



Rooted in Scripture - Pointing to Jesus

KNOWING JESUS

What It Means to Follow Jesus

A Beginner Guide to Discipleship, Trust, Obedience, and Everyday Life with Christ

The short answer

Following Jesus means trusting Him as Savior, submitting to Him as Lord, learning from His Word, and allowing the Holy Spirit to shape every part of your life. It begins with grace—not achievement.

“If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.”

Matthew 16:24 WEB

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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE

Jesus saves us—and teaches us to walk with Him

This Companion was not written to replace your Bible. It was written to help you fall in love with it. Every page is intended to send you back into God's Word with greater confidence, deeper understanding, and a clearer picture of Jesus Christ. If, after using this Companion, you spend more time reading your Bible than reading these pages—then it has accomplished its purpose.

Foundational truth

The Bible is not merely a book to be understood. It is God's self-revelation, given so that people may know Him through Jesus Christ.

What is a disciple?

A disciple is a learner, follower, and apprentice. Jesus' first disciples spent time with Him, watched how He lived, asked questions, received correction, obeyed His instructions, and gradually learned to become more like Him.

- A disciple believes in Jesus.
- A disciple learns from and trusts Jesus.
- A disciple obeys Jesus and becomes more like Him.
- A disciple helps others learn to follow Jesus.

Beginner memory anchor

Jesus saves us by grace and then teaches us to walk with Him.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE

What you will learn

01

Come to Jesus

Discipleship begins by receiving His invitation—not by making yourself worthy.

02

Trust Jesus

Rely on who Jesus is, what He has done, and what He has promised.

03

Learn from Jesus

Open Scripture and discover His character, teaching, priorities, and ways.

04

Obey Jesus

Respond to His Word with trust-filled action, not information alone.

05

Walk with the Holy Spirit

Depend on the Spirit to help you grow, resist sin, and bear witness.

06

Follow Jesus with others

Worship, learn, serve, and grow within God's spiritual family.

07

Keep following

Continue in a lifelong journey of grace, repentance, growth, and perseverance.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 1

Jesus calls us to come to Him

“Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls.”

Matthew 11:28–29 WEB

Following Jesus begins with an invitation. Jesus does not say, “Fix yourself, and then come.” He says, “Come to Me.”

We come with our sin, questions, fears, wounds, failures, and need. Jesus receives those who turn to Him in faith. Learning from Him is not meant to place another crushing burden on us. His leadership is good, His heart is gentle, and His grace meets us where we are.

Jesus does not leave us unchanged. He changes us through relationship with Him.

Beginner truth

You do not clean yourself up so Jesus will accept you. You come to Jesus because you need Him to save and transform you.

Begin with these passages

- Matthew 11:28–30
- John 6:35–40
- Romans 5:6–11
- Hebrews 4:14–16



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 2

Following Jesus begins with grace

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast.”

Ephesians 2:8–9 WEB

No one earns salvation by becoming a good disciple. We are saved because of what Jesus has done—not because of what we accomplish.

Jesus lived without sin, willingly died for our sins, and rose bodily from the dead. Everyone who repents and places faith in Him receives forgiveness, reconciliation with God, and eternal life.

Good works do not purchase salvation. Instead, a changed life grows from salvation. Ephesians 2:10 says believers are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.

The order matters

- Grace comes first.
- Salvation is received through faith.
- Obedience grows from a restored relationship with God.
- Good works become evidence of God’s transforming work.

Beginner memory anchor

We do not obey Jesus so that He will save us. We obey because He has saved us and we trust Him.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 3

Following Jesus means trusting who He is

Jesus asked His disciples, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:15–16).

Following Jesus rests on the truth of His identity. Jesus is not merely a helpful teacher, moral example, or inspiring religious leader. He is the promised Messiah, the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and the risen Lord.

We can trust Jesus because

- He speaks truth and reveals the Father.
- He lived without sin and gave His life for sinners.
- He rose from the dead and keeps His promises.
- He has authority over sin, death, and all creation.
- He will never abandon those who belong to Him.

Faith is more than knowing facts about Jesus. It is entrusting ourselves to Him. A person can know many things about a bridge without stepping onto it. Trust means placing our weight upon it.

Following Jesus means placing the full weight of our hope upon Him.

