

Lesson 1 – The Joy of Hope: *God's Eternal Plan*

Be sure that you have read page 5 very carefully and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

Question: The Bible contains 66 books, written over a span of 1,500 years by more than 40 authors, yet it tells one unified story. What are your thoughts about this?

Use this opportunity to give some very important background information regarding the amazing unique features of the Bible. Here are some additional pieces of information that you may want to share:

- Authors were from many various educational levels, vocations, social classes, historical eras, political situations, and geographical settings. They reflected very diverse personalities.
- Parts of the Bible were written in three different languages and from three continents—Africa, Asia, and Europe.
- Many of the prophecies from the early part of the Bible have already been fulfilled with amazing accuracy.

Options:

1. Read the story statements given here and study the Bible texts.
2. Read the extended version of the story on pages 26-29 and study the Bible texts.
3. As the leader, tell the story in your own words and study the Bible texts.

The amount time available for this lesson will probably be the biggest factor in determining which option you choose. Also, your comfort level in telling the story will be another factor. You may want to create another hybrid option. For example, in some situations (for example, witnessing to another passenger on a plane, you may just want to talk through the events of the story and paraphrase or summarize what you know to be in the Bible passages).

Whichever option you choose, it is imperative that you study the Bible texts in advance so that you will be able to be confident in explaining them.

Main Sections: (center section)

- **Top-center:**

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Read: “The Bible is a collection of hundreds of connected stories.”

Then, drop down to statement below the timeline. Read the statement there.

“But, the Bible focuses on one Big Story interwoven through all the others: God is working to provide eternal hope to all of the people of the earth!”

Explain that there are two major divisions of the Bible—the Old Testament and the New Testament. Explain that “we” are going to study ten key events from each of those testaments and by doing so, “we’ll” see a good overview of the entire Bible, as its story unfolds progressively.

Exactly how you proceed from this point, depends upon the study option that you choose. Here are some suggestions, point by point.

1. If the learner is an agnostic, try not to argue whether or not God exists. Simply encourage her to hold her doubts until the end of this study and simply let the Bible speak for itself through the Bible study process.
2. Again, just present what the Bible says. If the learner insists on bringing up other, non-biblical views of creation, ask her to write her questions down for later discussion. Be sure to plan a time when you will address those issues, perhaps after lesson 10 of this study series.
3. Also, if the learner tends to argue about biological evolutionary ideas, ask her to record these questions or concerns for a future discussion. Focus on the Bible’s view of man—his unique nature as the image of God and his God-given role as God’s manager over all of creation. Be prepared to explain the “image of God” as simply as possible—that God shared with man (generic use of the term “man”) some of His attributes (creativity, personality, wisdom, ability to communicate, etc.) to a degree that made man special among all of God’s creatures. It is very important that new Bible students understand the Bible’s view of man, as God originally made him. The Bible’s view of man is refreshing, uplifting, and dignifying when compared to secular theories.
4. Technically, Lucifer’s downfall probably happened earlier, but we do not know when he was created and when he fell. It seems to work better to present points one through three and do a kind of flashback here.
5. Remember that 1 Timothy 2:4 distinguishes between the fact that Eve was deceived but Adam, apparently, knowingly and willingly disobeyed.
6. You will need to explain here that death is “separation” and that there are three types of death—spiritual (here and now separation from God), physical (separation of body and spirit), and eternal (eternal separation

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- from God). Point out the signs in the text that indicate that Adam and Eve's behavior drastically changed, showing that they had died spiritually.
7. This is a key passage. Study it thoroughly and think through how you will explain it without getting too deep. Avoid telling who this offspring of woman will be. Let the mysteries of the Big Story unveil themselves in due time.
 8. Contrast the two types of coverings—fig leaves and skins. Lead the learner to come to her own insights regarding the differences. Ultimately, be sure that she understands that innocent animals died in order to cover Adam and Eve's shame and sense of guilt. But, don't push the implications too deeply yet.
 9. Explain that there was a mixture of judgment and grace in what God did. Adam and Eve would never again enjoy this beautiful paradise, but had they eaten of the tree of life in their sinful state, their spiritual death would probably have been irreparable.
 10. This is a key passage. If possible, show the learner a picture of the tabernacle and explain its features and functions. There are many websites that will be helpful to you in this regard. Explain that the actions described in Leviticus 1:1-4, 10 took place at the bronze altar just inside of the court of the tabernacle. Be sure that they understand the significance of the placement of the hands that were placed on the head of the sacrificial animal. If the learner understands this event—what happened and how it was significant—it will be easy for her to understand the theological meaning of the death of Christ.
 11. Point out the several unique things that are indicated in the Matthew passage related to Jesus, who He was and what He would do.
 12. This event is pivotal in connecting the Old Testament sacrificial events and concepts to Jesus Christ. Lead the learner to come up with her own insights into the proclamation of John the Baptist.
 13. This, theologically, is a watershed step in a new Bible learner's development of a biblical view of life. If she sees and understands that Jesus was and is God, she may be well on her way to becoming a possessor of the hope that is central to the Bible's Big Story. Spend as much time as is necessary here. Be prepared to re-enforce this John 5 passage with other similar passages in John, such as John 8:48-59 and John 10:22-33.
 14. Make it clear that Jesus was not only innocent of crimes, but he was also innocent of sin (sinless).
 15. The story of the repentant thief on the cross is a clear and simple illustration of what a person does in order to receive God's gift of eternal

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- life, as well as what a person does not have to do to enjoy God's provision of life with Him forever. Emphasize his confession of personal guilt, his recognition of Jesus' innocence, and his faith in who Jesus was and what Jesus had the authority to do for him.
16. Point out the evidences that Jesus was raised bodily and explain why it was important that He be resurrected from death and the grave.
 17. Also point out that just as Jesus was raised bodily from the grave, He also ascended to heaven in a true bodily form.
 18. Tie this event back to Lucifer's fall and his ongoing adversarial role in God's creation. It is an important example of God's sovereign control over even the strongest evil forces in the universe and of His holiness and justice that will ultimately prevail.
 19. Explain that the "dead" mentioned here are those who are "spiritually dead." Only unrepentant, unforgiven sinners will stand before this judgment throne and receive the dreadful sentence meted out there.
 20. Remind the learner of the original paradise in Eden as well as the one into which Jesus received the repentant thief on the cross. Highlight all of the wonderful characteristics of this new and holy city, where believers will dwell eternally with God. Explain that Lesson Two will help "us" to understand how we can know for sure that our names are in God's "Lamb Book of Life."

Teaching tip: Always have the learner locate and read the Bible study verses aloud. You may want to provide her with a Bible just like the one that you are using, so that you can provide page numbers for the Bible reference locations. Be sure to use the same translation that she is using.



The Hope – Video or DVD Presentation

The Hope is an excellent presentation of the Bible's Big Story. It was produced by Mars-Hill Productions and is available in several languages. We highly recommend that you show it to the learner at the end of lesson 1, after you have studied the 20 Bible events in this lesson.

www.thehopeproject.com/

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Discuss: Which of these segments of the Bible's story are still not clear to you?

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Review and clarify any parts of the story that are unclear to the person with whom you are studying.

- In the next lesson, we will see eight essential truths of this Big Story of the Bible.

Options:

1. Ask the learner to study Lesson 2 prior to the next Bible study session. Show her pages 30-31 and explain that those pages provide additional information related to the content in Lesson 2. If she was and is keenly interested in the Big Story discussed in this lesson, she should be interested in what Lesson 2 teaches us.
2. Wait until the next study session to study Lesson 2 together. Beginning with Lesson 3 it will always be important that the learner study the next lesson ahead of time.

Assignments:

- Memory Verse: Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse for this lesson. Be sure that she understands what it means. Explain how to use the memory verse cards. Tell her that you will review the memorized verse with her at the beginning of your meeting for Lesson 2.
- Bible Reading: Discuss the Personal Bible Reading Plan on page 32. Explain to her that each of the remaining sessions in this Bible study series will begin with a review of memory verses and a follow-up discussion of the assigned Bible readings. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.

Lesson 2 – The Joy of Eternal Life: *Salvation*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- Discuss: Bible readings and review the previous memory verse.
 - Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages he has been reading. Then you may want to probe his understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that he understands what he has read.
 - Memory verse: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse. Then, check his ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for him to follow.
- Question: In your own words, what must a person *believe* and what must a person *do* in order to know that he or she has everlasting life?

Use these questions to stimulate the learner to talk about his relationship with God. If he expresses...

- What seems to be a genuine salvation experience, this lesson will be a further clarification of his relationship to God through Christ. Also, it will provide you with an opportunity to teach him how to explain and share the gospel with unbelievers.
 - Any degree of denial or doubt regarding his salvation, this lesson will allow you to give him an opportunity to receive God's gift of eternal life.
- Instruction: Answer each question from information stated or implied in the Bible passage. See pages 30-31 for more information related to this lesson.

As much as possible, get the learner into these Bible texts and allow him to answer the questions. As the leader, help him to clarify his understanding of these texts. You may need to elaborate on some of his responses.

Use the supplemental material on pages 30-31 in the way that is most helpful to you and the learner. Here are a three options:

- You will probably want to study this material prior to leading this lesson.
- Use the appropriate paragraph on pages 30-31 in order to summarize each point on pages 8-9, as you go through the eight points in lesson 2.

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- Ask the learner to read and study pages 30-31, as a follow up to this lesson.

Teaching tip: Be sure that the learner has his own Bible. It is important that you use the same translation that he uses. Prior to this lesson, and all other lessons, check the wording of your translation to see how it fits the questions in the lesson. Be prepared to handle any mis-match between the wording in your translation and the wording of the questions in the lesson.

