

# How To Study The Bible

Part 4: Process of Faith

John 20:17; 2 Peter 3:18



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**FOCAL Read Responsively** John 20:17 ... go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

**2 Peter 3:18** But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.<sup>KJV</sup>

The Christian way of life, as I said this morning, is a process, a Way of Life. It begins with the seeking heart finding Christ. It continues with the growing heart serving Christ. It extends into creation with the knowing heart being like Christ. It ceases in this life when you enter eternity to live forever with Christ.

**Christianity is a process, a Way of Life.**

You enter the Kingdom of God by faith in the finished work of Christ. The Bible tells us that:

**Romans 10:9-11** That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. {10} For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. {11} For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on

KJV All texts are 1789 King James Version, unless otherwise noted

**him shall not be ashamed.**

Salvation is *entirely* a work of God. You are **saved** – past tense – at the moment that you **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, believing in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**. We are not saved by works of righteousness, as the Scripture clearly teaches. What does our Bible tell us?

**Titus 3:5-7 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; {6} Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; {7} That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.**

“According to His mercy HE SAVED US”. The Source of our salvation is the finished work of Christ. He did the work, we believe in the work, and are saved. This is very clearly illustrated in the account of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. If you will remember Jesus

**Matthew 16:21 ... began [clearly] to show His disciples that He must ... be killed, and on the third day be raised from death.**<sup>AMP</sup>

The Lord told them over and over again that He was going to the Cross of Calvary. When He said “**I come**

AMP Amplified Version of the Holy Scriptures

**not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give my life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28)** there was no ambiguity. They should have known this. Yet – as humans tend to do – the disciples heard Christ teaching but failed to apply that teaching to their lives. When they went the Gethsemane they slept when they should have prayed with the Savior, encouraging Him in His hour of need. Some, like Peter, denied knowing the Lord at all (**Matthew 26:74**) while cursing the very name of God. Others like John the Beloved Apostle watched in the background but never stood up for Jesus. Christ's followers denied Him in the Temple, at His trial, and at His crucifixion. Though Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea summoned up the courage to go and collect His body following Christ's death (**Mark 15:43**) when they returned to the tomb and found Christ's body gone. What was their response?

**CONTEXT** John 20:10 Then **the disciples went away again unto their own home.**

The disciples just *gave up and went home*. I have been asked if a professing Christian could truly be saved if he or she consistently denied the Lord. My answer is based on the answer of Christ. When Mary found the Savior at the open tomb Jesus told her:

**FOCAL** John 20:17 ... **go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.**

Note the Master's Words, and rejoice ye fallen!

Jesus said “**go to My brethren**”. The Lord never used “brethren” with the disciples before this point.

He called the disciples “**friends**”.

**John 15:15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.**

The disciples were called “**friends**” because they were in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. They were “**friends**” because Jesus shared the Word of God with them as they followed Him. Yet they could not be “**family**” until the Blood was shed. It was the Blood that purchased our redemption, the Blood that made it possible for the believer to be bound into the Family of God. The “**Blood of Christ washed us from our sins**” (Revelation 1:5). The purchase price was paid. This is why Jesus could tell Mary

**FOCAL John 20:17 ... go to MY BRETHREN, and say unto them, I ascend unto MY FATHER, and YOUR FATHER; and to MY GOD, and YOUR GOD.**

Jesus spoke these words to men who betrayed Him, who cursed Him, who denied Him – and yet who were saved still because of the shed Blood of Christ.

Faith in Christ secures the salvation of the believer – PERIOD. **He abideth faithful – He cannot deny Himself (2 Timothy 2:13)**. Saved by grace, you remain saved – this is the testimony of Christ. Christ is our Brother, God is our Father – if we have entered into the Kingdom through faith in Him.

### **1. My Effectiveness In Christ Is Measured By My *Growth* In Grace**

**FOCAL 2 Peter 3:18 ... grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. ..**

If I am saved by faith in Christ, then *why* study the Word of the Lord? The answer is simple, and is clearly seen in the lives of the first disciples. Though Christ had repeatedly taught them the Word of God they *never internalized what they heard*. Had the disciples studied what Christ taught, meditating on its content while applying it to their lives, then they would not have had such a hellish beginning in the faith. Listen Beloved,

Grace is not just a vehicle by which we reach eternal life. Grace is the vehicle that carries the wise Christian through this present life.

