



GROW

FIRST STEPS WITH JESUS



DOXA DEO



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Layout: Lisa van der Walt & Taiki Dimas

Editors: Sue Eksteen, Madelein Asher & Taiki Dimas

Text: Jean Symons (in collaboration with the Doxa Deo team)

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THESE ARE YOUR FIRST STEPS WITH JESUS

We have created a couple of tools to assist you as you grow in your relationship with Jesus:

This book has 20 short daily studies that spread out over 4 weeks. (it is also available in Afrikaans on YouVersion as "Groei: Eerste treeë saam met Jesus")

We recorded 20 videos of about 4-5 minutes each, to walk you through the content. (<https://www.firststepswithJesus.com>)

An audiobook is also available in English and Afrikaans at the link above.

Each day has an affirmation that we encourage you to repeat throughout the day.

Each chapter has one action step for each day.

My name is Jean Symons and I started my relationship with Jesus when I was 13 years old. I have studied Theology at The College of The Apostolic Faith Mission of South Africa in Johannesburg. (AFM of SA). I have been a pastor since 1992 and I now serve as a leader in Doxa Deo in Pretoria. (www.doxadeo.org)

We believe that a relationship with God is the main story of God's interaction with humanity. (Find our full statement of belief at <https://www.doxadeo.org/about/believe/>). Our approach in this book was to not assume that you may know much about the Bible or Jesus or any of the other subjects.

This journey of discovery that we would like to take you on, was brought about by our heart for people who start, with their first steps, a relationship with Jesus. The best way to go about this is to find someone who already follows Jesus, and to have such a person walk you through the daily discoveries.

So here we go! Watch the 4-5 minute daily video, or listen to the daily audio recording, as you follow it in your book.

May your relationship with Jesus grow to become the anchor of your whole life. He came so that we may have life in abundance! (John 10:10)

Jean Symons
Doxa Deo Team Leader

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THIS BOOK & YOUR JOURNEY





**WEEK
ONE**



DISCOVERY

WEEK ONE: DISCOVERY

Our desire for you in the first week is that you will discover that God is a reality. May His love for you become clear. May you learn to know who Jesus is, the Saviour of the world. May you receive the gift of a personal relationship with your Creator, who wants to be your Father.



DAY1: IS GOD REAL?

DAY2: GOD'S LOVE INITIATIVE

DAY3: WHO IS JESUS?

DAY4: WHAT IS FAITH?

DAY5: THE LOVING FATHER



IS GOD REAL?

ACTS 9:5

Today I am inviting you to take the first steps into growing a relationship with a real and living God. You may ask, like so many others do: "How do I know God is real?"

WEEK ONE

DAY 1

Allow me to share my story. At the age of thirteen I attended a youth camp. I have been attending church for as long as I can remember, but at this particular camp something of the reality of God just struck me for the first time. I discovered that He loves me and I realised that I was living without Him. A desire arose in my heart to live my life with Him. Have you ever felt this way?

In the 66 Books of the Bible there are many other similar testimonies of people who encountered the reality of God. One of those characters is a person by the name of Saul. We read his story in the book of Acts, Chapter 9, Verses 1-19:

¹ Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem.

³ As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" ⁵ "Who are



you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. ⁶ "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." ⁷ The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone."

Consider this testimony from the Bible. How is it possible for such a great persecutor of those who were following Jesus, to turn around and to become the greatest promoter of Jesus? The answer is simply that Saul had a real encounter with a real God! He did not want to live his life devoid of God any longer.

There is more proof of God's existence, it's not just my testimony or the testimony of people in the Bible. I ask you to consider the wonder of creation, the intelligent design, the order, the ecosystem, the balance of everything in the universe and the fact that the earth is the only planet containing life.

More evidence is the biological wonder of the human body. Have a good look at the function of every cell in your own body. It did not merely 'happen' by accident. It was planned and carefully executed by our Creator.

God put it together to show that He is indeed the Creator of all.

This Creator is extending an invitation to you to live your life with Him and to enter into a meaningful and exciting relationship with your Creator.

I would love for you to repeat the following affirmation today. We will have a special affirmation daily hereafter:



ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK ONE

DAY 2

ROMANS 5:8

GOD'S LOVE INITIATIVE

Our discovery today will be that God took the first steps towards us. We will see it in the testimony of Saul, who we spoke of in the previous chapter. Saul, renamed Paul after his Damascus experience, wrote many of the books of the New Testament. In a letter to the believers in Rome we read the following:

⁶ Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:6-8)

This shows how God took the first steps towards us even when we were not willing to respond to His love. He directs His love in our direction in spite of our mistakes and in spite of our past. It is like a good father who loves his children notwithstanding their choices and decisions.

This indicates how much value God, the Creator, places on you as a person. He values us because He loves us. This kind of love is much more than an emotion. It's a value statement. We are God's creation, we are his children. He is a loving Father, He loves His children. God loves you!

The New Testament reveals that God is our Father, and our best response to this love, would be to read and study the Bible to help us understand it. We will show you where to start in a later chapter.

go.doxadeo.org/grow2



As we study the love of God in the Bible, we will start to understand God's love, and it will develop a capacity to love Him. Love will increase in our hearts as a reaction to His love for us.

I encourage you to also begin to listen to music that reinforces this message. We pray, as you head to the following link and listen to this song (Wonder of Your Love by Revelation Enterprises), that you will experience the love of God.



(<https://go.doxadeo.org/wonder>)

Here is a reminder that we will make a daily affirmation as we discover more of what the Bible teaches.
Repeat it a couple of times today.



AFFIRMATION

"I AM DEEPLY LOVED BY GOD."

ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK ONE

DAY 3

JOHN 3:16

WHO IS JESUS?

