

# ENGAGE

TRAINING



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DAVE NADLER





Fourthstream.com

Engaging in spiritual, creative,  
and philosophical revolution.

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*This is a book about authenticity.*

*authentic knowledge  
authentic faith  
authentic life  
authentic destiny*

*“Choose entrance through the narrow gate.  
For the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to  
destruction, and there are many who choose it.  
But the gate is small and the way is narrow that  
leads to life, and there are few who find it.”*

*- Jesus in Matthew 7:13-14*

## THE STORY HANDED DOWN FROM THE DAWN OF TIME!

At the dawn of human existence Adam and Eve, on our behalf, ensured spiritual, eternal death for themselves and all human offspring.

God immediately killed animals and clothed our “parents” to cover their nakedness and shame. They had become “uncovered” because they chose to not believe God’s Word, and to rebel against our Creator. By shedding this first blood on the earth God indicated that blood would be required to escape spiritual death.

Through Abraham, the Living God gave us the chosen people (the Jews), the Law and Prophets, and finally the One who would save humans from eternal death. Jesus Christ was born according to many specific prophecies on the exact day of God’s choosing. He is the Savior, or Messiah, of the entire world. Please take care to understand, *the Son has always existed*. In submission to His Father’s will and to “buy back” lost humans from eternal death, the Son was born without a human father to a young Jewish woman. His goal was to shed the necessary blood as an offering for the sin (separation) of the world. The Bible is His story and, consequently, our story as well.

*May you respond to this “Good News” of the so-called “old” and “new” testaments - a good news which appears to be the only answer to the “bad news” of Adam and Eve’s (and our) eternal spiritual death.*

One other note. Don’t confuse historical Christianity or Christianity today with Jesus. It’s ALL about Jesus. And you.

*This would be a great time to go to [Fourthstream.com](http://Fourthstream.com) and listen to “The God Story” as an audio reflection!*

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LISTEN TO THE INDESTRUCTIBLE LIFE VIDEO HERE.

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What do you conclude about Jesus’ view of life, death, and heaven?

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# ENGAGE

## TRAINING

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 Access to the support videos noted in this book can be obtained  
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*The Bible is God's love letter to His children. It is alive!  
The Author of the Bible is God, working through the personality and  
experiences of chosen men and women just like you and me.*

The Hebrews were chosen to hold and care for these sacred words of God.  
There is no dispute about the Authenticity of the Old Testament books.

The Jews cared for, transcribed, and honored the  
Scriptures. The so-called "Old Testament" is the history of  
God choosing a people to bless the earth (the Jews) with the  
promise and fulfillment of a "Messiah" or Deliverer.

This promised Messiah was Jesus Christ, a Jew from the royal tribe of  
Judah and a descendent of King David. Jesus is God's Son, and has  
always existed. According to the God-story He made the world.

When the Holy Spirit came upon Mary (a virgin) He became  
the Father of Jesus the human (who was also sinless God).  
They were and are Father and Son - just as they have always been.

Jesus' sole purpose was to come to reveal eternal  
life to the world, die, be raised from the dead,  
and to take upon His sinless self the sins of the world.

The so-called "New Testament" is God's story of giving His Son.  
There are other religious writings but they dim when held up to the Law  
(the books given through Moses) and the prophets and the  
psalms of the ancient Hebrews - God's chosen people.

*You can be quite confident that sufficient truth  
concerning God's Son has been accurately brought to mankind.  
Certainly enough to find or reject eternal life. All that remains is for  
the Holy Spirit to bring His Word of faith alive in our lives!*

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[LISTEN TO THE GROWING STRONG WITHIN THE STORY OF TIME VIDEO HERE.](#)  
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Authentic  
F A I T H

Read each passage and think through the outline below and answer the question:  
“DO I LONG FOR AUTHENTICITY?”

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*Authenticity: The genuine article. Faithful to the original. Real.*

*To be authentic it must transcend culture and yet contextualize truth in personal ways.*

*To be authentic it must transcend circumstance and yet be totally relevant.*

*To be authentic it must transcend experience and yet stir the passions of the heart.*

*In what ways do I desire authenticity?*

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*Have I learned to ask these questions with frequency?*

*If God has spoken - what is He saying?*

*Am I following what He has spoken?*

*Will He be pleased with my response?*

*Where can I find authentic examples of faith and am I solidly familiar with these examples?*

From the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms. How familiar am I?

From Jesus' life and words. How familiar am I?

From eyewitnesses who carried the Gospel to the world. How familiar am I?

From some early church fathers (2nd - 4th century). How familiar am I?

From a select part of historical Christianity as well as books about personal faith. How familiar am I?