We as Believer-Priests must **grow in Grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**. The early disciples were taught the Scripture,

yet the Bible testifies

**CONTEXT** John 20:9 ... **they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.**

The **New American Standard Version** of the Scripture translates this a little clearer, saying **“they did not understand the Scripture”**. I believe that's more correct. They *knew* – just as the Scribes and Pharisees knew the Scriptures they *knew*. They had the base knowledge – but not its application. Taught by the Master of all Teachers on the necessity of His crucifixion they repeatedly refused to internalize that message. At one point Peter arrogantly rebuked Jesus, saying:

**Matthew 16:22 ... Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.**

Jesus rebuked Peter in turn, saying:

**Matthew 16:23 ... Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.**

It is counterproductive – and devilish – for the believer to neglect his spiritual growth. If you **savor the things that be of God** then you will be used of God. We believers must **grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord** if we expect to sustain the hard blows of life's trials.

**FOCAL** 2 Peter 3:18 **But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

**Grow in Grace.** Think about the word **“grace”** for just a moment. The word **“grace”** is found *170 times* in the King James Version of Scripture. It's very first use is in reference to Noah prior to the worldwide flood:

**Genesis 6:8 But Noah found grace<sup>1</sup> in the eyes of the LORD.**

As we study the Word of God we discover several things about ourselves. First of all, we discover the terrible truth: none of us have earned – nor deserve – the grace that God has bestowed on us.

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The immature believer always considers themselves *worthy and deserving in his own right*. The mature believer feels worthy *because of the Blood of Christ*.

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Just as the young baby in the crib cries and demands attention, the young believer – unaware of how amazing God's Grace to him is – cries and demands attention. The young baby soils himself. The young believer finds himself in the mud of frequent sin. The younger in Christ you are, the less effective you are. If you have little knowledge of Christ, you will approach all things in this

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<sup>1</sup> H2580, חֵן, chên, *khane*, From H2603; *graciousness*, that is, subjectively (*kindness, favor*) or objectively (*beauty*): - favor, grace (-ious), pleasant, precious, [well-] favoured.

life from a position of weakness.

As you study the Word of God your worldview – the way you look at and respond to life's challenges – will naturally grow to be *in tune with Christ's worldview*.

What did Paul tell the Corinthian Church? He said:

**1 Corinthians 2:14-16** But the natural<sup>2</sup> man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. {15} But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. {16} For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

The **natural or soulish man** – the person whose focus is on the things of this world and not on the Word of God – **cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God**. Why is that? Because the Spirit of God was given to us to teach us **all truth (John 16:13)**. What is “**truth**”? Jesus said “**God's Word is truth**” (**John 17:17**). If your mind is focused on worldliness then you cannot grow. If your mind is focused on the Word of God then **you will have the mind of Christ**. You will, as you study the Word, be more and more like Jesus. You will respond to life's challenges as Jesus did. You will view all things through the lens of Eternity. You will trust God and His

2 G5591, ψυχικός, psuchikos, *psoo-khee-kos'*, From G5590; *sensitive* that is, *animate* (in distinction on the one hand from G4152, which is the higher or *renovated* nature; and on the other from G5446, which is the lower or *bestial* nature): - natural, sensual.

Providence no matter what might come. **Adrian Rogers** said:

**“Every believer needs to have the mind of Christ under the control of Almighty God. When a person is saved, for the first time he has his right mind. A person without the Lord Jesus Christ has a form of insanity. They do not operate with the mind that God made them to have.”**

When you were saved you *began* to operate under the parameters of Grace. You must continue to operate under those parameters “**having the mind of Christ under the control of Almighty God**” if you expect to have victorious and overcoming faith in this present life.

Grow as a tree grows. Grow downward, learning the deep things of God. Learn of His perfection and your imperfection and inability. Learn of His undying and immutable love. Let your roots grow deep beyond the topsoil until, no matter what storm may come, you will be able to stand. Grow upward, ever praising and glorifying the Lord Who loves you. Adore Him Who adorned you with mercy and grace. Strive to be like Jesus in all things. Put your mind on high things, not on the base things of earth. Grow outward, bearing fruit for the Master. Grow as His tree, and be blessed!

## **2. I Must Help Others Grow In Grace**

Return once more to the words Jesus spoke to Mary at the empty tomb. He told her:

**FOCAL** John 20:17 ... go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

Do you notice the implied *unity* in this statement? Mary had just seen Jesus for the first time following His resurrection. Her natural inclination was to grab Him, to hold on to Him – and she started to do that. But what did Jesus command her to do instead? **“Go to My brethren”**. Go to those I have purchased with My Blood. Go and tell them what *you have learned* so that *they may learn*.

