

ACTS 242

Foundation Guide

A discipleship guide for learning, growing,
and following Jesus Christ

By Acts 242 Church of Christ
Edition 1 (2026)

ACTS
2:42
CHURCH OF CHRIST

WELCOME TO ACTS 242

Acts 242 Church of Christ, is a church community committed to living out the pattern found in Scripture.

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

- Acts 2:42 (NIV)

This verse expresses the heart of who we are and what we desire to become. We want to be a church grounded in the Word of God, shaped by prayer, united in fellowship, and centered on Jesus Christ.

This guide was created to help people know God, understand His truth, and respond in faithful obedience. It is designed for those who are seeking God, learning the foundations of the Christian life, or growing deeper as disciples of Jesus.

Our prayer is that every lesson in this guide will lead people not only to knowledge, but to real transformation. May this book help each reader grow in faith, walk in truth, and live as part of God's people with purpose, conviction, and love.

Church Use Notice

This guide was prepared for the ministry, discipleship, and teaching work of **Acts 242 Church of Christ Corporation**, operating under the name **Acts 242**.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible.

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All lesson content remains subject to review and future revision for teaching clarity, doctrinal consistency, and ministry use.

Acts 242 Church of Christ Corporation

4707 Dr Arcadio Santos Ave, Parañaque, 1700 Metro Manila
2026

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed for personal study, one on one discipleship, and small group teaching.

Each lesson begins with the original study material used in our church. The original Scriptures and core teaching points are kept intact. To help readers understand and apply the lessons more clearly, added sections may include notes, explanations, Bible stories, examples, reflection questions, and practical challenges.

As you go through each lesson, read the verses carefully, answer the questions honestly, and take time to pray. Do not rush through the material. The goal is not simply to finish a lesson, but to let God's Word shape your heart, mind, and life.

For the best use of this guide, keep a Bible, a notebook, and a willing heart with you. Some lessons may challenge your beliefs, priorities, or habits. Receive those moments with humility and faith, and let Scripture remain your standard.

This guide is best used with a mentor, disciple maker, or church group, but it may also be used for personal study. Our prayer is that through every page, you will know Jesus more clearly, follow Him more faithfully, and grow in His church.

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SEEKING GOD

**Pursuing a Relationship with
God with All Your Heart**

PURPOSE

To determine what it means to pursue a relationship with God with all our hearts.

MAIN QUESTION

1. What are you looking for in life?
2. What are you pursuing with all your heart?

INTRO

Every person is searching for something.

1. Some pursue success.
2. Some pursue happiness.
3. Some pursue relationships.
4. Some pursue purpose.

But the most important question is this:

Are you seeking God?

This lesson will help you understand what it truly means to seek God, and how that decision can change your life.

PSALM 119:1-2

Aleph א

- ¹ Blessed are those whose ways are blameless,
 who walk according to the law of the Lord.
² Blessed are those who keep his statutes
 and seek him with all their heart—

“Blessed” = joyful, highly favored

“Blameless” = living what is right

On a scale of 1-10, how much effort do you give to seeking God?

To **seek God**, you must **seek His Word with all your heart**.

We seek God by knowing and obeying His Word.

When you seek God fully, the result is not just temporary happiness, but a deeper and lasting joy.

MATTHEW 6:25-34

Many people do not seek God because they don't believe He has the power to change their lives.

What are some areas in your life that you are tempted to worry about? (*Summary Version*)

What does it mean to "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness"?

What does God promise if you do?

UNDERSTAND

Worry often reveals what we value most.

We worry about:

- finances
- career
- relationships

Jesus teaches that instead of being consumed by these things, we should seek God first.

To "seek first His kingdom" means:

- putting God above your plans
- trusting God with your future
- obeying God even when it is difficult

KEY TRUTH

When God is first, everything else finds its proper place.

ACTS 17:24-28

What is God doing to develop a relationship with people?
Why does God go through all this trouble?

So that people may seek Him and have a genuine relationship with Him even though there is no guarantee that they will.

UNDERSTAND

God is not distant or uninterested.

He created you, sustains you, and places you in situations where you can find Him.

Even:

- life struggles
- confusion
- questions
- difficult seasons

can be used by God to draw you closer to Him.

TRUTH

God is near.

The question is not whether God is present.

The question is whether you are seeking Him.

JOHN 4:23-24

23 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. 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

What does a true worshiper of God do?

God is seeking those who will worship Him in spirit and truth.

UNDERSTAND

Worship is not just:

- singing
- attending church
- emotional experience

True worship is:

- sincere (from the heart)
- grounded in truth (based on God's Word)
- consistent in life, not just in moments

God is not looking for perfect people.

He is looking for people who are real and willing to seek Him honestly.