From current expressions of faith by groups around the world. How familiar am I?

From people we know or hear stories about. How familiar am I?

*Are these things true in my spiritual quest for authenticity?*

Hold to the purity of the original message (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) Is this me?

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Be devoted to the calling of my heart (2 Timothy 2:3-13) Is this me?

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Engage in living as a servant (Mark 10:41-45) Is this me?

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Live for the promised outcome (1 Corinthians 15:19, 50-58) Is this me?

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Follow the anointing (1 John 4) Is this me?

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*Are these key questions at the core of what is shaping of my world view?*

How can I break free from my human nature? (1 Corinthians 10:11-13)

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How can I break free from my culture? (John 8:31-36)

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How can my heart go where I am unable to take it myself? (John 6:63; John 16:12-15)

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*AUTHENTICITY.....to find it, you have to want it!.....Read Jeremiah 29:10-14*



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LISTEN TO THE FIRST THINGS FIRST VIDEO HERE.

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## FIRST THINGS FIRST

Read Acts 2:37-47

Serious contemplation of the God-Story readily reveals our need for continual intervention and communication from our Living Creator. A belief in the need for repentance, renewal, and revival has been shared by many Jesus followers in history. Careful observation of church and secular history reveals that followers of Christ in any age must accurately assess their times. We live in times that are weak in prayer (God contact) and shallow in principled and passionate living.

We must learn to be men and women of **prayer**. We must embrace **spiritual heart strategies** that will put the axe to the roots of religious tradition, lazy agnosticism and weak atheism. We must engage in the painstaking, fruitful process of sowing the fresh and precious Seed of Jesus into our own hearts and into the world around us. Too often we emphasize getting to know people rather than knowing Christ, in functioning as an organization rather than as a living organism, and mastering our mission or program at the expense of being men and women with uncompromising hearts.

There is nothing worthwhile in this world apart from Christ. God can do in a moment through His Spirit what we can labor over for a lifetime. Time spent in this world is brief when compared to the eternal privilege of experiencing the inexhaustible depths of God. "Getting it right" is not the ultimate goal, because it is WHO we know and not WHAT we know that makes us spiritual.

The first Christ-followers cut deeply into the pages of past and future history. Through continual devotion to the apostle's teaching (the Word), the breaking of bread (the remembering), fellowship (the consuming desire to spend days and evenings together), and prayer, *It was the presence of God within them, around them, and through them that made the difference.* The world would never be the same. They were, quite simply, men and women of whom the world was not worthy. Though as common as you and me, their relationship with their Master eclipsed the temptation to be ordinary. *They were obsessed not so much with the dream of heaven on earth, as heaven in heart.* In my view there are several areas that reflect our current cultural need for intervention by the Living God so we too may experience *heaven in heart*.

### 1. WORSHIPPERS OR ACQUAINTANCES? Read John 4:21-24

There are many who are acquainted with Christ and the Gospel but few who worship Him in Spirit and in truth. People in America are often observers in worship, not necessarily dedicated to knowing God. This is an incredible shame, because the divine power that raised Jesus from the dead is the same power that opens our mortal eyes to see the immortal and inspires our souls to seed-sowing that is bigger than ourselves. God has many acquaintances in the American church, but how many are worshippers?

Jacob had a simple formula. Grasp

Him and don't let go until He blesses you. Peter's understanding was pure as well, "Where else shall we go Master, You have the words of eternal life."

There is no substitute for holding on to God. We were created to know God. All preaching, teaching, singing, discipling, retreating, and Bible studying that misses this is worthless. It is the hot and cold of life that is normal, not the exception. God meant our personal insufficiency to do good to drive us to Him. Here we find what only He can provide. This leads to a second very important issue:

## 2. ARE WE CHRIST-FOLLOWERS OR BELIEVERS? Matthew 10:34-39

It is clear from the Gospels that Jesus was exacting a great price from His disciples. The decision to be a follower far surpassed what we call being someone who “believes.” In America when someone “believes” it means that he or she is giving mere intellectual assent. This was not true in the Biblical time of the people of God nor in eastern cultures today. When Jesus said, “Come, follow me,” He was assuming a journey that would require much of His followers. Paul called this “dying to self.” Jesus called it picking up our cross...and following Him!

