

**what is
salvation?**



foundations

knowing God through his word

*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.

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can we know God?

God has given his unfailing word to make himself known to his children. yet, far too often, we depend on other voices to tell us about God instead of knowing him for ourselves through his word.

God is continually pursuing our hearts; our affections for and knowledge of God grow as we spend time with him. **this needs to be our daily pursuit.**

every child of God is able to intimately know God through the scriptures—**we are all called to know him and make him known.** as we grow in our knowledge of him, we also get to invite others to grow in their knowledge of him through discipleship.

foundations was created to encourage an active learning process for discipling relationships. it in no way replaces scripture as the authority on any topic or truth; rather, it is intended to point you to scripture in your growing understanding of God and his word. the purpose of this tool is to assist in laying a solid biblical foundation, equip believers to study the bible, and disciple others to do the same.

a few notes as you begin:

- **engage**

each chapter of foundations includes an introduction and four sections. this format provides a structure for meeting together regularly to study and discuss the word. **consider focusing on just one section of a chapter each week.** this pace will allow you to enjoy several days engaging with the word and reflecting 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

- **pray**

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

- **worship**

resist the temptation to treat any of this as an item on a checklist or see this as homework. 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 and enjoy God more. **as we gain a greater vision of God through his word, our worship of him will deepen.**

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 active followers and worshippers of him, not simply spectators and fans.

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**.

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

read slowly, and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you 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 get 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 discipled 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 that kingdom**.

» *Jesus is building his kingdom through our active participation in discipleship. as you start this journey, begin praying now about who God might be leading you to disciple as you grow in him.*

*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

what is salvation?

for the son of man came to seek and to save the lost. —luke 19:10

the gospel is ultimately about Jesus—his perfect life, his substitutionary death, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension back to heaven. it is the story of his completed mission to rescue and redeem his people. the good news of the gospel is about so much more than just our salvation; but it is certainly not about less than that.

» *pause and reflect on the gift of salvation: what you've been saved from, what you've been saved to, and your own salvation story.*

as believers in Christ and his work, we are given salvation as a gift of God through Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit. **there is nothing you or I could do to earn God's favor**; salvation is bestowed upon us completely by the grace of God and entirely on the basis of Christ's finished work.

our salvation is given freely and is not at all based on our performance or works. this is good news! we don't have to be good enough to receive salvation and we don't have to live perfectly to keep it. **once we are saved, we are saved forever.**

there is only one salvation...and only one way to be saved.

we, however, are notoriously self-reliant. in our pride, we desperately desire to have something to do with our own salvation. yet scripture makes it clear that there is only one way to be saved: **through faith in Jesus Christ.**

faith is more than just cognitive assent to the existence of Jesus; it is the confession that he alone is the son of God and completely placing the assurance of our salvation on his perfect life and finished work alone.

our works can't save us...

our knowledge can't save us...

our piety can't save us...

...only Jesus can save us—fully and completely—and there is nothing we can add to our salvation. in humility, we confess that we cannot save ourselves, and in repentance, we let his saving grace wash over us as we surrender to him as king. no more striving. no more shame. his unconditional and all-sufficient grace comforts us and bolsters our faith so we can walk unwaveringly in freedom with him.

in him [Christ] you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

ephesians 1:13

there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

acts 4:12

saved from what?

and the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “you may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” —genesis 2:16-17

as a result of adam’s disobedience, death was now inevitable. because of his sin and our own, we were separated from God forever with no hope to redeem ourselves. humanity needed a savior.

Jesus is savior of all who call on his name...but exactly what have we been saved from?

wrath

God is fully and equally both love and justice. he would be completely just to pour out his wrath on all sinners, casting everyone to the fires of hell as punishment for sin. **in his holiness, he could not simply overlook sin—it had to be dealt with.** in love he sent Jesus to atone for sin and absorb God’s wrath on our behalf. now we can live free from the fear of God’s wrath and instead be reconciled to him once again.

