



foundations

pursuing Christ through discipleship

who is the Holy Spirit?

04

foundations: pursuing Christ through discipleship

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foundations

pursuing Christ through discipleship

*for no one can lay a foundation
other than that which is laid,
which is Jesus Christ.*

1 corinthians 3:11



loving him
& loving his.

why discipleship?

the story of God is the story of a king saving his people and building his eternal kingdom—a kingdom that is made up of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. his is an ever-expanding kingdom, and it includes us as **disciples of Jesus**.

before Jesus returned to heaven after his resurrection, he commanded his disciples to go and make disciples who would then make disciples (matthew 28:19-20). you are reading these words as a result of their obedience and the obedience of generations of men and women after them.

Jesus' command to make disciples applies just as much to us today as it did to his original followers. **he desires disciples, not merely converts**. he wants us to be followers and worshippers of him, not simply spectators and fans.

this is the essence of discipleship: **follow me as together we follow Christ.**

as you use this resource, do not let this be merely a cognitive exercise. discipleship is not simply knowing more about God, but rather it is **knowing God intimately** and **daily surrendering your life to his lordship**.

read slowly. ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you more and more of who God is and his steadfast love for you specifically. pray that your heart and mind would be moved to worship as you meet with God in his word.

in order to love God we must know him. as our knowledge of him grows, we are to make him known. as members of the body of Christ, we get to spur one another on towards Christ-likeness through discipleship.

this is the essence of discipleship: follow me as together we follow Christ. the commandment hasn't changed—we are to be disciplined to make disciples who make disciples. his kingdom is made up of people who know him, love him, and follow him. **if you belong to him, you are a part of this kingdom**.

so then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone.

ephesians 2:19-20

don't skip this!

foundations was created to be a resource for you to use as you walk through your discipling relationships. it in no way replaces scripture as the authority on any topic or truth, but rather it is to be supplemental in your growing understanding of God and his word. the purpose of this tool is to assist in laying a solid biblical foundation as well as equip believers to study the bible and disciple others to do the same.

a few notes as you begin:

- **pray!**

it is the Holy Spirit who guides us into all truth (john 16:13), so anytime we seek to read or study scripture, we need to first **pray that the Holy Spirit would illuminate our minds** to understand the truths we will read and **soften our hearts** to let scripture transform us.

- **slow down!**

resist the temptation to treat any of this as an item on a checklist or see this as homework. do not feel the pressure to finish any portion in a single sitting or even to look up every scripture reference listed.

the end goal of this resource is not that you would finish any of it in a specific timeframe, but that you would **grow to know God and worship him more**.

- **be free!**

each section of *foundations* includes an introduction and four parts to provide a structure for getting together regularly to study and discuss the word. consider focusing on just one of these parts each week. this pace will allow you to enjoy several days reading and meditating on the scriptures as you reflect on what the Holy Spirit reveals to you before you meet to talk about it.

however, you are welcome to **move through it at whatever pace works for your discipling relationship**. everything is provided for your benefit—feel free to use it in the way that works best for you as the Spirit leads.

**teach me your way, o Lord,
that I may walk in your truth;
unite my heart to fear your name.**

psalm 86:11



who is the Holy Spirit?

who is the Holy Spirit?

for most people, the Holy Spirit is the least understood member of the trinity. we can somewhat wrap our brains around the fact that God the son became God in the flesh as the son of man, Jesus. additionally, God the father, although he is spirit, is frequently described in scripture with human physical and emotional characteristics which can help us relate to him.

perhaps one reason the Holy Spirit is more challenging to understand is simply because people avoid discussing what the scriptures have to say about him; **lack of knowledge has led to a fear of the unknown.** sometimes we don't want to risk getting him wrong, so we just ignore him all together.