Beginner truth

Jesus is trustworthy because of who He is and what He has done.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 4

Following Jesus means learning from Him

“If you remain in my word, then you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

John 8:31–32 WEB

A disciple remains in Jesus' Word. We do not treat Scripture as something to visit only when we need an answer. We return to it because we want to know God, recognize His truth, and learn His ways.

We learn from Jesus by

- Reading Scripture and studying passages in context.
- Asking what the text reveals about God.
- Noticing what Jesus taught and demonstrated.
- Praying for understanding.
- Obeying what God makes clear.
- Learning alongside other believers.
- Returning to the Bible when our feelings or culture tell us something different.

The goal is not information without transformation. Jesus compares the person who hears and practices His words to a wise builder whose house rests upon rock (Matthew 7:24).

Beginner truth

A disciple asks both, “What does this passage mean?” and “How should this truth change the way I trust and obey God?”



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 5

Following Jesus means obeying Him

Jesus said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

Christian obedience is not cold rule-keeping meant to earn God’s approval. It is a response of love and trust. We obey because Jesus is Lord, His wisdom is greater than ours, His commands are good, and His ways lead toward life.

Obedience may involve

- Telling the truth when lying would be easier.
- Forgiving while still establishing wise boundaries.
- Turning away from sexual sin and refusing gossip.
- Loving someone who is difficult to love.
- Serving without demanding recognition.
- Giving generously and confessing sin.
- Seeking reconciliation when possible.
- Trusting God when we do not understand.

We will not obey perfectly. When we sin, we do not hide from Jesus. We confess, receive His forgiveness, and return to Him (1 John 1:9). Repentance means agreeing with God about sin, turning away from it, and returning to Him.

Beginner memory anchor

Obedience is not perfection. It is a growing willingness to trust Jesus, follow His Word, and return when we wander.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 6

Following Jesus requires surrender

"If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me."

Luke 9:23 WEB

To deny ourselves does not mean believing we have no value. Jesus demonstrated our value by giving His life to redeem us. Self-denial means we stop treating ourselves as the highest authority.

We bring our desires, plans, habits, relationships, possessions, and ambitions under Jesus' leadership.

Taking up our cross does not mean every inconvenience is "our cross." In Jesus' world, the cross represented death, shame, and costly surrender. Jesus prepared His followers to understand that allegiance to Him might require sacrifice, rejection, or suffering.

Following Jesus may cost us

- Approval or comfort.
- Sinful habits and personal control.
- Opportunities that require disobedience.
- Cultural acceptance or safety where Christians are persecuted.

A needed safeguard

Jesus' call to surrender must never be used to pressure someone to remain in abuse, conceal criminal behavior, or submit to spiritual manipulation. Following Jesus includes truth, wise help, protection of those in danger, and appropriate authorities when necessary.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 7

Following Jesus means abiding in Him

“Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can’t bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me.”

John 15:4 WEB

The Christian life is not sustained by willpower alone. A branch does not strain to manufacture life. It remains connected to the vine and receives what it needs.

To abide in Jesus means to continue, remain, and make our home in relationship with Him.

We abide through

- Trusting Him and remaining in His Word.
- Praying and obeying what He teaches.
- Receiving His love and depending on His strength.
- Confessing sin rather than hiding.
- Continuing with Him through hardship.
- Loving other believers.

Jesus produces fruit in those who remain in Him. That fruit includes Christlike character, obedience, love, service, perseverance, and faithful witness.

Beginner truth

Jesus does not merely give us instructions and send us away. He calls us to remain close because He is the source of the life He asks us to live.



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PART ONE • BEGINNER GUIDE • 8

Following Jesus requires the Holy Spirit

Before returning to the Father, Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with His followers. Following Jesus is not something we accomplish alone.

The Spirit

- Teaches and reminds believers of Jesus' words (John 14:26).
- Bears witness about Jesus and guides believers into truth (John 15:26; 16:13).
- Gives power to bear witness (Acts 1:8).
- Helps believers put sinful practices to death (Romans 8:13).
- Helps believers pray in weakness (Romans 8:26).
- Gives gifts for serving the church (1 Corinthians 12:4–7).

The fruit of the Spirit

- Love, joy, and peace.
- Patience, kindness, and goodness.
- Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22–23).

