



ELEMENTARY

Book 2 - Understanding Salvation

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*A discipleship resource prepared by
Mount Gambier Baptist Church*

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ABOUT THIS SERIES

“And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others”

Paul in a letter to a young pastor (2 Timothy 2:2)

We are shown in the gospels that Jesus calls us to a deliberate journey of spiritual formation once we have become aware of his reign and accepted his Lordship over our lives. It calls for a sense of active belief in him, and a lifetime of following him in an intentional arrangement called *discipleship*.

The *Elementary* series has been developed to assist those who are taking their first steps into this discipleship journey. It will help you to explore some key things that Christians need to know somewhat early in their discipleship journey. It's our prayer that these studies help you to really grow in your faith and understanding of what it takes to be a follower of Jesus.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Here's a few quick tips to help you get started:

1. You'll need a Bible - either in print or in an app.
2. You'll need a *disciple-maker!* You could do this study on your own, but we believe in the greater value in going through this material with other experienced Christians who have worked through these ideas themselves. (In keeping with the Bible verse quoted above).
3. You'll need some dedicated time. There will be parts of these studies that need to be thought through, processed and even revisited. Take all the time you need, and don't overwhelm yourself by going too fast through them.
4. It's highly likely that you'll end up telling somebody else about what you've learnt, so we invite you to use the spaces provided to help you articulate things in your own words.

1

How does the Bible describe a Christian

Now that we have looked at the Person and Work of Jesus Christ we will explore what it means to become believers in him. Not only will this allow us to examine our own salvation through Scripture and our experience, it will identify the main ways that Christians are distinctive and provide the central ideas we need to communicate to others who express interest in faith.

We have looked at Jesus and his ministry; now we focus on the ways in which God expects us to interact with Jesus our Saviour. We will look first at the truths central to belief in Jesus as our Saviour. God at no point forces us to believe him - he leaves that up to us; nor does he want us to be ignorant of his truths. The ideas in this study give a good basis for making an informed decision about whether or not we can trust ourselves to Jesus.

In these studies, we'll look at what our response to that needs to be.

Idea 1: Christians are Saved By Christ

A: We have received the Grace of God

Read: John 1:14-17; Romans 3:22-24; Ephesians 2:4-5

One dictionary definition of grace is “A favour rendered by one who need not do so” or “Undeserved favour.” What is God’s undeserved favour to us?

Each of the scriptures show a different aspect of God’s grace. What are they?

If our salvation is by grace, what do we have to do?

B: We have been Rescued from Sin and Death

Read: John 3:16; 5:24; Romans 8:1-2; Colossians 1:13-14

What do each of these verses say to you today?

What is it that bothers us about talk of sin and death ?

What do these verses say about that?

C: We are now Credited with Righteousness

**Read: Genesis 15:6; Romans 5:19; 2 Corinthians 5:21;
Philippians 3:8-9**

In what way do each of these Scriptures describe how we receive righteousness from God?

Romans 5:19 compares Adam with Jesus. How did Adam make us sinners and how did Jesus make us righteous?

Idea 2: Christians are Included in Christ

A: We Abide in Jesus

Read: John 15:1-8

How does Jesus describe the way we “abide” or “remain” in him? How do you think you would do this in practise?

How does Jesus describe the result for people who remain in him?

How does Jesus describe those who do not remain in him?

B: Christians are now “In Christ”

Read: Romans 8:1; 8:39; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 1:13; Hebrews 3:14

“In Christ” is a term used over 60 times in the Epistles. It seems to be a definition of Christians. How would you describe being “in Christ”?

What spiritual attributes are included “in Christ” in the verses given?

C: We are Reconciled to God

Read: Romans 5:8-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

The dictionary meaning of reconciliation is: “To forgive, accept, or make peace with someone.” Romans 5:10 describes us as “God’s enemies.” Why is that?

Jesus died to save us from God’s wrath in order to make reconciliation possible. Most Australians would argue they haven’t committed enough sin to make God angry. What do you think about this?

