

Turning Points:
A Teaching to Help New Believers
Grow in Their Faith
–Student Handbook–



Introduction

This material has been compiled over the past 35 years by Mannahouse Church for the purpose of training disciples and educating new believers. This curriculum can be used one-on-one or in a group setting. The outlines present foundational truths in a clear, organized way that is adaptable to any congregation and leader. The following will provide new believers with foundational truths, and next steps to grow in their faith.

Session 1 - The Bible Is the Word of God

Our Need For God's Word

The Bible is God's story written for us. Through it we learn about the character of God. We get to know His personality and how passionately He loves us; He will split seas and move mountains to rescue us.

We learn how relational God is—He desires us to know Him, talk with Him, trust Him, and receive His love. The Bible is full of wisdom and truth.

We also learn that there is a real devil—also known as Satan—who is out to kill, steal and destroy our lives any way that he can.

The Bible gives us insight to differentiate how God works from how the Devil works. The Devil's strategies involve shame, condemnation, humiliation, confusion, lies, and hatred. God relates with us out of His love and goodness; He is full of mercy, forgiveness, grace, and patience. Even when God corrects us, He is loving and kind.

Spending time each day reading and meditating on God's Word is important to our overall health as a Christian. Just as you need daily nourishment in order to become physically strong, the Bible gives you spiritual nourishment to make you spiritually strong.

1. The Example of Peter

Matthew 16:13-17 (CEV)

When Jesus and his disciples were near the town of Caesarea Philippi, he asked them, "What do people say about the Son of Man? The disciples answered, "Some people say you are John the Baptist, or maybe Elijah or Jeremiah or some other prophet."

*Then Jesus asked, "But who do you say I am?"
Simon Peter spoke up, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God."*

Jesus told him:

"Simon, son of Jonah, you are blessed! You didn't discover this on your own. It was shown to you by my Father in heaven..."



Matthew 16:21-23 (CEV)

From then on Jesus began telling his disciples what would happen to them. He said, "I must go to Jerusalem. There the nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make me suffer terribly. I will be killed, but three days later I will rise to life."

Peter took Jesus aside and told him to stop talking like that. He said, "God would never let this happen to you, Lord!"

Jesus turned to Peter and said, "Satan, get away from me! You're in my way because you think like everyone else and not like God."



2. The Voice of God vs the Voice of Satan

So here we have two voices: God's voice and Satan's voice. **How do you know the difference?**

Ephesians 2:1-2 (CEV)

In the past you were dead because you sinned and fought against God. You followed the ways of this world and obeyed the devil. He rules the world, and his spirit has power over everyone who doesn't obey God.

What happened to Peter?

We can also be similarly influenced. Have you ever had a sudden negative thought? Did it cause fear, confusion, shame, contradiction, bitterness, hate, anxiety, or even cursing? Did you feel guilty because of it? That's the Devil, and that is how he works. He is the enemy of our soul.

God's voice speaks to the heart. His voice is one of love, mercy, compassion, and kindness.

The Sufficiency of God's Word

The Devil is on the attack; sometimes his attacks are not obvious, in fact they are often sneaky. His deception can sound very reasonable—we saw how the Devil distorted Peter's perspective. **So how do we deal with this problem in our lives? How can we make sure we don't fall into the same trap that Peter did?**

Psalms 86:11 (GNT)

Teach me, Lord, what you want me to do, and I will obey you faithfully; teach me to serve you with complete devotion.

How can we understand how to tell the difference between God's voice and the Devil's voice?

John 1:1-18 (NIV)

(vs 1-4) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

(vs 12-14) Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (vs 17-18) For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.



Revelations 19:11-13 (CEV)

I looked and saw heaven was open, and a white horse was there. Its rider was called Faithful and True, and he is always fair when he judges or goes to war. He had eyes like flames of fire, and he was wearing a lot of crowns. His name was written on him, but he was the only one who knew what the name meant. The rider wore a robe that was covered with blood, and he was known as "The Word of God."



2 Timothy 4:1-2 (NIV)

In the presence of God and of Christ, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.



1 Peter 2:1-2 (NLV)

Put out of your life hate and lying. Do not pretend to be someone you are not. Do not always want something someone else has. Do not say bad things about other people. As new babies want milk, you should want to drink the pure milk which is God's Word so you will grow up and be saved from the punishment of sin.



Matthew 4:2-4 (NLV)

Jesus went without food for forty days and forty nights. After that He was hungry. The devil came tempting Him and said, "If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to be made into bread." But Jesus said, "It is written, 'Man is not to live on bread only. Man is to live by every word that God speaks.'"

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.

James 1:22-25 (NIV)

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

John 8:31-32 (NASB)

So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you continue in My word, then you are truly My disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

Psalms 119:9-12 (NIV)

How can a young man stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Praise be to you, Lord; teach me your decrees.

Submission to The Word: Repentance

In 1 Thessalonians 1:9, we find a classic biblical definition of repentance:

1 Thessalonians 1:9 (NASB)

For they themselves report about us as to the kind of reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God.

Let's go a bit deeper:

1.

2.

3.

4.