JEREMIAH 29:11-13

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

In the same way, we can be held captive by sin, and God wants to set us free.

God wants to give us hope and a future, but to discover these plans, we must first draw near to Him. The only way to do that is to seek Him with all our hearts.

UNDERSTAND

Many people want:

- direction
- purpose
- a better future

God's promise is clear:

"You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

This is not casual interest.

This is full pursuit.

ACTS 8:26–39 (BIBLE EXAMPLE)

A case study of someone seeking God.

The Ethiopian eunuch shows us how a person truly seeks God:

Sacrifice

He traveled a long distance to seek God.

Humility

Although he was important, he was willing to learn from others.

Obedience

When he understood the truth, he responded immediately. He rejoiced after his baptism because he now had a real relationship with God.

REFLECT

Are you seeking God like this?

MATTHEW 7:7-8

Ask, Seek, Knock

⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

Take a moment and answer honestly:

What am I truly seeking in life?

What takes most of my time, attention, and energy?

Do I only seek God when I have problems?

Am I willing to seek God with all my heart?

CHALLENGE

- Pray and talk to God daily
- Read the Bible every day (start with the Gospel of John)
- Make time for God, not just when convenient
- Continue this study and take the next step

PRAYER

God,

I want to seek You with all my heart.

Help me to desire You more than anything else.

Teach me to trust You, follow You, and live according to Your Word.

Guide me as I begin this journey to know You more.

Amen.

WORD OF GOD

Making the Bible Your Standard for Life

PURPOSE

To help you decide to make the Bible your standard for life and to build conviction about what the Bible says about itself.

MAIN QUESTION

1. What is your standard in life?
2. Do you believe the Bible is the Word of God?
3. Do you trust it enough to follow it?

INTRO

Every person lives by a standard.

Some follow:

1. personal opinion
2. culture
3. emotions
4. traditions

But the question is:

What determines what is right and wrong in your life?

If the Bible is truly the Word of God,
then it must become our final authority.

FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

- Written by around 40 authors
- Written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek
- Written across three continents: Asia, Africa, and Europe
- Written over a period of about 1,500 years
- Contains hundreds of prophecies fulfilled in Jesus
- No proven contradiction despite its complexity
- More ancient copies than any other historical document

ILLUSTRATION

If you wanted to measure something accurately, you would need a standard like a ruler. Without a standard, everything becomes a guess.

QUESTION

What is the standard of measurement in your life?

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17

¹⁶ All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God^[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Do you believe that all Scripture is from God?

The Bible is useful to:

- teach
- correct
- rebuke
- train

So that a person may be fully equipped.

UNDERSTAND

The Bible is not just for information.

It is meant to transform your life.

To accept the Bible as God's Word means:

- allowing it to correct you
- allowing it to change your thinking
- allowing it to guide your decisions

HEBREWS 4:12-13

¹² For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. The Word of God is living and active. It exposes the human heart.

UNDERSTAND

The Bible is like a mirror.

It reveals:

- motives
- intentions
- hidden attitudes

Sometimes it is uncomfortable,
but it is necessary for growth.

TRUTH

The goal is not just to read the Bible,
but to let the Bible change you.

THREE THINGS THAT TAKE AWAY FROM GOD'S WORD

1. INTERPRETATION — 2 PETER 1:19-21

The Bible is meant to be understood as God intended,
not adjusted to fit our opinions.

2. EMOTIONS — JOHN 8:31-32

Feelings do not determine truth.
You can feel right and still be wrong.
Truth comes from God's Word.

3. TRADITIONS — MARK 7:1-13

Religious or cultural traditions can override God's Word.
Example:

Following tradition instead of obeying Scripture.

WARNING

If we are not careful,
we may follow what is familiar instead of what is true.

1 TIMOTHY 4:16

16 Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

What is more important: life or doctrine?
Both are equally important.

UNDERSTAND

You must guard:

- what you believe (doctrine)
- how you live (life)

Wrong beliefs lead to wrong actions.

ACTS 17:10-11

The Bereans examined the Scriptures daily.

APPLICATION

Do not rely only on what others say.
Study the Bible for yourself.

JAMES 1:22-25

22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. **23** Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror **24** and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. **25** But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

Listening without applying leads to self-deception.
The Word of God reveals our character.

UNDERSTAND

It is not enough to:

- hear
- read
- agree

You must obey.

QUESTION

Are you willing to apply what the Bible teaches in your life?

JOHN 12:48

48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.

Jesus says His Word will judge us.
The Bible is God's standard.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

What has been my standard in life?

Do I follow God's Word or my own opinions?

Am I willing to let the Bible correct me?

CHALLENGE

- Read the Bible daily
- Begin with the Gospel of John
- Apply what you learn
- Make God's Word your standard

PRAYER

God,

Help me to trust Your Word completely.