» *before you begin this section, reflect on what you know about the Holy Spirit and what questions you have concerning him.*

in the same way that God the father and God the son are eternal, so too is God the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit is referred to throughout scripture with the personal *he*, not the abstract *it*. he is not inanimate or unrelatable. he is so many things to and for us:

- **breath of God**—job 32:8, 33:4
- **helper**—john 14:16
- **our reminder**—john 14:26
- **convictor of sin**—john 16:7-8
- **teacher**—john 16:13-14
- **divine power**—acts 1:8
- **witness**—romans 8:16
- **intercessor**—romans 8:26-27
- **sanctifier**—romans 15:14-17
- **revealer**—1 corinthians 2:10-11
- **gift giver**—1 corinthians 12:7-11
- **security**—ephesians 1:13-14
- **wisdom**—ephesians 1:16-19
- **truth**—1 john 4:6

while the Holy Spirit has always existed, in the old testament he came upon specific individuals for specific purposes. however, there was a promise: **one day the Holy Spirit would indwell all who called upon the name of the Lord.**

the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus ushered in the new covenant, and with it came the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit for every son and daughter of God. covered by the blood of Christ and made one with our savior, the chasm separating us from God has been bridged, and his Spirit is now forever ours as well. if you are a child of God, the Holy Spirit is as near to you as your own heartbeat.

and it shall come to pass afterward, that i will pour out my Spirit on all flesh: your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. even on the male and female servants in those days i will pour out my Spirit...and it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

joel 2:28-29, 32

indwelling

in the old testament, the people of God had very limited access to the Spirit of God. however, God assured his people that **he would dwell with them**. for that reason, God repeatedly commanded his people to build a tabernacle or temple where he would dwell in their midst.

with the coming of Jesus in the new testament, **people now had access to God in the flesh**. even still, their access was limited to proximity because Jesus the man was not omnipresent as he walked upon the earth. not until after Jesus returned to heaven was the promised Holy Spirit permanently given to the believers in the book of acts.

filled with the Spirit of God, **we are now his temple** and the dwelling place of God is *with* and *in* his daughters and sons.

- **exodus 25:8-9**
- **exodus 29:43-46**
- **acts 2:1-4**
- **1 corinthians 3:16-17**
- **1 corinthians 6:18-20**
- **ephesians 2:18-22**

» *imagine being an old testament believer with limited access to God. spend time thanking God for the gift he has given us in the indwelling Holy Spirit.*

» *what does it mean that you are God's temple? does realizing the nearness of God change how you live and worship?*

the law of God consists of more than just the ten commandments written on stone. in the first five books of the old testament, moses records over 600 civil, ceremonial, and moral laws that the israelites, as God's chosen people, were required to follow.

in part, these laws served as reminders to them that they were to look like the God to whom they belonged. **God is holy and they were his set-apart people**. the law instructed them how to follow God; their faith was largely external—living in obedience out of fear and reverence.

- **exodus 32:15-16**
- **deuteronomy 30:15-20**
- **romans 7:7-12**

now, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, we as children of God are invited and empowered to **live in obedience from a place of freedom and relationship**. the Holy Spirit dwelling inside us, draws us to Jesus—showing us our desperate need for him, bringing us from death to life in Christ, and convicting us of our sins that we may repent and live free.

instead of having the law written on tablets of stone, by the work and power of the Holy Spirit, we have **the law written on our hearts**.

- **jeremiah 31:31-34**
- **ezekiel 36:26-27**
- **romans 8:1-4**

since we are covered in the blood of Jesus, God the father sees his son when he looks at us. in his loving-kindness, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin in order to progressively make us more like Christ through a process referred to in the bible as *sanctification*. **the Spirit works in us to make us look more like Jesus**.

helper

the life of a christian centers on increasingly becoming more like Christ, which is not something we can do on our own—nor does God expect us to. **he has given us his indwelling Spirit to help us** live “in a manner worthy of [our] calling” (ephesians 4:1).

in the original language of the new testament, the greek word that is often used synonymously with the Holy Spirit is *paraclete*. because of the limitations of language, there is no exact translation for *paraclete* in english.

in the english standard version of the bible, *paraclete* is most often translated as *helper*. however, the other translations also use: *advocate*, *counselor*, or *comforter*, and all are correct because *paraclete*, in a single word, means all of those things.

the Holy Spirit is indeed our helper, advocate, counselor, and comforter.