God is revealed to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One God, yet three persons...how can this be rationally explained? This could be a confusing concept for some people.

I often think of this statement in comparison to water. Water is one substance, yet it can be three: steam, ice and water (liquid, solid and gas). There are three expressions to one substance. This metaphor helps us to understand what the Bible means when it says our God is one God but He is revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Let's read the book of John, who was one of the first followers of Jesus:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." (John 3:16-17)



We discover in the Bible that the Son of God is known as Jesus. Today we desire to introduce you to Him.

We read in the Bible about Jesus' birth, His life, His ministry, His teachings and the many miracles He performed. Then we learn that He was crucified on behalf of all people. His resurrection from the dead was a miracle observed by about 500 witnesses. This has been recorded in history and is the most discussed topic of all time.

Let us fast forward to today. What happened 2000 years ago is still relevant today: God desires to save the world. He does not want anyone to go to a lost eternity. The question then today is: Do you know Jesus? Do you realize that He wants to be a Saviour in your life? He is the Saviour of the world, He does not want you to perish and He desires for us to be with Him now and for eternity.

Eternal life simply means that there is a restored, quality relationship with God. This takes place as we start believing in Jesus. Through our faith in Jesus, we discover God's love for us. Billions of other people have made the same discovery and now believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

AFFIRMATION

"JESUS, I WANT TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU."

go.doxadeo.org/grow3



**CONSIDER WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW ABOUT JESUS AND WRITE DOWN
SOME THINGS THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO GET TO KNOW ABOUT HIM.**

ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK ONE

DAY 4

JOHN 1:12

WHAT IS FAITH?

In John 3:16 we learned that eternal life is promised to everyone who believes. If faith is the requirement then, what does it actually mean?

Let us turn to John 1:12 to discover some of the dimensions of what it means to believe in Jesus.

"Yet to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

We will now consider the two dimensions of 'receiving' and 'believing'.

When we receive a gift from someone, how do we react? Do we untie the ribbon, open the package, gaze at it for a while, close the gift and hoard it in a safe place? That would be ridiculous! When I recently received a new watch as a gift, I immediately discarded the old one and put the new one on my arm. It became a part of my life and a signature of who I am.

Faith is similar. We fully accept and receive the gift from God through Jesus. The gift of love, the gift of forgiveness, the gift of His sacrifice and the gift of a new life. All these and many more dimensions are included in this gift. Faith is learning how to receive the fullness of this gift from God.



Now, let's also consider what it means to believe in the Name of Jesus. Someone's name refers to their reputation and what they represent. To believe in Jesus then is to accept what He stands for, to adhere to His values. People who believe in Jesus actually identify with Him and take all that He represents and make it a part of who they are.

'Receiving' and 'believing' also includes the principle of trust. When a good friend invites me to have lunch with him, stating that he may be 30 minutes late, but that I could order anything from the menu in the meantime, I will oblige. Why? Because, if I have a good relationship with that person, I will trust his character and his promise.

When we receive Jesus and believe in his Name, we own the promise to become children of God. It becomes a right that is bestowed on us. As we study the Bible and learn more about Jesus, we grow in our trust in Him. The more we learn and the more we trust the better our relationship with Jesus will become.

This promise in John 1:12 is for every single person who believes, it definitely includes you!



AFFIRMATION

“JESUS, I BELIEVE THAT I AM A CHILD OF GOD.”

ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK ONE

DAY 5

LUKE 15:24

THE LOVING FATHER

Luke was one of the first followers of Jesus and he recorded a story told by Jesus. Jesus shows us the character of God and also reveals something of our own human story.

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. ¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' ²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put

it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate. (Luke 15:11-24)

Why do I say that this reveals the character of God and tells us something of the human story? Each of us has something of the prodigal son in us, because we also sometimes choose our own path and seek to satisfy our own selfish needs.

This story is probably more about the waiting Father than the prodigal son. Do you realize that the Father of creation, who designed everything, is filled with compassion for every human who has gone astray? He is waiting for every human who got lost in their own desires, to simply turn back to Him. He wants to reconcile us to Him and restore the relationship between us. He is not locked onto our sins and mistakes only. When we come to Him he welcomes us with open arms: "My son was lost, but now he's found."

We may feel, like the son in the story, that our mistakes disqualify us from His love, but the Father looks beyond our mistakes and declares: You are my son! He fully restores relationship with us and then from that platform of acceptance, He continues to cleanse us and redeem us from our past. Then only does He start to restore us to our full stature.

We have a loving Father who addresses all our mistakes through His love for us.





