ He gives you the power of Holy Spirit to sustain you.
 - ✓ Jesus already has authority over the devil. He delegates some of His authority to us, He's wanting us to learn how to use Jesus' authority.
 - ✓ He's wanting us to learn how to protect our families.
 - ✓ He's wanting us to grow strong faith, faith that overcomes.
 - ✓ Jesus wants to demonstrate that He is infinitely greater.
 - ✓ But you have to stand up & fight .. He even promises you'll still be standing when the battle is over.

4 things you need to remember every day.

1. Jesus has defeated the devil & has all authority.

the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. 1 Jn 3:8

I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. Eph1:19-22

If we trust in Jesus there is no contest because Jesus has already won.

When we pray in Jesus name, in line with His Word, it carries His authority.

We can rest assured, because God is in control & He has the devil restrained.

2. God's Word gives us the truth

I have written to you who are young in the faith because you are strong. God's word lives in your hearts, and you have won your battle with the evil one.

1Jn2:14

The devil is defenceless against us when we know & believe God's word. He can't stand against God's Word, because they are God's words, they carry His power.

So this is how we overcome. We get into God's word each day, we need to know the truth. Then every thought that goes through your mind you can ask, is this truth, does this line up with God's Word? If it's truth, grab hold of it. But if it's a lie, kick it out immediately & replace it with truth.

3. We need to stand in God's strength

Be strong in the Lord .. it literally means get your strength from God. We need His strength because we can't do this on our own. We can't fight supernatural forces with natural strength.

Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes .. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. *Eph6:10-13*

God is promising that if we rely on Him, we will overcome. This is God's purpose for you. He wants us to learn to overcome like Jesus did. He wants us to implement His authority.

4. We can overcome because of Jesus.

We are more than conquerors through Christ. *Rom 8:37*

The outcome is not in doubt, there is no partial victory. Jesus has overcome & now He calls us to.

You have overcome them because greater is He that is in you than the one who is in the world *1Jn4:4*

This is the foundational truth we base our lives on. Jesus is the greatest, He is infinitely perfect in every way, He has all power. So if we trust in Him we will overcome.

The only way the devil can derail you is to tempt you to doubt Jesus, to undermine your faith in Him. This is the aim behind all his lies. If the devil can get us to not trust in Jesus, to stand on our own, if he can separate us from Jesus, then we are easy pickings.

Our greatest mistake is to underestimate the mighty power of all-conquering Jesus. We underestimate the power of praying in His name. We underestimate the victory He has won on the cross.

Jesus is the King of Kings & Lord of Lords. He has all authority. He has conquered sin, death & the devil. And He will reign forevermore.

Trust Him.

If God is for us, who can be against us?

Just trust & pray. Ask God for help. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you His strength. Pray in Jesus name.

Action to obey .. Say out loud

- Jesus is my Lord,
- Jesus has all authority in heaven & on earth,
- Jesus victory on the cross was complete & absolute,
- Jesus has defeated the devil, sin & death,
- I belong to Jesus so the devil has no hold on me,
- I trust in Jesus completely,
- And I pray in the mighty name of Jesus.

Going deeper..Eph6:10-20.. Eph1:19-22

Truth to believe .. God is on a mission

- God is on a mission.
- He's opening men's eyes, forgiving their sin, rescuing & redeeming them,
- He's healing & setting them free. Act26:18
- He's growing these new believers into His disciples, filling them with purpose & courage to do life.
- He's speaking to them through His Word, drawing them deeper into relationship.
- He's filling them with His Holy Spirit, empowering them to overcome sin, equipping them to live for Him.
- He's building them into His church & sending them out to expand His kingdom.
- And He's doing it all to demonstrate how truly great He is. That He is the one & only Almighty God who is glorious & loving, powerful & gracious, compassionate & holy. This is God's great purpose.

God could get rocks to cry out, He could make the stars dance, but He wants & deserves men like me & you, to willingly worship Him with all their lives. God wants us to know & love Him. So God loves to redeem people. Just like how He has saved you, He wants to save others. He's preparing us to live & reign with Him forever in heaven.

This is God's mission. And even though He doesn't need us, He invites us to be involved. Saving people is what is closest to His heart so of course He wants to include us.

So here's the progression. We said at the start we want to **become God's mighty men**. We'll do that by ..

1. **Following Jesus** .. He wants to grow our relationship with Him first, make us solid.
2. **Making disciples** .. He wants to work through us to disciple others. This book is a tool to help you disciple another bloke.
3. **Building God's Kingdom** .. With the Holy Spirit's enabling, together we'll go into the world. We'll live for Jesus everyday, leading our families, sharing the gospel, seeing men saved, making disciples. We'll show these new disciples how to disciple other men. God's aim is for the whole cycle to be repeated again & again, His kingdom growing & multiplying under the Lordship of King Jesus. And He is receiving all the glory & honour.

So you can go through this book on your own. But it's much better to do it with a mate. Even if you only started to believe in Jesus a month ago, you can start disciplining someone else.

- **You don't have to know everything, because you're not wanting them to learn from you but from God's Word. So learn from God's Word together.**
- **You don't have to be perfect, because you're not wanting them to become like you but like Jesus. So surrender to Jesus together.**

Jesus said that to make disciples we have to demonstrate how to obey in everyday life. So we disciple by living. We learn together how to hear from God's Word, how to worship, how to follow Jesus in our relationships, in our work, in everything. It has to be real life.