What are the benefits to us of reconciliation with God?

Idea 3: Christians are Disciples of Christ

A: We always on a learning journey

**Read: Matthew 10:24; 10:37-39; 28:18-20; John 14:26; Acts 2:42;
2 Timothy 3:16-17**

A disciple is: "a pupil or an adherent of another; a follower."
How do we follow Jesus?

Who do we learn from?

After we've been following and learning for a while, what changes should we see?

Read: Romans 8:29; 1 Corinthians 13:12; 1 John 3:2

What is the end result of following Jesus and learning from him?

Your own reflections:

You are now invited to summarise what you've learned in the space below, in particular considering how you might explain these things to another person if they asked you.

2

What does 'Becoming a Christian' look like?

In Study 1 "How does the Bible describe a Christian?" we looked at teachings that are important to be acquainted with if we are to have faith in Jesus as our Saviour. In this study we will look at "How We Become Christians" by investigating 6 important milestones that seekers usually encounter over time as they give their life to Jesus.

This study describes the various ways we become a Christian, and it will equip you with the basic foundations for faith in which seekers become new believers.

1. Believe

Read: John 3:14-18; 10:24-30; Acts 10:43; Romans 10:14

What does Jesus mean when he calls people to believe in him?

What must people know in order to have this kind of belief?

2. Repent

**Read: Ezekiel 18:30-32; Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Acts 3:19;
2 Corinthians 7:10**

Some dictionary definitions of 'repent' include 'to feel sorry for something you have done,' or to 'feel or express sincere regret or remorse about one's wrongdoing.' Taking these into account, how might you explain repentance in your own words?

The Jews were quite familiar with the idea of repentance from sin. What does Ezekiel show about how important this principle is to God?

Repentance was central to both John's preaching and Jesus' message. Why?

Why is repentance linked with forgiveness of sin?

3. Follow

**Read: Matthew 10:32-33; 37-39; 19:2; Mark 1:17;
John 8:12; 12:26**

Jesus makes it clear that he expects his disciples to *follow* him. What does that look like in practical terms?

What does Jesus say will happen to those who do not want to follow where he leads them? What is the cost of following Jesus?

Jesus is also clear that following him comes with blessings. What do those blessings look like?

4. Receive

**Read: John 1:12; 1 Corinthians 2:12; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 8:15
Ephesians 2:8-9; ; 1 Peter 2:10**

Everything about our faith hinges on the free gift of God. Identify the gift of God we receive in each of the Bible passages.

How do we receive each of the gifts? Does that change over time as a new believer becomes a mature believer?

5. Confess

**Read: Proverbs 28:13; Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 1:9;
2 Corinthians 9:13; Philippians 2:11; 2 Timothy 2:19**

To confess is to declare, speak out or agree with. The NIV translates each of these meanings as confess, but other translations use different words. What is the central idea in each passage?

What is the main purpose of confessing our sin?

What accompanies confessing or declaring your belief in Jesus?

6. Be Baptised

**Read: Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 1:9-11; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:1-6
Galatians 3:26-28; 1 Peter 3:21**

Baptism simply means “immersion” usually for the purpose of washing. Before Jesus, baptism was already used as a symbol of spiritual cleansing. Why did Jesus command his disciples to baptise new believers?

What blessings do you receive with baptism?

Baptism in the early church was sometimes public and sometimes private. Sometimes it was planned but often it was spontaneous. It was not the ritual that was important but the symbolism. What is the spiritual symbolism of baptism?

7. How important are these steps?

The 6 basic biblical ways of entering Christianity are:

| | | |
|---------|---------|--------------|
| Believe | Repent | Follow |
| Receive | Confess | Be Baptised. |

Are some of these steps more important than others?

Will we still be a Christian if we miss any of the steps? Why or why not?

How do these six steps compare with your journey to faith?

Are there steps in this list that you are currently being challenged about as you consider your own Christian journey?
Note: If this is the case, speak with your pastor or 'disciple-maker' if you are working through this study with them.