Main Sections: (center sections)

Online resource: There are three versions of the ABWE chronological Bridge to Life (ChronoBridge) that are available to you online:

- A “click through” visual of the ChronoBridge.
- A high resolution downloadable video clip of someone presenting the ChronoBridge (10 minutes in length) that can be downloaded and played on your computer.
- A lower resolution “streaming” version of this same video clip that can be viewed online.

www.ceimresources.org/the-bridge-to-life/

Introduce The Bridge to Life: There is another presentation of the gospel, created by the Navigators, that is also called “The Bridge to Life.” The presentation used in *The Way to Joy*, and in other ABWE gospel tools, differs from that bridge in that the ABWE bridge is a chronological Bridge to Life (ChronoBridge). That is, it presents eight essential gospel truths in the order in which they emerge chronologically from the Big Story of the Bible. Be sure to point out the relationship between the Big Story of lesson 1 and the chronological Bridge to Life in lesson 2. To do so you may want to read and explain the two statements that appear between the bridge (at the top) and the Bible study questions (on the bottom half of the page):

Eight essential truths emerge out of the Big Story of the Bible.
These truths provide us with a bridge from spiritual death to life.

Teaching tips: Pace your presentation of The Bridge to Life according to how you perceive that the learner understands each concept. For example, when you see that the learner understands and receives the essential concepts associated with the God of the Bible, move on to the next bridge concept and etc. If you sense that his understanding is not clear at any point, pause on

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that point and re-enforce your presentation with additional Bible passages (see page 30-31, for starters). If it appears that he understands, but doesn't *believe* what he understands, it may be appropriate to move on to subsequent points and pray that God will give him the faith to believe what he has been exposed to in God's Word.

At each step on the bridge, ask the learner to read the Bible verse aloud before you begin to discuss it.

1. God—Hebrews 11:6

a. When we come to God, what is the first thing we must believe?

This verse clearly states that the starting point for coming to God is to believe that He exists. If the person that you are taking through this study (the learner) does not believe in the existence of God, the remainder of this lesson and this study will be useless to him, since this study is designed for new believers or for unbelievers who are very receptive to the gospel. In that case, you may want to take him through *The Story of Hope*, if he can and will agree to temporarily suspend his active disbelief and be intellectually honest and open enough to study the Bible, taking its story and message at face value.

b. What does it mean to seek God diligently?

A person is not saved by simply believing in God's existence. Satan and his evil spirits (demons) believe more strongly that God exists than we do. To be rewarded with God's salvation, we must diligently seek Him—to actively incline ourselves to get to know Him in a personal way, to develop a positive relationship with Him.

Ask the learner to read the "*Our Faith Response*" statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 30.

2. Man—Genesis 2:7

a. Distinguish between man's body and his essential being (soul).

The body of man is physical. God used the dust of the ground as the base substance from which he formed Adam's body.

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Translations vary in the way they render the last phrase of this verse—“man became a living _____.” The older King James Version uses the word “soul” here. Many translations, including the New King James, use the word “being.” Regardless of the specific word used in the translation, the meaning of the text is clear—God created, from His own breath, an immaterial part of man. This immaterial “being” or “soul” inhabits the material body. It is this immaterial part of man that is the essential living core of man.

b. Why are all people accountable to God?

God made us, thus we belong to Him and are accountable to Him. You may want to use an illustration regarding something that you own because you made it.

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 30.

3. Sin—Romans 3:23

a. What is the standard that defines sin?

The obvious answer is “the glory of God.” However, this simple response will require some explanation. The phrase seems to refer to God’s glorious holiness or moral perfection—the fact that God is sinlessly perfect. Consequently, anything less than moral perfection is “sin.”

b. Who has sinned?

Given the standard mentioned in this verse, most people will readily admit that they have fallen short of this standard. You may want to be transparent and share examples from your own life of your moral imperfections. If the learner resists admitting that he has sinned, you may want to turn to Exodus 20 and take him through the ten commandments. Ask him to evaluate his entire life in light of these ten moral laws. If he is honest (which is one of God’s holy standards!), he will admit that he has sinned.

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 30.

4. Death—Hebrews 9:27

a. Who established this appointment with death?

This verse does not tell us who established the death-appointment for man. But the Big Story in lesson 1 provides that information. If necessary, go back to lesson 1 to review the historical and theological reason why humans must die.

b. What is certain to occur after death?

Just as surely as we must die, we also must face God in judgment. You may want to review point 19 in the Big Story in Lesson One.

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult pages 30-31.

5. Christ—John 14:6

a. How many true ways to God are there?

According to Jesus, there is only one way to God and He (Jesus) is that way. If a person is a true “believer” in Jesus Christ, he will not have a problem with this seemingly audacious claim. Because of the prevailing pluralistic thinking in most parts of the world, many people struggle with Jesus’ claim.

b. What makes Jesus so unique, that He is the only way to God?

If Jesus is the only true way to God, there must be something unique about Him that qualifies Him to be the one and only way. You may want to take the learner back on the Big Story in lesson 1 to review the life of Jesus, especially the facts that Jesus is one with and equal to God the Father and that He, like the Heavenly Father, is perfect and sinless. Also, point the learner to the memory verse for Lesson One—John 3:16.

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 31.

6. Cross—1 Peter 2:24

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a. Explain: “Jesus carried our sins in His own body on the cross.”

The above statement is a paraphrase of 1 Peter 2:24. In order to understand the theological-redemptive significance of this statement, it is essential that the learner have a clear understanding of Old Testament sacrifices. Review that concept with the learner, perhaps going back to Leviticus 1:1-4, 10.

b. What was the ultimate purpose of Jesus' death?

Jesus took the judgment of our sins in His own body on the cross, so that we might die to sins (lose our desire to sin), live for righteousness (live a righteous life), and be healed spiritually (become a spiritually “well” person). Thus, Jesus did not die as a helpless martyr or a noble example; He died to make provision for our spiritual needs.

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 31.

7. Faith—Ephesians 2:8-9

a. What is the relationship between grace, faith, and works?

It is by God's grace (His loving favor which we do not deserve) that we are saved from the wrath of God's judgment. We received the benefits of this unmerited favor by placing our faith in Him—that He is able and willing to forgive us of our sins, just as He has promised. This forgiveness of our sins is a free gift from God and not something that we earn by our good deeds or works. Because, if we could earn it through our own good works, we would be able to boast about it and not give God the glory that only He deserves.

b. What must a person do in order to possess a gift?

To possess a gift we simply accept it when it is offered. You may want to illustrate this by giving the learner a gift and explaining that he owes you nothing for it—it's free!

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 31.

8. Life—John 11:25-26

It will be helpful to the learner if you explain the context for this passage. Review, at least for yourself, the story in which this dialog appears so that you can clearly explain the context.

a. What does it mean that “though he may die, he shall live”?

Jesus was explaining that physical death is not the “end” for a believer. Believers die physically, but they possess spiritual life that is eternal—that will never be terminated. When their bodies die, their “souls” (essential beings) live on, forever.

b. What does it mean that believers in Jesus “shall never die”?

This is essentially the same as the previous promise that Jesus had just presented. Though the body may die, the essential core being of believers will live eternally.

“Do you believe this?” Notice the way verse 26 ends. Jesus put a crucial question to Martha. This is a great way to bring the gospel recipient to a decision—“If Jesus were here today and said to you, ‘your name, do you believe this,’ what would you say?”

You may want to close by asking the learner if he would like to express his belief in a prayer to God, either as a first-time expression of his saving belief in Jesus for salvation or as a prayer of gratitude for the salvation that he has earlier received, by God’s grace.

Ask the learner to read the “*Our Faith Response*” statement. Comment and elaborate as needed. For more information, consult page 31.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- **Discuss:** Do you believe in Jesus? If not, why not? If so, please explain what you believe and how convinced you are that it is true.

This question may have already been answered, in the course of discussing the last four points. But if not, be sure to deal with it here. Do not allow this session to end without determining where the learner stands in his relationship to God, through Jesus Christ.

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- Discuss: Are you willing to add these bridge verses to your Bible memory plan, and begin to work on the first one this week?

There are memory verse cards for each of the eight bridge concepts. You may need to explain the value of knowing these Bible texts. For example, if you and the learner have these texts memorized you and he will be able to present this chronological Bridge to Life in situations where a Bible is not available.

Assignments:

- Memory Verse: Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that he understands what the verse means. Remind him that you will review both of the previously memorized verses (from lessons 1 and 2) with him at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 3.
- Bible Reading: Remind the learner of his Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.
- Prepare for Lesson 3: Turn to page 10 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 3 material before the next session and prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for in-session discussions.

Lesson 3 – The Joy of Confidence: Assurance and Security

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- Discuss: Bible readings and review memory verses.

- Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages she has been reading. Then you may want to probe her understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that she understands what she has read.
- Memory verse: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse from lesson 2. Then, check her ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verse be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for her to follow. Also, review the verse for lesson 1, as well as any *The Bridge to Life* verses that have been memorized. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask her to check your memorization of those verses.

If memory work is lagging, spend five minutes working on the next verse together. Get her participating with you in the process. Teach the learner this method: Read the verse aloud ten times, then practice reading by phrases. Read the first phrase five times, then do the same thing again but add the second phrase, then do the same thing again, adding the next phrase, etc. Include the reference before and after each reading of the verse.

- Discuss: *Since you accepted Christ as your Savior, have you ever had any doubts as to whether or not you were or are now truly saved? If so, please explain.*

Encourage the learner to share her honest thoughts and feelings. Explain that it's not unusual for new believers to have doubts. Some of the more common doubts are these: "Did I do it right?" "But, I still sin." "I sinned again after I prayed, did I lose it?" "Do I have to do it again?" "It seemed too easy, did I mean it enough?"