These qualities do not appear instantly in perfect form. They grow as we walk with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit never leads us away from Scripture or away from Jesus. He glorifies Christ and forms Christlike character within God's people.

Beginner memory anchor

The Holy Spirit lives within believers and helps them become more like Christ.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 9

Following Jesus changes how we love people

Jesus said love would identify His disciples (John 13:35). Biblical love seeks another person's true good in ways that agree with God's truth.

Jesus showed love by

- Welcoming people others overlooked.
- Showing compassion to those who suffered.
- Telling sinners the truth and calling people to repentance.
- Feeding the hungry and serving humbly.
- Defending the vulnerable.
- Forgiving His enemies and giving His life for sinners.

Following Jesus means learning to love with both grace and truth. Love does not celebrate what God calls sin. Truth does not give us permission to be harsh, proud, or cruel.

Questions for the heart

- Am I treating this person as someone made in God's image?
- Am I speaking truth with humility?
- Am I seeking restoration rather than revenge?
- Am I confusing love with approval of everything?
- Am I using truth as an excuse to be unkind?
- Do my boundaries protect what is good without disguising bitterness?



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PART ONE • BEGINNER GUIDE • 10

Following Jesus happens with other believers

Jesus calls individual people, but He does not intend for them to follow Him in isolation. Acts 2:42–47 shows believers learning the apostles' teaching, sharing fellowship, breaking bread, praying, worshiping, and caring for needs.

Christian community helps us

- Worship, learn, and receive encouragement.
- Ask questions and use our gifts.
- Carry one another's burdens.
- Receive correction and practice forgiveness.
- Serve, grow in love, and remember the gospel.

No church is perfect because every church is made of imperfect people. Seek a church that faithfully teaches Scripture, clearly proclaims the gospel, honors Jesus, practices accountable leadership, and takes holiness, grace, and care for people seriously.

A needed safeguard

Spiritual authority is never permission for manipulation, secrecy, coercion, exploitation, or abuse. Church leaders remain accountable to Scripture. Serious wrongdoing should not be hidden under the language of forgiveness, submission, or protecting a ministry's reputation.



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Following Jesus includes mission

Jesus sends His followers to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20). Every Christian participates in His mission, although believers have different personalities, roles, and gifts.

We bear witness by

- Explaining the gospel and sharing what Jesus has done.
- Living with integrity and loving people well.
- Serving those in need and praying for others.
- Supporting faithful ministry.
- Inviting people to read Scripture.
- Helping believers grow.
- Refusing to be ashamed of Jesus.

Jesus linked the Great Commission with the Spirit's power. Acts 1:8 says the Holy Spirit would empower His followers to be witnesses from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

Beginner truth

You do not need to know everything before you tell someone what Jesus has done. Speak honestly, stay grounded in Scripture, and continue learning.

Mission, power, and message

The mission comes from Jesus, the power comes from the Holy Spirit, and the message centers on the crucified and risen Lord.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 12

Following Jesus does not promise an easy life

Jesus said, “In the world you have oppression; but cheer up! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Following Jesus does not guarantee

- Wealth, perfect health, or freedom from grief.
- Easy relationships or immediate answers.
- Constant happiness or approval from others.
- Protection from every consequence.

Christians may suffer because they live in a fallen world, because of their own choices, the choices of others, illness, injustice, persecution, or circumstances they cannot explain.

Not every hardship is punishment from God. Not every delay means we lack faith. Not every illness will be healed in this life.

Jesus promises something better than a trouble-free life: His presence, grace, truth, sustaining strength, resurrection, and final victory. He walks with His people through suffering and will one day remove sin, death, grief, and pain forever.

Beginner memory anchor

Jesus does not promise an easy road. He promises to remain with His people.



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PART ONE · BEGINNER GUIDE · 13

Following Jesus is a lifelong journey

The first disciples misunderstood Jesus, acted impulsively, competed for importance, fell asleep when they should have prayed, and fled when Jesus was arrested. Peter even denied knowing Him.

After the resurrection, Jesus restored Peter and continued to use him (John 21:15–19). Failure does not have to be the final chapter for someone who returns to Jesus.

Growth may include

- Learning, stumbling, receiving correction, and confessing.
- Turning back and developing new habits.
- Healing from old wounds and learning to trust.
- Persevering through dry seasons.
- Becoming more dependent on grace.