The very nature of Christ and His gospel requires everything from us. According to James “demons believe (in Jesus) and tremble.” To say we believe when we are unwilling to follow is to fly in the face of Christ and all of His teachings. This luxury of choice and convenience is Greek, Roman, American, and

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*"Believers in America are often parasites of convenience."*

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spiritually decadent. After all, are we not supposed to be “working out our salvation in fear and trembling?” Believers in America are often parasites of convenience. If the people of God wish to experience the power of God, then we will take seriously the command to follow. For it is the Lord Christ we serve. *Once this is settled in our heart, we move to the next thing our needy days demand:*

## 3. HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FACE OF CULTURAL IRRESPONSIBILITY Read Ephesians 5:15-21

I am husband to my wife of 30 years and father to my three children. Neither the state, Sunday school teachers, High School teachers or college professors, peers, counselors...no one...is to fulfill my role as a partner and parent. When God voiced His expectation for a father to lead and teach, He did not qualify this role with how much someone worked, the status of a marriage, or how comfortable a man was with his role. He expected it then just as He does now. We are to let God build our house by His grace, teach our children to fear the Lord, and live with our wife in an understanding way. No excuses. No psycho-babble. No weak-willed compromise.

My children are to be taught to be servants of God, contributors to what is good in society, and to flee and oppose what is undesirable or evil. I am supposed to love my wife and my daughter with a godly, protective love. I am to teach my boys to become men who love God, respect women, and hold to high integrity. I, and I alone, will be held responsible for the father-picture of God in my home. If my wife is my partner in this, I am blessed. If she is not, I am not off the hook. If I am a woman alone or a woman alone with children, I set my face toward the Living God who is my protector and my husband. If I am unmarried, I embrace my freedom from concern with joy, and design a life-style that blesses Christ and furthers His kingdom.

I am to discern what is garbage in my society and call it what it is. I am to reject sensuality, greed, anger, envy, and strife. I am to reject pornography and the degrading of women, expend my heart on my family rather than myself, and constantly teach my children what it means to be a man or a woman who embraces their destiny as the seed of God in the world.

Together with my wife, we form a partnership to advance God's kingdom and bring God glory. If I experience the privilege of co-laboring for the Gospel with my children, I am doubly blessed. I am to see parenting as the highest calling apart from my marriage to Christ and my commitment to my wife. This leads us to point four. *I need friends who hold the same values and convictions as I do.*

*MY THOUGHTS ABOUT THESE THREE “FIRST THINGS”:*

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## 4. RELATIONAL LOVE BASED UPON TRUTH Read 1 Peter 1:22

Jesus summed up all of Scripture by saying we should love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love our neighbor as we love ourself. This is why the Church exists. We are to help each other love our neighbor as ourselves, because "if we cannot love our neighbor whom we can see, how can we love God whom we do not see?"

The Church has evolved in America to focus on the WHERE rather than the WHO. This is a critical error. We must wade through multiple layers to uncover the relational reality that we ARE the church. Often the church is more of a club than a community, an organization rather than a living organism. If there are often so many layers that those who follow Christ never discover community, how will the unbelieving community ever see it or understand it? And yet, we are to be marked before unbelievers by our love for one another.

***This higher relational calling is built upon the foundation of love spoken and lived toward one another.*** It is not as elementary as modern psychology's belief if we can just change behavior or environment, our problems will be solved." This calling is built upon a third Person in our relationships where people love others the way God is loving them RIGHT NOW. The Church becomes a community where merely being right is not the goal, but, rather, our quest is fulfilling our ongoing debt to love one another. Community occurs as a group of people love one another despite our personal shortcomings and sociological, economic, and even theological differences.

This kind of love for one another is something that our culture avoids. It is messy. It is work. And it costs us a huge piece of ourselves. It cost Jesus and His Father dearly.

In a world where relationships are discarded like out of date clothing, love based upon truth has heart, fortitude, and commitment. It has sacrifice at its root. It is the inevitable measuring stick on the pathway that has been blazed by the One who IS love. It takes a brave man or woman to "go first." It takes courage to love others the way God loves us, and to speak the truth in love. *We have been gifted by God to apply this kind of love to others:*

## 5. TALENTED OR GIFTED? Read 1 Peter 4:7-11

According to the Scriptures, when Christ ascended to heaven He gave gifts to men. These gifts, when activated by the Holy Spirit, were to make the Church a supernatural community. Christ-followers were to band together with their gifts and together become far more than they ever could have been alone. This necessitated being submitted to one another in love. This supernatural living also demanded that time, gifts, and treasures be released completely for the sake of the Kingdom of God (one another). Not one day in seven but seven days a week were to belong to God. We are to give more than a "leftover" commitment of hours and even our work and leisure time are to be submitted to the discretion of our Creator. It is not a question of giving 5, 10, or 20 percent of my time, talents, and money, but a commitment to use all of my resources to build the kingdom of God.

