

# WHAT IS?

Series of studies



Answers from the bible

Volume one

# Forward

In this volume, we find biblical solutions to some very genuine questions. People felt comfortable to ask Jesus whatever was on their hearts. Throughout this series, we explore these questions and give application notes that will help develop a closer relationship with God and the people around about us.

These studies are fellowship based with plenty of room for group discussion and Kingdom truths that remind us of the personal relationship we have with Jesus.

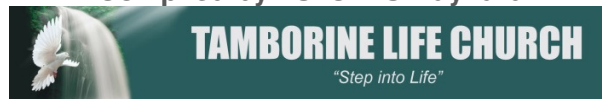
Each study gives room for the leader to exercise discretion as to the length of time each study takes. In appearance, some subjects appear long, however through advance preparation, the leader will know where to portion time.

May you be abundantly blessed as you read and apply each subject. Our hope is that you will grow and be prepared for others when they in turn ask you the same questions.

Matthew 7:7

***“Ask, and it will be given to you, seek, and you will find,  
knock, and it will be opened to you”***

Compiled by Ps. Chris Maynard



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## **WHAT IS**

Is a series designed for home group bible studies

It is Bible based (NKJ) and designed to encourage discussion.

# What is - Our identity?

## Introduction

If there is anything at threat today, it is our identity. From a biblical point of view, the answer to the question, “who am I?” is answered in detail that leaves no doubt.

The loss of real identity often precedes stress and depression, sometimes married people fight with each other when the true struggle is within. Single people sometimes lack vision to see forward because within themselves, they have no idea who they are, thus the saying. “I’m just busy finding myself, let alone someone else.”

The true desire to discover our identity comes from a place deep within us and yearns for purpose.

## Shaping our identity

**Point 1.** Our identity is shaped through a variety of influences. Out of this list, choose three that you believe have the greatest impact.

Tick three boxes

- |   |  |                                      |                                     |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Failure <input type="checkbox"/>            | Sin <input type="checkbox"/>           | Parents <input type="checkbox"/>     | Self <input type="checkbox"/>       |
| Opinions of others <input type="checkbox"/> | Wealth <input type="checkbox"/>        | Siblings <input type="checkbox"/>    | Education <input type="checkbox"/>  |
| National culture <input type="checkbox"/>   | Peer pressure <input type="checkbox"/> | Experiences <input type="checkbox"/> | Television <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Discussion:** Why did you choose these three?

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## Identity theft

**Read:** 1 Samuel 16:7-13 The world concentrates on outward appearance, this pressure this lie, is to rob us of our purpose and our true identity. If God worked this way, David would never have been King and would never have fulfilled his purpose.

**Point 2.** Jesus said in John 10:10 “The thief does not come except to steal and to kill to destroy. I have come that they may have life and that may have it more abundantly”

- a. The devil is at work to destroy everything; he is particularly at work to corrupt our identity. Jesus is at work within us to develop, shape and reveal our identity – Purpose and identity are linked!

**Discussion:** Why would the enemy want so badly to corrupt our identity and what does this mean to our purpose?

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**Transition:** Before we were Christians, we were sinners, that is, born in sin (separated from God) we were strangers to God, slaves to sin and all this, without repentance. Read: Ephesians 2:12

### **Our identity in Christ is not a secret identity**

**Point 3.** Read Romans 6:22; Galatians 3:29; Romans 8:16-17

- a. Philippians 3:20 says, “Our citizenship is in heaven, for which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- b. Although we are Australian, although we may be a husband or wife, a parent or we work for an employer with a title, we may be successful or we may have failed. All these things are not our true identity. Our true identity is a Christian, a man or woman of God, we are seated in heavenly places, bought with the price of His blood and we are Born Again as His Children.

**Discussion:** If we find our identity to be first a husband, first a wife or first a parent and try to fit that into being a Christian; what will be the outcome?

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**Discussion:** For a person that knows who they are in Christ, they also know what their purpose is; a man becomes a Christian husband, a wife becomes a Christian wife; for the parent, they see themselves as Christian parents.

