

Foundations of Faith

Lesson One: Salvation

Steps to Peace with God

1. God's Purpose: Peace and Life

Read the following verses and describe in your own words God's original intention for us.

Genesis 1:27-28^a _____

John 10:10^b (memorize) _____

John 3:16^c (memorize) _____

There is a God. He is real. He exists. God is not nature or some made-up idea of man. God is our creator. That means you are not here by accident. God made you to bless you and give you purpose. He wants you to experience peace and life – both right now in this journey of life, as well as forever (eternal and abundant life).

2. The Problem: Separation from God

Read the following verses and describe in your own words sin and its results

Romans 3:23^d (memorize) _____

Isaiah 59:2^e _____

Romans 6:23^f (memorize) _____

Have you ever sinned? Yes No I don't know (optional, read Exodus 20:1-17)

Which statement best describes what you believe? What is wrong with the others?

- a. I have made a few mistakes, but mostly I am still a good person.
- b. A loving God wouldn't send anyone to hell – just really evil people.
- c. I have sinned against God, so I deserve death and eternal separation from God.

(See 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9)

Story on sin and our need for God

What are some ways people try to get to God? Why do they fail? _____

The Bridge Illustration

3. God's Bridge: the Cross!

Read the following verses and describe in your own words what God has done for us.

John 14:6^g (memorize) _____

Romans 5:8^h (memorize) _____

John 3:16ⁱ _____

I Peter 3:18^j _____

Ephesians 2:8-9^k _____

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Story on grace

4. Our Response: Receive Jesus

Read the following verse and describe in your own words what we must do to receive God's offer of salvation.

John 1:12^l (memorize) _____

Romans 10:9^m (memorize) _____

Check the responses necessary for you to be saved. (see also 1 John 1:9; Acts 2:37-39; I Corinthians 15:1-5)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do more good things than bad things | <input type="checkbox"/> Be willing to turn from your sins |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admit that you have sinned | <input type="checkbox"/> Believe Jesus died to forgive your sins and rose from the dead |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sincerely try to be a better person | <input type="checkbox"/> Choose one of the many ways to get to heaven |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Go to church more | <input type="checkbox"/> Invite Jesus to come in and control your life |

New life in Christ!

What can we learn from these verses about what it means to be a true Christian?

2 Corinthians 5:14-15, 17ⁿ _____

When does eternal life with God begin? _____

I John 5:12-13^o _____

Have you believed in Jesus and received this new life? Yes No I don't know

Describe your life in the following boxes:

My life before Jesus	When I encountered Jesus	Since I met Jesus
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YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Pray to receive Jesus into your life.
- Record your spiritual "birthday" here:

On _____ (month) ____ (day) _____ (year) I received Jesus into my heart to be my savior. He forgave my sin, became my Lord and took control of my life. Now I have become a child of God and a new creation. I have begun a new life and journey with Jesus.

Signature: _____

- Talk with the one taking you through this lesson or a pastor about being baptized. (Acts 2:37-39; Romans 6:1-14)
- Get your own Bible if you do not have one. Begin reading the book of Matthew and learn to follow and obey Jesus.
- Memorize the scriptures (in bold) in this lesson as well as memorize and practice the bridge illustration.
- Practice sharing your testimony.
- Plan to attend a home group.
- Agree with the person taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to tell someone about Jesus this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.

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Foundations of Faith

Lesson Two: Devotional Life *(time with Jesus)*

God wants to spend time with you! One of God’s deepest desires is for you to know Him and have a relationship with Him. We can pray at any time of the day and at any place. God is everywhere and wants to be involved in every part of your life. Developing a relationship with a person requires consistent interaction with that person. In the same way, if you want to have a close relationship with God, you need to set aside daily time just for God. This “set apart” time for seeking God is our devotion life.

Read Psalm 27:4, 7-8^a. Describe the attitude this person has toward seeking God. _____

Read Jeremiah 29:11-13^b. What does God promise us in these verses? _____

Read Mark 1:35^c. What can we learn from Jesus? _____

Personal testimony on when and how you started spending time with God (or how you currently do)

God hears us when we pray! Prayer is “talking” with God. We can communicate with God in the same way we can with any other person. Prayer should be natural conversation with God. When you pray you should be honest and sincere. We don’t have to pray perfectly. Be encouraged - Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, and He will teach you too.

**Read the following verses and write in your own words the type of prayer described*

Psalm 135:3^d _____

1 John 1:9^e _____

1 Timothy 2:1^f _____

Philippians 4:6-7^g _____

Effective prayer includes...