God’s promise to restore his presence with his people culminated in the incarnation of Jesus. after years of friendship and physical proximity to his followers, with his crucifixion imminent, Jesus comforted his disciples by promising that **God the father would send another helper in his place** who would be with them forever. though their hearts and minds could not fathom it, Jesus insisted it would actually be better for him to leave so the helper could come.

- matthew 10:16-20
- john 14:15-21
- john 15:26
- john 16:7-11
- romans 5:3-5
- galatians 5:22-25

» *what do these verses reveal about the Holy Spirit being our helper, advocate, counselor, and comforter? how do these truths broaden your understanding of him?*

» *in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit be your paraclete?*

reading with God

God has given us his word that we might know him, but **we need his help to even understand what we are reading**. the word is “living and active” (hebrews 4:12) because the Spirit inside us is living and active and present as we read and meditate on the scriptures.

the Holy Spirit illumines our minds as we read scripture, teaching us the truths of God and convicting us of sin. without depending on the Holy Spirit—asking for his wisdom and praying for understanding—reading the bible becomes simply an empty religious duty. without the Holy Spirit, we cannot know God. **with the Spirit, you and i have the mind of Christ**.

- john 14:22-26
- john 16:12-15
- 1 corinthians 2:9-16
- 2 timothy 2:7

praying to God

just as the Holy Spirit helps as we read the word, **he also helps us communicate with God**. prayer can be difficult. this is not a common confession among believers: no one wants to admit that talking with God doesn’t always come naturally. we don’t always know what to say or how to verbalize what is on our heart. sometimes all we have to offer is unfiltered crying in pain or raging in anger at God; those are prayers from our

lips, but this is where the Spirit intercedes on our behalf **knowing both our hearts and the mind of God.**

sometimes prayer is saying no words at all, but rather sitting in silence and knowing he is God and we are secure in him. **the Holy Spirit abiding in us is the very Spirit of God** and is our intercessor before God the father. he helps us in our weakness, so we can rest in his strength.

• romans 8:26-27

• ephesians 6:16-19

• jude 1:20-21

» *currently, where do you most need the help of the Holy Spirit?*

» *take a moment to confess your weaknesses and receive his perfect comfort.*

divine power

shortly before Jesus ascended into heaven, he gave his disciples this command: “go therefore and make disciples of all nations” (matthew 28:19). **all nations. everyone. to the ends of the earth.**

surely an impossible feat for mere humans. they would need power—divine power—to accomplish such a lofty mission. which is why Jesus coupled this command with a caveat: stay put until you receive power from on high. Jesus knew, **without the coming of the promised indwelling Holy Spirit, their words would have no power**, and they would likely cower in fear in the same way they had at his arrest and crucifixion.

- acts 1:4-8

- acts 2:1-11

- acts 4:7-13

» **read matthew 26:69-75 and acts 3:1-16.** *compare peter before and after receiving the Holy Spirit.*

» *are there any similar comparisons you can make in your own life: your life without the Holy Spirit versus your life with the Holy Spirit?*

the Holy Spirit is the divine power of God. he was at work both in creation and in the conception of Jesus, and if you are his, you have access to that same power through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

we are intentionally unable to live the holy, set-apart life to which we have been called without the divine power of the Holy Spirit. we cannot come to Christ without this power drawing us to him. by the power of the Spirit, we can surrender our lives to our Lord and king, and together with paul say, “it is no longer i who live, but Christ who lives in me” (galatians 2:20).

- zechariah 4:6-7

- romans 8:9-11

- romans 15:13

- 1 thessalonians 1:4-7

» *in what ways do these verses speak of the Holy Spirit's power?*

» *what questions do you have about the power of the Holy Spirit?*

as we walk in the power of the Spirit, **we are changed into the image of Christ** for our own sanctification and for the building up of God's church. accordingly, the Holy Spirit empowers us by giving us each gifts that have been appointed for us from the foundation of the world. by the power of the Holy Spirit, our hearts are changed and our desires increasingly mirror those of our Lord Jesus.