Better questions

- Am I continuing with Jesus?
- Am I willing to be corrected by His Word?
- Am I turning back when I wander?
- Is the Holy Spirit gradually producing fruit?
- Am I learning to love God and people more faithfully?

A promise for the journey

“He who began a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.” — Philippians 1:6 WEB



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PART ONE · COMMON BEGINNER QUESTIONS

Questions about beginning and growing

Do I have to understand the whole Bible first?

No. The first disciples followed before they understood everything. Begin with what Scripture makes clear, continue learning, and bring your questions to God.

Does following Jesus mean I will never sin again?

No. Christians still struggle with sin, but they are no longer meant to make peace with it. Believers confess, receive forgiveness, turn back, and depend on the Spirit.

What if I do not feel close to God?

Feelings change. Continue returning to Scripture, prayer, worship, Christian community, and obedience. God's faithfulness is not measured by emotional intensity.

What if I have wandered far from Jesus?

Return to Him. Confess honestly, turn from sin, and take the next faithful step. Jesus' welcome does not make sin harmless; it shows that His grace is greater.

Remember

Questions do not disqualify you from learning. Bring them into the light and keep seeking Jesus in Scripture.



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PART ONE · COMMON BEGINNER QUESTIONS

Questions about cost, family, and doubt

Do I need to give away everything I own?

Jesus exposed one wealthy ruler's allegiance to possessions (Mark 10:17–27). Scripture calls every Christian to surrender ownership to God, reject greed, give generously, and refuse to make possessions an idol. It does not prescribe identical finances for every disciple.

Do I need to leave my family?

Jesus requires allegiance above every relationship, but Scripture also commands believers to honor parents, love spouses, care for children, and fulfill family responsibilities. Jesus does not authorize neglect or cruelty.

Do doubts mean I am not a real Christian?

Questions do not automatically mean a person has rejected Jesus. Examine Scripture, pray honestly, seek wise help, and continue pursuing truth. Faith is not pretending questions do not exist.

What if following Jesus feels costly?

Some losses are real and painful. Jesus told His followers to count the cost. Yet nothing surrendered for Him ultimately compares with knowing Him and receiving eternal life.



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PART ONE · A PRACTICAL TOOL

A simple daily rhythm

01	Listen Read a short portion of Scripture. Ask, “What does this reveal about Jesus?”
02	Pray Thank God, confess sin, ask for help, and pray for others.
03	Obey Identify one clear response to what you read.
04	Love Find one practical way to serve, encourage, forgive, or show compassion.
05	Remember Carry one truth from Scripture into the day.
06	Return If distracted, discouraged, or disobedient, turn back to Jesus rather than hiding.

Keep it simple

Consistency grows through small, faithful steps. The purpose is not to complete a perfect routine but to remain with Jesus and respond to His Word.



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PART ONE · PRACTICE PAGE

Read Luke 9:18–26

01

Consider

Who does Peter say Jesus is?

02

Consider

What does Jesus say will happen to Him?

03

Consider

What does Jesus tell His followers to do daily?

04

Consider

What might self-denial mean without believing you have no value?

05

Consider

What area of life is difficult to place under Jesus' authority?

06

Consider

What promise or warning in this passage stands out?

One possible faithful summary

Jesus is the promised Christ who would suffer, die, and rise again. Because He is Savior and Lord, His followers place their lives under His authority, accept the cost of allegiance to Him, and trust that true life is found in Christ rather than in protecting personal control.



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PART ONE · REVIEW AND REFLECTION

What have you learned?

- Who is Jesus, and what is a disciple?
- Why must grace come before obedience?
- What does it mean to deny yourself?
- How is taking up your cross different from an ordinary inconvenience?
- Why do believers need the Holy Spirit?
- How does Scripture help us follow Jesus?
- Why is Christian community important?
- What should a believer do after sinning?
- How does Jesus change the way we love people?
- What part does mission play in discipleship?
- What is one faithful next step Jesus may be asking you to take?

Beginner memory anchors

- Jesus calls us before we have everything figured out.
- Salvation is received by grace through faith.
- Obedience grows from love and trust.
- The Holy Spirit gives believers power to grow and bear witness.
- Failure does not have to be final when we return to Christ.
- Discipleship is a lifelong life of trust, repentance, obedience, and grace.