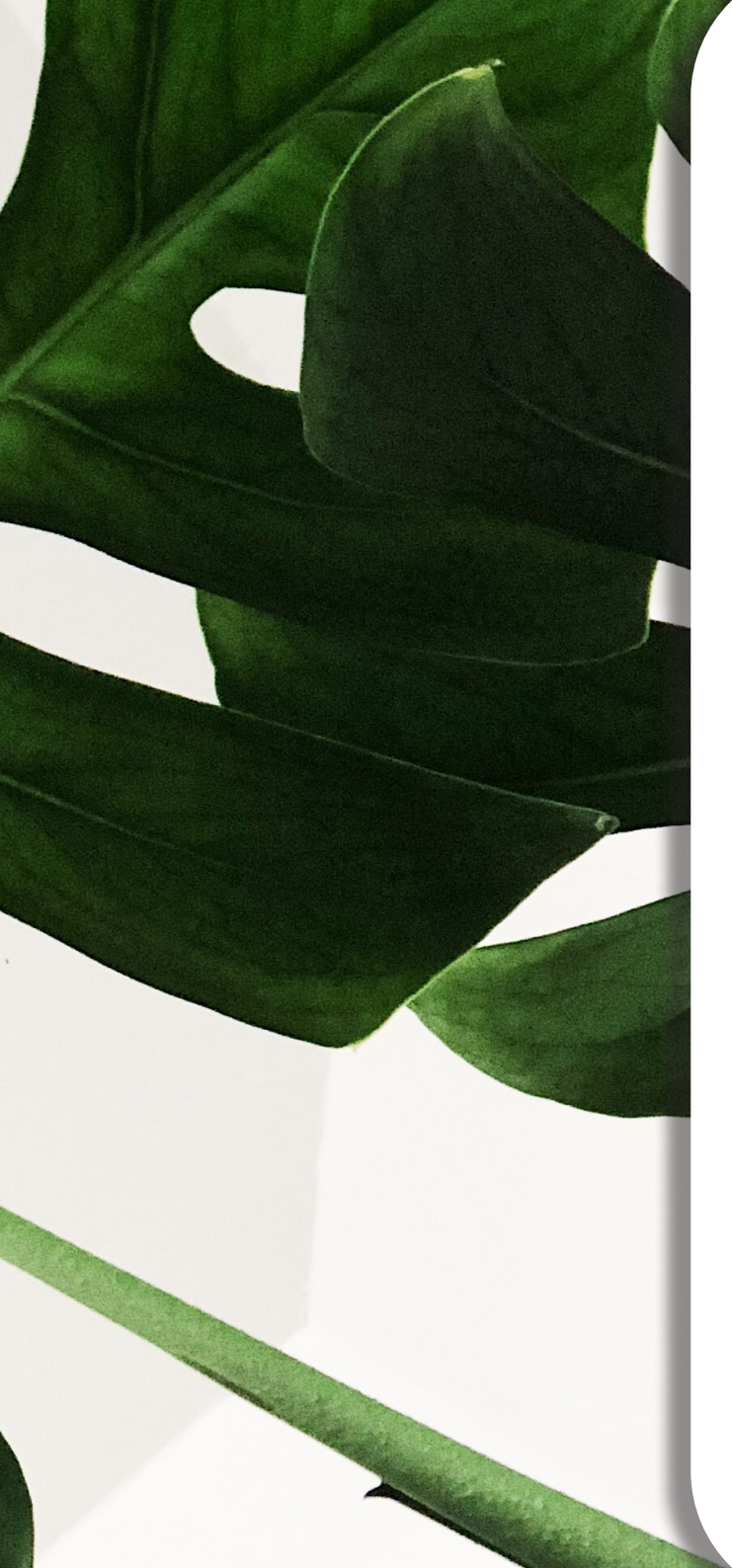
ACTION STEPS

[illegible]

**WE HAVE
A LOVING
FATHER WHO
ADDRESSES ALL
OUR MISTAKES
THROUGH HIS
LOVE FOR US.**



WEEK TWO



GRACE

WEEK TWO: GRACE

You are now in your second week of growing in your relationship with your Father in heaven. This is a very important week as we discover what God's grace means and what He really did for us. May you discover His forgiveness as you get to know the new creation that He has created in you. The new life of Christ is our destiny through the gifts of His grace.

DAY6: FORGIVEN

DAY7: NEW IDENTITY

DAY8: GRACE EMPOWERS ME

DAY9: ASSURANCE FOR ETERNITY

DAY10: A NEW WAY OF LIVING



WEEK TWO

DAY 6

EPHESIANS 2:8

THE GIFT OF GRACE

This is your second week of growing in your relationship with your Father in heaven. In this week we will discover not just what God did for us, but also what he is doing in us!

I would like to encourage you to obtain your own personal Bible. Also consider to download this Bible app onto your devices:



(<https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>)

We learn from one of the disciples of Jesus (in Luke 23:39-43) about a criminal that was crucified next to Jesus. As he cried out to Jesus, it surprises us that Jesus gave him assurance of eternity even though the criminal had no chance to do anything that could deserve it.

In a similar way we discover that we receive something from God without working for it. Another similar story is about Saul who was a persecutor of Christians, he lived in opposition to Jesus and yet he received undeserved grace from God, which brought about a radical turnaround in his life. This same person, Paul, now writes to the young church in the city of Ephesus.



"⁴ Because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God."
(Ephesians 2:4-5,8)

'Grace' is a very important term in the Bible. Grace is a gift we receive, not on the premise of our own good deeds, but by the unmerited favour of God. It is a free gift.

Today we are filled with a deep appreciation towards God for not focusing on our mistakes. His favour pulls us from a massive current of godless and sinful living and saves us forever. (Look at Ephesians 2:1 to see the list).

The only decent response on our side is to take this truth and put it in the deepest of our being and begin to declare that we are saved only by grace.





ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK TWO

DAY 7

EPHESIANS 2:1-3

WHAT IS SIN?

Do you remember what we learned from Paul in Romans 5?

"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
(Romans 5:8)

Our question today is: Why are we referred to as sinners? Let us go back to the beginning. When God created Adam and Eve (in the first book of the Bible, Genesis 1 and 2), He gave them access and permission to enjoy every part of the Garden of Eden, excluding the one forbidden tree. Adam and Eve were unable to resist and succumbed to the temptation. This caused implications for them and the rest of mankind. We are all affected by this one mistake they made.

Paul teaches us that this negative current of influence is so strong that all of humanity keeps on making the same mistakes.

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath." (Ephesians 2:1-3)



Jesus also teaches us in Luke 15 that we are all similar to the prodigal son who wanted to do things his own way. This brings us to the basic idea of sin: It means we miss the intention of our Creator, namely to live in a quality relationship with Him.