Verse

Having faith	“when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver,..” (James 1:6)
Confessing our sins	“if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins...” (1 John 1:9)
Asking according to His will	“...he hears us whenever we ask for anything that pleases him.” (1 John 5:14)
Asking in Jesus’ name	“You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it,...” (John 14:13)
Praying with perseverance	“...that they should always pray and never give up.” (Luke 18:1)

Story on the power of answered prayer

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God wants to speak to us through His Word – the Bible.

God speaks to us by the Holy Spirit in a variety of ways. Yet every potential truth about God is always found in the Bible. The Bible was written over a 1500 year span by over forty authors in three languages. It records over 1000 references to fulfilled prophecies and an eyewitness account of a supernatural miracle of God in most of its 66 books. The Bible is regarded as the most reliable text of any piece of literature ever. It has been translated into other languages more than any other book. And for 2000 years countless lives have been transformed by its message. The Bible is God's Word to us. He said perfectly what He wanted to say through imperfect people. He speaks to us through His Word today.

*Match the verse and the correct truth about the Bible.

_____ 1. Psalm 119:89-91 ^h	a. The point of the Scriptures is to lead us to a relationship with Jesus.
_____ 2. Psalm 119:160 ⁱ (see also Hebrews 4:12-13)	b. God's Word is eternal and, therefore, relevant to us today.
_____ 3. 2 Timothy 3:15-17 ^j (see also Psalm 19:1-7)	c. God's word is true - our moral standard of right and wrong.
_____ 4. John 5:39-40 ^k (see also Luke 24:27, 44-45)	d. All Scripture is from God, powerful and useful to transform lives.

Below are **three simple questions** to ask yourself when you are reading the Bible. Remember **SOS** – *Say, Obey, Share*.
Read this story from Luke 10:38-42^l and answer the following questions.

What does this passage **SAY**?

What do I need to **OBEY**?

Who do I need to **SHARE** this with?

How to get started with your devotional life

1. **Prepare for God** – Find a time where you can consistently meet with God. Choose a place where you can meet with God without being disturbed. Collect items you may need for your time with God: a Bible, journal, pen, music and a calendar.
2. **Worship God** – Sing songs of praise to God. Thank God for something good in your life. (Psalm 100; Romans 12:1-2)
3. **Bible reading** – Choose a book in the Bible to study using the three simple questions above. If you have never read the Bible before, begin with a gospel. Consider how what you read applies to your life and obey everything Jesus says to do.
4. **Prayer** - Share your concerns for yourself and others with God through prayer.
5. **Wait on God** – Listen for His encouragement, correction and direction. Write down what you sense God saying to you in a journal. (Psalm 143:8)

Make it a part of your daily routine. It is your decision to meet with God. Spending time with God will not make God love you more, but if you seek God everyday, you will grow in your love for Him and obedience to Him. (Matthew 6:33)

***Will you commit to a daily devotional life with God?**

Signature

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Decide when and where you will set aside time alone to spend time with God every day and begin!
- Get a journal and make a list of things you want to pray about.
- Spend time with God together with the one taking you through this lesson.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share Jesus with someone this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.

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Lesson Three: The Church

Created for Community

Read Genesis 2:18^a. In God's perfect creation before any sin, what did God say was "not good"? Why?

Story on our need for community and acceptance

One of the greatest needs of the human heart is relationship. When you became a child of God, you became a member of God's family, the church. The church is not a building or a meeting. The church is a gathered group of believers. We were created for this kind of community. We all need God, and we all need the church to find acceptance and fulfill His plans for our lives. Jesus and the church are inseparable.

Read Ephesians 1:22-23^b. What do these verses teach us about the church? _____

Read Hebrews 10:24-25^c. What do these verses tell us is God's will for us regarding being with other believers regularly?

Describe your past view of and experience with the church. _____

Personal testimony on what the church has meant in your life

Church life

The best description of church life in the New Testament is more of a series of snapshots than a definition. Numerous passages help us see what Jesus intended for His body, the church.

Read Acts 2:42-47 and circle the characteristics of the early church that stand out to you.

v.42 - *All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord's Supper), and to prayer.*

v.43 - *A deep sense of awe came over them all, and the apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders.*

v.44 - *And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had.*

v.45 - *They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need.*

v.46 - *They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity*

v.47 - *all the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved.*

What would attract you to this type of community? _____

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Purpose of the Church

Read Ephesians 3:10-11^d. What is God's purpose for the church? _____

Read Matthew 28:19-20^e. Describe the four things Jesus commands His followers to do in these verses in your own words.

Acts of Obedience

Jesus has instructed us to obey all that He has commanded. Baptism, the observance of communion, and giving are three specific commands Jesus gave us that demonstrate our relationship and commitment not only to him, but also to other believers.

