

CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP FOUNDATIONS STUDIES

Session #1

This series is for those who have recently heard of the sacrifice which Jesus made for them. The sacrifice that Jesus died for their sins and in hearing this, they have decided to surrender their lives and hearts to Father God, and to love and follow His Son Jesus Christ.

If this is you, then Congratulations !!!, you are a Christian, a disciple of Jesus.

A disciple is simply someone who believes in Jesus, is committed to Him and who seeks to follow Him in their daily life. A disciple also means to be a student.

This series can also be helpful for any Christians who have never done any foundational studies and want to learn more about the basics of their Christian faith.

Most start their new life in Christ not really knowing much at all about what Christianity is all about, aside from experiencing a conviction of their sins and a sincere thankfulness of what Christ did for them on the cross. This is the first and most important response of all, however, this is only the beginning of your new and exciting life. And a new life it is ... because the moment you gave your life to Christ, the Bible tells us what happened. We can read this in 2 Corinthians 5:17 it says ***This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!***

So, let's begin these sessions with an introduction as to why it's so very important to study the Bible thereby learning what it means to be a Christian.

Jesus Himself taught about 4 different types of soil where some seed fell. As we read these verses, think about the seed being the Word of God, which is the truth. Luke 8:4-15 is about a farmer Scattering Seed

Let's read... *One day Jesus told a story in the form of a parable to a large crowd that had gathered from many towns to hear him: He says "A farmer went out to plant his seed. As he scattered it across his field, some seed fell on a footpath, where it was stepped on, & birds ate it.*

Other seed fell among rocks. It began to grow, but the plant soon wilted and died for lack of moisture.

*Other seed fell among **thorns** that grew up with it and **choked** out the tender plants.*

*Still other seed fell on **fertile** soil. This seed grew and produced a crop that was a hundred times as much as had been planted!"*

When Jesus had said this, he called out, "Anyone with ears to hear should listen & understand."

In verse 11, Jesus explains the meaning of the parable:

He says, The seed is God's word.

*The seeds that fell on the **footpath** represent those who hear the message, only to have the **devil come and take it away** from their hearts and prevent them from believing and being saved.*

*The seeds on the **rocky** soil represent those who hear the message and receive it with joy. But since they **don't have deep roots**, they believe for a while, then they fall away when they face times of doubt.*

*The seeds that fell among the **thorns** represent those who hear the message, but all too quickly the message is **crowded out by the cares and riches and pleasures of this life**. And so they **never grow into maturity**.*

*The seed that fell on **good** soil represents those who **truly hear and understand** God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted!"*

So, I'm very happy to say that there's a pretty good chance that you are the good soil which Jesus talked about. Why do I say this ? well, because here you are listening to this video. You have heard God's word and heard about the gift of salvation He has offered you. You've accepted this free gift and now you are desiring to truly understand God's word and grow in maturity and in your knowledge and love of Jesus, your Saviour. That's so wonderful !

What we've just read together in the Gospel of Luke is called a parable. Jesus often told parables to help people better understand the Heavenly Kingdom of God.

A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. Parables tell a story using something familiar in our every day lives to help us understand a spiritual truth that we just can't see with our eyes.

So, now let's look at how a seed grows into a plant. All seeds contain nutrients and energy inside of a hard, protective coating. Firstly, the seed is buried in the ground. When the seed is in good, soft, warm soil, it sends out a little root that goes down into the soil. The root starts to drink up the nutrients that are in the soil. This gives the tiny plant more energy. It gets enough energy to start growing, and then a tiny stalk starts to reach up out of the ground. With the sun shining on the stalk, and nutrients going into the root from the rain and the soil, more roots grow, and the plant begins to thrive.

In the parable, we read about 4 different types of environments that the seed was planted in. However, unfortunately none of the seeds thrived in 3 of those 4 environments. The first of those 3 being the **footpath** with the seed being trodden on, without any regard to its true value.

Next, the **rocky** soil with hinderances stopping the roots from going down deep, so there could be no firm foundation to grow and thrive, with no real understanding of God's promises. God's word never promises that life will be easy, without any trials. He does promise though that He will be **with us** helping us through our problems. What a wonderful promise. No longer do we have to walk through life alone.

