

A LIFE of  
VICTORY  
SERIES

# How to Experience New Life

SIX BIBLE STUDY LESSONS  
FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



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FOR GROUP DISCIPLESHIP



**EVERY NATION**  
P R O D U C T I O N S

## **HOW TO EXPERIENCE NEW LIFE**

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# How to Use this Material

In Victory, the primary venue for discipleship happens in a small group. It is called a Victory group. We strongly encourage everyone to be involved since these groups are specifically designed to help disciples grow spiritually.

A Victory group meeting has three sections: **Connect**, **Word**, and **Prayer**, and ideally lasts from forty to sixty minutes.

## **CONNECT** (5-10 minutes)

Victory group meetings begin with a time to relate with one another. Depending on the people who comprise the group, this can be done through a variety of ways:

- Fun—such as an icebreaker activity
- Answered prayers—sharing of testimonies and updates
- Questions—such as those provided in the material, learning each other's personal stories, and sharing feedback from the weekly message

### *Effective Questions During the Connect Portion:*

- Are deliberately friendly to first-timers
- Ask for opinion or experiences
- Require no Bible knowledge
- Have no right or wrong answer
- Are not controversial
- Are preferably connected to the meeting's topic

## **WORD** (20-30 minutes)

Teach the truth and relevance of God's Word for life application. The Victory group meeting is not primarily a Bible study. Although teaching and explanation of Scripture is involved, the goal is to minister, not finish a material.

There is no need teach all the points in a material.

Within this section, we look at what the Bible says, its relevance to us today, and its application in our lives.

### **What:** *What does the Bible say?*

Communicate and impart biblical truth clearly and concisely

*<sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16,17*

### *Tips for Sharing the Word Effectively*

- Let the Bible speak for itself.
- Use illustrations and tell stories to explain Bible verses.
- When entertaining clarifications, be watchful not to allow the discussion to go off-tangent.
- The primary goal is to minister to the needs of the people, not to finish a Bible lesson.
- Be led by the Spirit when using the material.

### **So What:** *What is the relevance of the Word to my life?*

Give participants the opportunity to discuss how the Word impacts the way they live.

*Do not conform any longer 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.*

ROMANS 12:2

**Now What:** *How do I apply the Word to my life?*

Our primary reason for sharing the Bible is so that people will know who God is and what He has done. In doing so, the participants will begin to discover who they are and what they should do.

If it is a promise, teach them to claim it. If it is a command or a principle, encourage them to put it to action by God's grace. If it is a truth, let them embrace it willingly and not under compulsion. Allow God's grace and love to win them by the way you teach God's Word.

Encourage specific, measurable action steps that are consistent with the life change that the Scripture is bringing about. We do not command people, but we spur them on toward love and good deeds.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves.*

*Do what it says.* JAMES 1:22

*Tips for Life-Changing Application*

- You may choose one of the "So What" and "Now What" questions or you may add your own.
- An effective standby application question is: "What one action step are you going to take as a result of what you heard today?"
- Designate who will be the first to answer the question asked.
- Do not allow someone to argue or be critical of others.
- Remind everyone to apply the lesson to their own lives, not to someone else's.
- Ask God for wisdom to know when to balance or correct strange or unbiblical applications. Insensitive correction or criticism can kill the group, as can unchecked heresy.
- Remind everyone that transformation is God's work, not ours, and our obedience is a response to who He is and His love for us. It is God's grace that enables us to apply and obey His Word.

## **PRAY** (15-20 minutes)

Prayer is the most important part of the Victory group meeting. Make sure you have plenty of time left so your prayer time is not rushed. This is not a "closing prayer," but a time for everyone in the group to take specific requests to God. This is where the action is. The goal is to create a venue where people will see God move on their behalf.