Teach me to follow Your truth, not my own understanding.

Give me a heart that is willing to obey and be changed.

Amen.

DISCIPLESHIP

**Following Jesus with
Commitment and Obedience**

PURPOSE

To understand what it means to be a disciple of Jesus and how that applies to your life.

MAIN QUESTION

1. What is a disciple?
2. Why does Jesus call people to follow Him?
3. What does it cost to follow Him?
4. How should a disciple live?

INTRO

Jesus did not only call people to believe in Him.

He called them to follow Him.

Discipleship is not just learning information about Jesus.

It is a life of surrender, obedience, love, and growth.

But the question is:

Are you only listening to Jesus, or are you truly following Him?

MATTHEW 28:18-20 & ACTS 11:25-26

MATTHEW 28:18-20

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

ACTS 11:25-26

²⁵ Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶ and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

What did Jesus command His followers to do?

UNDERSTAND

A disciple is a follower of Jesus who learns from Him, obeys Him, and helps others follow Him too.

Discipleship is not optional.

It is the mission Jesus gave to His people.

A disciple does not only receive truth.

A disciple also grows, obeys, and helps others grow.

MARK 1:16-18

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

¹⁶ As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁷ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ¹⁸ At once they left their nets and followed him.

How did the first disciples respond to Jesus?

UNDERSTAND

Jesus called ordinary people to follow Him.

Their response was immediate.

They left what defined their old life and followed Him.

To follow Jesus means:

- responding to His call
- trusting His direction
- allowing Him to change your purpose

A disciple is not self-made.

Jesus says, “I will make you.”

LUKE 9:23-26

²³ Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? ²⁶ Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

What does Jesus say is required to follow Him?

UNDERSTAND

Discipleship requires surrender.

To deny yourself means:

- not putting yourself first
- not living by your own will
- not making life all about you

To take up your cross daily means:

- dying to sin
- choosing obedience
- following Jesus even when it is costly

A disciple does not follow Jesus only when convenient.

A disciple follows Him daily.

LUKE 14:25–33

25–27 Jesus said anyone who does not put Him first and carry their cross cannot be His disciple. 28–30 He spoke of counting the cost like a builder planning a tower. 31–32 He compared it to a king preparing for battle. 33 He said anyone who does not give up everything cannot be His disciple. (*Summary Version*)

Why is it important to count the cost of discipleship?

UNDERSTAND

Jesus never hid the cost of following Him.

Discipleship is not casual interest.

It is full commitment.

To count the cost means:

- understanding that Jesus must come first
- accepting that following Him will require sacrifice
- choosing Him above comfort, pride, and control

A disciple does not add Jesus to life.

A disciple gives life to Jesus.

LUKE 11:1-4

1 The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. 2-4 Jesus taught them to pray with reverence, dependence on God, forgiveness, and surrender to His will. (*Summary Version*)

MATTHEW 22:34-40

34-36 Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment. 37 He said to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 The second is to love your neighbor as yourself. 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (*Summary Version*)

How should a disciple live?

UNDERSTAND

A disciple grows in relationship with God.

A disciple learns to:

- pray
- love God fully
- love others sincerely
- live under God's will

Discipleship is not only about activity.

It is about a life centered on God and shaped by love.

JOHN 13:34–35

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

What identifies a true disciple of Jesus?

UNDERSTAND

The true mark of a disciple is love.

Not just knowledge.

Not just words.

Not just church activity.

A disciple reflects the love of Christ in how they treat others.

Love shows:

- humility
- forgiveness
- patience
- service
- commitment to others

People should be able to see Jesus in the way His disciples love.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

Take time to answer honestly:

Am I truly following Jesus, or only agreeing with Him?

What am I still unwilling to surrender?

Have I counted the cost of discipleship?

Am I growing in prayer, obedience, and love?

Do others see the love of Christ in my life?

CHALLENGE

- Read these passages again slowly.
- Ask God what needs to change in your life.
- Choose one area where you need to obey Jesus more fully.
- Follow Him daily, not only when it is easy.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for calling me to follow You.

Teach me to deny myself, obey You daily, and love others the way You love.

Shape my life so that I may truly live as Your disciple.

Amen.

KINGDOM OF GOD

**Knowing God's Rule, God's
People, and God's Purpose**

PURPOSE

To discover what the Kingdom of God is and what it means to enter and live in it.

MAIN QUESTION

1. What is the Kingdom of God?
2. Who is the King?
3. Who belongs to His Kingdom?
4. How does a person enter it?
5. What kind of life is found in it?

INTRO

Many people think of a kingdom as a place, a territory, or a government. But when the Bible speaks about the Kingdom of God, it points us to something greater. It is about God's rule, God's reign, and God's authority over every life that submits to Him.