- psalm 78:32-55
- zephaniah 1:14-18
- john 3:36
- 1 thessalonians 5:9-11

» *what response does God’s wrath evoke in you?*

death

we will all taste death in this life if Jesus does not return first; however, in him we are promised eternal life after death. **life apart from Christ is an eternal death sentence,** but because of Christ, we who belong to him have no reason to even fear death. we can hold fast to the confidence that death is the doorway to new life forever with him.

- acts 2:23-24
- 1 corinthians 15:54-58
- 1 thessalonians 4:13-18
- hebrews 2:14-15

» *how do these verses give you hope in the face of death?*

sin

in our sinful nature we are in constant rebellion against God. without the Holy Spirit, sin is our master and we gladly serve it; but **Jesus has saved us from our slavery to sin.** we are now aware of and able to resist sin through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- isaiah 59:1-4
- romans 7:5-6
- galatians 5:1
- 1 john 2:1

» *where have you experienced freedom from sin, and where do you still need freedom?*

satan

we have an enemy who wants us dead. he hates God and he hates us—God’s image bearers and the objects of his love. satan is called the accuser; he testifies of our guilt before God. althought the devil can make sin look appealing, he is a thief who “*comes only to steal and kill and destroy*” (john 10:10).

- zechariah 3:1-5
- ephesians 6:10-18
- 1 peter 5:8-9
- revelation 12:7-12

» *how do these verses increase your confidence in the Lord against the enemy?*

justification

God is perfectly holy—morally pure—and has commanded that we be holy as well. yet our sin wrecked any possibility of obtaining this righteousness on our own—we had no means by which to justify ourselves before God.

- leviticus 19:2
- deuteronomy 28:15
- matthew 5:48
- romans 3:23
- 1 peter 1:14-16
- james 2:10

» *what thoughts come to mind when you consider God's command to be holy?*

justification is a one time act of God in the life of each new believer by which he has declared us righteous in his sight because of Jesus. it is a legal term which communicates that the demands of the law have been fully satisfied for those who are in Christ. at the moment of salvation, **we are eternally sealed by the Holy Spirit and forgiven of all our sins: past, present, and future.** our justification has nothing to do with what we have done or will do; it is all the work of God from beginning to end.

» *in what ways are you still trying to work to make yourself right before God?*

in faith we come to the end of ourselves and confess that we can never make ourselves holy. when we wholly trust in Christ's redemptive work to make us right before God, we are justified and **Christ's righteousness becomes our own.** robed in the holiness of Christ, we no longer stand condemned before God - both now and in eternity.

- isaiah 53:11
- romans 5:1-11
- 2 corinthians 5:21
- galatians 2:16
- galatians 3:10-11
- titus 3:4-7

» *when you sin, do you try to hide from God as adam and eve did in the garden, or do you run to him for forgiveness knowing you stand before him justified?*

» *how challenging is it for you to rest in Christ's finished work as your means of justification? why?*

not only does justification make us right with God, it will also change how we relate to one another. God has declared that none of us are able to obtain righteousness on our own. **we all equally need to be clothed in Christ's righteousness.** the field has been leveled and not one of us can boast in ourselves as we claim Christ's holiness as our own. this should free us to love and live in peace with those around us—especially our brothers and sisters in the body of Christ.

- isaiah 64:6
- jeremiah 9:23-24
- 1 corinthians 1:18-31
- ephesians 2:8-9

» *in what ways do you struggle with comparing yourself to other believers?*

» *how does our equal standing before God in Christ alone change the way you view and relate to your brothers and sisters in Christ?*

sanctification

for this is the will of God, your sanctification. —1 thessalonians 4:3

justified by God through Christ, we have been given a new identity: **God now calls us holy**. yet our human lives tell us a different story—we can each look at aspects of our lives that underscore our shortcomings and indicate we're far from walking in holiness. the enemy loves to point to that evidence and shout accusations of our guilt.

but rest assured: **if you are in Christ, you are forever freed from any condemnation for your sin**. while we will never be completely sinless in this life, the Holy Spirit is doing a purifying work in our lives that will increasingly grow our distaste for sin and our insatiable desire for holiness.