*"Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven."* MATTHEW 18:19

### *Tips for Powerful Prayer*

- Listen to the Holy Spirit carefully during the Connect and Word sections for things that may need prayer.
- Spend your time praying for one another, not sharing and discussing prayer requests.
- Keep your prayers simple, sincere, and short. Most non-believers have never heard an ordinary Christian just talk to God and will be touched by the sincerity and simplicity of the prayer.
- Pray, don't preach. Pray in simple and short sentences, not long "sermon prayers."
- Use conversational prayer, not complicated or profound, intercessory prayer.
- Expect God to answer your prayers.

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# The New Life

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- Tell us about one of your earliest childhood memories.
- What event or time period in your life would you like to live over again? Why? What would you do different the second time around?
- Where is the farthest you have been from home? What was it like?

*<sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!*

*<sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-21*

## WHAT

The moment we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, a supernatural transformation takes place. We become a new creation. We get a new life, a fresh start, a new destiny, a new set of priorities. We have a new purpose in life. In this lesson, we will look at what it means to be in Christ.

1

### **Since I am in Christ, I am a new creation.**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

What has changed in your life since you received new life in Christ?

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*What are some of the old things that are now gone?*

**2**

**Since I am in Christ, I am reconciled to God and He does not count my sins against me.**

*... that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

What is "reconciliation"?  
Why do we need to be reconciled to God?

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**3**

**Since I am in Christ, I have a ministry of reconciliation and I am His ambassador.**

<sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: <sup>19</sup>that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:18-20

What is a minister? Who should be a minister of reconciliation?

What is an ambassador?  
Who does an ambassador represent and speak for? What is our message?

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4

**Since I am in Christ, I have become the righteousness of God.**

*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

Before we were in Christ, we were in sin. Now we are new creations. Because Jesus died for our sins, we are now the righteousness of God. In other words, we are in right relation with God. We are accepted by God, not because of our own works of righteousness, but because of the righteousness of God.

What is "righteousness"?

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**SO WHAT**

- Why do we need to become a new creation? What was wrong with the old one?
- Do you believe that God does not hold your sins against you now that you are in Christ? What does the Bible say about this?
- How can we be Christ's ambassadors? How do you feel about being His ambassador?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are you a new creation in Christ? If not, would you like to follow Christ and receive the new life He is offering you today?
- In two or three minutes, briefly share how God has changed your life—before you received new life in Christ, how and when you surrendered your life to Him, changes in your life since you have been following Christ.
- Are you properly representing Christ as His ambassador? Are there areas, habits, priorities, relationships, or attitudes that need to change? What can you do to better represent Christ?
- Are you fulfilling your calling as a minister of reconciliation? What can you do this week to share the message of reconciliation to your family and friends, and those you encounter?

- 
- Thank God for the new life He has given you.
  - Ask God to continue to transform you and make you into the person He has called you to be.
  - Pray that you would be an effective ambassador of Christ. Pray for specific people you know who are not following Christ yet. Ask God for boldness and opportunities to share the gospel with them.



## 2

# Experiencing God's Forgiveness

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- What's one of the best gifts you have ever received? Tell us who gave it and what you felt.
- How do you respond when things don't go as planned? Recall a specific instance explaining this.
- Do you have a hard time admitting your mistakes? Why or why not?



*“Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”* LUKE 7:47

## WHAT

Here, Jesus explains why some people seem to have more love for the Lord than others. Whoever has been forgiven much loves much. And whoever has been forgiven little loves little. The fact is: Anyone who has been forgiven at all has been forgiven much. Too many Christians do not realize how much they have been forgiven. When we wrongly suppose that we had little to be forgiven, we end up loving little. In this lesson, we will look at what the Bible says about God’s forgiveness for us.

1

### **The basis of our forgiveness is the blood of Jesus.**

*“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”* MATTHEW 26:28

(SEE ALSO HEBREWS 9:22.)

God forgives our sin because of what Jesus did for us on the cross, not because of what we do for Him. Prayer, generosity, penance, and other religious activities have no power to forgive even the smallest of sins.