Transition into this lesson by saying that this lesson will help her learn how to deal with salvation doubts.

Main Sections: (center sections)

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Top of page (white section): Read and comment on this statement. If you have had experiences of this kind in your own Christian life or know of doubting experiences from the lives of other young believers, it might be good to share those at this time. The purpose would be to encourage her to realize that doubts are fairly common, but that there are ways of dealing with them from the Bible.

1. Assurance—How can I know I am truly saved?

Always begin the following discussions by having the learner read the Bible verse or verses aloud.

a. Witness of God—John 5:24

Notice the three bullet point response answers:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me ¹has everlasting life, and ²shall not come into judgment, but ³has passed from death into life.

See if the learner can identify the one promise and the two statements of current facts, regarding those who have heard Jesus' word and have trusted God for salvation:

- “has everlasting life” (statement of current fact)
- “shall not come into judgment” (promise)
- “has passed from death into life” (statement of current fact)

b. Witness of the Bible—1 John 5:11-13

Explain that assurance of salvation is as simple as this—if you have truly received Jesus Christ, you have God's Son. And if you have Him, you have eternal life. Notice again that eternal life is something that believers presently possess. And if it's eternal, it is unending. To deny any of this is to deny God's record—the written Word of God. Assurance of salvation for those who have trusted Christ as Savior is largely a matter of trusting what God has said.

c. Inner Witness—Romans 8:16

The Holy Spirit is the One who bears witness with our spirit to assure us that we are members of God's family. This is an inner confidence—a sense of just “knowing for sure” in our hearts that comes from God's

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Spirit.

Explain how you have sensed this inner witness in your own life. While this witness is valuable and assuring to us, we might not always sense it because it is closely associated to human feelings. Thus, it's always good to remember the witness of Jesus and God's Word in John 5:24 and 1 John 5:11-13. Remember, if you sin or are refusing to obey God in some area of your life, you are not going to feel "right" in your heart. This, too, is a work of God's Spirit. See Hebrews 12:5-11. We'll study more about this in a later lesson.

d. Witness of a Changed Life—2 Corinthians 5:17

Ask the learner to share her answer to the question, "Have you experienced a noticeable, improved change in your life, since the time you were saved?" Obviously, if the answer is "No" then the learner needs to rethink the matter of whether or not she was truly saved. If the answer is "Yes" then encourage her to share these changes with you. Explain that she should not be discouraged if her life isn't as perfect as she would like it to be. Dealing with our imperfections (sins) is something that all believers must face. Spiritual growth is a gradual process. Explain that we'll deal more with these issues in lesson 7.

Train illustration: (page 11)

Without referring to the visual train illustration, read, explain, and discuss each of the Facts & Faith & Feelings paragraphs.

Then, ask the learner if she can explain the visual train illustration in her own words.

- The (Bible) **Facts** regarding God's promises of salvation are the engine that drives our assurance of salvation. These facts are steady and absolutely trustworthy. They are always solidly "on track."
- Our **Faith** must be connected to the facts of God's Word, otherwise our faith will fluctuate and waver. Faith not connected to God's promises in the Bible is just presumption and wishing. Faith must always be connected to God's Word, not my wishes.
- Our **Feelings** tend to be even more volatile than our faith. If we aren't careful our wobbly feelings will even unsettle our faith. But if our faith is tied closely to the facts of God's Word, our faith will be so stable that our feelings will be stable too.

2. Security—How can I know I will stay saved?

To some people with salvation doubts, getting saved and staying saved *seem* to them to be two separate issues. In reality, those who truly get saved will stay saved.

a. Secure in the hands of Jesus and the Father—John 10:27-30

The learner should have already underlined the “security phrases” in John 10:27-30. Read the passage and discuss these phrases that indicate that we are eternally secure. Here are some of the clearest security phrases, but there are others that have security implications as well:

- “I give them eternal life”
- “they shall never perish”
- “neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand”
- “no one is able to snatch them out of My father’s hand”

b. Safe and secure from all of our accusers—Romans 8:31-39

You may want to read carefully through this passage with the learner and point out all of the various ways that the apostle Paul assured us that we are secure as believers from those who would want to see us condemned or separated from God’s love.

- “³¹If God is for us, who can be against us?”
- “³³Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.”
- “³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.”
- “³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?
³⁶As it is written:
‘For Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’
³⁷Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us.”
- “³⁸For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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Bottom line: **Who or what is able to separate us from the love of God?**
Answer = no one or nothing!

c. Sealed and secured by the Holy Spirit—Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30

Two analogies are used here for the Holy Spirit and the promised security that we have in Jesus Christ.

- The Holy Spirit is a seal. (verse 13 and 4:30)

Explain the significance of the use of seals in New Testament times. Important documents were rolled up and sealed to assure that no one would break into them or tamper with them (similar to the idea of sealing envelopes today, but using an external adhesive seal that was applied to the document). Paul says that we were sealed in Christ when we were saved and the Holy Spirit is the seal that protects us from becoming “unsecured.”

In Ephesians 4:30, Paul repeats this analogy of the Holy Spirit as a seal.

- The Holy Spirit is the “guarantee of our inheritance.” (verse 14)

When an inheritance is promised, something is sometimes given to the future heir (perhaps an official document) to assure that the inheritance will be fulfilled as promised. This is also true for many other types of financial transactions. The Holy Spirit has been given to believers as a guarantee that God will fulfill His promise of an eternal heavenly existence with Him.

Questions:

- How long is this seal guaranteed?** (until the time of the redemption of our bodies, when we are resurrected from the dead to meet the Lord and be with Him in heaven)
- What does that mean to you?** (that, as believers, we are safely secured by the Holy Spirit and that we need not fear becoming “unsaved”)

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Question: **What would you do if or when you have doubts about the assurance or security of your salvation?**

Go back to God's Word and re-read His promises of salvation to us, especially

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John 5:24, 1 John 5:11-13, John 10:27-30, Romans 8:31-39 and Ephesians 1:13-14 and 4:30. We must base our faith (regarding the assurance of our salvation) upon God's unchanging Word, not upon our volatile human feelings.

Assignments:

- Memory Verse: Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that she understands what the verse means. Remind her that you will review all of the memorized verses with her at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 4.
- Bible Reading: Remind the learner of her Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.
- Prepare for Lesson 4: Turn to page 12 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 4 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 4.

Lesson 4 – The Joy of Guidance: *God's Word*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- Discuss: Bible readings and review memory verses.
 - Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages he has been reading. Then you may want to probe his understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that he understands what he has read.
 - Memory verses: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse for lesson 3. Then, check his ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for him to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask him to check your memorization of those verses.
- Discuss: Before you became a Christian, what was your view of the Bible?

After you hear the learner's response to this question, you might want to share your own pre-Christian view, if your view of the Bible changed when you became a Christian. Explain how your view has changed, if indeed that was your experience.

Main Sections: (center sections)

1. The Bible: A Book Inspired by God for an Important Purpose

When a Bible verse is presented as a part of a question or discussion, always begin by having the learner read the Bible verse or verses aloud.

- According to the verses above (2 Timothy 3:16-17), how was the Bible given to us? It was given to us by God's inspiration. Explain that this literally means that it was "God breathed." Provide as much further explanation as is needed to help the learner understand that the Bible is a book uniquely given to us by God.
- Read also 2 Peter 1:20-21. How does Peter describe this inspiration? It did

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not come by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” Ask and discuss: What do you think that means? Explain that the human writers of the Bible did not just decide, by themselves, to write their parts of the Bible. Peter says that they were “moved” or “carried along” by the Holy Spirit in this process.

- **What is the Bible profitable for, according to 2 Timothy 3:16-17?**

Ask and discuss: What do each of these mean?

- Doctrine (teaching of Bible truths)
- Reproof (points out when we do wrong)
- Correction (shows us how to correct our ways)
- Instruction in righteousness (teaches us how to live in a way that pleases God)

- **According to this same passage (2 Timothy 3:16-17), what is the Bible's ultimate purpose in the lives of men and women of God? The purpose of the Bible in the lives of believers is to equip them thoroughly “for every good work.”**

a. **Desire God's Word—1 Peter 2:2**

Why? Ask the learner to share his answers.

We should desire God's Word, because it helps us to grow spiritually? Discuss the analogy between a newborn baby who needs milk to grow and a newborn Christian who needs regular feedings on God's Word in order to mature as a believer. What happens to a baby who is malnourished? How would that compare to a newborn Christian who does not feed regularly on God's Word?

Discuss: What does the Bible do for us, specifically, that helps us grow spiritually?

- It causes us to be convicted of sin, and helps us to purify our lives.
- It helps us to understand God, the teachings of His Word, and His purposes for our lives.
- It gives us hope and confidence as believers.
- It confirms and builds up our faith.
- Etc.

b. **Study God's Word—2 Timothy 2:15**

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Why? Ask the learner to share his answers.

- It helps us to stand before God, approved.
- It helps us not to be ashamed, as workmen for God. Compare a Christian who attempts to work for God but doesn't know the Bible to a doctor who attempts to practice medicine but doesn't *study* medicine.
- It helps us to learn how to interpret ("rightly divide") God's Word so as to understand its teaching correctly.

c. Memorize God's Word—Psalm 119:11

Why? Ask the learner to share his answer.

We should memorize God's Word in order to help us avoid sinning.

Discuss: Practically speaking, how would memorizing Bible passages help us to prevent us from sinning? Memorized Bible verses can serve as a constant reminder of what we shouldn't do and what we should do, as well as how we can avoid doing what we shouldn't do. It is a way to carry God's Word with us, wherever we go. We'll see in lesson 7 how Jesus used God's Word when He was tempted by Satan.

d. Love God's Word—Psalm 119:97

If we love it, what will we do all day? Ask the learner to share his answer.