How does living our true identity influence our family, our work and our daily lives?

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## Changed identity

**Point 4.** Matthew 16:18 Simon became Peter; Genesis 17:5 Abram became Abraham; Genesis 32:28 Jacob became Israel

- a. God is in the identity changing and restoring business! His work for us is that we will know who we are and if we have confused our identity, He will do a work within us to help us to be all we can be.

**Transition:** It is impossible for a person to establish their values, if they first do not know their own identity. Next week we will look at our values. What a value is and how the correct values can help us in our relationships with others and in the Lord.

## Conclusion & application

- a. What do you value most from this lesson?
- b. What can we do this week to strengthen our identity in Christ?
- c. Take these scriptures with you; start to speak them into your life.

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### **I am a Christian, saved and my birthright is in heaven!**

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"

Jeremiah 15:16b "Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of Hosts"

Psalms 17:8 "Keep me as the apple of Your eye. Hide me under the shadow of Your wings."

Deuteronomy 28:13a "And the Lord will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only and not beneath".

**Next week:** Share how God has shown you your identity, how you have grown and what this has done for your relationship with others.

## What is - Our values?

**Last week:** We studied our identity and discovered that we are not the job that we do, not the role we have. Our identity is first a Christian. A Christian husband, a Christian wife, a Christian business person and so on.

Remember, as we confess with our mouth and believe in our heart, we change and grow!

**Introduction:** **Out of last week's lesson, what have you discovered about your own identity and how have your relationships improved? Share some testimonies.**

Our values come down to this basic truth. Whatever we value, we will live to, feed and nurture, we will listen to and we will protect. Our values determine how we make decisions and are in themselves either a signal during trouble times that remind us we are off track, or our values are misplaced and they become the very reason we fall into confusion.

### Values establish security

**Point 1.** Read Matthew 6:26 and Matthew 10:30-31 God loves us and values us enough to notice what we do. He pays attention to us, so much so, that the hairs on our head are numbered. A BIG God takes notice, because He values us!

- a. A value is like the pillar of a building, everything rests upon them and out of them, we find security.
- b. When we pray, when we hurt, when we laugh, when we sing, when we lay down and when we rise, God notices! Have you ever thought that perhaps you are not important enough for God to notice you? Perhaps you do not know enough, or you have not been a Christian long enough?
- c. Did you notice, that nowhere in the bible is His value on us, determined by the value we place upon ourselves. You may have low self esteem, but God esteems you with great value!

**Discussion:** In Matthew 6:26 Jesus reinforces His value for us, read this verse again. How should we respond to this great value? How secure should we feel?

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**Divided values**

**Point 2.** Mark 3:24 “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand”

Why is this statement true?

The best thing a Husband can do for his children is love his wife, the best thing a wife can do for her children is love her husband

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- a. Whether it be family a business or a group of people with a common goal, if their is a lack of security, it is often the fruit of conflicting values!

**Value of purpose**

**Point 3.** Read: Luke 3:23 Jesus started His ministry at thirty years of age. He died at thirty three. This means, Jesus was in ministry for only three years.

Which of these statements are correct

- Jesus could not be bothered ministering any longer than three years
- Jesus valued His purpose above His time
- Jesus was confused why He came for thirty years

- a. How many of us place time above our purpose? If we value our purpose, our time becomes more effective and we make time for our priorities

**Discussion:** How can we relate this value of purpose over time, to our Christian life?

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- b. Read Luke 23:42-43 – Even on the cross, Jesus placed His purpose, above His own pain. Jesus NEVER lost sight of His values!



## Values and priorities

**Point 4.** Values should be thought through. Do you value peace? At what cost? Matthew 5:9a Jesus said, “Blessed are the peace makers” These people value peace, but not at the cost of allowing injustice. Therefore, justice is a greater priority. Out of justice, peace finds its own value.

a. Values work hand in hand. The following order of values doesn't mean we should not serve the Lord, but if we do not work, our ministry is in vein. If you value your partner above God, your partner will lack security in you.