*Share about how you came to understand this truth and how Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross changed your life.*

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2

**The way we experience forgiveness is to confess our sins to God.**

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 JOHN 1:9

Confession is an honest admission of our guilt before God. No excuses. No rationalizing. No blaming others.

*Why is confession essential for forgiveness?*

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**The result of being forgiven is repentance.**

*God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel. ACTS 5:31 (SEE ALSO LUKE 24:47.)*

Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of direction. Repentance is like a U-turn when you realize you're on the wrong side of a one-way street, a 180-degree turn around.

*Why is repentance a natural result of understanding God's forgiveness?*

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**4**

**Only those who have faith in Christ can be forgiven.**

*"All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."* ACTS 10:43

Believing in Christ is more than mentally accepting the fact that He lived and died 2,000 years ago. Real faith is a complete transfer of trust from self to God.

*Does God limit or put a condition on who can believe in Him and be forgiven?*

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**SO WHAT**

- Why can we be forgiven by God? Are there sins in your life, past or present, that you are not sure God will forgive? How does your understanding of forgiveness differ from what the Bible says about it?
- Why is it hard for someone to confess their sins to God?
- What is the difference between repentance and penance? What does the Bible say about these?

**NOW WHAT**

- Have you put your trust in Christ and have received forgiveness for all your sins? If not, would you like to do that today?
- Are there sins that you have confessed and turned away from, yet you are still strongly tempted to participate in? What are some practical ways you can walk out your repentance this week?
- Do some of your sins still “haunt” you? What can you do to hold on to the truth of God’s forgiveness in your life every day?

- 
- Thank God for His forgiveness for all your sins.
  - Ask God to renew your mind that you may grow in your understanding of Him and His love.
  - Pray for those you know who have not yet experienced God’s forgiveness. Ask God to reveal Himself to them and to use you to minister His love to them.



# Real Forgiveness

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- How do you express your love and appreciation for a person? Give examples.
- When people don't treat you well, how do you respond? Recall a specific instance explaining this.
- Do you have a hard time asking for forgiveness? Why or why not?

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Jesus and asked,  
 “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother  
 when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”  
<sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times,  
 but seventy-seven times.” MATTHEW 18:21,22

## WHAT

In the New Testament days, it was customary to forgive an offender up to three times. A fourth offense was unforgivable. Peter thought he was being a spiritual giant by offering to forgive not only the fourth offense, but up to seven offenses. Jesus quickly deflated his self-righteousness by saying that seven was not enough. In other words, we should not put a limit on our willingness to forgive. God didn’t limit our forgiveness to the first seven, or even the first seventy-seven. In this lesson, we will learn about sharing with others the forgiveness we have experienced from God.

### 1

## Real forgiveness must come from the heart.

*“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”*

MATTHEW 18:35

Since offense pierces the heart, not the head, our forgiveness must come from the heart. Insincere forgiveness is not forgiveness at all. If we can’t forget, there is a good chance we haven’t really forgiven. If we continually bring it up, we have not forgiven it.

*Tell about a situation in your life that required heart-forgiveness.*

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## 2

### Real forgiveness precedes powerful faith-filled prayer.

*<sup>24</sup>Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.*

*<sup>25</sup>And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”* MARK 11:24,25

Jesus said that we should forgive others before we approach God with our prayers of faith. Unforgiveness is when we “hold anything against anyone.” Forgiveness is when we let it go.

*Why is it sometimes difficult to forgive or let go of an offense?*

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## 3

### Unforgiveness causes bitterness, and bitterness defiles relationships.

*<sup>14</sup>Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. <sup>15</sup>See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.*

HEBREWS 12:14,15

The writer of Hebrews exhorts the believers to live in peace with all men. The opposite of living in peace is living in bitterness. Unforgiveness causes bitterness; bitterness causes defilement. The only way to live in peace is to walk in forgiveness.