As His followers, you have started the greatest journey a human being can ever experience. Your destination is to become a productive, healthy Christian who is victoriously living each day the way Jesus intended.

Proverbs 9:10 says, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." **Does that mean God wants us to be scared of Him?**

Repentance is not something we give to God; it is the gift God gives to us.

Acts 5:31 (NIV)

God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins.

Acts 11:18 (NASB)

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has also granted to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life."

The Blessing of Repentance

1.

Galatians 3:26 (CEV)

All of you are God's children because of your faith in Christ Jesus.

2.

Galatians 4:6 (CEV)

*Now that we are His children, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts.
And His Spirit tells us that God is our Father.*

3.

2 Corinthians 4:5 (CEV)

*We are not preaching about ourselves. Our message is that Jesus Christ is Lord.
He also sent us to be your servants.*

4.

Ephesians 1:17 (CEV)

*I ask the glorious Father and God of our Lord Jesus Christ to give you his Spirit.
The Spirit will make you wise and let you understand what it means to know God.*

5.

Ephesians 1:19-20 (CEV)

I want you to know about the great and mighty power that God has for us followers. It is the same wonderful power he used when he raised Christ from death and let him sit at his right side in heaven.

6.

Isaiah 26:3

The Lord gives perfect peace to those whose faith is firm.

7.

Revelations 4:11 (CEV)

"Our Lord and God, you are worthy to receive glory, honor, and power. You created all things, and by your decision they are and were created."

8.

1 John 3:1-2 (NIV)

See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see him as He is.

Session 2 - Faith And Water Baptism

What is “faith”?

John 3:16-17 (ESV)

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Part of the faith process is believing that God exists and that He loves you. He's not here to condemn you—He cares about you! This is one of the most difficult things for some people to expect.

Matthew 10:29-31 (ESV)

Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

What Is the Meaning of Our Faith?

Hebrews 11:1-3 (NIV)

*Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. This is what the **ancients** were commended for. By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*



Hebrews 11:6-10 (NIV)

*And **without faith it is impossible to please God**, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith. By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and building is God.*



Romans 8:28 (NIV)

And we know that all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

The First Great Act of Faith and Obedience to God: Water Baptism

What is water baptism?

Matthew 28:19 (NIV)

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Who is baptism for?

Acts 2:38 (NIV)

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:48 (NIV)

So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Do you have to be water baptized?

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

When should you be water baptized?

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Mark 16:16 (ESV)

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.

What if I was baptized as a baby? Can a baby repent of its sins?

Is the mode of baptism important?

Matthew 3:16a (NIV)

As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went out of the water.

Acts 8:38-39 (NIV)

...Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip...

What happens in baptism?

Colossians 2:11-12 (NIV)

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

Romans 6:3-5 (NIV)

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.

What does God promise when we are baptized in water?

Romans 6:6-14 (NIV)

For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once and for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness. For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace.

Session 3 - Hearing From God—Prayer and the Holy Spirit

The Voice of the Holy Spirit

God can speak to us by His Holy Spirit through prayer...but in order to hear from Him we must be open and willing to do things God's way.

Responding to the Voice

You may have heard that God is made up of three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is called the Trinity, one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Ephesians 5:18 (NIV)

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.

Luke 11:9-13 (NIV)

So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will you give him a snake instead? Or if he asks for an egg, will you give him a scorpion? If then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

When we have a need, what should we ask for?

Acts 1:8-9 (NIV)

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

Acts 8:14-17 (ESV)

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:43-47 (NIV)

"All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name." While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, "Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have."

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NIV)

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

2 Timothy 1:14 (ESV)

By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

A Heart For Prayer

Mark 11:24 (ESV)

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV)

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Matthew 6:5-13 (NIV)

And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling on like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This then is how you should pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name"

We begin by praising God.
Example: Lord, your name is above all names. You are our Creator. We praise you!

"Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

God is wiser than we are and we ask for His way in our life and situations.
Example: We want Your Kingdom to come first in our lives. The only prayer we want to pray is Your will.

"Give us today our daily bread"

God has provided all of our daily needs and we are grateful! We are blessed!
Example: Thank you Lord for taking care of the necessities of life, our daily needs. We acknowledge you doing that.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

God understands the area of greed and bitterness. We ask for forgiveness for our wrongs and we receive His grace.
Example: If we have sinned against you in any area, forgive us. If I have done wrong, forgive me. And I will make sure that I forgive others the same.

"And lead us not into temptation"

We ask for help to make the right decisions and to keep us from sin.
Example: Don't allow temptations of the world to come upon me.

"But deliver us from the evil one"

We ask for forgiveness for agreements we made with the wrong thoughts and beliefs about who God is and who He says we are.

Example: Don't allow my life to be deceived, to fall into the deception of the Devil. Thank you God, for your mercy, grace, and forgiveness. Thank you for your love and kindness. I praise you God!

Matthew 6:14-16 (NIV)

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Hindrances to Prayer

Ephesians 4:31-32 (NIV)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Final Session - A Celebration!

The Book of Acts in the Bible describes what happened after the resurrection of Jesus. Believers gathered together regularly in the temple and in each other's homes. The scripture in Acts illustrates the importance of having community with fellow believers.

The Role of the Church