This lesson will help you understand that the Kingdom of God is not just a future hope. It is also a present reality for those who believe in Jesus, are born again, and live under His rule.

But the question is:

Who is ruling your life right now?

If the Kingdom of God is real,
then His rule must shape how you live.

MATTHEW 3:1-2 & MATTHEW 4:17

MATTHEW 3:1-2

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea 2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

MATTHEW 4:17

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

UNDERSTAND

The message of both John and Jesus began with the same call: *repent*.

To repent means:

- turn away from sin
- change your mind and direction
- return to God

The Kingdom is not something we enter casually.
When God’s rule comes near, we are called to respond.

MATTHEW 3:1-2 & MATTHEW 4:17

MARK 9:1

Jesus said that some standing there would not taste death before they saw the kingdom of God come with power.

LUKE 17:20-21

Jesus said the kingdom of God is not something observed outwardly, because the kingdom of God is in your midst.

Is the Kingdom of God only something future?

UNDERSTAND

The Kingdom of God is not only a future hope.
It is also a present reality.

Where Jesus is received as King,
where His truth is believed,
and where His will is obeyed,
His Kingdom is present.

The Kingdom is not mainly about location.
It is about God's rule.

JOHN 3:1-7

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus (*Shortened Version*)

¹ Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a Jewish ruler. ² He came to Jesus at night and said Jesus came from God because of His signs. ³ Jesus said no one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again. ⁴ Nicodemus asked how a person can be born again when already old. ⁵ Jesus said no one can enter God's kingdom unless born of water and the Spirit. ⁶ Physical birth gives physical life, but the Spirit gives spiritual life. ⁷ Jesus said Nicodemus should not be surprised that everyone must be born again.

How does a person enter the Kingdom of God?

UNDERSTAND

A person does not enter God's Kingdom by:

- religion
- good works
- human effort

Jesus said a person must be born again.

To be born again means:

- receiving new life from God
- being changed from within
- beginning a new life through the Spirit

You cannot enter God's Kingdom without a changed heart.

MATTHEW 16:13-19

¹³ Jesus asked His disciples who people said He was. ¹⁴ They gave different answers. ¹⁵ Jesus asked them, "Who do you say I am?" ¹⁶ Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ Jesus said this was revealed by the Father. ¹⁸ He said He would build His church. ¹⁹ He spoke of the keys of the kingdom of heaven and His authority.

Who is the King of the Kingdom of God?

UNDERSTAND

The Kingdom of God is centered on Jesus.

He is not only:

- a teacher
- a prophet
- a good example

He is the Messiah,
the Son of the living God,
the rightful King.

The Kingdom cannot be understood apart from Jesus.
To belong to the Kingdom is to submit to Him.

ROMANS 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in^[a] Christ Jesus our Lord.

ACTS 2:1-4

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, the believers were together. ² A sound like a violent wind came from heaven. ³ Tongues like fire rested on them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. (*Shorten Version*)

ACTS 2:36-41

Peter declared that Jesus is Lord and Christ. The people responded with conviction, repentance, baptism, and were added to the believers. (*Summary Version*)

How do people respond when Jesus is preached as Lord and Christ?

UNDERSTAND

Sin brings death,
but God offers life through Jesus Christ.

When the people understood who Jesus was, they responded with:

- conviction
- repentance
- baptism
- obedience

The Kingdom of God is entered through faith in Christ, not through self-effort.

LUKE 23:50-52

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁰ Now there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, a good and upright man, ⁵¹ who had not consented to their decision and action. He came from the Judean town of Arimathea, and he himself was waiting for the kingdom of God. ⁵² Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body.

1 JOHN 1:3-4 (*Shortened Version*)

³ What the apostles had seen and heard, they proclaimed so others may have fellowship with them. Their fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ They wrote these things so that their joy may be complete. What kind of life is found in the Kingdom of God?

UNDERSTAND

The Kingdom of God is not only personal.

It is shared with God's people.

Those in the Kingdom live with:

- hope
- fellowship
- joy
- faithfulness

Joseph waited for the Kingdom.

The believers lived in fellowship with God and with one another.

To belong to the Kingdom means living under God's rule with God's people.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

Take time to answer honestly:

Who is ruling my life right now?

Have I truly repented and submitted to Jesus as King?

Am I trying to enter God's Kingdom by my own effort, or by faith in Christ?

Am I living under God's rule in my daily life?

Am I growing in fellowship with God and His people?

CHALLENGE

- Read these passages again slowly.
- Ask God to show you where you still resist His rule.
- Submit every area of your life to Jesus.
- Live as someone who belongs to His Kingdom.

PRAYER

God,

Thank You for calling people into Your Kingdom.