- romans 15:15-20

- 1 corinthians 6:9-11

- 1 corinthians 12:4-31

- ephesians 3:14-21

» *how does seeing the power of the Holy Spirit in these verses encourage your intimacy with and obedience to God?*

» *in what ways have you seen the Holy Spirit's power at work in your life?*

“when we have the Holy Spirit, we have all that is needed to be all that God desires us to be.” —**a.w. tozer**

security

the life of a believer is a life of faith. yet in this fallen world, our faith can often be easily shaken. **suffering, temptation, sin, and doubt can work to shatter our confidence.** there may be times when we feel like we are holding onto faith—with both fists clenched—desperately clinging to Jesus for fear we might lose our faith, or worse, our salvation.

God knew. he knew we would doubt and struggle and waiver, and in his grace, he has provided for all of our insecurities. the Holy Spirit has been given as both our assurance and our guarantee of the eternal life we have in Christ Jesus. faith is not something we can prove, but is rather something that is proven in us as we live and walk by the Spirit.

now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

hebrews 11:1

- romans 8:14-17
- 2 corinthians 5:5
- galatians 4:4-7
- ephesians 1:11-14

- » *what has caused you to question your faith or doubt your salvation?*
- » *how does God's word help you combat those insecurities?*

in the old testament, God promises to never leave his people. in the new testament, Jesus promises to always be with his disciples. however, Jesus incarnate does not, in fact, remain with them; instead he assures them he will not leave them as orphans but will live *in* them. with the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God takes up residence within his children fulfilling his promise of permanence—and **that Spirit will never be taken away.**

- matthew 28:18-20
- john 14:18-20
- 2 corinthians 1:20-22

- » *what are the implications of the permanent indwelling presence of the Spirit of God in your daily life?*
- » *how can you become more aware of the Spirit's presence in your life?*

not one single person comes to Jesus simply out of reason or intellect. we don't have faith in God because we are somehow smarter than our unbelieving neighbor. we would not know Christ apart from the Holy Spirit. it is the Spirit of God who draws us to faith, gives us the gift of faith, and sustains us in that faith. **by the power of the Spirit we are saved, and by the power of the Spirit we will persevere to the end.**

- matthew 11:25-30
- john 6:44
- 1 corinthians 12:3
- philippians 1:6
- 1 john 3:19-24
- 1 john 4:2-4

- » *in these verses, what do you see of the Spirit's pursuing and sustaining work in your salvation?*
- » *how does a greater understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit help ease your doubts and fears?*





**what is
the
story?**

what is the story?

the bible is one book made up of 66 smaller books. these books vary in genre; they contain stories, poems, wisdom, prophecies, instructions, and laws. the whole bible was written over a span of 1500 years, so it can seem that the content is perhaps anecdotal and disconnected. nothing could be further from the truth. the bible was written by many different human authors, but ultimately has one divine author. **this is all God's story, and it is all about him.**

scripture tells **one overarching story of a faithful God who pursues his people relentlessly**—literally moving heaven and earth to dwell with those who are his. every smaller story recorded within the pages of scripture serve both to show the depravity of all people and humanity's desperate need for a savior. these accounts paint a picture of just how inadequate the greatest heroes in history were to even save themselves, let alone anyone else.

undergirding each story is the resounding theme that we need a savior and the declaration that the true savior is coming.

from the beginning of time, he has purposed to create a people for his own possession. however, our first parents brought sin into the world, fracturing creation and our access to a holy God.

God, in his steadfast love, determined to reconcile us to himself and redeem our lives for his name's sake; one day he promises that **all things will be made new** as evil is put to death and we are able to live in the presence of our savior for all eternity.

the narrative of scripture moves from creation to the fall of adam and eve, followed by centuries of God promising a coming redemption which is fulfilled in the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ.

however, that is not the end of the story.

in the end, we are promised that God will be faithful to restore all things to their intended perfect design in the creation of the new heavens and the new earth. he will eternally dwell with his people—which has been his divine plan since before time began.

creation → fall → redemption → restoration: this is the story of the bible

"i am the alpha and the omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the almighty."

revelation 1:8

creation

there was a time when time did not exist. we cannot comprehend this—and it makes our brains hurt if we try. absolutely nothing existed—except God...

then God spoke. the beginning of creation was now permanently fixed in time.