We will find ourselves meditating upon it throughout the day. This assumes that we are reading it regularly. Explain that the concept of meditating on the Bible is somewhat like a cow that eats grass in the morning and brings it up from its stomach later in the day to chew on. We call that "chewing the cud." This process, practiced by numerous kinds of animals, allows for an easier and more thorough digestion of the food.

2. Developing a Daily Bible Study Plan

Read and discuss each of the six points in this section. When you discuss the "Third" point in this section, show the learner a Bible (perhaps two or three) that have been carefully marked and annotated, by you and/or by other

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believers. Help him to develop his own personal system of Bible marking. Explain such practical matters as what kind of pen to use, how to differentiate between what to mark and what not to mark, etc. Also discuss the value of using a separate Bible study notebook for personal Bible study and also to carry to church for taking notes of the pastor's sermons. Set a good example for him to follow.

Practice: Before you end this session, select a chapter from the Bible reading plan on page 32, preferably a chapter you have read recently. With assistance from your leader, practice the suggestions presented in this lesson.

Take this opportunity to assist the follower with developing a regular plan for personal Bible study. Try to answer any of his "how to" questions. You will want to follow up on this instruction in each of the "**Discuss:** Bible readings" sections of the following lessons.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- **Question:** What do you expect to be the most difficult challenges to having a regular personal Bible study?

This question is an extension of the previous activity. But emphasize here the vital importance of establishing a regular procedure for daily Bible study regardless of the obstacles that might hinder the establishment and practice of this spiritual discipline.

Assignments:

- **Memory Verses:** Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verses associated with this lesson. Be sure that he understands what the verses mean. Remind him that you will review all of the memorized verses with him at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 5.
- **Bible Reading:** Remind the learner of his Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.
- **Prepare for Lesson 5:** Turn to page 14 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 5 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses,

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but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 5. Commend the learner when he has written thoughtful responses to the questions in the booklet. If he tends to not record written responses, urge him to do so where it is appropriate in the lessons.

Lesson 5 – The Joy of Communion: Prayer

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- Discuss: Bible readings and review memory verses.

- Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages she has been reading. Then you may want to probe her understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that she understands what she has read.
- Memory verses: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verses for lesson 4. Then, check her ability to recite the verses from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for her to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask her to check your memorization of those verses.

- Discuss: Why do you think that praying to God is important for you?

This question should surface some of the learner's views concerning prayer. Since she has probably already read and studied lesson 5, her responses may reflect some of the truths found here. You might ask her, "Did you pray before you became a Christian? Why? For what did you pray?"

Is it important to God? Ask the learner to respond to this question. Explain that God desires our prayers for a variety of reasons:

- God loves us and desires to provide for our needs, as we request His assistance.
- Prayer is an expression of our dependency upon God, which is an attitude that God wants us to have.
- Meaningful prayer is an expression of a true relationship with God—a relationship that God desires to have with us.
- Prayer, as described in the Bible, involves the worship of God.

Main Sections: (center sections)

1. What is Prayer?

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Read and discuss the definition of prayer given in this section. Be sure that the learner understands each part of this definition.

- Discuss: How does this definition compare to what you have thought about prayer previously?

Encourage the learner to share her previous understandings about prayer—how prayer should be done, its meaning and significance in life, and etc.

The Divine Procedures of Prayer

Read the three “We pray...” (divine procedures of prayer) statements and show how they relate to the visual (trinity symbol) at the top of page 15. Then read/ask the question:

- Which one of the Bible passages above needs the most explanation for you?

Ask what about that passage was most difficult for her to understand. Read each of the passages and discuss/explain. Obviously, be sure to focus most on the passage that was most difficult for the learner to comprehend. See the notes below.

We pray...

a. To God the Father—Matthew 6:9

In the prayer that Jesus modeled to His disciples, He taught them to pray to God the Father. His prayers were addressed to the Father. You may want to turn to John 17:1-26 and notice the several times that He addressed His heavenly Father in this pre-betrayal and pre-arrest prayer. The prayer in Matthew 6 is often called the “Lord’s Prayer.” Some have suggested that we call that prayer the “Model Prayer” and that we call the prayer in John 17 the “Lord’s Prayer.”

God is our Heavenly Father. He is in Heaven, but He is also everywhere. He loves us infinitely and knows everything. Explain that we can pray with complete confidence because God is our loving heavenly Father.

b. Through Jesus Christ—Hebrews 4:14-16

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Discuss: Do you know why Christians often close their prayers with the phrase, “in Jesus name?”

- You might begin by showing the learner the passage John 14:12-14. However, these verses just state the fact that we are to pray “in Jesus’ name,” they do not explain *why* He told His disciples to do that.
- Hebrews 4:14-16 provides insight into the reason for this practice of praying in Jesus’ name. Ask the learner to read this passage and see if she understands what is being taught here. Explain the Old Testament priestly system and, especially, the role of the High Priest and how he intervened regularly for the Old Testament Israelites. Explain that, after His death, Jesus went to heaven to fulfill the permanent and perfect role of our great High Priest. He continuously intercedes for God’s children. It is important to point out the significance of the fact that Jesus was tempted in the same ways that we are, but that He didn’t sin. He knows and understands what we are going through, but He triumphed over those temptations! When we pray, we can approach God’s throne with boldness, knowing that Jesus Christ is our High Priest—our Advocate, who pleads our case to the Father. Explain that it is not essential that we always recite the words, “in Jesus’ name,” but it is always important to realize that when we approach God we are doing so through Jesus and based upon His merits.

c. With the help of the Holy Spirit—Romans 8:26

- Ask the learner to read this verse aloud. Ask her to make an attempt to explain it. Help to clarify her understanding of the Spirit’s role in prayer, according to this text.

The point here seems to be that our human weakness extends even to our inability to know specifically what we should pray for. Although we may often have a vague sense of our need, we may not be able to understand well or articulate it. The Holy Spirit, in those cases, knows our need better than we do, so He intercedes with God for us. We should try to be informed and specific in prayer, but often we cannot be. So praying “when we don’t know how to pray” is OK. The Holy Spirit will also bring people and situations to our minds as we quietly wait on God in prayer.

Explain that the Holy Spirit is a person, thus we speak of Him as “He” and not as an impersonal spirit (“it”). Lesson 6, in its entirety, will focus

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on the Holy Spirit and His various roles in the lives of believers.

2. Four Elements of Prayer

Explain that there are at least four common elements to prayer. Make it clear that God does not legalistically require a specific step-by-step procedure for prayer, but that there is a logical order to how we generally should arrange these elements in our prayers.

a. Confession—Psalm 66:18

Explain that the word “regard” in this verse means to “cherish” or “cling to.” It is the opposite of confession, which carries the idea of openly agreeing with God about the wrongness of our sins, as a first step toward forsaking the sin. Lesson 7 contains a section about the confession of sin.

- Discuss: Why is it important to confess our known sins at the beginning of our prayer? (Psalm 66:18 gives the clear answer to this question.)

b. Adoration and Praise—Psalm 145

- Read Psalm 145 and see how the psalmist adored God and how he expressed this adoration in praise.

First, read the definitions of “adoration” and “praise.” Discuss these to be sure that the learner understands the difference between the two terms.

Then, read Psalm 145 and mark all occurrences of the word “praise” and words that appear to be synonyms for “praise.” As you go through the psalm with the learner, also identify each of the specific qualities of God that the psalmist (David) adored.

c. Thanksgiving—Psalm 107:1, 8, 15, 21, 31

Read these verses and discuss the things, historically, that the psalmist was thankful for.

- Discuss: What are some God-given things for which you can express your thankfulness in prayer?

Ask the learner to write down at least ten things for which she is

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thankful to God. As the leader, you may want to create your own “thanksgiving list.” Share your lists with each other.

d. Supplication and Intercession—Philippians 4:6

Discuss/explain the difference between “prayer” and “supplication.”

Prayer is generally considered to be the general term used to refer to a petition offered to God. Supplication, on the other hand, is generally considered to be a more specific term used to refer to an intense pleading with God regarding a need.

You may want to take the learner to 1 Timothy 2:1-3 in order to see some of the elements of prayer which Paul urged believers to offer on behalf of civil leaders.

Discuss: In Philippians 4:6, why would Paul state that prayer is the appropriate alternative to anxiety.

Prayer addresses the Sovereign God who is control of our lives. This all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, loving God is always available to believers, to help us with our fears and our burdens. In 1 Peter 5:6-7, God invites us to cast our cares upon Him. In Philippians 4:6, Paul is simply stating that our first response in times of potential anxiety should be to turn to God and seek His help.

Review Activity: Ask the learner to demonstrate how she might use the visual on page 15 to explain to someone what she has learned about the procedures and elements of prayer.

3. Developing a Daily Prayer Plan

Read through the five points in this section and then...

- Practice:** Before you end this session, practice (leader and learner together) what you have learned in this lesson about prayer.

As the leader, pray first and model what you have just taught the learner. Before or after this prayer, re-emphasize that prayer should be a natural practice with which we feel comfortable and that it isn't essential that we always follow one strict procedure. However, it is important to be aware of

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these four elements of prayer and incorporate them into our communion with God. Then, ask the learner to lead in prayer, applying what she has learned. Encourage her to make prayer a natural conversation with God and not a performance with which to impress other people.

Answer the learner's questions about this section.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Question: **What difficulties do you expect in trying to establish a regular, daily prayer time?**

This question extends the previous activity, but the emphasis here is to urge the learner to begin to take action on what she has learned. Ask her to discuss some specific steps of action that she would like to implement in order to develop a meaningful daily prayer time.