Teach me to repent, believe, and live under the rule of Jesus.

Change my heart and help me walk as part of Your people.

Amen.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

**Understanding Salvation and
Responding to God**

PURPOSE

To understand God's plan of salvation and what it means to move from darkness into light.

MAIN QUESTION

1. What separates people from God?
2. How can a person truly be saved?

INTRO

Every person lives in one of two conditions:
light or darkness.

The Bible teaches that without Christ, people remain in darkness because of sin. But God, in His mercy, calls people out of darkness and into His marvelous light.

This lesson explains:

1. humanity's problem
2. God's solution
3. our response
4. the meaning of baptism

But the question is:

What determines what is right and wrong in your life?

If the Bible is truly the Word of God,
then it must become our final authority.

1 PETER 2:9-10

9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

What does it mean to be called out of darkness?

What does it mean to belong to God?

UNDERSTAND

Darkness represents separation from God, sin, and spiritual blindness.

Light represents truth, salvation, forgiveness, and new life in Christ.

God does not merely improve our old life.

He brings us into a new life.

ROMANS 3:23 & ROMANS 6:23

ROMANS 3:23

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

ROMANS 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

What is sin?

What is the consequence of sin?

UNDERSTAND

The problem is universal:
all have sinned.

Sin is not only wrongdoing in action.

It is also rebellion against God, rejecting His rule, and falling short of His standard.

The result of sin is death:

- spiritual separation from God
- judgment
- loss of true life apart from Christ

But Romans 6:23 also gives hope:
eternal life is a gift through Jesus Christ.

JOHN 3:1-7

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus (*Shortened Version*)

1 Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a Jewish ruler. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said Jesus came from God because of His signs. 3 Jesus said no one can see God's kingdom unless they are born again. 4 Nicodemus asked how a person can be born again when already old. 5 Jesus said no one can enter God's kingdom unless born of water and the Spirit. 6 Physical birth gives physical life, but the Spirit gives spiritual life. 7 Jesus said Nicodemus should not be surprised that everyone must be born again.

Why is being "born again" necessary?

UNDERSTAND

Religion is not enough.

Good morals are not enough.

Being sincere is not enough.

Jesus teaches that people need spiritual rebirth.

To be born again means:

- receiving new life from God
- being changed from within
- beginning a new relationship with Him

Not a self-improvement rather transformation through God.

ACTS 2:22-24

22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,^[a] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

He was crucified, but God raised Him from the dead.
Why is the death and resurrection of Jesus central to salvation?

UNDERSTAND

The gospel is centered on Jesus:

- who He is
- what He did
- what God accomplished through Him

Jesus died for sin.

Jesus rose again in victory.

Without the resurrection, there is no complete gospel.

Without Jesus, there is no salvation.

ACTS 2:37

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart...”
What does it mean to be cut to the heart?

UNDERSTAND

A true response to the gospel is not merely intellectual.
It reaches the heart.

To be cut to the heart means:

- conviction of sin
- awareness of guilt
- realization of the need for God
- readiness to respond

Many hear the truth.

Not everyone responds to it.

ACTS 2:38–42

38 Peter told them to repent and be baptized in Jesus' name for forgiveness and receive the Holy Spirit. 39 He said the promise was for them, their children, and all whom God calls. 40 Peter urged them to turn away from that corrupt generation. 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added. 42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. (*Shortened Version*)

What is repentance?

Why were they baptized?

UNDERSTAND

Repentance means a change of mind and direction: turning away from sin and turning toward God.

Baptism is the outward response of faith and obedience.

After responding to the gospel, they devoted themselves to:

- the apostles' teaching
- fellowship
- breaking of bread
- prayer

Salvation is not only a decision.

It begins a new life with God and His people.

ROMANS 6:3-8

3 All who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death. 4 Through baptism, we were buried with Him so that just as Christ was raised, we too may live a new life. 5 If we are united with Him in death, we will also be united with Him in resurrection. 6 Our old self was crucified with Him so we would no longer be slaves to sin. 7 Whoever has died has been set free from sin. 8 If we died with Christ, we believe we will also live with Him. (*Shortened Version*)

Baptism is connected to Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

UNDERSTAND

Baptism does not save a person by itself.

But it is a powerful picture of what has happened through faith in Christ.

It represents:

- dying to the old life
- burial of the old self
- rising to walk in newness of life

Baptism is a public declaration:

I now belong to Jesus.

COLOSSIANS 2:11-12

11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh[a] was put off when you were circumcised by[b] Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

In Christ, there is a spiritual work of transformation. Baptism points to this new identity.

UNDERSTAND

What outward rituals could never accomplish, Christ accomplishes inwardly.