Sin then actually is disobedience to God and it causes us to miss the target that God intended our lives to be. That is why all of us need grace. We need Jesus. We need a Saviour. Salvation brings us back into relationship with the Father and saves us from the current of sin that swept humanity away from where we originated from.

This is what Jesus dealt with as He died on our behalf. Our sins are forgiven!



AFFIRMATION

**“I WANT TO LIVE IN A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP
WITH JESUS.”**

ACTION STEPS

**WRITE DOWN A SIMPLE SENTENCE ASKING GOD TO PUT YOUR PAST
BEHIND YOU FOREVER.**

ACTION



WEEK TWO

DAY 8

COLOSSIANS 2:13

FORGIVEN

One of the greatest gifts anyone can receive from God, is to hear these words: "I forgive you."

"As far as the east is from the west,
so far does He remove our trans-
gressions from us." (Psalms 103:12)

The idea of forgiveness paints the picture where God looks at you and literally removes all your past mistakes from you, as far as the east is from the west. You are so valuable to Him that he is willing to separate you from your sins; looking at your value and not your mistakes. Paul continues to help us understand forgiveness in his letter to the church.

¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.

¹⁴ having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Colossians 2:13-15)



What this discovery means to us is that Jesus forgave all our sins. This includes everything you have done in the past and everything you may still do in the future! What a thought!

For me personally, it means that the complete list of accusations against me was destroyed, together with the guilt and shame that accompanies it. Jesus took the legal note against us, with all of its accusations, and paid the full price with His life. In other words, He died in my place!

God removed the power that sin used to have over us. We are conquerors over sin's power when we receive this gift of grace. That is why we know that we have been forgiven. God considers you valuable enough to put irrevocable distance between you and your sins. In Him and by His power you become a conqueror.

AFFIRMATION

“FATHER, I THANK YOU THAT EVERYTHING HAS BEEN RESTORED BETWEEN YOU AND ME.”



COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE WITH 3-4 RELEVANT REALIZATIONS:

I AM FORGIVEN OF...

ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK TWO

DAY 9

2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

NEW IDENTITY

From John 1:12 we realize that we have become children of God. And so, people who believe in Jesus experience a conclusive change in their identity.

"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

We so often hear people say: I am just a sinner saved by grace. This gives us the impression that they are barely surviving; that God is just tolerating us. But from this next scripture we discover a radically different idea.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" (2 Corinthians 5:17)

If anyone associates with, identifies with and believes in Christ, that person is a new creation. So, you are not just a sinner saved by grace, no, you have become a child of God! It is almost as if a line has been drawn in the sand and we no longer step over it. We are new beings, with a new nature, a new identity

Let me use my relationship with my own children as an example. They often act or speak in a way that could cause disappointment or hurt. I do not tell them that they are hopeless and will never become anything worthwhile in life. No, I tell them that they have our DNA, they are our children and therefore they can develop into all their parents are and much more!



This scenario of our identity and association with God is now further explained in the next verse:

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ." (2 Corinthians 5:18)

Paul teaches us that the quality of the restored relationship with God affirms our identity. We are His children. Let's now have a look at one of the most important scriptures in the Bible about your identity:

"For our sake He (the Father) made Him (the Son, Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him (Christ) we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

That means Jesus identified with our old identity as sinners, and because of His sacrifice we have become the righteousness of God. This is a very important term in the new testament.

Let's look at what it means:

- 1. RIGHTNESS WITH GOD, A QUALITY RELATIONSHIP, TO BE ACCEPTED.**
- 2. I AM FORGIVEN, CLEANSED FROM SIN, A PURE CHILD OF GOD,**
- 3. I AM RESTORED TO HIS PURPOSE AND IDENTITY.**
- 4. I HAVE ACCESS TO ALL OF THE BLESSINGS OF HIS KINGDOM.**
- 5. I HAVE AUTHORITY TO LIVE THIS LIFE IN VICTORY AND CONQUER THE FORCE OF SIN.**

AFFIRMATION

“IN CHRIST JESUS I AM A BRAND-NEW CREATION.”



REWRITE 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21 TO AFFIRM THE TRUTH IN THOSE WORDS.

ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



WEEK TWO

DAY 10

TITUS 2:11

GRACE EMPOWERS ME

Our last discovery, in this week about grace, is how it empowers us to live godly, purposeful and peaceful lives.

Let's look at the letter that Paul wrote to a young person by the name of Titus, who came to believe in Jesus through Paul's testimony.

"The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age." (Titus 2:11-12)

We have already learned that the grace of God brings salvation to all people. We will now discover, through Paul's writings, that grace goes much further in our lives. Grace trains us, like a personal trainer in a gym, to accomplish a standard of living that we could never have achieved on our own. Let's look at the two dimensions of how grace trains us.

In the first instance the grace of God trains us to renounce ungodliness. It enables us to say no to people or our own selfish desires which may draw us back into a life of godless living. Grace does not just train us to say no to sinful living, it also secondly, enables us to say yes to something. Grace trains us to live self-controlled, godly lives.

Practically this is how it works: As we learn more about Jesus and His values, we grow the courage and also the strength to live with Him and also to live for Him. That is

how we live out His purposes on earth.

Jesus, through grace, becomes our Personal Trainer, and will empower us way beyond what we ever thought we could achieve. He will lead us in a path that is outstanding and superior to anything we ever dreamed we could become.

AFFIRMATION

“GRACE EMPOWERS ME TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT THINGS IN THIS LIFE.”



LIST SOME OF THE POSITIVE THINGS, ABOUT YOUR POTENTIAL, THAT YOU TRUST GOD TO ACCOMPLISH THROUGH HIS GRACE.