The church today functions much more on experience than gifting, on human drive than divine empowerment, and on who is

*Christ-followers  
are to band  
together with  
their gifts, and  
together become  
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ever could have  
become alone.*

available rather than who evidences mature character and needed gifts. Our leaders are often untested or visible leaders in commerce and community, and then assumed to be good leaders for the people of God. Our workers often see God as needing to be integrated into life, rather than our whole lives being given over to God. Our confidence is many times based in our ability to plan and execute and our prayer lives are puny in comparison to our gallant efforts. The ministry of the Spirit is either divorced from the Word or the Word is absent of the Spirit.

When Jesus came He unleashed not only the authority of truth but the daily reality of a Living Holy Spirit, supernaturally revolutionizing the souls of men. If we aspire to only what mere men, even great men, can do, then we rule out our need to rely upon Christ to work through us. When God's strength is obvious God's glory will not be confused with our own. To mature in love and effectiveness by supernatural gifting is the heart of the Church. *And if we are to be men and women of renewal and revival in the power of God we must be willing to:*

## 6. CHOOSE RELATIONSHIP OVER RELIGION Read Mark 7:1-23

*The Church is not a gathering point where people meet to find their identity, it is a "place" to celebrate our identity.*

*The work of God is done on our behalf because God is gracious - not because we are able to perform well enough.*

It is human nature to develop traditions. Traditions are not evil in and of themselves, but when elevated to a level of the Word of God (or above it), they suck the spiritual life right out of a living community. This is why Jesus had such fiery words for the Scribes and the Pharisees. Eventually their traditions not only eclipsed commandment, they invalidated them. A healthy community of believers will avoid and put to death religion (the traditions of men) wherever they are found.

The Church is not a place for people to find their identity, it is a place to celebrate it. The work of God is done on our behalf because God is gracious not because we are able to perform well enough. Obsession with personal recognition is a powerful result of being in a fallen world. This stronghold of Satan, along with the accusation that we are worthless, runs deep in our humanity. It drives leaders, workers, homemakers, and children every day. Yet the essence of the message of the Gospel is that God loves us and has rescued us not only from sin and Satan but from self (and self-effort).

Little seeds become large plants. When "church" became a place we GO rather than who we ARE, American Christianity suffered. In our culture we are hard-pressed to find believers (let alone unbelievers) that don't associate God with what goes on in a building. In the face of "calling no man father" we elevate priests and pastors to a higher order. But the main quality of men and women of faith in the Bible was the extraordinary work of God in very ordinary people. Though they were just like anyone else (and sometimes worse) they had learned the secret of "Christ in me." We bicker and fight over worship styles, petty dogmas, the color of carpet, and the articles of our worship. And all the while our relevance gap with our dying world widens right along with our inflated views of our traditions and ourselves.

Galatians gives us a simple formula: The GOSPEL + SOMETHING = NOTHING. When time and energy serving our traditions carries the bulk of our time and heart, it is time to beg God to deliver us. If tradition's foothold is so strong that we lose our ability to pray, dream, and believe, then it is time to slit the throat of tradition. *We can then turn our eyes onto the fields, white for harvest:*

## 7. GOSPEL RELEVANCE FOR OUR DYING WORLD

There is a chasm in our culture. Most undecided Christ-followers perceive church people or "Christians" as religious to the point of being self-righteous. Even when this isn't true, most Americans still view becoming a Christian as getting behaviorally better. If we just could kick smoking, quit drinking, reject drugs, escape premarital and extra-marital immorality, go to church enough, wear different clothing, and change our language from crude to "christian-speak," then we would be good enough for God. Despite the fact that this flies in the face of the Gospel of grace, the "church" does little to defuse such fanciful notions. In fact, we even reinforce them, depending upon just how religious we are. Perhaps it is because we are struggling so much with our own identity in Christ, or busy perfecting our newfound Christian altar-egos, that we have so little to talk about with our "brothers in Adam."

The world is a dying place that needs Jesus. It doesn't need "church." KING FIRST. KINGDOM SECOND. and CHURCH is the outworking of the "King in me!" The world doesn't need perfect people to bring the gospel to it. It doesn't need people with all the right answers, ready to "dump the truck" rather than give salt-seasoned responses. The world needs people who care enough to introduce others to Jesus. Because He is all-powerful God He can and will take care of the rest. The world needs people who understand the power of God. Committed people who know that presenting Jesus is more powerful than presenting "me" or my "church." *In this way we "hold out the word of life!"*

### SOME CONCLUSIONS:

It is my belief, and our secularizing numbers substantiate it, that America is the "lost mission field" of the twentieth century. As we launch into the 21st century, Jesus must be experienced and represented by courageous communities of Christ-followers who worship with all our hearts and who take responsibility for our lives, blemishes and all. We must be those who love one another fervently from our hearts, who use all of our gifts to bless the King and His Kingdom, and who uncompromisingly live above religion.