In Him, believers receive:

- forgiveness
- cleansing
- new identity
- spiritual life

Baptism points to this inner reality.

MATTHEW 15:6-9

6 they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

- 8 "These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
9 They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.' [a]"

UNDERSTAND

One of the dangers in spiritual matters is replacing God's truth with tradition.

People may trust:

- religious background
- family practice
- church culture
- outward actions

instead of trusting God's Word.

The question is not:

"What have I always done?"

but:

"What does God say?"

1 PETER 3:18-22

18 Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. 19 He then made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits. 20 These were those who disobeyed in Noah's time, when only eight people were saved through water. 21 This water points to baptism, not as outer cleansing, but as a pledge of a clear conscience toward God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 22 Jesus is now in heaven at God's right hand, with all powers under Him. (*Shortened Version*)

Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

Baptism is connected to this salvation message.

UNDERSTAND

Jesus is the one who brings us to God.

Our hope is not in ourselves, but in Him.

This passage points beyond outward form to a sincere response toward God.

Salvation is grounded in Christ's finished work and received through faith that responds in obedience.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

Take time to answer honestly:

Have I truly understood the seriousness of sin?

Do I see my need for Jesus?

Have I responded to the gospel with faith and repentance?

Am I walking in the light, or still holding on to darkness?

Have I obeyed God in baptism?

CHALLENGE

- Read these passages again slowly
- Thank Jesus for His death and resurrection
- Respond in faith and repentance
- Obey Him fully
- Continue in His Word and in fellowship with His people

PRAYER

God,

Thank You for calling people out of darkness into Your light.

Thank You for sending Jesus to die for sin and rise again.

Help me respond with faith, repentance, and obedience.

Lead me into the new life You have given.

Amen.

CHURCH

Understanding God's Heart for His Church

PURPOSE

To gain a deeper understanding of how God values His Church and His wonderful plans for her, and to know how we must function as part of God's household.

MAIN QUESTION

1. When you hear the word Church, what comes into your mind?

INTRO

Many people think of church as a building, a service, or a religious gathering. But in Scripture, the Church is far more than that. The Church is God's people, Christ's body, God's family, and the bride of Christ. To understand the Church rightly is to understand how God wants us to live, love, serve, and remain faithful to Him. This lesson will help us see the beauty, value, and calling of the Church.

But the question is:

How do you truly view the Church?

If the Church is Christ's body,
God's family,
and the Bride of Christ,
then it must be loved, valued, and honored in our lives.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-18

COLOSSIANS 1:15-18

Jesus is the exact representation of God the Father. All things were created through Him and for Him. He has authority over all creation and is supreme over all powers, rulers, and authorities. Jesus is also the Head of the Body, the Church. (*Summary Version*)

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-14

The Church is the Body of Christ. (*Summary Version*)

What does it mean that Jesus is the Head and the Church is His Body?

UNDERSTAND

The Church belongs to Jesus. He leads it, sustains it, and gives it purpose.

If Jesus is the Head, then the Church must submit to Him. We do not define the Church by personal preference, culture, or convenience. We understand the Church through Christ.

To be part of the Church means:

- belonging to Christ
- being connected to His people
- living under His authority

1 CORINTHIANS 12:15–22

Paul explains that the body has many different parts, and each one belongs and has a purpose. God placed every part as He wanted, so no one should feel unimportant or unnecessary. At the same time, no part can say it does not need the others, because even the parts that seem weaker are still indispensable. (*Summary Version*)

What does this teach us about our place in the Church?

UNDERSTAND

God did not design the Church so that one person does everything and everyone else watches.

Each believer has a place.

Each believer has value.

Each believer has a function.

Some may be more visible, while others serve quietly. But every part matters.

The Church becomes unhealthy when people compare, compete, or withdraw. The Church becomes strong when each member accepts their role and serves faithfully.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:23–28 & JOHN 13:34–35

1 CORINTHIANS 12:23–28

God gave special honor even to the parts that seem less important so there would be no division in the body. Instead, every part should care for one another, suffer together, and rejoice together. Paul says believers are the body of Christ, and each person has a place and function in the church according to how God has arranged it. (*Summary Version*)

JOHN 13:34–35

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”
How should believers treat one another in the Church?

UNDERSTAND

The Church is not held together merely by attendance, activity, or structure. It is held together by love, unity, and service.

Where there is pride, division grows.

Where there is love, the body is strengthened.

To function as the Church means:

- serving one another
- caring for one another
- honoring one another
- loving one another as Christ loved us

EPHESIANS 2:19-22

¹⁹ Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

What does it mean to belong to God's household?

UNDERSTAND

The Church is not only an organization. It is a family.

When we come to Christ, we are no longer outsiders. We become part of God's household. This means we are not meant to live the Christian life alone.