*Which is easier—to forgive or harbor bitterness? Why?*

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**SO WHAT**

- Why can forgiveness be so difficult? Why must real forgiveness come from the heart?
- Why should we forgive others before we approach God with our prayers of faith? How does this differ from how we normally approach God and deal with our unforgiveness?
- How do you value the relationships God has given you? How do you feel about unforgiveness and bitterness defiling these?

**NOW WHAT**

- Is there anyone you need to forgive? Are you willing to forgive them from the heart? What can you do to walk out this forgiveness?
- How should you deal with future offenses so that they do not turn into bitterness? Share some practical things you can do.
- Is there anyone from whom you need to ask forgiveness? When and how will you do this?

- 
- Forgive those who have offended you. Ask God for His love to fill you so you can share this with others.
  - Thank God for the relationships He has given you. Pray for wisdom, love, and joy to overflow in your relationships.
  - Ask God to help you forgive easily and to not let any bitter root grow in your heart.

# 4

# The Blood of Jesus (PART 1)

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CONNECT

- If you could buy one thing today without any consideration for the budget, what would you get? Why?
- What do you do to rest and relax?
- How do you react when you see blood? Recall an instance explaining this.

*"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

MATTHEW 26:28

## WHAT

A common accusation hurled at the first century Christians was that they practiced cannibalism. The basis of this charge was a rumor that they ate flesh and drank blood at their weekly gatherings. Of course the accusers were referring to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This first century confusion shows that it is impossible to understand Christianity, much less become a Christian, without understanding the role of the blood of Jesus in redemption. In this lesson, we will look at some of the benefits of the shed blood of Christ on the cross.

1

### **Because of the blood of Jesus, we belong to God.**

*... you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.* 1 CORINTHIANS 6:20

We were purchased with the blood of Jesus. Therefore, we are not our own. We belong to God. He bought us; He owns us. And because He owns us, He has the right to rule and direct our lives.

*What is a purchase?*

*How is a purchase made?*

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**2**

**Because of the blood of Jesus,  
our sins are forgiven.**

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace . . .* EPHESIANS 1:7

There is nothing we can do to forgive or remove our own sins. But because of the blood of Jesus, our lives have been redeemed and our sins forgiven.

*Why is it important to have our sins forgiven? What happens if our sins are not forgiven?*

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**3**

**Because of the blood of Jesus,  
we have been justified.**

*Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

ROMANS 5:9

Justified means "just-as-if-I'd" never sinned. In other words, God not only forgives sin, He lets us start over with a clean slate, just as if we'd never sinned. This new start with a clean slate is not because of our good works, but because of the blood of His Son.

*What are some ways you attempted to be justified before you were justified by His blood?*

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**4**

**Because of the blood of Jesus, we are at peace with God.**

*... and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

COLOSSIANS 1:20

*What is "peace?"  
Why are we not  
at peace with  
God? How did  
Jesus make peace  
for us?*

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**SO WHAT**

- If we belong to God, how does this affect our thoughts, words, and actions? What does it mean to truly belong to Him?
- How is religion man's attempt to earn God's forgiveness? How is this different from what Jesus did for us on the cross?
- Why is justification necessary? How do people try to be justified apart from Christ?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are there areas in your life that need to be submitted to God's ownership? Do you live as if you belong to God? What can you do to fully live for Him every day?
- Are you at peace with God, or do you have inner turmoil? Why? What can you do to experience a greater measure of God's peace this week?
- Do you know anyone who at one time was at peace with God, but now seems to be running from Him or living in rebellion against Him? Pray for them to be restored to God.

- 
- Thank God for His blood and what He did for you on the cross. Now that you belong to Him, commit to live for Him.
  - Pray for the Prince of Peace to rule in your life and for the peace of God that surpasses all understanding to guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus.
  - Pray for your family and friends who don't know Jesus yet. Believe God for their salvation and for opportunities to show them God's love.