In these last days God needs people who take Him at His Word. He is my KING. His KINGDOM is me! The Church is the "called out" expression of God's richness dwelling within our hearts.

*Dare to be courageous. Dare to engage. "Eye has not seen or has ear heard what God has prepared for those whose heart is perfect toward Him!"*

### MY THOUGHTS ABOUT THESE LAST FOUR "FIRST THINGS":

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LISTEN TO THE WHO IS GOD VIDEO HERE.  
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## WHO IS GOD AND HOW DO I CONNECT WITH HIM?

There are a number of ways people can contemplate God. Here are a few. Which ones best help you to connect with the concept of a Designer or Living God?

1. In nature...from macro-astronomy to creatures and plants.
2. Through science...from species to atoms, DNA molecules to forces of nature.
3. Archeology...all that we can infer from digging up old stuff.
4. Religious writings...places in history God may have authentically shown up.
5. Philosophical writings...stories of personal experience and observation.
6. Personal experiences...compelling evidence from those who are credible - or those we trust personally.

Who is God based upon your current personal thoughts?

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What sources have provided primary avenues for your conclusions?

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Do you feel like you know God? How and in what ways?

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What would you assess as the level of your desire to please God?

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*The Bible tells us that we can have a personal relationship with God. Through His Son we may talk to Him, hear from Him, and see Him at work in the world around us and in the lives of people. To what depth do you believe this and how do you believe you are experiencing this in your personal journey?*

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# WHO IS OUR FATHER AND WHO HAS HE REVEALED HIMSELF TO BE?

God's personal name in the New Testament: ABBA, FATHER!

PSALM 84...Abba means "Daddy."

Read Mark 14:36; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:6

*What do you learn about a personal relationship with God from the following passages?*

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Some things you and I can count on about our Father:

Matthew 7:6-11

He is our Protector and has our best interests at heart so that we can live without speculation!

*How protected do you feel?*

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Hebrews 12:3-11

He disciplines us for our holiness so that we can have an example for our growth!

(He totally understands us...Hebrews 5:7-9) *How have you seen this in your life?*

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Romans 8:31-39

There is nothing that can separate us from His love so we can live without fear!

*How big of an issue is fear in your life?*

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Romans 8:26-30

He will continue to work with us and in us so we can be secure in His love!

*What can separate you from God's love?*

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John 14:1-5

He is preparing a place for us so that we can trust Him, reject anxiety, and invest our hearts in eternal things (Matthew 6:25-34). *Does this excite you?*

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Romans 9

Because He is God of all that exists He has rulership over everything. Our "free will" is subjected under the umbrella of His sovereign will. *Do you allow God to rule in your life?*

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## SOME OF LORD GOD'S REVEALED NAMES

What does each of these names help us to understand about the nature of our Creator?

EL ELYON.....“The Most High” ..... Genesis 14:22, Isaiah 14:14

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EL OLAM.....“The Everlasting God” ..... Genesis 21:33, Isaiah 40:28

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EL SHADDAI.....“The Almighty God” ..... Genesis 17:1, Ruth 1:20-21

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YAHWEH-JIREH.....“The Lord Provides” ..... Genesis 22:14

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YAHWEH-NISSI.....“The Lord is my Banner” ..... Exodus 17:15

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YAHWEH-SHALOM.....“The Lord is Peace” ..... Judges 6:24

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YAHWEH-SABBAOTH.....“The Lord of Hosts” ..... 1 Samuel 1:3

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YAHWEH-MACCADESHCEM.....“The Lord thy Sanctifier” ..... Exodus 31:13

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YAHWEH-ROI.....“The Lord my Shepherd” ..... Psalm 23:1

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YAHWEH-TSIDKENU.....“The Lord our Righteousness” ..... Jeremiah 23:6

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YAHWEH SHAMMAH.....“The Lord is there” ..... Ezekiel 48:35

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# GOD'S RULE

*As you read these passages determine the extent of rulership God deserves in your life!*

Genesis 1:1,2,26,27

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Job 1-2, 38-42

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Psalms 90

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John 1,8,9

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Colossians 1:15-20

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Matthew 28:16-20

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Revelation 1, 19:11-16

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*“When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; for His teaching was filled with authority, and not like their religious leaders.”*

Matthew 7:28,29







## **The King and His Kingdom!**

*”And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse, and He who sat on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and wages war.*

*His eyes are a flame of fire, and on His head are many crowns; and He has a name written on Him which no one knows except Himself.*

*He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, were following Him on white horses.*

*From His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may strike down the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.*

*And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, “KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”*

- Revelation 19:11-16

**There is only one King over the earth.**

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[LISTEN TO THE REASONS TO BELIEVE VIDEO HERE.](#)  
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# Who is Jesus?