Your own reflections:

You are now invited to summarise what you've learned in the space below, in particular considering how you might explain these things to another person if they asked you.

3

What difference does being a Christian make Spiritually?

Now that we have looked at the steps typically taken to become a Christian, the next two studies look at the differences we start to see as we grow in Christ.

This study looks at the *spiritual* difference. These differences are sometimes called *positional*, meaning that since we are now 'in Christ' these spiritual attributes are given to us because we have been saved by God and become one with Jesus Christ.

To begin with, these spiritual differences come as a revelation of 'who we really are in Christ.' They are attributes given to us as part of entering the Kingdom of God (that word 'positional'). Over time however, these attributes become part of our conscious understanding and experience of our faith life.

1. Sons and Heirs of God

The first and biggest change is that we are no longer simply created beings, we have become born again by the Holy Spirit. This means that God is our Heavenly Father.

**Read: John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17; Galatians 4:4-7;
Ephesians 3:6**

Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life...to the Father” (John 14:6). Discuss our new relationship with God our Father with reference to John 1:12-13.

“Now if we are children, then we are heirs...” In what ways are we the heirs of God the Father?

2. Justified

Read: Romans 3:23-24; 5:1-2, 8-9; Titus 3:3-7

One dictionary meaning of justified is to demonstrate or prove to be just, right or valid. It also means we are put right with God. Explain ‘justified’ in your own words.

Justification is a gift of God that comes with our salvation. It is 'positional' - if we are saved we are justified. How does being justified affect the consequences of sin in this life? And, how does this affect us on the "Day of Judgement"?

3. Sanctified

**Read: John 17:15-9; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 7:14;
1 Thessalonians 4:3**

Sanctification is both positional and an ongoing work of the Holy Spirit to make us holy. It can be useful to understand the two meanings of the word:

1. To set apart for holy use; consecrate.
2. To make holy; purify.

How do these two meanings affect the consequences of sin?

How does being sanctified affect our ability to minister to others? (See 1 Cor 7:14)

Compare 1 Cor 6:9-11 with 1 Thess 4:3. One passage uses the past tense 'were sanctified' and the other uses the present text 'be sanctified.' Why is that?

4. Citizens of the Kingdom of God

Reading on Citizenship: Ephesians 2:19

Reading about Jesus as King: John 18:36-37; Philippians 3:20; Matthew 21:28-32

Becoming citizens of the kingdom of God is positional. Explain what that means.

A kingdom needs a king. Why do we describe Jesus as the king of the kingdom of God?

Matthew 21:28-32 describes two different sons. Do you see yourself in the story?

5. Royal Priesthood

**Read: Exodus 19:6; 1 Corinthians 6:19; 1 Peter 2:4-10;
Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6**

God has long wanted his people to act as a royal priesthood.
Why is that?

Why are we described as living stones and the temple of the
Holy Spirit?

6. Servants

Read: Mark 10:43-45; Luke 12:35-37; 17:7-10; Philippians 2:5-7

Jesus came to the earth as God's Son and though he was King
he received a crown of thorns. What attitude did Jesus
demonstrate?

In order to follow Jesus and be his servant what attitude do we need? What reward do we receive?

7. Friends

**Read: Matthew 11:19; 26:49-50; Luke 5:20; 12:4; John 15:13-15;
James 2:23**

This study has shown how seriously Jesus regards servanthood but now he says, "Instead I have called you friends." In light of this, how are we called to serve him?

Your own reflections:

You are now invited to summarise what you've learned in the space below, in particular considering how you might explain these things to another person if they asked you.

4

How does being a Christian change us outwardly?

We should at some point expect salvation and following Jesus to make tangible and outward differences in our lives, leading to noticeable changes in our character and behaviour. Following Jesus will by its very nature lead to this change, with the Holy Spirit working in us towards this outcome.

It is these changes in behaviour and attitude that help ourselves and others see us growing in maturity in our faith. Part of good discipleship is the way other believers encourage us as they see this growth, and it is always heartening to reflect with others on our faith journey and note some significant changes.