Assignments:

- **Memory Verse:** Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that she understands what the verse means. Remind her that you will review all of the memorized verses with her at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 6.
- **Bible Reading:** Remind the learner of her Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.
- **Prepare for Lesson 6:** Turn to page 16 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 6 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 6.

Lesson 6 – The Joy of Empowerment: *The Spirit-Controlled Life*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- **Discuss:** Bible readings and review memory verses.
 - Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages he has been reading. Then you may want to probe his understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that he understands what he has read.
 - Memory verses: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse for lesson 5. Then, check his ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for him to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask him to check your memorization of those verses.
- **Discuss:** How adequately do you feel you could live the Christian life apart from God's help? Explain.

Presumably, the learner will sense a strong need for God's help in living for Jesus Christ. Thus, the "Explain" part of the response is the most important. Encourage him to share openly with you. It is important that you be transparent about some of your own struggles, to assure him that there are no "Super Christians" who can live the Christian life obediently and victoriously without God's help.

Steer this discussion toward the good news that God has given all believers a very special divine Helper—the Holy Spirit. Explain that God does not expect us to live the Christian life on our own. He knows that, in our human condition, we are spiritually weak. Without His continuing presence and power in our lives, none of us could ever please Him with our lives.

Main Sections: (center sections)

Top (white) section: Read the text in the top (white) section of pages 16-17.

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Explain that the Bible clearly teaches the one true God exists in three distinct persons—the Father, the Son (Jesus), and the Holy Spirit. This great truth about God can not be fully grasped by human minds, which are limited in their ability to comprehend such lofty divine truths. Explain that this lesson will focus on the Holy Spirit and some of His very important roles in the lives of Christians.

1. The Holy Spirit: God Living in Us

a. What Jesus promised—Read John 14:16-17

What can we learn about the Holy Spirit in these verses?

Some of the lessons to be learned about the Holy Spirit in this passage:

- God the Father has given us the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit will live with us forever.
- He is also called the “Spirit of Truth.”
- The world (unbelievers) does not know Him.
- The Holy Spirit lives with and in us.

b. What Paul later knew—Read 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

The promise that Jesus made earlier was a reality in Paul's day.

Explain that these verses in 1 Corinthians were written more than 20 years after Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would come to live with and in believers. In Paul's day, Jesus' promises had become a reality.

Read the paragraph that describes the city of Corinth. As the leader, you may want to do some background research, prior to this lesson, regarding Corinth and its general immoral condition.

In that kind of an environment, why is it important to remember that God the Holy Spirit lives within us?

Allow the learner to share his answer to this question. Discuss the implications of this reality—that God indwells us as we live our lives in the midst of sinful environments. Explain how His (the Holy Spirit's) presence should be a deterrent to our tendency to participate in the sin that occurs around us. Also, discuss how He must be grieved when we use the very temple which He inhabits (our bodies) to participate in sinful

activities.

2. The Holy Spirit: God Helping Us

Read the introductory paragraph under point 2.

a. He helps us understand the Bible—1 Corinthians 2:9-14

Be aware that there are some details in this passage that are not immediately easy to understand. You may want to consult some good commentaries in your preparation for this lesson, just to be sure that you understand the passage yourself. However, in your study with the learner, focus on the clear general message in the text—we need the assistance of the Spirit of God in understanding the Word of God. Avoid the kind of in-depth analysis of the passage that would only confuse the learner, at this stage in his understanding of Scripture.

Ask the learner (as always) to read these verses aloud.

Explain that, in this passage, Paul was teaching believers in the church of Corinth about the Holy Spirit's role as the One who helps us to understand the spiritual truths that God has revealed to us in the Bible.

- Verse 9—This verse is often misunderstood to refer to things that God has prepared for us in heaven, but in the context (see verses 10-14) it seems to refer to things (truths) that God has prepared for us in the Bible.
- Verses 10-12—In order to understand spiritual things, we must be assisted by God's Spirit. He is capable of helping us to know even the deep things of God that are revealed in Scripture.
- Verse 13—Paul's understanding and teaching of these concepts was not based upon man's wisdom, but upon what the Holy Spirit had taught him.
- Verse 14—Unbelievers do not receive ("welcome with open arms") the things of the Spirit of God because they perceive them as being foolish. Neither can they know (understand these truths intimately) because they do not possess the Spirit of God who alone is capable of discerning them.

Why is it important for us to realize that the Holy Spirit inspired human authors to write the Bible, in order for us to fully appreciate the fact that

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He can help us understand it? [Discuss this concept.](#)

Allow the learner to answer this question. You may want to illustrate this concept by referring to some book (other than the Bible) that was written by a person who is still living. Ask: "If you were reading this book and were having difficulty understanding parts of it, who would have the greatest potential of explaining the book to you?" Obviously, the author would be that person. Explain that we, as believers, have the author of the Bible (the Holy Spirit) residing within in. He helps us to understand the Bible as we read it.

b. He equips us to minister—1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-31

Option: [Read also Romans 12:1-8 and Ephesians 4:11-12.](#)

Whether or not you choose to read these two additional passages will probably depend upon the time that you have available for this lesson. These passages provide additional parallel information on the doctrine of spiritual gifts.

Read and explain the definition of spiritual gifts. The purpose in this lesson is *not* to do an in-depth study on the doctrine of spiritual gifts, but simply to teach the learner that God equips believers with the gifts that they need to serve Him. Thus, the focus here is on some of the ministry gifts that clearly seem to continue beyond the apostolic age into our own time. The list of six gifts in this section is intended to be representative and not necessarily a complete list of the gifts that God is dispensing today.

Do you think that you may be gifted in any of these areas? [Explain](#)

Also ask the learner if there are other abilities (including general talents) that God has given him that can be used in God's service. The important thing for him to know, at this point, is that all of our abilities (spiritual gifts or God-given talents) have been given to us in a stewardship. In other words, we need to use them for God's glory as much as possible.

3. The Holy Spirit: God Controlling Us

[Read Ephesians 5:18.](#)

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The one thing that these two conditions (“drunk with wine” & “filled with the Holy Spirit”) have in common is “control.” But in what ways do they differ?

Ask the learner to state his answer to this question. Obviously, the behavior of a person controlled by God’s Spirit is very different from the behavior of a person controlled by alcohol.

The main point in this section is that a person who is “filled with the Holy Spirit” is a person who has allowed God’s Spirit to take control of his life so as to influence his behavior to please God. Explain to the learner that God the Holy Spirit lives in every true believer but He only *controls* those who will yield their lives to His control. Encourage the learner to yield to God’s control of his life continually.

Read Galatians 5:16-26. This is another great passage about the Holy Spirit’s control over a believer’s life, but slightly different terminology is used. As always, study this passage prior to session 6 so that you understand its meaning before attempting to teach it to the learner. As you study the passage with the learner, provide explanations as needed for him to understand Paul’s teachings. A central feature in this passage is the contrast between the “works of the flesh” and the “fruit of the Spirit.”

See if you can define each of the nine fruit of the Spirit traits in your own words.

Allow the learner to share his definitions first. Some of these will be clear and obvious to him, but others will need some explanation. Study the passage in advance so that you can provide well-informed definitions and explanations.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Question: What is the relationship between the Spirit of God, the Word of God, and the child of God (a believer)?

This question has the potential of evoking a variety of kinds of good and legitimate answers.

In light of this lesson, perhaps the best answer is that the same Spirit of God

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who inspired the Word of God (see lesson 4) also lives within the child of God. Thus, believers can have confidence knowing that the Bible does not have to be an unknowable book to them. God the Holy Spirit is ever present with them to assist them in understanding the Bible.

Assignments:

- **Memory Verses:** Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that he understands what the verse means. Remind him that you will review all of the memorized verses with him at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 7.
- **Bible Reading:** Remind the learner of his Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.
- **Prepare for Lesson 7:** Turn to page 18 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 7 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 7. Commend the learner when he has written thoughtful responses to the questions in the booklet. If he tends to not record written responses, urge him to do so where it is appropriate in the lessons.

Lesson 7 – The Joy of Purity: *Personal Holiness*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- **Discuss:** Bible readings and review memory verses.

- Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages she has been reading. Then you may want to probe her understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that she understands what she has read.
- Memory verse: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse from lesson 6. Then, check her ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for her to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask her to check your memorization of those verses.

- **Discuss:** How do you feel when you have done something wrong? Why?

Probe the learner's sense of guilt for her disobedience to God.. Ask about her sense of guilt before she became a believer? Was there a "before and after salvation" difference? Why or why not? If she is a true believer, her conscience should be appropriately sensitive to the presence of unconfessed sins. Explain that the human conscience is activated by truth. The more the learner reads the Word of God and understands God's truth, the more sensitive her conscience will become to sin.

- **Read 2 Samuel 11:1-27.** Hopefully this passage was read as a part of your and the learner's preparations for this session. If so, do not read it again. Ask the learner to summarize the story of David, Uriah the Hittite, and Bathsheba. If the learner did not read this chapter, you may need to pause here to read it together or you could tell the story to her, pointing out key verses along the way. This passage provides an important background to the next part of the lesson.

Main Sections: (center sections)

Top (white) section: Read the text in the top (white) section of pages 18-19.

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- Read Psalm 51:1-17 and answer these questions: How did he (David) feel? What did he (David) desire?

- It appears that David felt very guilty—defiled, ashamed, and sad.
- David desired God's forgiveness—mercy, cleansing, renewed joy, and restoration with God.

1. God's Standards: Holiness and Righteousness

Read and explain the definitions of holiness and righteousness. On the surface these terms may seem to mean the same thing. The biblical distinction between the two terms is important.