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|-------------|--|
| 1. God      | Our values should be maintained and monitored.   |
| 2. Partner  | How do these values in this order work together? |
| 3. Family   | .....  |
| 4. Work     | .....  |
| 5. Ministry | .....  |

## Conclusion & application

There are many values we all have. Knowing them and establishing them as a habit is something different.

What has been of value to you in this lesson?

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**Next Week:** During the course of the following week, consider your values, write a list and bring a testimony next week of what this has meant to you.

### A small list of values that many people hold dear

Truth	Birthdays	Church	Compassion
Prayer	Christmas	Loyalty	Flexibility
Time together	Easter	Your word	Liberty
Your health	Saying grace	Obedience	Wisdom
Talking together	Punctuality	Attentiveness	Joy

## **What is – Truth?**

**Last week:** We studied the purpose of values. Indeed values and purpose go hand in hand. How did last week's study help you? From re-visiting your own values, what have you placed on the list that wasn't there before? Have you rearranged your values? What values have been impressed upon you this past week?

**Security is a byproduct of the correct values, both within us and with the people around about us.**

### **Introduction**

In Act I, scene 3 of Hamlet, the character of Polonius prepares his son Laertes for travel abroad with a speech in which he directs the youth to commit a few precepts to memory. Among these precepts is the now familiar adage "This above all, to thine own self be true."

Close to the truth, does not make things true, a close truth is more often a deception. We should be true to ourselves, to our values, to our identity, but if we are the only arbiter of what is true, then truth becomes a matter of interpretation and that is not biblical. .

Today we will study truth and deception, objectivity and the author of truth, the Lord Jesus Christ. When a bridge is built well, they say, "it is true" An arrow can fly true or it can miss the mark. Living our lives true is a byproduct of understanding truth!

### **Confronted with truth**

**Point 1.** Read: John 18:37-38. Pilot was a man that had seen and judged many people from liars to truthful men, but this time he was faced with the very author of truth, Jesus Christ.

- a. The bible speaks of many things that are true, not only to be truthful, but that truth would be a belt around us, that would hold everything together – Read: Ephesians 6:13-14 (Armour of God, belt of truth)
- b. We all must face truth. The question is, what do we do when truth is facing us? In that hour, can we see truth for what it is, or do we ignore it, thinking that what is true will go away?

### **Staying objective**

**Point 2.** Integrity and truth go hand in hand. Accepting the truth sometimes means that we may lose something. We may have to give up and agree. Truth challenges our pride and remaining objective when hurt or pride is in the way is very difficult indeed.

**Discussion:** Why is it difficult to accept truth when we are hurt? Why is pride such a weapon of the enemy? Read the following scriptures:

Proverbs 11:2; Proverbs 16:18; Proverbs 29:23; Ephesians 4:26

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**Discussion:** We trust a plane because it keeps its shape and is somewhat flexible during rough weather. If it is damaged we say: "It has lost it's integrity" Would you fly in it? How can hurt, anger and pride damage our integrity?

Quote: "When we are angry, the last thing we get is information"

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**You have the power!**

**Point 3.** Luke 10:19 Jesus said, "Behold, I give you authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you." In John 14:6a, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life."

- a. When truth is illusive, we must refocus on Jesus! Seeing Him, gives us clarity. By focusing on Him, we rise in power, the traps of the devil amount to naught, people can no longer hurt us and pride has no voice! We literally trample on serpents of deceit and walk all over scorpions of hurt – ***How awesome is that!***
- b. Sometimes we need to get out of our own road and let go of things that stop us from laying hold of truth.

**Discussion:** What can we hold onto when we lose our grip on truth?

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**Conclusion & application**

Living a life that is true, helps us let go of baggage. We make better decisions, we are trusted, we see deception more clearly and we have greater access to God when we worship Him

How many ways can we apply truth? Family, work, friends, ourselves, in our worship, in our own thought life, are just some. Low self-esteem has no place in a person that is looking to Jesus.

What has been of value to you during this study?

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How can you apply truth this week?