ACTION STEPS





WEEK THREE



LIVE IN HIS KINGDOM

WEEK THREE: LIVE IN HIS KINGDOM

Week three helps us to live with assurance of our faith for now and for eternity. We discover a new way of living in His kingdom. We learn about baptism and we get to know the Holy Spirit. That is how we are empowered to live life under His leadership.

DAY11: ASSURANCE FOR ETERNITY

DAY12: A NEW WAY OF LIVING

DAY13: BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

DAY14: THE HOLY SPIRIT

**DAY15: THE GUIDANCE OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT**



WEEK THREE

DAY 11

JOHN 17:3

ASSURANCE FOR ETERNITY

We are in week three and we will get to understand that we can live with assurance of our faith and also how to fully surrender to Jesus and His life.

Did you know that when we die, our body will separate from our spirit? Did you know that your body will perish, but you will live forever? The only assurance that we could have for life after death, is because of our faith in Jesus.

Many people feel unsure and fearful whether future mistakes could jeopardize eternity for them. They are apprehensive about God rejecting them and that they will forfeit eternal life or it may influence their eternal future.

How can we know with certainty that we will inherit eternal life? We need to return to the words of Jesus where He establishes a paradigm about heaven.

¹ After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.

² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:1-3)

From these words of Jesus, we determine that Jesus gives eternal life, it is a gift that you could receive with certainty. We also discover that eternal life is a state of quality rela-

tionship with God, rather than just a place. The same author, who was also known as the beloved disciple wrote in another letter about this matter:

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3:2)

It starts with the assurance that we are children of God. And then continues to assure us, that due to the personal knowledge and experience of our congruence with God, our eternal future is defined. That means that eternal life starts now, but we will experience the fullness and depth thereof when we die as God's children.

We do not know when and how Jesus will return, but we know that we will be secure in our relationship with Him.

AFFIRMATION

**"THANK YOU JESUS THAT I WILL LIVE WITH YOU
FOREVER."**



ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



GALATIANS 2:20

A NEW WAY OF LIVING

We will continue to talk about the idea of life today. Let's look at one of the most famous scriptures in the New Testament.

WEEK THREE

DAY 12

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son God, who loved me and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

The foundation of the above Scripture is in the last line: 'Jesus loves me and He gave Himself up for me.' If this then is God's foundation of His initiative to me, how am I to react then?

Paul speaks to the church of Galatia here, stipulating that he has been crucified with Christ. Ok, wait a bit here, how could he be crucified if he is still breathing and very much alive? What was he saying? I believe he refers to a life that is surrendered to Jesus.

In my own experience I have discovered that when you become engulfed with God's love for you, that in response to that love, you would also want to live for Him. I certainly want to lay down my life for Him.

Jesus paid the price and each one of us were included in that sacrifice. This brings clarity to Paul's statement: 'I no longer live'. His entire life was surrendered to the purposes and values of Jesus.

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Remember that Paul was a business owner and an ordinary man. He refers to his normal existence when he says: 'This life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God'.

Today is an extremely important day on our journey to grow in a relationship with Jesus. He is not just our Saviour, Jesus is also our Lord. "Lord" implies that He is our owner. This is a very important term in the Bible. It suggests that every part of our lives belong to Him and we live with Him but we also live for Him.

To allow Jesus to be Lord of our lives simply means that every decision of what we do and how we do it is measured by this question: "Will this decision be pleasing to the Lord?" Today is a day of surrender. Are you ready to allow God to become the anchor of your Life?

AFFIRMATION

**"LORD JESUS, I KNOW THAT YOU LOVE ME,
THEREFORE I WANT TO LIVE FOR YOU."**



ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



MATTHEW 28:19

BAPTISM OF BELIEVERS

The followers of Jesus were referred to as His disciples. What does it mean to declare Jesus as Lord of your life? What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus?

WEEK THREE

DAY 13

SOMEONE WHO STUDIES THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

SOMEONE WHO FOLLOWS THE VALUES OF JESUS.

SOMEONE WHO LIVES IN RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

SOMEONE WHO LIVES OUT THE PURPOSES OF JESUS.

His disciples went through a public demonstration to prove that they were indeed His followers by executing what the Bible calls baptism. Jesus himself was also baptized. At the end of His life he commanded His disciples to make disciples of all men, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

In the Book of Acts we read how many people responded to this commandment of Jesus. In most cases, the new disciples were immediately baptized.

(See this long list of examples of new followers of Jesus who were baptized in Acts 2:37-41, 8:5-13, 8:36-38, 9:10-12, 9:17-19, 10:47-48, 16:13-15, 16:27-34, 18:5-8, 19:1-5, 22:14-17)



So, if you also want to be baptized, how would that work? A mature Christian would gather your friends, family and people from the church family. You would then be submerged into the water in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, as described in Matthew 28:19. It is a public declaration of a spiritual reality.

Baptism has a very rich meaning. The spiritual reality that is expressed in this practical action is found in Romans 6:3-4:

*"³ Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life."
(Romans 6:3-4)*

As people who believe in Jesus, we are convinced that we died with Him and that we were raised from the dead with Him. And that is why believers want to demonstrate this spiritual reality with a practical and public act of baptism. We encourage you then to consider to be baptized. Please contact any Doxa Deo church for more information and assistance in regards to this decision. (www.doxadeo.org)

AFFIRMATION

**"JESUS, I'VE BEEN BAPTIZED WITH YOU AND I
HAVE BEEN RAISED TO A NEW LIFE."**



ACTION STEPS

[illegible]



JOHN 14:16-17

THE HOLY SPIRIT

In our first week, we discovered that God is revealed to us as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Today we take a look at the 3rd person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit.

WEEK THREE

DAY 14

The first time in the New Testament that we read about the Holy Spirit was when Jesus was baptized in Matthew 3:16. The people who were there saw how the Holy Spirit came and rested on Him.