- 2 corinthians 3:17-18
- 1 thessalonians 5:23-24
- titus 2:11-14
- hebrews 10:11-18

» *how often are you tempted to believe you are still guilty?*

justification is instantaneous—sanctification is a lifelong process.

in sanctification, the Holy Spirit works within us to increasingly make us look more like Christ. we have been set apart by God and we are holy before him; the more we walk in step with the Spirit, the more **our lives will reflect the holiness of Christ**. the more we know him, the more we will love him and our hearts will desire what his heart desires: our holiness.

- psalm 37:3-6
- romans 8:1-9
- 2 peters 1:2-8
- 1 john 1:8-10

» *what have been some recent displays of God's sanctifying work in your life?*

» *in what areas of your life are you currently asking God to align your desires with his?*

sanctification is not an optional add-on to justification nor is it a passive experience; **it is a cooperative work in which we daily yield to the Spirit's leading**. this is not about trying harder or doing better; if we are saved, our lives will exhibit more and more of the fruit which the Spirit is cultivating in our lives. sanctification inevitably leads to action on our part as an outflow of our continual submission to the indwelling Holy Spirit.

- leviticus 20:7-8
- john 15:1-8
- romans 6:15-23
- philippians 2:12-13
- colossians 3:1-17
- galatians 5:16-26

» *in what areas of your life is the Holy Spirit currently calling you to grow in holiness?*

» *where are you currently resisting submission to the Spirit in your life?*

confess this to the Lord and ask him to change your heart to be fully surrendered.

“sanctification grows out of faith in Jesus Christ. remember holiness is a flower, not a root. it is not sanctification that saves, but salvation that sanctifies.”

—charles spurgeon

glorification

he will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.

revelation 21:4

from the moment we are born, we are on a journey towards death. it may be 80 years or more down the road, but, unless Jesus returns first, we will all experience death. regardless of how much we exercise or how well we eat, our bodies will eventually fail us because these bodies are not eternal. we grieve sin, sickness, and loss, and **in the depths of our souls we groan that these things should not be.**

» *name some of the hardships you have seen in your own life. do these things increase your longing for eternity?*

a day is coming when those of us who belong to him will be free of our frail minds and broken bodies, and **we will be resurrected with glorified, imperishable bodies** never again to be constrained by earthly limitations and fears. therefore, we can remain steadfast through hardship because we are sure redemption and glorification of our bodies is coming, and all our earthly sorrows will no longer be remembered (isaiah 65:17).

- john 17:22-24
- 1 corinthians 15:42-53
- 2 corinthians 4:16-18
- 2 corinthians 5:1-9
- philippians 3:20-21
- hebrews 2:5-10

» *how do these truths give you a greater eternal perspective?*

» *how could this perspective change how you look at your current circumstances? how might this change how you live?*

God's presence and holiness are so incomprehensibly all-consuming that, on our own, in our sin, we cannot look upon his face and live. many in the old testament spoke of the fear they had at the thought of being in proximity to such a holy God.

however, **Jesus changed everything.** we now stand clothed in his righteousness and arrayed in his glory and, because we are in him, **we are justified in this life and glorified in the next.** we will all be transformed in the presence of God. in the life to come, not only will we receive glorified bodies, but **we will enjoy God face-to-face.**

- deuteronomy 5:22-27
- judges 13:15-22
- isaiah 6:1-5
- 1 corinthians 13:12
- hebrews 12:28-29
- revelation 7:9-17

» *as you look at eternity, what excites you more: the thought of a pain-free life or unfettered access to God himself? what might increase your affections for him in the here and now?*

» *as you consider the beauty of your salvation—both the finished work of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in you—thank the Lord for calling you to himself, for the work he is doing in you now, and the promised glory to come.*

he has put eternity into man's heart. —ecclesiastes 3:11