Baptism

Water baptism is a public declaration that you believe in Jesus. Baptism is not optional but the first command Jesus has given new believers (Acts 2:38). Water baptism is a symbolic act through emersion in water. It does not have the power to forgive sin. But baptism does signify to the world, "I am not ashamed to identify with Jesus Christ or His family."

Read Romans 6:3-4^f. What does water baptism symbolize according to these verses? _____

Communion

Read I Corinthians 11:23-26^g. According to these verses, what has Jesus instructed his disciples to do? Why? _____

We call this ordinance from Jesus "communion" or "the Lord's Supper." It ought to be regularly observed by the people of God gathered. When we receive communion, it is a time to examine our actions and faith (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), to remember what He has done for us on the cross and renew our covenant of love together with Him.

Giving

God also asks the church to be a giving community. Monetary giving is often a test of a Christian's faith, love and obedience. Everything we have is from God, and He is our provider. We can trust Him with our money and our lives.

What do the following verses teach us about giving?

Malachi 3:8-10^h _____

2 Corinthians 9:6-8ⁱ _____

Acts 20:35^j _____

Personal testimony of the joy of giving

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Commit to a home group and becoming part of the life of the Church
- Begin this month giving 10% of your income to a local church or group of believers.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share Jesus this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.

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Foundations of Faith

Lesson Four: Father Heart of God

God our Father

God can be described in a lot of ways. He is our creator and savior. He is holy (which means set apart), loving and all-powerful. In the New Testament, we come to know Him as Father, Son (Jesus) and Holy Spirit. When Jesus came he showed us what the Father is like and how to have a relationship with Him. He also taught His disciples to address God in prayer saying, “Our Father who art in heaven.” When you come to faith in Jesus, you are adopted into God’s family (Romans 8:15). God becomes your father.

Story on the need for a father

We all have an earthly father. Like it or not our relationship (or lack of relationship) with our earthly father has significantly shaped the way we each view God as our heavenly Father for good or for bad.

Circle the words below that best describe your earthly father. Then check the areas that describe God as a perfect father.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distant and disinterested | <input type="checkbox"/> Slow to anger | <input type="checkbox"/> Wants to help me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kind and compassionate | <input type="checkbox"/> Impatient and harsh | <input type="checkbox"/> Condemning and unforgiving |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passive and cold | <input type="checkbox"/> Too busy for me | <input type="checkbox"/> Full of grace when I fail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nitpicking or perfectionist | <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful to protect and provide | <input type="checkbox"/> Let’s me do whatever I want |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warm and accepting | <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplines because he loves me | <input type="checkbox"/> Unconditionally loves me |

In what ways do you believe God is like or not like your earthly father? _____

Our Father’s Goodness

Read Matthew 7:7-11^a. What does this verse teach us about God? _____

Read Psalm 18:2^b. What do this verse teach us about God’s protection of us? _____

Read Matthew 6:31-34^c. Why are God’s children not to worry? _____

Story on God’s provision (optional)

Our Father’s Love

Read Luke 15:11-24^d. What do you observe about the father in this story? _____

What are the similarities between this father and God the Father? _____

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Read Hebrews 12:5-11^e.

Why does God discipline us? _____

What are the results of God's discipline? _____

Read Romans 8:31-32^f. Describe the love of God in your own words. _____

Read Romans 8:38-39^g. Describe the love of God in your own words. _____

Discuss and write how God the Father as described in the Bible is different from what you originally thought? _____

Story on the love of God

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Share with the one taking you through this lesson any painful memories of your relationship with your earthly father.
- Pray the following prayer: *“God, I believe you are my perfect Father. I choose to believe what the Bible says about you rather than my experiences. Open the eyes of my heart to see you more clearly as you really are.”*
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share the Jesus with someone this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.

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Lesson Five: the Holy Spirit

Who is the Holy Spirit?

You are not alone. Jesus promised us before He left that He would always be with us (Matthew 28:20). So if Jesus has ascended into heaven and has not returned yet how can God always be with us? The answer is the Holy Spirit, who is God (2 Corinthians 3:17). Jesus is God in the form of a man. He can only be one place at a time. Right now He is in heaven. But God is always with us by His Spirit. When we feel God's presence or hear God's voice – that is the Holy Spirit!