With so many voices in the world it is truly difficult to focus. Jesus Christ is unique among the voices. I would like to help you to consider Christ for yourself, independent from any religious atmosphere or pressure. I would like to present to you what the Bible teaches about Christ. Please take this opportunity to consider the claims of Christ firsthand. *If you find them to be untrue or impossible to believe, then you have the peace of mind to know you have considered Christ for yourself. We stake far too much on far too little if we stop short of considering Christ beyond our culture's oversimplified and under-investigated conclusions.*

*Jesus claimed to be the Savior of the World.  
Read John 4:26*

If you take the time to read about this woman at the well, you will find that Jesus is not interested in promoting religion. He is interested in providing a quality relationship. Do you know that God can be known personally? Jesus claims to be the Messiah (Savior). That means that God thinks that you and I need to be delivered from something. Do you find it hard to believe that mankind needs to be saved from ourselves? Jesus was very specific in John 8:21-24. If we don't see our need for a Savior we will die, eternally separated from God.

*Jesus claimed to be God.  
Read John 8:58*

Is it really so hard to believe that there is a God? Jesus believed it. Why? Because He had experienced the Father firsthand. He had 100% authority to speak on the subject. Why do we insist on speaking with such authority about things which we cannot see? This is why it is so important to examine the Scriptures personally. Jesus Christ made some pretty amazing claims...and history backs Him up!

*Jesus came to help the blind and the hungry.*

*Read Luke 4:18-19*

If you can admit that you have insufficient insight to walk through life or find eternal life, you are not far from the kingdom Jesus was preaching. In John 8:12 Jesus states that He is the light of the world. Can you admit that you are blind when it come to pleasing God? In John 6:35 Jesus claims to be the Bread of Life. If you can admit that the food this world has to offer is insufficient to sustain you, you are close to Christ's kingdom.

*Jesus claimed to hold the keys to eternal life.*

*Read John 12:25,26*

Do you truly believe that "what you see is all you get?" Do you believe deep in your heart that your 50-90 years on this earth (if you live that long) are all that there is? Jesus speaks with transcending perspective. He says that after our physical death, there will be entrance into the eternal presence of God. Apart from trusting Christ this meeting will be as unpleasant as anything any human will have ever encountered.

*Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth, and the life.*

*Read John 14:6*

This is where many people stumble. We all want to think that what we are grasping for is the essence of life. We all want to believe that we understand the truth about reality. We all want to believe that everything will work out in the end. Jesus' claims are clear... there is only one way: His way. There is only one truth: His truth. There is only one option for eternal life spent with God: His life... the eternal life that only the Son of God can give!

*Jesus wants to rescue you.*

*He claims to have the authority*

*1) to define your plight*

*2) to provide your escape*

*3) to allow you to live forever*

*He offers this gift to anyone who will call upon His name!*

*John 1:12,13*

*If, as you have considered these claims,  
you find you have the strength to believe, read on.  
If you think the decision will wait, read James 4:14.*

*If you think this is foolishness,  
may God be merciful to your soul.*

*What are your objections to Jesus? Are you prepared to acknowledge His kingship over your soul?*



## Becoming a Christ-follower

How does a person become a Christian? What is a Christian? The word literally means "little Christ." The first followers of Jesus were called Christians because they embraced all that their Master taught. Jesus claimed not only to be the Savior of the world, but the Judge of the world as well. According to Jesus' teaching He is standing before the door of our hearts.

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*"I am the door; if anyone enters through me, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." John 10:9*

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**You and I are outside the door.** That means we need to gain access. Do you believe you have a need for God? Read Matthew 4:17; Romans 3:10-12; and Ephesians 2:1-10. In order to receive the good news, we must first examine the credibility of the bad news.

To enter through the door you must step through Christ. You can't go over Him (there is no one above Him). You cannot get around Him (there is only one door, one entrance). You must go through Him.

According to Christ, you have come to the crossroad of life and death. If you choose to go forward, life and peace are waiting. If you choose to shrink away, eternal separation from your Creator is assured you. The decision becomes yours alone.

Do you believe you have entered through the Door?

Jesus died to save us.

Read Colossians 2:13,14

The first step to enter through the door is to receive the fact that God's Son was given in our place to satisfy God's wrath for sin. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son..." (John 3:16). If Jesus had not died, there would be no way to come to God. His purpose in dying was to build a bridge across the chasm of death between God and men.