# 5

# The Blood of Jesus (PART 2)

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CONNECT

- Who do you enjoy spending time with? Why?
- What is your most valued possession? Why?
- What was the most painful injury you have suffered? What happened?



*"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."*

MATTHEW 26:28

## WHAT

Because of the blood of Jesus, we belong to God, our sins are forgiven, we have been justified, and we are at peace with Him. In this lesson, we will continue to look at what the blood of Jesus has done for us.

### 1 **Because of the blood of Jesus, we are free from the power of sin.**

*... and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood . . .* REVELATION 1:5

Not only are our sins forgiven, but the blood of Jesus frees us from the power of sin. Will power, religious association, and peer pressure cannot free a person from sin. Freedom from sin is only available through the blood of Jesus.

What is freedom?

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### 2 **Because of the blood of Jesus, we have the confidence to draw near to God.**

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.*

EPHESIANS 2:13 (SEE ALSO HEBREWS 10:19,22.)

We can come close to God not because we are worthy, but because we are covered by the blood of Jesus. Therefore, we can and should have full assurance and confidence in the presence of God. The blood leaves no room for spiritual insecurity and inferiority. God's great dream is to have His people close to Him. He has made His dream a reality by the blood.

When do you feel  
far from God?  
When do you feel  
close to God?

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### **3** Because of the blood of Jesus, we have a clean conscience.

*How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!* HEBREWS 9:14

It is only after we have a clean conscience that we can really serve God. Much religious activity is done in service to guilty consciences, not in obedience to God. After our conscience is cleansed from the guilt of past sins, then our prayer time, Bible reading, and Christian service can be done in true obedience to God, rather than as penance to soothe a guilty conscience.

Give examples  
of times you  
have had a guilty  
conscience.

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**4****Because of the blood of Jesus,  
we can overcome.**

*They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.* REVELATION 12:11

The Christian life was not meant to be a life of defeat. Yes, there are obstacles. But because of the blood, we can overcome every temptation, trial, or trick that Satan puts our way. Our victory in life is not dependent on how strong we are, but on how powerful the blood is.

*What does  
it mean to  
"overcome"? How  
can we overcome  
by the blood of  
the Lamb?*

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**SO WHAT**

- Why do some not have the confidence to approach God? How does the blood of Christ give us the confidence?
- Why is there no room for insecurity and inferiority for those who are covered by Christ's blood? How do you feel about this?
- What does a clean conscience look like? How can you have a clean conscience? Why is it dangerous to perform religious activities because of a guilty conscience?

**NOW WHAT**

- Are you living in freedom from sin? Are there sins that still seem to control you? What can you do to walk in freedom this week?
- Are you living in freedom from worry or fear? What can you do to walk in peace with God every day?
- Do you have a clean conscience before God? Why do you perform religious activities? If you do not have a clean conscience, would you like to pray and surrender your life to Christ today?

- 
- Thank God for His blood that was shed on the cross for you. Thank God for a clean conscience. Ask God to make this truth more real in your life every day.
  - Approach God with freedom and confidence. Ask Him to help you overcome every situation you are going through.
  - Pray for those you know who are experiencing difficult times. Pray that because of the blood of the Lamb, they would overcome. For those who don't know Christ yet, ask Him to use you to encourage and minister to them.



# 6

# The Gift of Righteousness

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CONNECT

- Recall one of your most memorable birthday celebrations from your childhood. What made it so memorable?
- Who gives some of the best gifts you know? Give examples.
- Recall a time when someone pointed out your mistake or that you were wrong about something. How did you respond?

*Not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.* PHILIPPIANS 3:9

## WHAT

In the eyes of the first century Jewish religious establishment, Pharisee Saul (later known as Apostle Paul) was one of the most righteous people of his day, yet he realized that his own righteousness was hopelessly inadequate. In fact, while casual observers were impressed with all his religious accomplishments, Paul judged himself to be the “worst of sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).