Explain that God's moral standards were not set arbitrarily (for Himself or for His creation); they are a manifestation of His very nature. Thus, any violation of them is grossly offensive to Him.

a. Holiness—Read 1 Peter 1:14-16.

What are the practical implications of 1 Peter 1:14-16 for your daily life?

If we are “obedient” children we will not conform our lives to our pre-Christian evil desires, but will seek to be holy, as God is holy.

Remember that the essential idea of holiness is “separateness.” The term is used in Scripture, not only to emphasize separateness from something (sin), but unto something (God). The basic idea here is, that as God's children, we should strive daily to be like Him—separated from sin but also set apart unto Him.

b. Righteousness—Read Psalm 15:1-2.

What are the practical implications of Psalm 15:1-2 for your daily life?

The question in verse 1 is simply asking, “Who can come into the presence of God?” Verse 2 provides the answer. David uses a common form of Hebrew poetry (parallelism) to state essentially the same (or very similar) things in three different ways:

- *He who walks uprightly,*
- *And works righteousness,*
- *And speaks the truth in his heart;*

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Discuss: How would you know a righteous man if you were to meet him and spend time with him? What specific things would you see in his life?

2. Your Response: Obedience or Disobedience

Read the introductory paragraph under point two. Ask the learner to share with you what she remembers from the story of Adam and Eve's temptation in the Garden of Eden (from lesson 1).

a. Temptations to be resisted—1 John 2:15-17

Ask the learner (as always) to read these verses aloud. Be sure to explain the definition of "world" as used in this passage.

Discuss: What is the significance of verse 17? Why would it be important for us to remember this verse?

We should remember that there is nothing of eternal value in these worldly things, contrary to the eternal values associated with doing God's will.

What are John's three categories of temptations?

- Lust of the flesh—Galatians 5:16-18
See below.
- Lust of the eyes—Job 31:1
Question to discuss: What did Job probably mean when he said that he had "made a covenant" with his eyes?
- Pride of life—Proverbs 16:18
Question to discuss: Why is it typical for pride to lead to destruction or a fall?

Discuss the meaning of the Galatians 5:16-18 passage.

If our Christian behavior is controlled by the Holy Spirit, we will not be yielding regularly to sinful fleshly desires. The flesh is a New Testament term that describes the sinful nature that seeks its own pleasure and dominated us before we became Christians. Thus, the "flesh" and the Holy Spirit are totally at odds with each other. If we allow the Holy Spirit to direct our decisions and actions, we will not need the law to restrain us because our lives will automatically operate

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within the realm of good moral conduct.

b. Resisting temptations—James 4:7

According to James, what can you do to make the devil flee from you?

Answer: Resist him! Jesus was the perfect example of someone who resisted the devil.

Read Matthew 4:1-11 (See verse 11—“Then the devil left Him...”).

Which of Jesus' three temptations appealed to?

- **Lust of the flesh?** “If...command that these stones become bread.”
Note: Keep in mind that Jesus had been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights and his “flesh and bones” body was hungry!
- **Lust of the eyes?** “...showed Him all the kingdoms of the world...”
Note: Imagine, the powerful desire associated with seeing all of the kingdoms of the world and knowing that they could be yours!
- **Pride of life?** “set Him on the pinnacle of the temple...if You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down...He shall give His angels charge over you.” Note: It would have been a prideful use of Jesus' power to have tempted God to prove Himself by sending angels to save Him.

What did Jesus do each time in order to resist the devil?

Answer: He resisted Satan by quoting God's Word to him. Ask the learner to find the three “it is written” statements where Jesus referenced God's Word in resisting Satan's temptations. Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy chapters six and eight.

Discuss: What lesson can we learn from what Jesus did these three times? (He used God's Word to resist temptations.)

c. Promised help in resisting temptations—1 Corinthians 10:13

Which of these four promises are found in this verse? Discuss:

Answer: All four of them!

- Other people face the same kinds of temptations that we face.
- God is always faithful.
- God will not allow us to be tempted beyond our abilities to resist.
- God will always provide a way for us to escape our temptations

(but we must choose that way)

3. God's Mercy: Forgiveness and Cleansing

Read the definition for “confess” and explain it. The word comes from two Greek words combined into one, which literally means to “say he same thing as.” To confess our sins means that we agree with God (same the same thing about our sins that He says about them) that our sins violate the holy moral law of God and offend Him more than we can imagine.

Read 1 John 1:9.

- What is your part in receiving God's mercy? Answer: confess sins
- What is God's part? Answer: forgive us and cleanse us

Read Psalm 32:1-5. With 1 John 1:9 in mind, how would you describe David's experience?

This is an excellent Old Testament case study of the truths of 1 John 1:9 being put into practice. David confessed his sins and God forgave him. David's experience occurred more than 1000 years before John wrote his epistle.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Question: What do you plan to do when tempted to sin?

Do not settle for a “pat” answer here. Work with the learner to help her establish a plan of action for living a holy and righteous life, in the face of temptations. This may need to involve some practical lifestyle changes that will remove her from the source of some of her temptations, such as old friends who are unbelievers, etc.

Assignments:

- Memory Verse: Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that she understands what the verse means. Remind her that you will review all of the memorized verses with her at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 8.
- Bible Reading: Remind the learner of her Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current

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period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.

- Prepare for Lesson 8: Turn to page 20 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 8 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 8. Commend the learner when she has written thoughtful responses to the questions in the booklet. If she tends to not record written responses, urge her to do so where it is appropriate in the lessons.

Lesson 8 – The Joy of Sharing: *Witnessing*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- Discuss: Bible readings and review memory verses.

- Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages he has been reading. Then you may want to probe his understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that he understands what he has read.
- Memory verses: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse for lesson 7. Then, check his ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for him to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask him to check your memorization of those verses.

- Discuss: When you think about sharing the gospel, what fears do you have?

There are a variety of common responses that are given to a question like this. Listen sympathetically to any responses given and provide assistance and encouragement in helping the learner to allay these fears. For most believers, one of the biggest fears they struggle with in beginning to witness is the fear of not knowing what to say or how to go about sharing their faith. This lesson is designed to help prepare believers for evangelism by reviewing the essential gospel content with them and by helping them to learn two related evangelistic methods that can be mastered prior to real life application.

- Note: *The Bridge to Life* instructions are found on pages 30-31.

In the first section of this lesson 8, there will be a review of *The Bridge to Life* evangelistic presentation. The learner should study pages 30-31 in order to prepare for this lesson, in which he will be asked to present the gospel to the learner, by using *The Bridge to Life* (ChronoBridge) illustration.

Online resource: There are three versions of the ABWE chronological Bridge to Life (ChronoBridge) that are available to you online:

- A “click through” visual of the ChronoBridge.

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- A high resolution downloadable video clip of someone presenting the ChronoBridge (10 minutes in length) that can be downloaded and played on your computer.
- A lower resolution “streaming” version of this same video clip that can be viewed online.

www.ceimresources.org/the-bridge-to-life/

Main Sections: (center sections)

1. Knowing the Essential Gospel Truths

Read the instructions in the first paragraph. If the learner has not already completed the written part of the activity that is presented in section 1 (from memory, write in the eight essential gospel concepts in the bridge on the top of page 21), have him do that at this time.

Practice: Pretend that your study leader is not a believer. Explain to your leader, step by step, how to cross the bridge from spiritual death to spiritual life. Use the eight key Bible passages (quote or read them) in the process.

Turn back to pages 8-9 for this practice presentation of the gospel. This is a key teaching time for you (the leader) to equip the learner to become a confident gospel presenter. As he leads you through the ChronoBridge, stop where it is appropriate and coach him as to how he can improve his presentation. Encourage him to open the Bible and ask you (the “pretend” recipient of the gospel) to read aloud the verses to him, just as he should do in a real life witnessing opportunity.

If he needs additional practice, you might want to begin lesson 9 with a review of this process.

2. Sharing Your Personal Faith Story

Experiences with *The Way to Joy* have repeatedly indicated that the activity in this section is one of the most valuable exercises in the entire study. You will be wise to take as much time as is needed to assist the learner to work through this activity thoroughly.

In addition to being an excellent method for presenting the gospel, a personal

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faith story also serves as a check-point for a professing Christian to evaluate the reality of his profession of faith in Christ. It is not unusual for a *professing* believer to begin to realize, at this point, that his faith story is not genuine by biblical gospel standards.

Some churches that have used *The Way to Joy* have begun to require baptismal candidates to develop written faith stories, according to the guidelines presented in this lesson. Not only does it help them to communicate their salvation experience clearly to the church, but it also prepares them to share their testimony of faith in Christ with unbelievers.

Read the first two paragraphs in section 2. Then, read each of the bullet points under “General Suggestions.” Discuss and explain each of these points.

Discuss: What questions do you have about developing your faith story?

Be sure that the learner understands the faith story concept. Go ahead and explain/discuss the three steps under “Structuring Your Faith Story.”

Share your own faith story, as you have developed it to match the instructions given in this lesson. The more effectively you model sharing your faith story, the more likely the learner will be serious about developing his faith story well.

Take some time here to help the learner begin to outline or write out his faith story. Follow up on this in subsequent sessions until he has developed a written faith story that will appeal to gospel recipients in a way that clearly communicates the gospel. Your goal should be that the learner has developed a refined faith story before the end of this series of studies and has practiced it enough that he is at ease in sharing it. It is also important that he begin to use his faith story in a real life witnessing situations before this study series is completed.

After you have developed one (faith story), practice it with your leader.

At some point in this study series, when the learner has developed a faith story, begin to let him practice that with you. Critique it caringly and encourage him to refine it until it ready for real life presentations.