In God's family, there should be:

- belonging
- support
- growth
- accountability
- shared life in Christ

To belong to the Church is to belong to God's people.

EPHESIANS 5:25-27 / REVELATIONS 19:6-7

EPHESIANS 5:25-27 / REVELATIONS 19:6-7

As a church, we are the Bride of Christ. *(Summary Version)*

1 CORINTHIANS 11:2-4

Christ over man, man over woman, and God over Christ. He also says that a man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. *(Summary Version)*

Why does Scripture describe the Church as the Bride of Christ?

UNDERSTAND

This shows how precious the Church is to Jesus.

The Church is not ordinary to Him.
He loves her, cares for her, and is preparing her.

If the Church is the Bride of Christ, then faithfulness matters. The Church must remain loyal to Jesus in truth, worship, and life.

This means:

- keeping Christ first
- rejecting compromise
- pursuing holiness
- remaining faithful to Him

JOHN 14:1-3 / 1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18

JOHN 14:1-3

Jesus tells His disciples to trust Him, for He is preparing a place for them and will return to bring them to be with Him. *(Summary Version)*

1 THESSALONIANS 4:16-18

The Lord will return, the dead in Christ will rise, and believers will be gathered to be with Him forever. This is meant to encourage us. *(Summary Version)*

What hope does the Church have?

UNDERSTAND

The Church does not live only for the present. We live with hope.

Jesus has not forgotten His people. He is preparing a place, and He will return for His Church.

This gives believers:

- comfort in suffering
- faithfulness in waiting
- confidence in God's promises
- hope beyond this world

The Church is not abandoned. The Church is awaited.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

Take time to answer honestly:

How do I truly view the Church?

Do I see the Church as Christ's body, God's family, and the Bride of Christ?

Am I functioning faithfully as part of the body?

Do I serve, love, and protect the unity of the Church?

Am I remaining faithful to Christ?

CHALLENGE

- Value the Church the way God values the Church.
- Refuse division.
- Love other believers.
- Use your gifts to serve.
- Stay faithful to Christ.
- Live with the hope of His return.

PRAYER

Lord,

Thank You for Your Church. Teach me to value what You value. Help me to love Your people, serve faithfully, protect unity, and remain true to Christ. Let my life strengthen Your body and honor You.

Amen.

CROSS

**Learning to Hate Sin and
Love God Through Jesus'
Sacrifice**

PURPOSE

To hate sin and love God because we appreciate Jesus' sacrifice.

MAIN QUESTION

1. How would you define sacrifice?
2. Who would you die for?

INTRO

The Cross is the foundation of Christianity. Sin hurts both God and us. Jesus was fully God and fully human, and He experienced real sorrow, struggle, pain, rejection, and suffering. This lesson will help us see what Jesus endured, how people responded to Him, and what our response to the Cross should be.

But the question is:

How do you truly view the Cross?

If the Cross reveals
the seriousness of sin
and the greatness of God's love,
then it must lead us to hate sin, love God, and live in
grateful obedience.

MATTHEW 26:31-35

Jesus told His disciples they would all fall away that night, and He told Peter he would deny Him three times. In Gethsemane, Jesus was deeply troubled and prayed three times, submitting to the Father's will. Meanwhile, the disciples kept falling asleep instead of watching and praying. Finally, Jesus said the time had come for Him to be betrayed. (*Summary Version*)

What would make you stop following Jesus?

How would you feel if your closest friends failed you in your hardest moment?

UNDERSTAND

Jesus did not go to the Cross lightly. He felt the weight of what was coming.

This shows us:

- the Cross was a real sacrifice
- obedience can involve deep struggle
- prayer gave Jesus strength to endure

Jesus did not simply die.

He chose to surrender Himself to the will of the Father.

MATTHEW 26:47-68

Judas came with an armed crowd and betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and Jesus was arrested. When one disciple tried to defend Him with a sword, Jesus stopped him and said this had to happen to fulfill Scripture. All the disciples then deserted Him and fled. Jesus was taken before the high priest and the Sanhedrin, where false witnesses accused Him. When asked if He was the Messiah, Jesus answered boldly, and they condemned Him to death, mocked Him, spat on Him, and struck Him. (*Summary Version*)

How does Peter following at a distance relate to you?

UNDERSTAND

Jesus had the power to escape, but He chose the Cross.

This means:

- His suffering was voluntary
- His arrest was not weakness
- His love was intentional

Peter followed, but from a distance. Many people still do the same today. They stay near enough to be associated with Jesus, but far enough to avoid the cost of full surrender.

THREE RESPONSES TO THE CROSS

MATTHEW 26:69-75 – PETER

Peter denied Jesus. Out of fear, he disowned Him, but afterward he was deeply broken and wept bitterly.