Jesus was raised from the dead to prepare the way for us.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:1-5, 12-28.

If Jesus had the authority to raise Himself from the power of sin and death, won't He be able to do the same with those who believe in His name? Entering through the door we believe that upon leaving this life we will stand before God, and, through Christ, eternal life will be ours.

Finally, we must humbly embrace Jesus as our only hope. Only Jesus offers and provides forgiveness for our sins. Through belief in His mission of death and resurrection, we receive entrance through the Door.

How does a person become a Christ Follower?

1. Face up to the plight you are in; confess your need for God to God,
2. Believe that Christ's death on the cross is sufficient to clear your debt.
3. Pray to God to request forgiveness in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ... God will listen!

Remember, Jesus claimed to come to save sinners. We will never be good enough. This is exactly the point. Grace is "undeserved favor." This grace is available to anyone who will humble his or her soul before our God and Father.

May you even now find yourself walking through the door!

**The choice is yours.**

**The work is God's.**

**Ask Him to give you life!**

# Is Jesus God's Son? Is Jesus God?

God reveals Himself in nature, in His written Word, and in His Son Jesus. Jesus is "the Word made flesh!"

\*\*\*\*\*  
LISTEN TO THE FINE TUNING VIDEO HERE.  
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"...as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." - John 1:12

Christ invites everyone to examine His works and words. He welcomes scrutiny and dialogue. One commonly verbalized barrier to considering Christ is the criticism of shortcomings of those who call themselves "Christians." It is important to remember that we will be held to Christ's own words, and not by comparisons we make with those around us.

If you have never truly taken the time to Consider Christ for yourself, the following study should be helpful. We offer Biblical references and several questions to stimulate your thinking.

## Some hints to get the most from your reading...

As you consider the following passages ask these three reflective questions:

1. What specific **information** are these verses communicating?
2. What did the words probably mean to those who were **originally** participating or reading? (each context will tell you who this is)
3. What **implications** do these verses contain for me and the way I believe and live my life?

Use a translation of the Bible that you can understand and are comfortable with. The New American Standard and the New International versions of the Bible are a couple of good translations from the original languages.

**Meditating on the Scriptures** is an engaging process. The above questions will help you to see more deeply and engage the following pages more fully!



# THE WRITTEN WORD: GIVEN TO HIS PEOPLE

Reading One: What are the potential benefits as we search the Word of Christ?

2 Timothy 3:14-17 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Timothy 2:14-16 \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 3:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 4:12 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the value of **meditating** on the Scriptures?

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2. Why is **accuracy** important in Bible study?

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3. How does the Word of God live **inside** a person?

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4. What can **encountering** the Word of Christ do for us?

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What are your personal commitments to searching the words of Christ? **What emphasis** do you place on God's Word in your daily life?

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Reading Two: How may we respond to Christ as a living person?

Revelation 5:9-10 \_\_\_\_\_

John 9:1-42 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 28:17 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you think about when the word **worship** comes to mind?

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2. Why is worship of Christ **necessary**?

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3. Why does the Bible claim that Christ by His very existence is **deserving** of worship?

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4. What are the practical **benefits** for the follower of Christ as he or she follows and worships?

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In what ways can you honor Christ through your life, and what do you consider personal barriers as you attempt to submit to Christ?

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### Reading Three: Facing the Example of Christ

Hebrews 12:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

John 13:12-20 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 2:18-25 \_\_\_\_\_

1. Why should we view Christ as our **example**?

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2. What aspects of His example stand out in your mind as you read these and other passages?

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3. In what ways does Christ's example **transcend mere words**?

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List three specific ways that a man or woman can better **follow** the example of Christ.

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# THE LIVING WORD: JESUS

## Reading One: Considering my Need for Christ

Romans 3:10-12 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 2:1-9 \_\_\_\_\_

1 John 2:2 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 15:3 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is the **extent** of sin? Why can this concept be so distasteful?

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2. What are the **consequences** of sin?

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3. What is the only **remedy** for sin?

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4. What does the Bible indicate as the **hope** for those trapped by sin?

What is the hope for the world?

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Would you honestly call yourself a sinner? Have you ever experienced personal need for Christ? How do your personal beliefs compare to those listed within the passages above?

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## Reading Two: How to Receive Christ by Faith

John 1:12-13 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 10:8-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 11:1-6 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 16:19-31 \_\_\_\_\_

1. Is there any difference between intellectual recognition of Christ and **personal faith** in Christ?

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2. What is faith? Why is it important?