3. Getting Started Sharing the Gospel Truth

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Develop an evangelistic prayer list with the names of ten to twenty unbelievers, and pray regularly for each person.

Begin by showing him your evangelistic prayer list. In this session, help him begin to think through names of people who should be on his list.

Plan to witness to one or two of them soon.

It is important to get him started, as soon as possible, in the process of witnessing. Ask him to share with you the name or names of the people he wants to witness to first. Pray with him, in this lesson and subsequent lessons, for the people on his evangelistic prayer list. Have him set a tentative date before which he hopes to share the gospel with them.

Share the gospel, as planned.

Ask him to keep you informed regarding how his witnessing efforts are going. Join him in praying for the people on his list. When he does have opportunities to share Christ with them, debrief with him as to how things went. Provide further instruction as is appropriate.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Question: How and when do you hope to begin to share the gospel using your faith story and/or *The Bridge to Life*?

This question may have been asked already in your discussions in section 3. If not, try to get the learner to establish some definite witnessing goals at this time.

Assignments:

- Memory Verses: Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verses associated with this lesson. Be sure that he understands what the verses mean. Remind him that you will review all of the memorized verses with him at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 9.
- Bible Reading: Remind the learner of his Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.

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- Prepare for Lesson 9: Turn to page 22 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 9 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 9.

Lesson 9 – The Joy of Fellowship: *The Local Church*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- Discuss: Bible readings and review memory verses.

- Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages she has been reading. Then you may want to probe her understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that she understands what she has read.
- Memory verse: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verses for lesson 8. Then, check her ability to recite the verses from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for her to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask her to check your memorization of those verses.

- Discuss: Before you were saved, what did you think about churches? How has your view changed?

It will be helpful for you to know the learner's answer to this question, since it may influence her views of a church that need to be corrected or clarified in this lesson. It is very important, in the early and formative days of a disciple's Christian life, that she be taught how to determine (1) what a "Biblical local church" is, (2) what its role is in God's plan, and (3) what her commitment should be to a local church, as defined in this lesson.

Main Sections: (center sections)

Top (white) section: Ask the learner to read aloud the definition of a local church that appears in the top (white) section of pages 22-23. Then, go back through the definition (thought by thought) and explain what each facet of the definition means. It is important, as you work through this lesson, that the learner understands what the text in this lesson means when it refers to a "church" or a "local church." In this lesson (and other places in this booklet) these terms refer to a church that truly strives to do what is described in this definition, although it may not be perfect in those attempts. The definition that appears here is intentionally simple. A more in-depth definition of the local church and study of ecclesiology

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(doctrine of the church) should be included in the next level of discipleship.

1. Believer's Baptism

a. Meaning of baptism—Romans 6:4

Find the three phrases in Romans 6:4 that are illustrated by the drawings to the right. Write each phrase below the appropriate drawing, then discuss each of them.

- “Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism unto death...”
- “That just as Christ was raised from the death by the glory of the Father...”
- “Even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

b. Requirement for baptism—Acts 16:30-33

What is required of a person prior to baptism? (See verses 30-31.)

Answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and...be saved...”

Discuss: Baptism does not save you, it only *symbolizes* what Christ has done for you?

According to Ephesians 2:8-9, salvation is a gift that is “not of works.” Baptism is a good “work” (an act of obedience on a believer’s part) that we do in order to declare our previous decision to identify with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection. You may want to again reference the believing thief who died on the cross beside Jesus, from lesson 1. Jesus promised him that he would be with Him in paradise, although the man was obviously not going to have an opportunity to be baptized.

2. Local Church Ministry

Note: The visual on page 22 summarizes the three purposes of a Biblical local church that are presented in point c. on page 23.

a. Identification with a local church—Acts 2:41

True or False (circle one answer) and then discuss: Baptism not only identifies you with Christ, in his death, burial, and resurrection. It also

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identifies you with a local body of Christians—a local church.

Christians hold various views regarding the relationship between baptism and the local church. For example, did Christ intend for baptism to only be performed by official representatives of local churches (as compared to any believer who chooses to baptize another believer)? Did Christ intend for people to automatically become identified with (that is, “members of” the baptizing church) the local church that administered the baptism? Without going into an extensive discussion in this follow-up lesson, suffice it to say that:

- Baptism, in the New Testament, appears to be an ordinance that was given to local churches and not to individuals who were acting independently of a local church. For example, Phillip, Peter, and Paul were all representatives of local churches. Thus, when they baptized new believers (in the book of Acts) they were probably acting under the authority of the local churches to which they belonged.
- In many, if not most, New Testament examples, it would appear that baptism probably did, in some way, initiate a new believer's identification with the church whose representative performed the act of baptism.

Thus, the correct answer to the True/False statement would be “True.”

b. Regular assembly of believers in a church—Hebrews 10:24-25

Why is it important to participate regularly in a local church assembly?

Just from this text, we see that the regular assembly of believers (church meetings) is where believers “stir up love and good works” by “exhorting one another.” Obviously, there are other reasons not found in this text: to participate in corporate worship, to learn the Word of God, to present our financial gifts to God, to pool our resources in order to strengthen and extend our witness and outreach to a spiritually needy world, etc.

At this point, emphasize very strongly the need for the learner to be actively and regularly involved in a local church fellowship—one that matches the definition stated at the top of pages 22-23. You may need to guidance in finding such a local church.

c. Purposes of a Biblical local church

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Reference the diagram on page 22 as you work through these three purposes.

- **Upward focus:** Corporate (as a collective body) worship—John 4:23-24

The Old Testament has much to say about the corporate worship of Israel, as associated with the temple. Not a lot is said about corporate worship in the New Testament, except for occasional references to singing, prayer, and praise that occurred as believers met. There are enough of these references, however, for us to assume that corporate worship was an integral function in the New Testament church, even though those meetings were generally convened in houses, most of the gatherings were of necessity small, and the services were probably somewhat informal.

Jesus spoke of a time future to His meeting with the Samaritan woman when true worshippers (genuine believers) would “worship the Father in spirit and truth” and that worship would not be centered in Jerusalem (see verses 21-22). He was probably speaking of the time when local churches would multiply far and wide and worship would be done in such a way as to recognize the reality that He is spirit and that our worship of Him should be in harmony with His truth. Truly Biblical local churches would be sensitive to these two emphases of worship.

- **Inward focus:** (that is, to other believers within the church) Building up of other believers—Ephesians 4:11-12

Here Paul tells us that God has given some gifted people to the church (apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastors and teachers—or possibly pastor-teachers). Their primary role is to equip believers (“saints”) to do the work of ministry, so that the body of Christ will be edified (solidified spiritually). Thus, one of the primary functions of a local church and its leadership is to teach and train all attendees in such a way as to prepare them to carry out the ministries of the church, rather than to leave those responsibilities to the aforementioned church leaders. This is a good place to emphasize to the learner in this study that she needs to become involved, as soon as possible, in some facet or facets of local church ministry.

- **Outward focus:** Mobilization for evangelism—Mark 16:15

Sometimes the question is asked, “To whom was the Great Commission given—local churches or to believers as individuals?” The best way to answer that is to study the book of Acts to see how it was carried out in the early years of the Church. Although in Acts you see individuals sharing the gospel, they were generally (if not always) associated with local churches who were equipping them and mobilizing them to do so.

Review activity: Ask the learner how he could use the visual illustration on page 22 to explain the focuses (or functions) of a local church to someone who is a new believer.

3. The Lord's Supper or “Communion”

a. Unifying effect of the Lord's Supper—1 Corinthians 10:16-17

How should participation in the Lord's Supper be unifying to a local body of believers?

The word “communion” implies fellowship and unity. Communion is intended to be a time when a local body of believers unite themselves in memorializing the death of our Savior. That emphasis is expressed clearly in verse 17. Ideally, it should be a time when any church schisms, small or great, should be healed, or at the very least set aside.

b. Purposes for the Lord's Supper—1 Corinthians 11:23-26

- **For believers:** To *memorialize* (or remember) Christ's death.
Why is it important for us to remember Christ's death regularly?

For one thing, it is an important act of worship for us to focus our memories upon the act of Jesus Christ that provided us salvation. It's also has a humbling effect that is vital to us. Peter tells us what the negative effects are in the lives of a believer who has forgotten that he has been purged from his old sins (2 Peter 1:8-10). Thus, the Lord's Supper should be an occasion for self examination and confession of personal (or perhaps corporate) sins (See 2 Corinthians 11:28-32.)

- **For unbelievers:** To *see and hear* the Lord's death proclaimed.
How does the Lord's Supper proclaim His death to unbelievers?

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When properly administered, the Lord's Supper (Communion) can be a powerful audio-visual message about the meaning and power of the death of Jesus Christ. Only believers are allowed to participate, because unbelievers have not yet identified themselves with Christ, in His death and resurrection. The breaking of the bread and the communion juice are vivid symbols of Christ's death—His broken body and the blood He shed. The same gospel impact can and should be true of baptismal services.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- **Discuss:** What do you not understand about a local church, as defined here?

Use this question as an opportunity to review concepts that were discussed but were not clear to the learner, or to discuss local church issues that were not covered in this lesson.

- **Discuss:** Have you taken this step of identification with Christ and a Biblical local church? If not, will you?

By this point in the learner's Christian life, it is hard to imagine a legitimate reason why she has not been baptized and established regular fellowship in a good local church, *if* a good local church exists in a location relatively convenient for her. If either (or both) of those acts of obedience have not yet occurred, it is important that you lovingly and firmly press upon her the Biblical obligation of obedience to Christ in those areas.