Have you ever experienced the presence of God? When? _____

Personal testimony on experiencing the presence of God

Sealing of the Holy Spirit

Read Ephesians 1:13-14^a. What happened when you first believed the gospel? _____

When you received Jesus into your life the Holy Spirit came to live in you. The Holy Spirit dwells in and with every believer. The Holy Spirit is like a seal on our lives securing us for God and our inheritance in heaven. The Holy Spirit is always with us working in our lives.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit

Read Matthew 3:11^b. What did John the Baptist say Jesus would do? _____

Read Acts 1:8^c. What does God say the Holy Spirit will do for us? Why? _____

Read Luke 3:20-22^d. What happened when Jesus was baptized? _____

Read Luke 4:1, 14, 18-19^e. What was Jesus' life like after He was baptized? _____

What does the Holy Spirit do?

Read these verses and describe the activity of the Holy Spirit.

John 14:26^f _____

John 16:8, 12-15^g _____

Romans 5:5^h _____

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Fruit of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit works in our lives to make us like Jesus. Christ-like characteristics are described in the Bible as good fruit.

Review the fruit of the Spirit in the verse below. Circle 2 or 3 that you would like to see more of in your life this week.

(Galatians 5:22-23)

” the fruit of the spirit is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”

Read John 15: 1-8ⁱ. How can we bear fruit? _____

Story on abiding in God

Power of the Holy Spirit

According to these verses, what power does God give us?

John 14:12^j _____

I Corinthians 12:4-11^k _____

We need the baptism of the Holy Spirit so that we can do the works that Jesus did – even greater ones (Hebrews 2:4). The Holy Spirit also gives us gifts to serve the church and extend the Kingdom of God. These gifts are abilities that are supernaturally empowered by God. Every believer in Jesus has at least one primary spiritual gift to contribute to the body of Christ.

Receiving the Holy Spirit

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit occurs in a variety of ways throughout the New Testament. There is no one method for being baptized with the Holy Spirit. Neither is there only one demonstration of the Spirit. The following are common, biblical characteristics of those who experience the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Baptism of the Spirit includes... Verse

A desire for Justice	<i>“those that hunger and thirst for righteousness...will be filled.”</i> (Matthew 5:6 NIV)
A desire for spiritual gifts	<i>“eagerly desire spiritual gifts”</i> (1 Corinthians 14:1 NIV)
Confessing all known sins	<i>“Many who became believers confessed their sinful practices.”</i> (Acts 19:18 NLT)
Coming to Jesus and believing	<i>“Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! Anyone who believes in me... Rivers of living water [Holy Spirit] will flow from his heart.”</i> (John 7:37-38 NLT)
Asking the Father in prayer	<i>“your heavenly Father give(s) the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.”</i> (Luke 11:13)
Potential manifestations like prophecy or tongues or joy or boldness	<i>“The Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke in other tongues and prophesied.”</i> (Acts 19:6 – See also Acts 4:31-35; 13:53)

Living by the Spirit

We are “sealed within” by the Holy Spirit when we are saved, but we are also encouraged to “be continually filled” with the Holy Spirit (*Ephesians 5:18; John 20:22; Acts 2:4, 4:31*). The Holy Spirit desires for us to have a personal and regular encounter with God that draws us close to Him and empowers us to glorify Him on earth.

Personal testimony on Living by the Holy Spirit

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Pray and ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit, review the Bible verses from this lesson over this next week.
- Have the one taking you through this lesson lay hands on you and pray for you to receive the Holy Spirit. (Acts 8:17; 2 Tim. 1:6)
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share the gospel this week.
- Share this lesson with someone who is ready to be trained.

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Foundations of Faith

Lesson Six: Growing Christ-like

Read I Peter 1:14-16, 22^a. What are some characteristics of children of God according to these verses? _____

Holiness

As you follow Christ, the sin that previously characterized your life will fade away and your life will begin to look more like His. God accepts us by grace not by good works. Yet when true salvation occurs, a change in our lives will be obvious. God promises to purify your life and make you holy (1 Thessalonians 5:21-23). The word “holy” means to be set apart. This lifelong process of becoming Christ-like involves every part of our lives.

What do these verses teach us about dealing with sin in our lives?

Romans 6:1,2; 6-7^b _____

Colossians 3:5-10^c _____

1 Corinthians 10:12-13^d (memorize) _____

What is one area of sin that you want greater victory over in your life? _____

Story on victory over sin

Obedience

In Matthew 28:20 Jesus commands His disciples, “*Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you.*” Jesus calls anyone who would follow Him to surrender their life to obey Him wholeheartedly (Mark 8:34-35).

What do the following verses teach us about obedience?