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**Next week:** Prepare some real life examples of how truth made the difference.

## **What is - Joy?**

**Last week:** We studied TRUTH. When Pilot was confronted with the author of truth, he had to ask, "what is truth?." Hurt, pride and all kinds of sin, get in the road of truth and we lose our integrity. God has given us power to overcome, to tread on snakes and scorpions that represent those things that would undermine the truth.

**What life experiences have you had where truth, made the difference?**

### **Introduction**

Webster's dictionary definition: 1) to experience great pleasure or delight : REJOICE, 2) the emotion evoked by well-being, success, or good fortune or by the prospect of possessing what one desires.

Joy is not merely a laugh or a smile, joy comes from a place deep within us. It is more than happiness and is not birthed out of entertainment. Joy is something all human beings can experience. God offers a joy that never departs. Today we will reach deep into joy and find that special place God has for us all, a place of total contentment, where the cares of this world fall away to the joy we have in Him.

### **Times of joy**

3 John 1:4 "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."

Romans 12:15 "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

1 Corinthians 13:6 "(Love) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;"

**Point 1.** Times of rejoicing can heal a family, can unite a nation, can bring vision and refresh our hearts and minds.

**Discussion:** Proverbs 17:22a "A merry heart does good, like a medicine." - Many will remember the Americas Cup race, where Australia rejoiced. Talk about times you remember that brought great rejoicing to you, your family, or even a time that you watched the rejoicing of others.

### **Joy that never departs**

1 Thessalonians 5:16 "Rejoice always."

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

**Point 2.** Most people are happy when they receive something, or when they are entertained, but God says to rejoice ALWAYS! There is a joy that can stay with us, no matter what the circumstances.

- a. Read: Galatians 5:22. This joy comes from within, when we receive Christ as Savior, He does not promise we will enjoy everything that happens but He does promise we can experience joy always. This joy is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, it comes from Him and dwells within us.

**Discussion:** If we experience joy ALWAYS, what do you think would change in our families and with the people we mix with?

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### **Confidence establishes joy**

Philippians 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"

Nehemiah 8:10b "the joy of the Lord is your strength"

**Point 3.** "Confidence": Read Hebrews 3:6; Hebrews 3:14; Hebrews 10:35

- a. This confidence is not in our natural ability, nor in the flesh nor from others around about us, this confidence comes from a deep and abiding confidence in the Lord. 1 John 5:14 "Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, he hears us."
- b. Paul says that he LEARNED how to be abased and he LEARNED to abound Philippians 4:12-13. He literally practiced confidence. In verse 13, He says, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

**Discussion:** Joy comes from the Holy Spirit, no matter what happens, we can remain content and full of joy. Confidence in Christ releases this joy.

What are three ways we can practice confidence?

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Proverbs 12:20 "Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, But counselors of peace have joy."

Proverbs 21:15 "It is a joy for the just to do justice, But destruction will come to the workers of iniquity."

**Peace, joy and love are connected**

**Point 4.** Not only should we experience God's joy, but we should also allow others to have their joy. The only thing worse than not having joy, is stealing it from someone else.

- a. Ever seen someone rejoicing and ground your teeth wishing they could experience the bad day you are having? 1 Corinthians 13:6 "(Love) does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;"
- b. When we walk in love, we love to witness joy, we feed off it, rather than resent it, we begin to practice it.
- c. Proverb 24:17 "Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles;"

**Conclusion & application**

We used to sing a song, "This joy that I have, the world can't take it away."

Are we better to worry and stress, or have confidence in God that the work He started, he will complete?

This joy does not mean, we are laughing when others are weeping, it does not mean we lose our compassion for those in trouble, it does mean that we become a wellspring of hope. We can weep with those who weep, for the joy within us is not crushed. We remain strong in all things and others can take courage in our faith.

How can we practice joy this week?

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**Next week:** Consider joy this week and bring a report next week of how you practiced and learned to experience His joy. How it made you feel and how better your week was because of joy.