Then as Jesus started His ministry in Luke 4:18, He made it clear that it is the Holy Spirit who empowers Him to do the work of His Father.

This important topic brings us now to the end of Jesus' ministry where He began to prepare His disciples for the reality that He would not be on earth forever.

"Truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."
(John 16:7)

Thousands of years later we see that it is still good for us that Jesus is no longer physically on this planet. Why? Because Jesus implicitly stated that the Advocate (the Holy Spirit) will not come unless He goes back to heaven.

Jesus made this promise which is still relevant and important to us today; that the Holy Spirit will come and empower us to live as His disciples.

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He will live in us and never leave us. Please study this scripture with me:

¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever, ¹⁷the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

²⁵ "All this I have spoken while still with you. ²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. ²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." (John 14:16-18, 25-27)

Consider the task of an advocate in a court of law. An advocate assists us and speaks on our behalf when we do not have the knowledge or the skill to defend ourselves. This is the picture that this scripture paints about the Holy Spirit. He stands next to me, He helps me.

Some of the other translations talk about the Comforter. He carries us and makes us stronger than we would be on our own. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would be with us forever. He actually also promised that He would come and live in us. That means that God resides in us as normal human beings through his Holy Spirit. That is how we are able to experience the existence of God in our natural state. The Holy Spirit further wants to become the teacher that we need in life. He reminds us of the words Jesus taught. He establishes the values of Christ in us. (See the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22)

In the last line of this scripture Jesus now promises that through the gift of the Holy Spirit we will have His peace for everything that we may encounter in life. This topic has so much more that we would want to share with you. We encourage you to contact any of our Doxa Deo campuses on www.doxadeo.org if you need us to teach you more about the wonderful promise of the Holy Spirit.

AFFIRMATION

“THANK YOU JESUS FOR THE PROMISE OF YOUR HOLY SPIRIT.”



ACTION STEPS

MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE AREAS IN YOUR LIFE WHERE YOU WOULD LOVE THE COUNSEL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.



MATTHEW 28:19

THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is clear from Scripture that Jesus needed the Holy Spirit for all He accomplished. It should be obvious then, that we also need the Holy Spirit in the same way.

WEEK THREE

DAY 15

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

This is a promise Jesus made, which stands for all eternity and includes all His children.

The people in the first church, as recorded in the book of Acts chapter two, were praying together and were filled with the Spirit, just as Jesus promised. What is astounding is that Simon Peter, who denied Jesus three times in public to save his own life, now suddenly had the courage to stand in front of thousands of people proclaiming that Jesus lives. This is evidence of how the empowerment of the Holy Spirit can change a person. He then made this comment at the end of his speech:

³⁸ Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off--for all whom the Lord our God will call."
(Acts 2:38-39)



We are included in this promise! My own story testifies to this as I had a very similar experience after I asked Jesus to fill me with the Holy Spirit as is promised here in Acts 2. That is why we encourage you today to ask the Father in heaven to do the same for you, to also fill you with the fullness of His Holy Spirit.

We have one more dimension about the Holy Spirit that we need to discuss. The empowered life of a disciple of Jesus is a life that lives from the source of the influence of the Holy Spirit. That means that you live under His direction and leadership.

“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.” (Galatians 5:25)

This is the best place to be as a follower of Jesus: living under the leadership influence, just like Jesus, of the Holy Spirit.

You are so welcome to reach out to one of our campuses on www.doxadeo.org and we would love to pray with you in this regard.

AFFIRMATION

“HOLY SPIRIT, I DESIRE YOUR LEADERSHIP IN MY LIFE.”



**LIST SOME OF THE BIGGEST DECISIONS AWAITING YOU IN THE
NEXT SEASON WHERE YOU WOULD LOVE THE LEADERSHIP OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT.**

ACTION STEPS

[illegible]

**THE
EMPOWERED
LIFE OF A
DISCIPLE OF
JESUS IS A LIFE
THAT LIVES
FROM THE
SOURCE OF
THE INFLUENCE
OF THE HOLY
SPIRIT.**



WEEK FOUR



LIFESTYLE

WEEK FOUR: LIFESTYLE

In the last week, of your first steps into a relationship with your Father, we look at the 'what now?' question. We learn about habits like reading the Bible, praying and being a part of a faith community. We also are reminded of what to do when we make mistakes. Then we close this time together as we discover how to represent Jesus here on earth.

DAY16: THE WORD OF GOD

DAY17: PRAYER

DAY18: CHURCH LIFE

DAY19: IF I STUMBLE AGAIN

DAY20: AMBASSADORS



WEEK FOUR

DAY 16

JOHN 14:23

THE WORD OF GOD

This is the last week of your first steps into a quality relationship with your Father in heaven. We will consider a few of the 'what now' questions from here on. We will look at some habits, give encouragement and discuss the implications of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

We start with the importance of the Bible in your life ... the Word of God. We are so privileged to have the Bible available in printed format as well as online. Remember to download the Bible on your devices at:



(<https://www.youversion.com/the-bible-app/>)

Paul writes to a young follower of Jesus with the name of Timothy:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Scripture is God-breathed, meaning that God wants to use everything in the Scripture to breathe His life into you and me.



The tools He will use are teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness. Then He gives us the purpose of Bible study: 'So that the servant of God can be thoroughly equipped for every good work'.

The reason we study the Bible is for our own full equipping. We receive encouragement, wisdom and learn how to make quality decision for everyday life. I discovered that I cannot afford to live my life without a daily habit of reading and studying the Bible.