» **read genesis 1:1-2:3** to familiarize yourself with the creation story. even if you have read it a thousand times before, read it again, slowly, asking the Holy Spirit to give you eyes to see and a heart to understand more deeply the wondrous works of our praise-worthy creator.

- **day 1**— heavens, earth, light, darkness
- **day 2**— sky
- **day 3**— land, sea, plants, vegetation
- **day 4**—sun, moon, stars
- **day 5**—birds, sea animals
- **day 6**—land animals, mankind

notice how the second three days of creation correlate to the first three days: this is commonly referred to as *forming and filling*. **God first forms what he will then fill.** our God is meticulously intentional in all his works.

» *what did you notice as you read the creation story?*

» *how do you see God's intentionality in his creation—and in your own life?*

the biblical authors repeatedly make reference to God being creator. in doing so, they are affirming his power, his greatness, and his eternal sovereignty. **Lord over creation and Lord over all**, we serve a God who transcends both time and space, as well as our understanding.

- **job 38:4-11**
- **psalm 90:1-2**
- **isaiah 40:21-28**
- **isaiah 45:18**
- **jeremiah 32:17**
- **romans 1:20**

» *what comfort or assurance do you have when you consider God as creator of all?*

» *how have these verses increased your confidence in God's power and sovereignty?*

each of the first six days ends with the repeated refrain, “and there was evening and there was morning.” not so with the seventh day. on the seventh day of creation we are told that **God rested from his work**. not only did he rest from his work, he declared the seventh day holy—set apart from the other days.

he did not rest because he was tired or in need of a break; God rested as both a pattern and an invitation for us to cease from our work and rest in him. unlike the first six days, God never declares the end of the seventh day. **we are to rest in him daily** as we await our seventh day rest of eternal life with him.

» *do you regularly find rest in God? how might you practice continually abiding in him?*

» *have you ever thought of eternity with God as a continuation of the seventh day of creation?*

» *how does this impact how you view eternity?*

fall

every single thing that God created was absolutely perfect. there was no sickness or death or disaster or war, and adam and eve lived in unhindered intimacy with both God and each other. everything was perfectly good—but it didn't take long for perfection to be shattered by evil.

» **read genesis 3:1-15**

there is an enemy. satan was once an angel who desired to usurp God's authority and become like God. in righteousness and justice, God cast him out of heaven, and now satan lives with bloodthirsty disdain for God and his people—because they have been made in his image.

- **isaiah 14:12-15**
- **ezekiel 28:12-19**

- **luke 10:17-20**
- **revelation 12:9**

just as he desired to become like God, satan now prowls around echoing the lie that humankind can become like God as well. he has been destined to hell, and he is determined to bring as many people with him as possible.

in the garden of eden, satan came as a serpent to deceive adam and eve. although eve was already made in God's image, **satan led her to believe there was more godlikeness to be had**—that God was actually holding out on them.

their entire existence thus far had been lived in the presence of God's goodness; **they had never known evil**. but as the devil always does, he made evil look more appealing than obedience to God. eve, and adam along with her, took the bait. they ate the forbidden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. **they disobeyed God**.

- » *what lies of the enemy do you hear most frequently? which lies are you most tempted to believe?*
- » *in what ways have you desired to be like God?*

in this one single act of disobedience to God, their relationship with both God and each other was fractured. **all of creation would now feel the effects of sin in the world**. death had entered into life's reality as a result of their first sin. all of humankind would now, for all generations, be marred with this sin nature.

humanity had fallen from perfect, intimate communion with their divine creator.