## What is - Favour?

**Last week:** We studied JOY! We saw that joy goes beyond mere happiness that is dependant upon a good day; joy comes from the Holy Spirit and confidence in God allows for our joy to be released. We saw that the only thing worse than not having joy, was stealing it from someone else and that peace, love and joy are connected.

**How did you practice joy this past week? How did it make you feel?  
How better was your week because of the joy of the Lord?**

### Introduction

(This study will take you on a journey of discovery. Take each step through this study and enjoy the revelation of the FAVOUR OF GOD!)

The favour of God, goes beyond the notion of “favours” as if God owes us anything. The favour of God is linked to the “PROMISE” the same promise given to Abram “Abraham” Read: Genesis 12:2-3. The favour of God however works through us with people, our families, our business, our Churches and with God’s favour upon us, we can be confident that what we do will prosper.

The PROMISE of God is our right of claim as a Christian, the favour of God is more linked to how we behave. Some people call it “luck,” however, luck denotes a fragile outcome to circumstances that could also turn bad. The favour of God is not luck, indeed there is no such thing as luck in God’s economy.

The bible has a lot to say about the favour of the Lord.

Joseph found favour through obedience and was raised to heights of great Power - Solomon found favour after asking for wisdom instead of something to please himself – God gave him more wisdom than any before or any after him.

God ensured that Israel would find favour with the Egyptians so that they would not leave empty handed

**Transition:** Through obedience, we can have favour with God and people.

To begin our understanding:

**Questions:** Have you ever been in the wrong place at the wrong time?  
Have you been in the right place at the right time?

**Discussion:** Share some stories of how you may have been in the wrong place at the wrong time, or the right place at the right time.



## Right place at the right time

**Point 1.** Read: Acts 1:4-5 Can you imagine if, on this day, how someone would feel if they had not been in that meeting? Perhaps they just decided, they would meet up with everyone the next day – This person, would have missed out on Jesus' instruction to wait.

- a. This person, would have been in the wrong place at the wrong time.
- b. For those assembled together, they were in the right place at the right time. These people, received favour!
- c. Read Acts 2:1-2 to see what happened.

**Point 2.** Read: Acts 2:42-47 Notice verse 47 “praising God and having favour with all the people.”

- a. God wants to give us favour, He is always speaking to us, always offering us favour in finances, friendships, health and in all we do.

**Transition:** Being in the right place at the right time, is not by chance, it is by choice! The three areas we need to be in the right place at the right time are:-

1. Physical
2. Mental
3. Spiritual

**Discussion:** Have you ever noticed, some people are physically in Church, but in their mind, they are somewhere else? Jesus could walk by them and they wouldn't notice. How often does this happen in daily life? The person is with you, or so it appears, but spiritually, or mentally, they are somewhere else.

When someone is not really with you, the opposite occurs, they lose favour with you!

## Positioning ourselves for supernatural favour

**Point 3.** Live up to your values, not down to your circumstances. This is linked to integrity. In the early Church they had very little, read Acts 2:46-47, what were they doing so well that God blessed them supernatural favour?

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- a. Do you think they were inward looking or outward looking?
  - b. These people gained favour with people, because they first gave favour to God and each other and they did it all, with a smile!

## Sensitivity

There are two types of sensitive people

**Point 4.** 1. Those who are too sensitive and cannot cope with correction.

2. Those who have laid their pride on the alter and listen.

**a. Read** Proverbs 19:20 and Proverbs 23:22

**Discussion:** How can we possibly receive favour, if we do not listen? Listening to each other, listening to the voice of God, listening to how people feel. Being over sensitive in the wrong way, is often due to pride or we have been hurt and “*refuse to talk about it*”. Ever heard someone say that?

Being in the right place at the right time is very difficult for people that refuse to listen. Talk about how being sensitive can be a thing that brings favour and how being over sensitive can literally rob us of any chance of receiving favour

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## Letting go and letting God

Point 5. 1 Peter 5:7.”Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.”