Dear friends, we are in this thing together. If you have been born again by faith in Christ then **“we are laborers together with God” (1 Corinthians 3:9)**. Study your Bible with the intent of sharing what you have learned with other believers.

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A fragmented and immature body of believers cannot have a positive impact on this world.

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Jesus told Mary to **go and tell My brothers**. The heart of the Great Commission is that we learn and teach. What did Jesus say?

**Matthew 28:19-20** **Go** ye therefore, and **teach**<sup>3</sup> all nations, **baptizing** them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: {20}

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3 G3100, μαθητεύω, mathēteuō, *math-ayt-yoo'-o*, From G3101; intransitively to *become a pupil*; transitively to *disciple*, that is, enroll as scholar: - be disciple, instruct, teach.

**Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

What did Jesus say? **Go ... teach ... baptize ... teach**. The word we translate **“teach”** is literally **“make disciples”**. Every believer should be willing to **grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus** to the point where we can *train or disciple other believers*. **“Go and tell My brothers”**. The local Church must grow, else it will slide into Corinthianism.

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Corinthianism is the state of a local Church when the number of immature believers is greater than the number of mature believers. A local Church in this state will be marked with strife, division, and selfishness. Such a Church is absolutely ineffective in reaching the world for Christ.

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Paul told the local Church at Corinth:

**1 Corinthians 3:1-3** **And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal<sup>4</sup>, even as unto babes in Christ. {2} I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. {3} For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?**

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4 G4559, σαρκικός, sarkikos, *sar-kee-kos'*, From G4561; *pertaining to flesh*, that is, (by extension) *bodily, temporal*, or (by implication) *animal, unregenerate*: - carnal, fleshly.

Please note that Paul still referred to these believers as **brethren** – just as Christ called the disciples who abandoned Him **brethren** – yet he also calls them **carnal, fleshly, babes in Christ**. The Apostle said “**I couldn't speak unto you as spiritual – I have to feed you milk and not meat. Like a baby you could not handle the meat, and cannot handle it even now**”. The Corinthians refused to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord. Saved by faith in Christ they – like babies – had among them **envyings, strife, and divisions**. When local Churches are involved in internal strife, divisions, bickering, feuding, envying this is a sure sign that there are few Biblically mature believers. My Beloved, this should never be. It is imperative that every believer study the Word of God, internalizing and applying its truths – then share these truths with others. If you study the Word then it will **effectually work in you**. If you share what you have studied with other believers they, too, will grow in Grace.

**You cannot make yourself grow – only God can do this (1 Corinthians 3:6). But the constant application of the water of the Word to your life *will grow you* – and will grow the local Church.**

Carnal or immature believers have little impact on the world around them. It is the believer *willing to grow* that can be used of God. It is the local Church that has the *maximum number of mature believers* that can impact the world in a positive way. The Apostle told the Corinthians:

**1 Corinthians 1:11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.**

I don't know who the **house of Chloe** is but these people – perhaps a prominent Gentile family – contacted Paul and *told on them*. People know when a local Church is sick. Like a skunk run over in the highway it's smell permeates the whole neighborhood. Paul told the Corinthians later in this letter:

**1 Corinthians 5:1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.**

Oh the shame of a local Church in Corinthianism! I praise my God daily for you, my Beloved, that I have never know you to be so. Because we have many who are mature in Christ – and sharing what they have learned with others – we are avoiding this terrible condition. Continue to study. Continue to disciple. Take under your wing these new believers we have received over the past year and encourage them to grow. Share the Word with them, so that **Christ will be formed in us (Galatians 4:19)**, so that we will be His Body, for His glory and honor forever.

**Dr. Adrian Rogers**, a great man of God, led the Southern Baptist Convention from liberalism and back to a Biblical trust in the Lord Jesus. During the 1990 Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans

conservatives began to laugh and cheer over their victory. Dr. Rogers gently said "**Brothers, God's Word says that we should not rejoice when our enemy falls. And those we have defeated are not our enemies. They are our brothers. We should not be rejoicing.**" He, sharing the mind of Christ, brought balance to our convention.

May God lead each and every one of you to so share what the Lord, in grace, teaches you with others. God Bless you.