So here's where you start ..

- A. Pray & ask Jesus who He wants you to disciple. Who is open & receptive? You could ask them today.
- B. When you have someone, connect with them. Be a genuine mate. Build trust by sharing your story. Encourage them to share their story.
- C. Talk about whatever is real life for them, the good bits & the hard bits. Show them how the gospel connects to every part of their life.
- D. Both of you need to commit to individually spending time with God every day. You can work through this book, do a "step" each day. The point is to spend time with God.
- E. Then meet together regularly, at least weekly. Encourage & build each other up. Become disciples of Jesus together. Each time you meet, if you go through the 4 steps we outlined in the daily commitment (1c) you'll have it covered.

1. Seek God Before you start pray & ask God to speak to you, open your heart to Him.

2. Be Accountable Hold each other accountable, have you started to do what God has already shown you?

3. God's Word Go through the "steps" you've read that week.
What do these verses reveal about God?
What does it tell me about myself? How should I respond to God?
Allow God's Word to change you.

4. Obey Make a plan to start doing what God has shown you today.

Obedience is key. Remember our 1 to 1 ratio.

We're committing to believe every truth that God shows us from His Word. And we're committing to obey everything He asks us to do. We have to know the truth & we have to live it.

Ask the Holy Spirit to go to work on your heart. If you start to do all that God shows you through His Word, then He will change every part of your life.

Jesus said, if you want to be my disciple, you have to trust & surrender to me in every part of your life. This is how we make disciples, this is how God builds His kingdom.

Action to obey .. Pray

- Lord Jesus, who do you want me to disciple? I can't do it, but I trust the Holy Spirit can through me, so I'm willing & available, please use me.

Going deeper..Act26:18..Lk14:25-33..Mt28:18-20

The Roadmap

Bonus .. These are the foundational truths this book is based on:

1. Jesus is the greatest man who ever lived. But He's much more than that. He is God the Son, our Messiah & Redeemer, the King of Kings & Lord of Lords. He has all authority in heaven & earth. Everything we truly need we can find in our relationship with Jesus.
2. God's Word (the bible) is our source of truth, it has absolute authority. We know Jesus & grow in Him as we learn from His Word. So because we're becoming disciples of Jesus, every step in this book will come from God's Word & is focussed on knowing Jesus.
3. The Holy Spirit is our great teacher. He will reveal truth from God's Word to us. He's the one who transforms us, He totally rebuilds us from the inside out & empowers us to live for Jesus.
4. We are created to give our allegiance to Jesus our King & commit our lives to serving Him. So as you follow Him, He will equip & empower you to impact your family, your workmates & other men around you. This will not only change your life, God wants to use you to change the eternal destiny of other lives also. Jesus has called every believer to be discipled & to make disciples.

Action to obey .. **KEEP READING GOD'S WORD**
 KEEP BELIEVING & OBEYING

If you haven't already, find a church that believes God's Word & follows Jesus & join them. No church is perfect, but God designed us to come together for teaching, encouragement & to hold you accountable. Coals burn hotter when they're put together.

The Roadmap

Truth to believe .. God is sovereign.

The CONTRACT

I acknowledge that every part of my life belongs to God.

1. Firstly He created me, so I belong to Him,
2. & then even when I sinned & put myself in debt & slavery, Jesus came & redeemed me, He purchased me out of debt when He forgave my sins & He purchased me as His own by giving His life in my place, so I belong to God twice over.

So again I acknowledge that every part of my life belongs to God.

His role is to be the owner. He is my Lord & King.

My role is to serve Him, to manage my life for Him, to bring Him the most honour.

So as I tick each item below & then sign the whole contract at the bottom, I'm acknowledging that each item belongs to God & I'm committing to use it to serve my God.

My time belongs to God.

- I will especially give my best time to spend with my Lord every day, but all my time belongs to Him.
- At work,
- At home,
- Both now & in the future.

My relationships belong to God.

- my marriage, (now or future)
- my children,
- my family of origin,
- mates.

My finances belong to God.

- my home,
- my car, bike, boat,
- my superannuation,
- 100% of my income belongs to Him (not just the tithe), so I will seek His will in making all financial decisions.
- I realise money & possessions are like a strangler fig, if you allow them to take root in your heart they'll eventually take over, so I'll be especially diligent to give this to God.

My mind belongs to God.

- I will give Him all my focus, I won't allow thoughts that distract me away from Him
- I aim for every thought in my mind to be honouring to Him, I won't allow any unclean thoughts to stay.

My heart belongs to God

- I give Him every part of my heart, totally undivided, complete devotion.

My strength belongs to God.

- I will give Him my best efforts, my strength, my abilities, I will serve the Lord with zeal

My past, present & future belongs to God

- My past He has forgiven & redeemed.
- My present I get to spend with Him & serve Him.
- All my plans & dreams for the future I surrender to Him.
- I will spend my eternity with Him.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mk12:30

Signed: _____ (your name)

Date: _____

Action to obey .. Are you willing to read through this contract & genuinely give every part of your life to God? When your heart is fully agreed, you can sign this contract & keep it as a record of your commitment.

Going deeper..Josh24:14-27..Deut6:1-7