How could this man be the most religious and the worst sinner at the same time? Because man judges the outside and God judges the heart. Paul, when judging himself from God’s perspective, was not impressed with his own righteousness. He knew he needed the righteousness that comes from God through faith in Christ. To understand our need for the gift of righteousness, we must know that . . .

### 1 God is righteous.

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made.* PSALM 145: 17 (SEE ALSO PSALM 97:2.)

Everything God does is simultaneously righteous, just, and loving. God, not man, is the standard for what is righteous and what is not.

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What does  
righteousness  
mean?

## 2 Man is not righteous.

<sup>10</sup>There is no one righteous, not even one; <sup>11</sup>there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. <sup>12</sup>All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one. ROMANS 3:10-12

When we compare ourselves to one another, we can always find someone who is more wicked, who can make us look relatively righteous before God. But when compared to God's righteous standard, we all fall pitifully short.

What happens when you compare yourself to others?

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## 3 Jesus Christ is our righteousness.

*It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."*

1 CORINTHIANS 1:30

*For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.* ROMANS 5:17

The Bible says righteousness is a gift we can receive because of what Jesus Christ did for us. When we stop trying to work our way into right relationship with God and instead put our faith in what Jesus did for us on the cross, Jesus then becomes our righteousness, our holiness, and our redemption.



What is a gift?  
What do you do  
to deserve a gift?

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There are three more points we need to understand and remember about this gift of righteousness.

- **Righteousness is a gift from God to man, not from man to God.**

*<sup>2</sup>For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. <sup>3</sup>Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. ROMANS 10:2,3*

Paul, after trying unsuccessfully to establish his own righteousness, discovered a righteousness that comes from God. Many zealous, but ignorant, religious people are still trying to establish their own righteousness, rather than humbly submitting to God's righteousness.

What are some  
of the things you  
did in the past  
in an attempt  
to establish  
your own  
righteousness?

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- **Righteousness is a gift received, not a wage earned.**

*For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. ROMANS 5:17*

What is the difference between a gift and a wage? Why is righteousness not a wage?

- **Righteousness comes by faith, not by keeping the Law.**

*<sup>21</sup>But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. <sup>22</sup>This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.*

ROMANS 3:21,22

The first century Jews thought they could earn righteousness by keeping the law. They were wrong. Since righteousness is a gift, it cannot be earned.

Why is it impossible to become righteous by obeying God's law?

**SO WHAT**

- When we say God is righteous, what do you think this means? Why is righteousness a gift? Why is Christ our only righteousness?
- Reread Romans 3:10-12. How does this differ from how we view ourselves?
- What is the difference between self-righteousness and true righteousness? Since righteousness is a gift, how should this affect the way you live?

**NOW WHAT**

- Do you believe that we can only be righteous before God because of Jesus Christ? If not, would you like to make a decision today to receive His gift of righteousness and forgiveness?
- How will the truth of God's righteousness affect the way you live this week?
- Do you sometimes try to earn your own righteousness? What can you do to walk in Christ's righteousness in your life every day?

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- Thank God for His gift of righteousness and that we can be in right standing with Him because of Jesus Christ.
  - Pray that as you read God's Word this week, you would know Him more and walk in His ways every day. Ask God to help you always trust in His righteousness rather than in trying to gain righteousness on your own.
  - Pray for those who do not know Christ yet, that they would trust in Him rather than their own religious activity or themselves. Believe God for opportunities to minister the gospel to them.

... "The righteous will live by faith."

ROMANS 1:17

**How to Experience New Life** is a series of six materials for group discipleship designed to help disciples grow in faith and understand what Christ did for us on the cross.

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The New Life
- Experiencing God's Forgiveness
- Real Forgiveness
- The Blood of Jesus (Parts 1 & 2)
- The Gift of Righteousness



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