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PART TWO · WANT TO GO DEEPER?

An intermediate study of discipleship

Part One provides a complete beginner foundation. This section explores concepts that require more background: the kingdom of God, faith and works, counting the cost, spiritual formation, perseverance, and the relationship between suffering and discipleship.

How to use Part Two

Move slowly. Read every cited passage in context. Where faithful Christians explain a question differently, keep the shared biblical truths central and avoid making a debated framework the measure of another believer's faith.

Intermediate memory anchor

Discipleship is the lifelong work of God's grace through which believers learn Christ, walk by the Spirit, obey Scripture, love others, endure faithfully, and increasingly reflect Jesus.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 1

Discipleship and the kingdom of God

Jesus proclaimed, “The time is fulfilled, and God’s Kingdom is at hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News” (Mark 1:15). God’s kingdom is His saving rule breaking into history through Jesus.

To follow Jesus is to recognize Him as King and begin living under His authority. His followers become citizens of His kingdom while still living in a world that often resists His ways.

The kingdom is already present because

- The King has come and defeated sin and death.
- The Holy Spirit lives within believers.
- People are being rescued and transformed.
- The gospel is spreading among the nations.

The kingdom is not yet fully visible because

- Sin, death, injustice, and creation’s groaning remain.
- Jesus has not yet returned to judge evil and renew all things.

Already and not yet

Disciples live between Christ’s first and second coming. We follow the risen King now while waiting for His kingdom to be revealed in fullness.

See Matthew 12:28; Luke 17:20–21; Romans 8:18–25; Colossians 1:13–14; Revelation 11:15.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 2

Faith, works, and evidence of discipleship

The New Testament holds together two truths

- We are justified by grace through faith apart from works.
- Genuine faith produces a changed life.

Paul says a person is justified by faith apart from works of the Law (Romans 3:28). James says faith without works is dead (James 2:17). They address different errors.

Paul opposes earning right standing with God through achievement or works of the Law. James opposes a claim of faith that produces no obedience, mercy, or visible fruit.

Works are not the root of salvation. They are its expected fruit. Jesus likewise warns against empty profession disconnected from relationship, submission, and transformed life (Matthew 7:21–23).

A healthy order

- Christ accomplishes salvation.
- The sinner receives salvation through faith.
- The Holy Spirit gives new life.
- Obedience and good works grow as evidence.
- God receives the glory.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 3

What does “hate” your family mean?

Luke 14:26 records Jesus using the strong word “hate” when describing allegiance to Him. Jesus was not commanding hostility, neglect, or cruelty toward family.

Elsewhere He affirmed God’s command to honor parents and condemned people who used religious excuses to avoid caring for them (Mark 7:9–13).

In this strong comparison, Jesus teaches that allegiance to Him must be so great that every other loyalty is secondary.

“He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.”

Matthew 10:37 WEB

Jesus must not become one priority among many. He is Lord over every priority. If faithfulness to Jesus and approval from family come into conflict, the disciple’s final allegiance belongs to Christ.

Read with care

This teaching never excuses neglect, cruelty, or abandonment of legitimate family responsibilities. It establishes Jesus as the highest authority over every relationship.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 4

Counting the cost

In Luke 14:25–33, Jesus describes a person calculating the cost before building a tower and a king considering whether he can face an approaching army.

Jesus did not want people to follow because of temporary excitement without understanding His claim. Counting the cost means recognizing that Jesus asks for complete allegiance.

This does not mean a person understands every future sacrifice before becoming a Christian. The first disciples did not know every challenge ahead. It means coming honestly, acknowledging Jesus' right to lead every part of life.

A crucial distinction

The cost of discipleship does not pay for salvation. Jesus paid the price of redemption. The cost describes what may be surrendered when allegiance changes from self-rule to Christ's rule.

Questions to consider

- Do I want Jesus only if He leaves my priorities untouched?
- What am I unwilling to place under His authority?
- Am I following from settled trust or temporary excitement?



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 5

Jesus' cross and the disciple's cross

Jesus' cross was unique

- He bore sin as the spotless Savior.
- He gave His life as a ransom.
- He reconciled sinners to God.
- He satisfied the demands of divine justice.
- He defeated death through His resurrection.

See Isaiah 53:4–6; Mark 10:45; Romans 3:23–26; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24.