**a.** Something that will stop us being in the right place at the right time is BAGGAGE.

**b.** Sometimes we carry so much: fear, the past, resentment, low self esteem, hurt, bad relationships. Sometimes it is that we simply fill our time with so much that we could not take hold of the favour of God because our hands are full.

**Discussion:** Can you relate to this? As a group, discuss how we can apply 1 Peter 5:7 and position ourselves to be in the right place at the right time in our MIND OUR SPIRIT AND OUR BODY

## Conclusion & application

What do you value the most from this study? Let’s take this with us through the coming week; to be conscious of being either over sensitive or not sensitive enough. That the favour of God is linked to obedience and faithfulness.

**NEXT WEEK:** Bring some testimonies of the FAVOUR OF GOD

## What is - Love?

**Last week:** We studied FAVOUR. Being in the right place at the right time, by placing our body, our mind and spirit in the right place! Favour is linked to obedience and with the favour of God, we can be certain that what we do will grow and we will prosper

**What testimonies do you have of the favour of God?**

### Introduction

Love demands a price! Love is the most fulfilling experience in life! Love is the most misunderstood of all human qualities because GOD IS LOVE! There have been more songs sung, more stories written, more wars fought over love, than any single thing – LOVE is compelling, it demands from us because we are made in the image of God, we are driven by it and one day, we will all be face to face with the very embodiment of love – GOD HIMSELF!

Read: 1 John 4:8 and 1 John 4:16.

### Four characteristics of love

**Point 1. AGAPE LOVE:** The first of the qualities of love and the most important is AGAPE LOVE. It is selfless love, it is commitment based & is unconditional love.

- a. It has been called the “LOVE THAT CONSUMES!” It is preeminent above all loves and demands the highest price possible, and can only be given by someone who truly loves: Read John 15:13
- b. Love works best when combined together with faith and hope: Read 1 Corinthians 13:13
- c. Faith is an absolute belief that God is in control  
Hope is the foundation of faith. Bible hope means a “confident eager expectation of good”

**Discussion:** Why does LOVE work so well with faith and hope? Consider a person without faith and hope, how difficult it must be to love without these two qualities. Remember, this love is commitment based & unconditional

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**Transition:** An important understanding of love is that “LOVE GROWS” It is nurtured. The bible says, we love, because He first loved us. 1 John 4:7-10. As we grow closer to God, we grow closer in our capacity to love.

**Discussion:** This is why our first love must be God! If we love any other over Him, we limit our capacity and as we grow weary, we grow weaker in love.

Read: Mark 12:30-31 - Is love a request? Not at all, indeed LOVE is a command.

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It is amazing that Christians are identified by love! The bible does not say “they shall know you are my disciples by your miracles”, or by any other thing, the bible says TRUE LOVE identifies the Christian faith apart from every other belief. Read John 13:34-35 the word used here is AGAPE. Jesus is giving the world the right to examine our credibility. For all the mistakes we may make, if we have this quality, the world will know we have something special.

Interesting point: The word translated “know” (*ginosko*) does not refer to a theoretical knowledge but to a knowledge gained by first-hand observation

How can we show this love? How can we develop this love? What circumstances arise where this love is tested?

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## STORGE LOVE

**Point 2. Storge love** – This love is strong affection love, normally reserved for family members. Read Romans 12:9-10.

- a. This love causes us to give preference to one another. It is “Brotherly love,” where a Christian who has met another Christian for the first time may say, “I love you Brother, or Sister.” We give honour and respect to the relationship. It is primarily used in families, particularly from parents to children, where they look and feel they just need to say, “I love you” It is a declaration of fondness.

**Point 3. Eros love** – This love is excited love. It is often used when people fall in love. It can also be called “blind love” It is based on sheer excitement and sheer pleasure. This love should be kept in check. When a person says, “I love you,” there are times that the other person confuses this with Agape. When people fall out of love therefore, they are not falling out of Agape, they are falling out of Eros. The New testament does not use this word, however it is best described by the words in the Song of Solomon in the Old testament

**Point 4. Philia love** – This love is friendship love. Read:1 Samuel 18:1-3. Philia love also operates in marriage; it is a giving one to another and operates in a mutually rewarding way.