MATTHEW 27:1-10 – JUDAS

Judas betrayed Jesus, realized his sin, but gave in to worldly sorrow and took his own life.

MATTHEW 27:11-26 – PILATE

Pilate failed to stand for what was right. His indecision was still a decision, and he cared more about people's opinions than God's truth.

Which response are you most like: Peter, Judas, or Pilate?

UNDERSTAND

People do not all respond to Jesus the same way.

Peter shows cowardice, but also godly sorrow.

Judas shows betrayal and worldly sorrow.

Pilate shows indecision and fear of people.

The Cross forces every person to respond.

No response is also a response.

MATTHEW 27:27-56

The soldiers mocked Jesus, put a robe and crown of thorns on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. At Golgotha, Jesus was crucified, mocked by the crowd, religious leaders, and even the rebels beside Him. Darkness covered the land, and Jesus cried out before giving up His spirit. At His death, the temple curtain was torn, the earth shook, and many were terrified. Seeing all this, the centurion declared that Jesus truly was the Son of God. *(Summary Version)*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

Jesus became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. *(Summary Version)*

How do you personally respond to hurt, pain, or suffering?

UNDERSTAND

The Cross shows both the seriousness of sin and the greatness of God's love.

Jesus suffered:

- publicly
- painfully
- willingly
- in our place

He took what we deserved so that we could receive what only He could give.

MATTHEW 27:57-66

Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, asked for His body, wrapped it, and placed it in his own new tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed near the tomb. The chief priests and Pharisees then secured the tomb with a seal and posted guards to prevent anyone from stealing Jesus' body. *(Summary Version)*

MATTHEW 28:1-10

Jesus rose from the dead and appeared to His disciples. *(Summary Version)*

UNDERSTAND

The Cross is not the end of the story.

Jesus was truly buried.

Jesus truly rose again.

The resurrection confirms:

- His victory over sin
- His victory over death
- His identity as Lord

Without the resurrection, the Cross would only be a tragedy. Because of the resurrection, it is our hope.

ISAIAH 53:4-6 & 1 PETER 2:21-24

ISAIAH 53:4-6

Our sins made us responsible for Jesus' suffering. We should take sin seriously because of what it cost Him. (*Summary Version*)

1 PETER 2:21-24

Jesus suffered for each of us personally. We are called to die to sin and live for righteousness. (*Summary Version*)

What is the hardest sin you need to surrender?

UNDERSTAND

The Cross is not only something to admire.
It is something that should change us.

If Jesus suffered for sin, then we must not treat sin lightly.
The right response to the Cross is:

- gratitude
- confession
- repentance
- a desire to live differently

To appreciate the Cross truly is to hate the sin that nailed Jesus there and to love the God who gave Himself for us.

REFLECTION AND CHALLENGE

Take time to answer honestly:

What does the Cross reveal about my sin?

Do I truly hate my sin because of how it hurt Jesus?

Am I following Jesus closely, or only at a distance?

Am I more like Peter, Judas, or Pilate?

What is one sin I need to confess and surrender?

CHALLENGE

- Die to sin and live for righteousness.
- Respond to the Cross with gratitude.
- Take time for honest confession.
- Develop a clear plan for repentance.
- Choose a faithful response to Jesus.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus,

Thank You for Your sacrifice on the Cross. Help me never to treat sin lightly. Teach me to hate what separates me from You and to love You more because of what You have done for me. Give me a broken heart, true repentance, and a life that honors Your sacrifice.

Amen.

CLOSING REFLECTION

As you finish this guide, take time to reflect honestly before God.

What have you learned about Him?

What truth has challenged you the most?

What area of your life needs surrender or change?

What step of obedience is God asking from you now?

Following Jesus is not only about gaining knowledge.

It is about responding to His truth with faith, repentance, obedience, and love.

Do not rush past what God may be doing in your heart.

Pause. Pray. Reflect. Respond.

Other Reflection Questions:

What is God teaching me?

What must I change?

What is my next step?

NEXT STEPS

⁴¹ Those who accepted his message were **baptized**, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Fellowship of the Believers

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.

Acts 2:41-42

If you have gone through this guide and are ready to follow Jesus more fully, do not stop here.

If you believe you are ready to take this step, we encourage you to speak with a pastor or church leader. Share what God has been teaching you, ask your questions, and express your readiness to be **baptized**.

You may also take these next steps:

- Continue reading the Bible daily.
- Pray and seek God consistently.
- Join the church in worship and fellowship.
- Stay connected with other believers.
- Speak with a pastor or leader about your spiritual journey.
- Show your readiness to obey Christ in water baptism.

This guide is only the beginning. Keep growing in faith, truth, obedience, and love.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

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