Luke 6:46-49^e _____

John 14:21^f _____

Key Commands of Jesus

“*Repent of your sins and believe the good news!*” (Mark 1:15) “*...forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.*” (Matthew 18:35)

“*Each of you ...be baptized in the name of Jesus...*” (Acts 2:38) “*giving gifts to the poor*” (Luke 11:41)

“*...pray and never give up.*” (Luke 18:1)

“*do this [Lord’s supper] to remember me.*” (Luke 22:14-19)

“*...love each other, just as [Jesus has] loved you.*” (John 13:34) “*go and make disciples of all the nations...*” (Matthew 28:19)

Do you seek to obey the commands of Jesus? Yes No Sometimes I don’t know

What do the following verses teach us about surrendering our life to Jesus?

Matthew 13:44-46^g _____

Mark 8:34-35^h _____

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Story on surrender

Love

The most defining characteristic of any follower of Jesus is love (John 13:35). Jesus has taught us love for God, love for each other and love for those that don't know Jesus - ought to govern all the life and decisions of a believer.

What do these verses teach you about love?

Mark 12:28-31ⁱ _____

I John 4:19-21^j _____

Luke 6:32-37^k _____

Story on love

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Share with the one taking you through this lesson an area (i.e. eating too much, anger, lust, loving your spouse/roommate) in which you would like to be held accountable.
- Read and meditate on 1 Corinthians 13:1-13 this week.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share Jesus with someone this week.
- Share these lessons with someone who is ready to be trained.

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Foundations of Faith

Lesson Seven: The Everyday Mission *(the great commission)*

" _____ came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, _____ and _____ of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. _____ these new disciples to _____ all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am _____ always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)^a

All Authority

These (above) verses in Matthew include some of the last instructions that Jesus gave his disciples before he ascended into heaven. This passage is commonly called the Great Commission; at Riverside we call it the Everyday Mission. God has called us with all His authority to share His message of love to the world.

Read the following verses. Describe in your own words what power/authority God has given us.

Acts 1:8^b _____

2 Corinthians 5:18-21^c _____

John 14:11-12^d _____

Go make disciples!

God's first command to humans was "be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth..." (Genesis 1:28). Today, God still calls us to reproduce life so people who love and follow him fill the earth. A disciple of Jesus is an "obedient and reproducing follower of Jesus." Making a disciple means helping someone else receive Christ and obey all He has commanded. God desires that each of us be bold and take the initiative to share the gospel with those that don't know Christ.

Read Luke 8:4-8, 11-15^e.

What does this teach us about who responds to the gospel? _____

What does this parable teach us sharing the gospel? _____

Read 2 Timothy 2:2^f. What does this teach us about making disciples? _____

Look closely, do you see the four generations of spiritual fatherhood in this verse?

Personal testimony on the impact of life on life evangelism and discipleship

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All Nations!

Read 2 Peter 3:9^g. *Who God does desire to save?* _____

Read Romans 10:13-17^h. *Why is it important to share the gospel with people?* _____

Read Acts 1:8ⁱ. *Where did Jesus call the disciples to go? Where has God called you to go?* _____

Read Matthew 24:14^j. *What does Jesus promise in this verse?* _____

The very end of the age!

When this Everyday Mission (Great Commission) has been completed then Jesus has promised to return, destroying all sin and evil. Then we will be with him forever in perfect paradise – Heaven!

What do the following verses teach us about heaven?

Revelation 7:9-10^k _____

Revelation 21:3-5^l _____

As a Christian you now have a great and living hope that one day you will be with God forever in heaven along with those you love that have believed in him as well. The most important thing now is that God calls you to share the gospel and teach people to obey all of His ways. God desires that all people be saved and we have the awesome privilege to join him in spreading the GOOD NEWS!

Pray about and boldly pursue the following things that you can do to be apart of fulfilling the Everyday Mission (Great Commission).

Ask God for boldness and sign and wonders

Pray for people that don't know Jesus

Lead people to believe in Jesus

Baptize those you lead to Jesus

Train others to obey Jesus and to make disciples also

Start a new lifegroup

Give money to support a missionary

Go to another country to share with those that have not heard

YOUR RESPONSE THIS WEEK:

- Pray and ask God for boldness and signs and wonders.
- Make a list of everyone you know that does not know Jesus. Then make a plan to share with them. For accountability, share the plan with the one taking you through this lesson.
- Agree with the one taking you through this lesson on a realistic but challenging goal to share Jesus this week.
- Share these lessons with someone who is ready to be trained.

- Continue using the SOS method of bible study (see lesson 2) as you read through the gospels and the rest of the Bible.
- Continue meeting regularly with someone for accountability and further training in following Jesus.

* these page numbers coincide with the NLT Paperback Bible available for free at Riverside Church (www.riversidecommunity.org):
a-760, b-830, c-884, d-823, e-788, f-914, g-939, h-864, i-830, j-755, k-953, l-961