The disciple's cross

A disciple's cross does not add to Jesus' saving work. Taking up our cross means accepting the cost of faithful allegiance—dying to self-rule, refusing to deny Christ, and remaining faithful when obedience brings sacrifice or suffering.

We imitate Jesus' humility, love, courage, and obedience. We do not repeat or complete His atoning work.

Keep the distinction clear

Jesus alone saves. His followers respond by surrendering their lives and faithfully following the Savior who gave Himself for them.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 6

Discipleship, baptism, and public identification

Jesus included baptism in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19). In the New Testament, those who believed the gospel were baptized as a public identification with Jesus.

Baptism pictures union with Christ in His death and resurrection (Romans 6:3–4). It does not mean a believer has reached spiritual maturity. It marks the beginning of a life of discipleship.

Christian traditions differ about the appropriate candidates, timing, and mode of baptism. These differences deserve careful biblical study, but they should not obscure what Christians broadly affirm: Jesus commanded baptism, and baptism points to belonging to Him.

A faithful next step

- Read Matthew 28:18–20, Acts 2:37–41, Acts 8:26–40, and Romans 6:1–4.
- Speak with faithful church leaders.
- Study the relevant passages in context.
- Seek to obey Jesus with a clear conscience.

Remember

Baptism is not graduation from discipleship. It publicly marks belonging to Jesus and the beginning of a life of following Him.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 7

Discipleship and spiritual formation

Sanctification

God sets His people apart and progressively forms holiness within them (1 Thessalonians 4:3; Hebrews 10:10–14).

Renewal of the mind

Believers reject the world's patterns and learn to think according to God's truth (Romans 12:1–2).

Putting off and putting on

Christians put away patterns belonging to the old life and put on Christlike character (Ephesians 4:20–32; Colossians 3:1–17).

Walking by the Spirit

Believers depend on the Spirit rather than allowing sinful desires to rule them (Galatians 5:16–25).

Training in godliness

Growth includes intentional practice, perseverance, and disciplined habits (1 Timothy 4:7–8).

Grace trains us

Spiritual practices do not earn God's love. Grace trains believers to reject ungodliness and live faithfully (Titus 2:11–14). Prayer, Scripture, fasting, worship, generosity, fellowship, and service help us attend to God, respond to His truth, and practice obedience.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 8

Jesus and the rich ruler

Jesus told a wealthy ruler to sell what he owned, give to the poor, and follow Him (Mark 10:17–27). The man went away sorrowful because he had great wealth.

Jesus exposed the ruler's heart. He wanted eternal life, but his possessions had become a rival master.

The New Testament does not command every Christian to possess nothing. Some believers continued to own homes and resources used for ministry and hospitality. Yet Jesus' encounter confronts every disciple.

Questions that expose allegiance

- What do I believe belongs to me rather than to God?
- What would I refuse to surrender if Jesus required it?
- Does money provide the security I should seek in God?
- Am I generous?
- Am I willing to use my resources for God's purposes?
- Do I follow Jesus only when obedience leaves my comfort untouched?

The deeper issue

Jesus may address different idols in different lives, but His claim to lordship is the same.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 9

Perseverance and assurance

Jesus calls His disciples to continue with Him. Some passages warn against turning away. Others strongly assure believers that Christ keeps His people.

Jesus said His sheep hear His voice, follow Him, and receive eternal life; no one can snatch them from His hand (John 10:27–29). Paul expressed confidence that God would complete the work He began (Philippians 1:6).

The New Testament also calls Christians to endure, remain watchful, and hold firmly to Christ (Hebrews 3:12–14; Colossians 1:21–23). Christian traditions explain the relationship between divine preservation and human perseverance differently.

Healthy assurance

- Does not rely on pride or perfect performance.
- Does not treat a past statement of faith as permission to reject Christ's lordship.
- Does not interpret every failure as proof that Jesus has abandoned us.
- Looks to Christ, continues trusting Him, takes sin seriously, and recognizes the Spirit's growing fruit.

Keep Christ central

Scripture directs assurance away from human pride and toward the faithfulness and sufficiency of Jesus.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 10

Discipleship and suffering

Jesus calls believers to faithfulness in suffering, but Scripture never romanticizes pain or makes suffering spiritually valuable in itself.