You may ask: "Where do I start?" As people who follow Jesus we read everything through the lens of the New Testament, which is the latter part of the Bible. That is where the story of Jesus starts. A very good book to start with is the book of John. Thereafter study the New Testament book by book before moving to the Old Testament.

Another question may be: "Which translation should I use?" There are many free translations and commentaries available on www.biblehub.com. There are different kinds of translations.

1. Literal translations focus on a word by word translation from the original language.
2. Modern or paraphrased translations capture the essence of the verse or the paragraph.

It is wise to always read literal translations like the New International Version (NIV) or the 1953 Afrikaanse Bybel (OAV) when you use modern or paraphrased Bibles like the Message Bible or the Living Bible.

One of my favourite scriptures in this regard is:

"Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23)

We have spoken quite a lot about God’s love for us. Now God asks us to demonstrate our love for Him by studying His Word and obeying Scripture. As a young Christian I tried to memorize one scripture every day. It was as simple as just writing it down and carrying it around with me. As you memorize what it says and where it is in the Bible, you will begin to see the impact of the Bible in your own life. Look at the promise in John 14:23 again. We know that God loves us unconditionally. But we learn here that our experience of His love will grow to a whole new intensity as we study and live in the Word of God. Remember your daily affirmation.



AFFIRMATION

“LORD, I LIVE IN YOUR WORD EVERY DAY.”

**DOWNLOAD YOUR OWN BIBLE APP TODAY OR GO AND BUY
YOUR OWN BIBLE.**

ACTION STEPS



WEEK FOUR

DAY 17

JOHN 14:13

PRAYER

A relationship with our Father in heaven is based on regular conversation with Him. This is similar to a good friendship that you may have with someone you love. You have regular conversations, sometimes short and sometimes long chats, which happen at regular intervals. See how Jesus refers to us as his friends:

"Instead I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15)

When we realize that prayer is an activity of friendship, we realize that it is just conversation with our God.

What do you think Paul meant when he wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray continually"?

All of us constantly talk to ourselves in our minds. We know it as self-talk. If you start each of these conversations with 'Father', you are well on your way to learning how to pray continually! Praying continually does not mean you should spend your entire day sitting somewhere and praying. It rather refers to a practical way to involve God in your day to day thoughts. When you include Him in every thought, your self-talk will turn into God talk!

Jesus taught the same thing when he said in Matthew 6:9 that our prayers should start with 'Our Father.' Jesus also demonstrated prayer as a critical part of His relationship with His Father.

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Jesus showed us the value of regular retreats where we are alone to have deep conversation with God.

"But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you in the open." (Matthew 6:6)

It is clear that prayer behind closed doors is not just thinking, it is talking. This sounds obvious but many people still need to learn how to actually talk to God. Let me give you a simple method to start a life of prayer. I love to do it while I am reading the Bible because it is a good option to pray through what we read in the scriptures.

Let's use Psalm 23 as an example. Verse 1 says: 'The Lord is my shepherd.' Let's put the word 'Father' in front of it: 'Father, you are my shepherd.' This immediately turns what I am reading into a conversation. You could then go one step further and ask your Father to help you understand what it means that He is your Shepherd. Praying the scriptures like this gives the Holy Spirit the opportunity to then respond. He will fill your mind with thoughts about how God wants to be your Shepherd.

A very good next step is then to take this prayer and apply it to all the practical challenges of your life. For instance: Father, shepherd me with my responsibilities at home. Father, shepherd me with my responsibilities at work. Father, shepherd me in every area of my life.

The last important discovery about prayer is that we must pray in the Name of Jesus:

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
(John 14:13)

We love to end all our prayers with this statement: ‘In the name of Jesus, Amen.’ The word ‘Amen’ just means: Let it be done.

Praying in the Name of Jesus actually means that we pray in alignment with His purposes for our lives. It also means that we pray on behalf of His reputation. This gives us the boldness to ask anything, whether it seems insignificant or extreme. As we align our prayers with His purposes and plans, we know that He will give us what we ask for!



AFFIRMATION

**“FATHER, I THANK YOU THAT I CAN TALK TO YOU
IN EVERY MOMENT OF MY DAY.”**

**WRITE DOWN A SIMPLE PRAYER AND READ IT OUT ALOUD AS YOU
BEGIN TO PRACTICE TALKING TO GOD.**

ACTION STEPS



EPHESIANS 4:16

CHURCH LIFE

Healthy church life is an integral part of our spiritual walk with God, just as important as Bible study and prayer. Our relationship with Jesus is expressed in relationships with other believers.

WEEK FOUR

DAY 18

Allow me to encourage you with some reasons to live in spiritual community.

1. We need support and encouragement on this journey with Jesus. Our fellowship with fellow believers is crucial. Paul often spoke of us being members of one another like the different parts of our body belong together. You can read this in Ephesians 4:16.
2. Your growth and your development is accelerated in the body of Christ (the Church). Ephesians 4:16 tells us that as we are joined together the body of Christ will 'build itself up in love.' Our God-experience is richly enhanced when we regularly meet with other believers for Bible Study, worship and to do outreaches together.
3. Together we also bring light to our world. As a team we maximize the positive influence of our faith in society. Matthew 5:14 "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden." The church becomes the light that shines on others through its people.