Assignments:

- **Memory Verse:** Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that she understands what the verse means. Remind her that you will review all of the memorized verses with her at the beginning of your meeting for lesson 10.
- **Bible Reading:** Remind the learner of her Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan.
- **Prepare for Lesson 10:** Turn to page 24 and preview the material on the left (dark blue) panel. Instruct the learner to read the lesson 10 material before the next session and to prepare for the Bible study discussions. This involves reading all of the Bible verses in the lesson and responding to the questions

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and the discussion instructions. Some of these will require written responses, but other instructions will only require mental preparation for discussions that will occur in session 10.

Lesson 10 – The Joy of Purpose: *God's Plan for You*

Be sure that you are very familiar with the instructions on page 5 and have prepared for this lesson according to the instructions given there.

Introduction: (dark blue left panel)

- **Discuss:** Bible readings and review memory verses.
 - Bible readings: Begin by discussing any questions that the learner has regarding the Bible passages he has been reading. Then you may want to probe his understanding of some of the key concepts in these passages, to be sure that he understands what he has read.
 - Memory verse: First, ask the learner to check your memorization of the verse for lesson 9. Then, check his ability to recite the verse from memory. Be patient, but gently insist that the verses be memorized word perfectly. Always set a good example for him to follow. Also, review the verses for the previous lessons and *The Bridge to Life* verses. If the learner did not choose to memorize *The Bridge to Life* verses, ask him to check your memorization of those verses.
- **Discuss:** Why didn't God *immediately* take you to heaven when He saved you?

It has been said, "We are here and *not in hell* because of the grace of God and we are here and *not in heaven* because of the Great Commission." Explain that God has left us here on earth for a purpose—God has a plan for us and that plan is related to His Great Commission. There are five Great Commission purposes that we'll study in lesson 10.

- **Begin** with the instructions at the very top of the lesson.

Lessons 8 and 9 dealt with two purposes that God intends for believers to fulfill in their lives. You will begin this "The Joy of Purpose" lesson with a brief review of those two lessons. See the next section for instructions about how to do that.

Main Sections: (center sections)

How to approach the lesson content in the main sections of pages 24-25:

First—Overview the content of this lesson by discussing the mural with the five

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visual illustrations (from 1. Personal Evangelism to 5. Future Missionary Service). To do so, begin the lesson (even before you read the “Purposes” in the white section at the top of the page) by explaining the five visuals in this mural.

- Explain that “God does have a purpose for you in...” (mural, page 24)
 1. Personal evangelism
 2. Local church ministry
 3. Personal discipleship
- Explain that “God may have a purpose for you in...” (mural, page 25)
 4. Helping to start new local churches
 5. Future missionary service

Second—Read the Matthew 28:19-20 account of the Great Commission, as it appears in the middle of pages 24-25 (just below the five visual mural).

Then, discuss this statement: “Evangelism modeled after Matthew 28 and the book of Acts is “Church-Planting Evangelism.”

Even though the term “church planting” does not appear in the Matthew 28 passage (nor any other place in the Bible), the activities in these two verses describe what we have come to know as “church planting.” We have been commissioned to “make disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teaching them...” These are functions of local churches. As we read through the book of Acts, we see that these activities were generally done in the context of *or* as an extension of local church ministries. Experiences throughout church history have repeatedly reinforced the value of the church in a believer’s life. We have learned that believers thrive best in their Christian lives when they are actively fellowshipping in a Bible-believing, gospel-preaching, missions-oriented local church.

The term “church-planting evangelism” (or “church-planting discipleship” or “church-planting instruction”) defines an approach to evangelism (or discipleship or Biblical instruction) whereby new converts are intentionally and strategically directed into “Biblical local churches” as defined in lesson 9. If no such church exists in the community, new converts are incorporated into a church-planting effort. As defined in lesson 9, a “Biblical local church” is a church that seeks to replicate itself, at home and/or abroad. “Church-planting evangelism” is juxtaposed to “parachurch evangelism” that does not emphasize strongly (if at all) the role of a local church in the life of a believer.

A key aspect of “church-planting evangelism” is to instruct new believers, from

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the time of their salvation and on, about their role in personal evangelism, discipleship, and church involvement (if there is a good existing church available to them) or church planting (if there is no Biblical local church in their community.”

Third—Go up to the first two purposes in the white section at the top of the page (see instructions below) and briefly review them.

Top (white) section:

1. Personal Evangelism

Go back to lesson 8 (pages 20-21) and briefly overview-review that lesson.

Discuss: What experiences have you had related to personal evangelism, since you studied lesson 8?

Ask the learner to share any experiences that he has had in sharing *The Bridge to Life* and/or his personal faith story. You may also want to review his progress in developing an evangelistic prayer list.

2. Local Church Ministry

Go back to lesson 9 (pages 22-23) and briefly overview-review that lesson.

Discuss: What experiences have you had in local church ministry, since you studied lesson 9?

Use this time to follow up on the learner's responses to the previous lesson, related to his involvement in a local church.

Fourth—Study the material in sections 3, 4, and 5.

3. Personal Discipleship

Discuss:

- What is this process called “discipleship?”

Explain that discipleship is the process by which a more mature believer

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assumes the role of nurturing a less mature believer to become well grounded in the Christian faith, to develop a faithful daily pattern of reading God's Word and praying, to progressively become more Christlike in character, and to evangelize and disciple others who need it.

- **Who needs to be “discipled?”**

Explain that all new believers or other believers who have not matured in their Christian faith need to be discipled, until they reach the place in their Christian life where they are matured and equipped to lead others through a discipleship process.

- **Who can be a “disciple maker?”**

Explain that any relatively mature (perfection not essential!) believer, who has been equipped in the spiritual disciplines presented in the previous lessons of this study *can* and *should* be involved in discipling others.

- a. **Baptizing them...**

Read and discuss the two purposes of baptism. If necessary, review the information about “Believer's Baptism” on pages 22-23.

- b. **Teaching them to observe all things...**

Read and discuss 2 Timothy 2:2.

Explain that this verse explains the discipleship process more clearly than any other passage in the Bible. Ask, “How many generations of believers are mentioned in this verse?” (answer = at least 4)

- **Whom could you disciple?**

Encourage the learner to think of someone who needs to be discipled whom he could begin to mentor in a discipleship process. This might be someone that he has led to Christ, or any other believer who has not matured in His Christian faith.

- **How would you do it?**

Suggest to the learner that he can now take someone through *The Way to Joy*, just as he has been taken through it. Explain that you will be available to help him with this, or you will be available as a resource person that he can come to for advice and encouragement in this process.

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- *When can you start?*

The objective of this question is to get the learner thinking about specific plans, rather than to just think about doing it “some time” in the future.

4. Helping Start New Local Churches

Read the content under this heading. Discuss anything that was not made clear in the previous discussion regarding “church-planting evangelism.”

Discuss: How does Matthew 28:19-20 relate to church planting?

If necessary, review the material above on “church-planting evangelism” in order to lead this discussion.

Discuss: Is there a need for a new church in your community, or nearby? Are there groups of people who are not currently being reached by a gospel-preaching local church that a new church might be able to reach?

We often think of church planting as something that only cross-cultural missionaries do in countries foreign to their home countries. However, planting new churches is something that all believers should sense an obligation to do in any community where a Biblical local church does not exist closely enough to impact that community.

There is an old Jewish saying that there are three things that a man should do in order for his life to influence the future:

- Parent a child.
- Plant a tree.
- Write a book.

As Christians, we might add three things a person can do to influence the future, even into eternity:

- Win someone to Jesus Christ.
- Disciple an immature believer.
- Assist in planting a new church.

5. Future Missionary Service

Discuss: Are you willing to ask God *if* He wants you to be a missionary, at some point in your life, to make disciples in another of the many nations of

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the world?

Obviously, God doesn't want all of us to leave our homelands to minister for Him in another country. But, a good test of submission to the lordship of Jesus Christ is to tell God that you are willing to invest your life, anywhere in the world where you could have optimum impact for Christ.

You might want to ask the learner, at this point, if he is willing to pray for God to use him anywhere in the world where his life can best be used for God's glory. If the answer is affirmative, pray with him now.

Closing: (light blue right panel)

- Question: *If there were more of these studies that would take you deeper into God's Word, would you be interested?*

If the learner is interested in and willing to continue Biblical studies, pray and plan with him toward that end. This might mean taking courses in a local or distance learning Bible school. Or, it may mean that you should take him personally through studies in a higher level of discipleship.

Assignments:

- It is strongly recommended that you plan at least one final session with the learner, in order to:
 - Review all of the Bible memory verses from this entire study series.
 - Review his presentation of *The Story of Hope* (from lesson 1).
 - Review his presentation of *The Bridge to Life* (from lesson 8).
 - Review the presentation of his personal faith story (from lesson 8).
 - Set up a long-term Bible reading plan.
 - Discuss his involvement in the "Five Purposes" that were studied in this lesson 10.
- Memory Verses: Ask the learner to read aloud, at this time, the memory verse associated with this lesson. Be sure that he understands what the verse means. Remind him that you will review all of the memorized verses with him at the beginning of your final meeting.
- Bible Reading: Remind the learner of his Bible reading assignments from page 32. If more than seven days occur between your Bible study meetings, instruct the learner to re-read the assigned Bible chapters for the current period, rather than to read ahead in the Bible reading plan. In the final meeting, assist the learner in developing a Bible reading plan that will continue

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through the coming months, and perhaps years.

- If the learner in this study reads English, you may want to award him with a copy of John Piper's book, *Don't Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2003). This book will provide an additional challenge that is perfectly fitting to conclude this Bible study series, particularly to reinforce the emphasis of lesson 10. To add a personal touch, write an encouraging note in the front of the book and sign it.