Suffering can become a setting in which believers

- Depend more deeply on God.
- Experience His sustaining grace.
- Grow in endurance.
- Comfort others with the comfort they received.
- Bear witness to Christ.
- Learn to hope in the resurrection.

See Romans 5:3–5; 2 Corinthians 1:3–5; 12:7–10; 1 Peter 4:12–16.

We should not assume another person's suffering results from personal sin or insufficient faith. Job's friends erred when they forced simple explanations upon his pain.

Pastoral care matters

Christians mourn with those who mourn, carry burdens, protect the vulnerable, seek justice, and provide practical care. Medical, psychological, legal, or pastoral help may be part of God's provision. Seeking appropriate help is not a failure to trust Him.



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PART TWO · INTERMEDIATE · 11

The goal of discipleship

The goal is not merely

- Better behavior or more Bible facts.
- Religious activity or public influence.
- Personal success, winning arguments, or looking spiritually impressive.

The goal is to know Christ and become more like Him. Romans 8:29 describes God's purpose as conforming believers to the image of His Son.

Transformation affects

- What we love, how we think, and how we speak.
- How we treat people and respond to suffering.
- How we use money and handle power.
- How we work, confess sin, forgive, wait, and worship.
- How we understand our purpose.

People are not the destination

The people of the Bible are evidence of God's transforming work. The goal is not merely to admire faithful disciples. The goal is to know God more deeply and follow Jesus more faithfully.



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CONTINUE IN SCRIPTURE

Key passages for further study

Jesus' call

Matthew 4:18–22; 10:24–39; 11:28–30; 16:13–28; Mark 1:14–20; 8:27–38; Luke 9:18–26; 14:25–35

Jesus' teaching

Matthew 5–7; 28:16–20; John 8:31–36; 10:27–30; 13:1–17, 34–35; 14–16; 15:1–17

Life in Christ

Romans 6:1–14; 8:1–30; 12:1–21; Galatians 2:20; 5:13–26; Ephesians 2:1–10; 4:17–32

Life together

Acts 1:8; 2:37–47; 1 Corinthians 12:12–27; Hebrews 10:19–25; James 1:19–27

Growth and endurance

Philippians 2:1–16; Colossians 3:1–17; Titus 2:11–14; Hebrews 3:12–14; 12:1–3; 1 Peter 2:9–12; 1 John 1:5–2:6

Study reminder

Read each passage in its immediate context. Ask what it reveals about Jesus, what it teaches about grace, and how it calls His followers to respond.



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A CALL TO SALVATION

Would you like to begin following Jesus?

Following Jesus begins with the gospel. God created us to know Him, love Him, and live under His good authority. But every person has sinned and fallen short of His glory. We cannot repair that separation through good behavior, religion, or personal effort.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, lived the sinless life we could not live, died on the cross for our sins, and rose bodily from the dead. Salvation is God's gift. Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus receives forgiveness, reconciliation with God, new life, and eternal hope.

How do we respond?

01

Turn toward God

Repentance means turning from sin and self-rule toward God.

02

Believe in Jesus

Trust that Jesus is Lord and that His death and resurrection are sufficient to save.

03

Call on Him

Confess your need, receive His grace, and ask Him to forgive and lead you.

God's promise

"For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved." — Romans 10:13 WEB



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BEGIN WITH JESUS

A prayer can express your faith

A prayer of faith

Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and cannot save myself. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from self-rule and place my trust in You. Please forgive me, give me new life, and teach me to follow You. I receive You as my Savior and Lord. Amen.

A prayer is not a magic formula. Salvation rests in Jesus Christ, not in perfect wording. If you have trusted Him, begin reading His Word, pray honestly, seek fellowship with faithful Christians, and speak with a Bible-teaching church about baptism and your next steps.

Final memory anchor

Jesus does not only call us to believe facts about Him. He calls us to receive His grace, trust Him as Savior, follow Him as Lord, and walk with Him for the rest of our lives.

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Resource review note

These documents were created by a well-intentioned but imperfect follower of Jesus—not a theologian or pastor. Every effort has been made to remain faithful to Scripture, but errors or incomplete explanations are possible.

Please open the Bible and verify each passage in context. Possible errors, unclear wording, or information needing review may be reported to 3NailResources@gmail.com for careful review and correction.

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