Of course, this study does not include an exhaustive list of the ways our lives change as we follow Jesus. There are many other instructions in Scripture but it is important to remember that Jesus guides us all personally on “paths of righteousness” (Psalm 23:3). However, in this study we will look at some major headings that describe what Christian lifestyles should look like.

Idea 1. We are Transformed by Righteousness

A. Personal Transformation

Read: Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:22-24

These passage teach us what we need to do to be transformed. What must we do to see transformation in our lives? Does this process ever stop?

These passage also teach some of the changes we will experience when we are transformed by the renewal of God. What do we experience through transformation?

B. Salt and Light

Read: Matthew 5:1-16

Jesus uses two different analogies to describe the difference between the saved and unsaved. In what ways should we act differently to those who don't know Jesus?

How is it possible for salt to lose its saltiness? Why would a light be hidden? What is Jesus referring to?

C. Fruit of the Spirit

Read: Galatians 5:19-26

Compare the fruit of the sinful nature (19-20) with the fruit of the Spirit (22-23). As we follow Jesus we will leave behind the former and grow in the latter. What examples of this can you give in your own life?

Since we received the Holy Spirit when we received Jesus, how do we 'grow' in the fruit of the Spirit ?

Idea 2. We are Called to do Good Works

A: Service and Ministry

Read: Romans 12:3-8; Matthew 20:25-27;

Ephesians 2:10; 4:11-13

It is clear from Ephesians 2:10 that good works are part of God's plan for our salvation. How would you define good works?

Some of the gifts listed in Romans 12 are commanded of every Christian in other passages, like 'serving,' 'encouraging,' and 'contributing to needs.' What do you think is the connection between gifts and good works that all should do?

Eph 4:12 has been translated 'works of service' and 'works of ministry' or simply 'work.' Who has responsibility for doing ministry in the church?

What good works or service or ministry do you feel called to do at the moment?

Idea 3. We are Part of the Body of Christ

A. Discipleship

Read: Matthew 28:18-20

Jesus commanded his first disciples to 'go and make disciples.' Every generation of believers has continued to do this. How have you been 'discipled?'

The word "disciple" could be translated "student". What do you feel you still need to learn about following Jesus? Who will teach you?

B. Fellowship

Read: Acts 2:42-47

The word translated "fellowship" means a variety of things including: community, intimacy and joint participation. How do we experience each of those elements of fellowship within the church?

This passage is a snapshot of the earliest beginnings of the church. In what ways was “fellowship” the same and in what ways different from our experience?

C. Leadership

Read: Ephesians 4:11-13; Hebrews 13:17

Jesus has given leadership to the church. What is the purpose of leadership?

One of the results of good leadership is that “all...become mature.” How does leadership development or ‘passing the baton’ relate to discipleship?

‘Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.’ What should that look like in the church?

Your own reflections:

You are now invited to summarise what you've learned in the space below, in particular considering how you might explain these things to another person if they asked you.

Now for some reflection on the whole topic of Salvation...

Take some time to look over all 6 summary notes pages in this study. When you are ready, take some time to write down a summary of the person, work and identity of Jesus that you might share with another person if you were given a few minutes to do so. While this is a massive topic, try to stay within the space provided here in this booklet, as a way of limiting your reflection to a few significant things.

Where to from here?

Once again, you have done really well to get this far! We pray that you have grown in your understanding of Jesus and what he has given to you through this gift of salvation.

There is great news from Jesus in the gospels that he is not going to leave us completely alone, and that a person called the Holy Spirit is on hand to help believers along in many powerful ways. We're really keen for you to get to know Him also, so we recommend that you move on to *Book 3: Understanding the Holy Spirit* at this time.

The Elementary Series

*Book 1:
Understanding Jesus*

Book 2:
Understanding Salvation

*Book 3:
Understanding the Holy Spirit*

*Book 4:
Understanding the Father*

*Book 5:
Understanding Christian Life & Community*

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