Here are a few practical tips as you become a part of a healthy church:

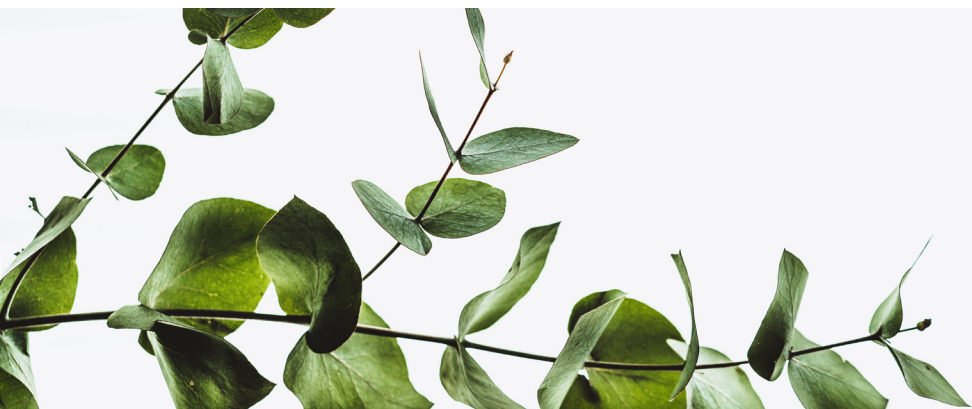


In Acts 2:42-47 we read that the first group of believers met regularly in two different spaces. The first was to gather regularly in private homes. This was due to their need for fellowship. The second was in the temple where they could hear the teaching of the apostles.

We can enjoy the church in the same way today. We meet weekly in larger groups (mostly on a Sunday) as the church, to worship and be taught from the Word. But then church-life reaches its full potential as we also meet weekly in small groups.

Christians are by no means perfect! Be prepared that sometimes people will disappoint you but the body of Christ is the best place to grow together.

A last observation is that the church does not exist for itself, but for the community. The fellowship and the sense of family has a much bigger purpose. A healthy church has a great impact on its community and city. Jesus and His Kingdom is made visible to people through the church in our city's homes and workplaces and other organizations. That is why we believe in the church!





ACTION STEPS

SHARE IT WITH ANOTHER PERSON.

ACTION S



WEEK FOUR

DAY 19

1 JOHN 1:9

IF I STUMBLE AGAIN

Every believer will come to a place in their spiritual walk where they you will make mistakes or even struggle with doubt.

We have already established previously that we are the children of God. That is our identity. That does not mean that we will not make mistakes. When we sin, it is normal to feel guilty and want to run away to hide somewhere like Adam and Eve did. It is important that we discover the value of rather running to Jesus and not away from Him.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

We need to allow God to address our sins, forgive us and purify us as He promised in this verse. What a wonderful assurance! A child who knows that his father loves him, will run to him when he has made a mistake. We have this guarantee in our hearts that our Father is the only one who can help us.

You may have a question about how to handle your old friendship circles? There could be friends and places that could pull you down if you are not strong enough to resist the temptations. It would be a good idea to spend as much time as possible with other believers until you are strong enough to manage with old friends. For future reference you definitely want to stay connected to your old friends, because they also need the new life that Jesus gives. And maybe your story will be an instrument in Jesus' hands to reach them.



Well, now we also need to talk about doubt. Is it normal to sometimes doubt whether God really exists or if you are really His child? We read the encouraging story of Thomas in John chapter 20. Thomas refused to believe, unless he could actually see the evidence in front of him and feel the scars. Jesus did not turn him away or scold him due to his unbelief, but invited him to come close and receive the evidence that he needed. We encourage you to run to God whenever you have similar doubts.

The enemy desires to use your guilt and doubt as a weapon against you. You have the liberty to ask your Father for evidence, which He will certainly supply. God uses people and that is why staying connected to other believers is so important because it will make you strong in times where you may struggle. Church life contributes greatly to support us in our walk with God.



AFFIRMATION

**“I CAN MAKE MISTAKES AS I GROW
IN MY FAITH.”**

**LIST SOME OF THE MISTAKES OR DOUBTS THAT YOU WANT TO
TAKE TO YOUR FATHER IN PRAYER.**

ACTION STEPS



WEEK FOUR

DAY 20

2 CORINTHIANS 5:18

AMBASSADORS

On this journey of the last couple of weeks we've discovered the tremendous devotion and enormous sacrifice of Jesus.

It is only appropriate now for us to also respond to that with our devotion to His cause.

"¹⁸ All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ²⁰ We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us." (2 Corinthians 5:18,20)

We become Christ's ambassadors, in other words, our function is to represent King Jesus here on earth.

There are at least two dimensions of being an ambassador:

- 1. WE REPRESENT HIS CHARACTER.**
- 2. WE REPRESENT HIS VOICE HERE ON EARTH.**

What does it mean to represent His character? We take care of His reputation in how we do life, family, business and social activities. Everything is about the reputation of our King. Secondly, we represent His voice by facilitating the influence and values of our King everywhere we live.

This ministry of reconciliation is captured in the marching orders given in Matthew 28:



¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20)

This is also known as the great commandment. You are experiencing this from us as we facilitate you to become a follower of Jesus.

The next step for you now, will be to reach out to somebody else and walk them through this journey you have just experienced. The moment you start reaching out to people with your testimony, the stronger you become spiritually and it becomes easier and a greater joy to observe the impact it has in the lives of others. The most monumental contribution this will make is not for the other person, but for your own growth.

As ambassadors of Jesus we are representing Him in the lives of the people around us and in our world.

AFFIRMATION

**"I AM AN AMBASSADOR OF JESUS
IN MY WORLD."**



ACTION STEPS

ACTION S



**I AM AN
AMBASSADOR
OF JESUS
IN MY
WORLD**

IN CLOSING

We pray this has been a blessed journey for you and that you will enjoy a rich and exciting relationship with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If you would like to do further reading to learn more about Jesus we would recommend the book 'Not do but done' by Alan Platt.

A great book that speaks to evidence that Jesus lived is 'More than a Carpenter' by Josh McDowell.

Please feel free to contact us at www.doxadeo.org or by sending an email to info@doxadeo.org for further guidance in your journey with the Lord.