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3. What does the Bible mean when it refers to the word **believe**?

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4. What does **confession** have to do with salvation?

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Would you consider **faith** an easy or difficult issue for you? Do you believe that at some point in your life you have received Christ by faith?

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### Reading Three: Experiencing the Assurance of Christ

- 1 John 5:13 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Peter 1:3-9 \_\_\_\_\_
- Philippians 1:3-6 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ephesians 1:3-14 \_\_\_\_\_
- John 10:22-30 \_\_\_\_\_

1. Does salvation through Jesus Christ provide **benefits** only for the future?

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2. Who is responsible for maintaining our salvation?

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3. To what extent can we count on God to complete work that He begins in us?

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4. Who or what can take away our relationship with God in Christ Jesus?

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In what ways do you find **security** in God? Just how far does that security influence your life?

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LISTEN TO THE **WHAT JESUS WANTS: PART A VIDEO HERE.**  
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# THE SPIRIT WORD: THE BREATH OF GOD

## Reading One: The Spirit-Influenced Life

John 14:26 \_\_\_\_\_

Ephesians 5:15-21 \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:16-26 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:1-17 \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what ways does the **Spirit** of God help us interact with the Word of God?

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2. How can a person be **filled** with the Spirit?

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3. What does it mean to **walk** by the Spirit?

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4. If a person claims to be a Christ-follower, what should be his or her **relationship** to the Holy Spirit?

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Do you believe that people have a spirit? How can any person know if they are living a **Spirit-directed** life? In what ways have you seen the activity of the Holy Spirit in your daily life?

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## Reading Two: The Gifts of the Spirit

Ephesians 4:16 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Corinthians 13 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 4:7-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Colossians 1:3-8 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What do you believe are some of the things that “every joint” can **supply**?

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2. What is the foremost **motivation** for the use of spiritual gifts?

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3. How many gifts are there?

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Do you feel you are becoming a spiritually **mature** believer? Can a Christ-follower evidence spiritual gifts and yet be immature? **In what ways do you believe God has gifted you?**

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### Reading Three: The Presence of the Spirit

1 Peter 3:15 \_\_\_\_\_

Luke 24:44-49 \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 1:8 \_\_\_\_\_

John 15:26-27 \_\_\_\_\_

1. In what ways do Christ-followers **evidence** the grace of Christ to those around us?

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2. How would you describe the **hope** within you?

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3. Of what are Christ-followers **witnesses**?

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4. **Where** are we to be a witness?

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In what ways do you know the Holy Spirit is a part of your life? Do you find it comfortable to tell others about your faith in Christ? Do you feel any more ready to tell others how to consider Christ for themselves? **Can you distinguish the Spirit's voice?**

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LISTEN TO THE **WHAT JESUS WANTS: PART B** VIDEO HERE.  
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# What is the Kingdom?

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LISTEN TO THE WHAT IS THE KINGDOM VIDEO HERE.  
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To understand God's Kingdom we must understand His Son, and to understand His Son we must understand how He has revealed Himself. God has chosen to communicate with mankind through His natural creation (all we may see and observe), through our historic need to worship (mankind's searching heart), through His chosen people (the Jews), and finally through Jesus Christ His Son.

The world exists for one purpose: to display the glory of God. Mankind exists for one purpose: to bear the image of God and to glorify our Creator.

God begins to be considered in earnest when we begin to ask the question: "How am I to find meaning for my existence?" The search for significance often results in men and women being reconciled to God. This is the story of the Kingdom.

Man has a huge problem. We are destined to eternal separation from our Creator. The story of the Kingdom is God's ancient choice to buy back men's souls by paying a huge price. This effort would cost Him His dearest possession - His own Son's life.

Men and women who answer their question of existence outside of the realm of mere personal experience are called noble-minded people. They have determined that there must be more to life than living and dying. Those who consider Jesus Christ as the solution to existence and to eternal life are given a choice: we can either reject Him or accept Him as the Savior of our souls.

## Matthew: the King & His Kingdom



## A Kingdom Heart/A Kingdom Shift

As the diagram above illustrates, once we consider the meaning of our existence (Who Am I?) we then consider the question "Who is the King?" This is where the testimony of the Gospels comes in. In the prophecies and miracles we see unparalleled authority in human history. Once we have engaged a consideration of "who is the King?" we then began to ask the question "what is His Kingdom?" The Gospels clearly answer this question with Christ's own words about Himself. Only then can we begin to grasp the friendship God has extended us by offering us life in His Son. Only then are we free to return to the question "Who am I?" with a whole new set of presuppositions, not the least of which is where we will spend eternity.

Who has the King chosen for His friends?