- **genesis 3:23-24**
- **isaiah 59:1-13**

- **hosea 6:6-7**
- **ephesians 2:1-3**

the fall ruined everything. God mercifully removed adam and eve from eden to prevent them from eating from the tree of life and, consequently, live in their sin forever. the garden of eden was now guarded by a flaming sword and cherubim with no hope for adam and eve to return—at least not on their own merit...

redemption

the effects of the fall spread to every corner of the earth. a gaping chasm now existed between the creator and his creation. as a result of the fall, **we became a race of people who are persistently against God**. the separation was so great and the sin so all-consuming that, left to ourselves, we could never again even desire relationship with God.

we could never save ourselves...

- **genesis 6:5**
- **ecclesiastes 9:3**
- **ephesians 2:12**
- **ephesians 4:18**

...we needed a redeemer.

God was not surprised by adam and eve's sin. he already had a plan for redemption in place. following their disobedience, clothed in their garments of shame, **they heard the first whisper of hope—the first glimpse of the gospel**. God declared that satan would not get the last word—there would be a son who would crush the head of the enemy.

"i will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."

genesis 3:15 (NIV)

the entire old testament weaves together the story of God's people with the repeated promise that a day was coming when his son, the messiah, would make everything right and the people of God could once again be with God.

- **job 19:23-27**
- **micah 5:2-5**
- **isaiah 7:14**
- **isaiah 9:2-7**
- **daniel 7:13-14**
- **zechariah 9:9-10**

» *imagine being an old testament believer awaiting the fulfillment of God's promised son. how do you think this waiting might have impacted your faith?*

» *how does recognizing the complexity of their hope-filled longing encourage you right now as you wait on the Lord?*

- **habakkuk 2:3**
- **2 peter 3:9**

finally, after centuries of waiting—at long last—**the promised son was born**. Jesus, immanuel, had come in the flesh to be God with us and save us from our sins. Jesus lived the perfectly holy life we could never live and died the death that we deserved in order to make us right with God. he then rose from the dead so that we can be with God forever. he paid the penalty for our disobedience to God and set us free from slavery to sin.

he is our redeemer—and we are the redeemed.

- **leviticus 17:11**
- **isaiah 61:1-3**
- **john 8:34-36**
- **romans 6:3-23**
- **colossians 1:13-14**
- **hebrews 9:11-12**

if this were a map, there might be a star indicating *you are here*. the story of the bible is not over: we are still living in the time of redemption. **Christ is still redeeming his people.**

restoration

the world, as it was created, has been fractured and marred by the curse of sin. what God created in perfection, evil has broken. God created us for intimacy with him; sin shattered that relationship and brought with it death. Christ has redeemed his people from the clutches of darkness, **but for now he leaves us here to be his light** to those around us still enslaved to sin. in our in-between existence, we live with an ever-increasing awareness of the brokenness that surrounds us.

- **genesis 3:16-19**
- **romans 8:19-25**
- **2 corinthians 5:1-4**
- **2 timothy 3:1-7**

» *where do you see the effects of sin in your life and the world around you?*

» *in what ways do you feel the tension of living in the already-and-not-yet of your redemption?*

the darkness will not last. much like the old testament believers, we are journeying towards our promised land. one day Jesus will return and wipe away all darkness, and he will be for us our eternal light in the new jerusalem.

- **john 1:4-5**
- **john 14:2-3**
- **acts 1:6-11**
- **1 corinthians 15:50-58**
- **hebrews 11:13-16**
- **revelation 22:1-5**

it will not always be like this. the brokenness and sin and turmoil and pain all have an end date. **Jesus is coming back.** he has promised he will return for his own as a bridegroom for his bride. God has promised to dwell with his people for all eternity. in the restoration of all things, **the earth and everything in it will be made new.**

- **2 corinthians 5:17**
- **1 john 3:2**
- **revelation 19:1-16**
- **revelation 21:1-7, 22-25**

on that great day when Christ returns for his bride—the church—we will exhale into eternity, stand before our king in our glorified bodies, and see our savior face-to-face as we fall to our knees in worship. **come, Lord Jesus!** (revelation 22:20)

» *as you contemplate the hope of the new creation, what is the response of your heart and soul?*

» *how has reading about the story of scripture given you a greater understanding of the continuity of the whole bible?*

and i heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. he will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God."

revelation 21:3



loving him
& loving his.