Then there's the seed trying really hard to grow amongst the **thorns** but once again without any real understanding of God's word, subsequently gets choked out by the worries and the influence of the world, ultimately withering and never reaching its full potential.

So, we see it wasn't the seed that was the problem, it was the soil. The seed could not take hold and thrive in any of these 3 environments. Understanding that the seed is the Word of God, the seed will thrive where the soil is good, fertilized and healthy.

That's why these studies are so important. They are like fertilizer, encouraging healthy life-giving soil where the understanding of the Word of God can abundantly flourish and you can grow in maturity. Isn't that exciting. I'm so glad you've decided to join us in these studies !

OK, I think a good place to start is at '**The Beginning**'!

We have started this wonderful journey of faith in God, through Jesus His Son. When we ask Jesus to be Lord of our lives, we receive salvation, body, soul and spirit. Romans 10:9-10 tells us that ...

If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

This topic 'The Beginning' aims to help you begin to understand this free and wonderful gift of salvation, and to get you off to a good start on the path of following Jesus for the rest of your life and receiving the abundant and everlasting life that He promised us. In John 10:10 we read the very words of Jesus Himself ...

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Making that decision to surrender your life to Jesus and to follow Him is a great decision! It is the most important and most life-changing decision that anyone will ever make.

So, now let's take a look at the very beginning of creation (which is also the very first verses in the Bible). It will show us a picture that will help us understand what takes place in our lives when we receive salvation in Christ.

We read in Genesis 1:1-3 -

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Before the light of God came into the newly created world, it was dark and empty. However, after the Holy Spirit moved over the earth and God spoke, commanding the light, there was a transformation from darkness to light, from chaos to peace, from barrenness to fruitfulness!

This is just what happens in our lives when, in response to the Spirit of God moving over our lives, revealing our sin and our need of forgiveness, we receive the light of Christ into our lives.

John 8:12 tells us ... ***Again, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."***

The Bible teaches us that until the light of Christ's good news comes into our world, we are living in spiritual darkness. Without Jesus, the light that is meant to shine in our innermost being grows dim, smoulders and then is extinguished, leaving us with darkness, uncertainty and fears.

However, the good news is that when we accept Jesus Christ into our lives, God's Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our spirit and "turns on our light" within. Our spirit becomes wonderfully alive. Our spirit is the place from where we commune with God.

Ephesians 5:8 says ... ***for once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So, live as people of light!***

We can begin to live as people of light by firstly understanding that men and women are created with 3 parts, Body, Soul and Spirit.

The Body being the flesh

The Soul being the mind, will and emotions

Spirit being the place meant from the beginning for us to commune with God

1 Thessalonians 5:23 says ***Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again.***

Our innermost spiritual being longs for love, acceptance, assurance, significance, security and peace and this can only be truly met by God. Without Him in our lives, we try and meet these needs in other ways that cause us damage & hurt in our souls & sometimes in our bodies too.

As a result, our soul, made up of our mind, will and emotions can be cluttered up with things from the past.

This is why it is so important to renew our minds daily, so our thoughts come into alignment with God's Word & with what he says, thinks and feels about us. We do this by meditating deeply on God's Word, by studying the Bible, and by getting to know Him.

Romans 12:2 says ... ***Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.***

By studying the Bible, you will further discover the reality that He loves us so much and we will uncover that wonderful love of our Heavenly Father in the next session as we talk more about The Way of Salvation in Jesus.

I recommend that between these sessions, you read the Gospel of John, which is one of the 4 Gospels about the life of Jesus.

If you don't yet have a Bible, I'll leave a link in the description box to a Bible App. The Bible version we will mainly be reading from in these studies is the New Living Translation. We will also be covering Bible translations in the next series which will help you choose your very own Bible, as technology cannot compare with actually turning the paper pages of God's word.

Romans 5:8 tells us ... ***But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***

We are the object of His love, created by Him and for Him.

I'm looking forward to our next session together. Please subscribe to this You Tube Channel for notifications of new videos as soon as they become available.

Until next time, bye for now and enjoy walking in the light of Jesus Christ.