- a. Agape will operate whether the two people are on good terms with each or not – Philia love, makes Agape love rewarding! Philia love makes you feel good, it is refreshing. People that enjoy the benefits of Agape love, should remember to refresh the bond they have with Philia (Friendship) How can we do this?

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- b. Read John 21:15-17 This is an incredible piece of dialogue between Jesus and Peter. Jesus actually asks Peter, “Do you Agape Me?” Peter answers with Philia love. Jesus is persistent with this three times, but each time, Peter answers with Philia love. Jesus tells Peter to act upon his answer by telling him to feed or tend His sheep (God’s people) Philia is always an action of doing!

**Discussion:** Peter had grown in wisdom not to answer so quickly with Agape; remember he did this before Jesus death and proceeded to deny Jesus three times. Read John 21:18-19 Here Jesus in no uncertain terms let’s Peter know that he will Agape love Jesus so much, that one day, Peter will die for him.

How can we learn from this dialogue? Was Peter wise for not answering in haste and committing to Agape, or was it out of fear that he would possibly again let Jesus down? Clearly Jesus was not bothered by his answer, but used Philia love to restore Peter - How can we learn from this?

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### **Conclusion & application**

The greatest definition of true love: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a <sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never fails.

What do you value most from this study?

**Next week:** How do we forgive others, inspire friendships, grow in our marriages? Grow and give LOVE! Bring a testimony next week of how your own love has grown and how love, made the difference!

## What is – Our destiny?

**Last week:** We studied LOVE. We found the four loves that operate within us. God is love!  
We cannot know true love without God.

**How did love make the difference in your life this week?**

### Introduction

As God's people, we have a destiny! We are not only living for the here and now, we are destined to reign and rule with Jesus. Larry Norman sang, "We are only visiting this planet" Soon we will see the King and whether we die before He returns, or we see Him return in all His glory, our destiny is to live into all eternity!

### Angels marvel

**Point 1.** Read: Hebrews 2:16; Hebrews 13:2; 1 Peter 1:12 Luke 15:10;

- a. 1 Corinthians 6:3, "Do you not know that we shall judge Angels? How much more, the things that pertain to this life."
- b. Psalm 139:14 says, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."
- c. In Genesis 1:26 - God said, "Let us make man in Our image." This word "OUR," We see the Trinity – God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, making His first creation that would be in His own image; that we would be an eternal being, we would stand forever as His greatest creation.

**Discussion:** What do these verses tell you of the plan God has for us? Of His purpose and what responsibility do you think this places upon us?

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- d. Read: Revelation 22:5 and 2 Timothy 2:12 We shall rule and reign with Christ. The plans for us in heaven go way beyond us just being saved – In heaven, God has things for us to do!

## Temporal and Eternal

**Transition:** Read Colossians 3:1-4 “Set your mind on things above” These words have a two fold purpose

**Point 2.** #1. That we constantly remember our calling

#2. That we do things that have eternal outcomes

- a. Giving has eternal outcomes, loving has eternal outcomes, winning people to Christ has eternal outcomes. There are many things we can do that work toward the eternal, they are actions that are not temporal, those things that will be forgotten or burned up at the end of days, but they are actions we do that build into our eternal calling.

**Discussion:** Talk about this; how much of our lives are wasted doing things that have no eternal outcome? What things do have eternal outcomes? These questions can change our lives!

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## Heavenly Reward

Read: Revelation 22:12

**Point 2.** The reward Jesus speaks of is based on our works. Many Christians have neglected works saying that it is grace that matters

- a. Read James 2:18 and James 2:26. God values what we do! He is preparing us for a future to reign with Him; it is clear that the reward He speaks of is also greater authority. There will be those with greater authority in heaven.
- b. John 14:2 Jesus said, “In my Father’s house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

### **Fictitious Story**

A man who was rich and a man that was poor both died together. The man that was poor was given a mansion, glorious and very large, lined with gold and precious stones. The rich man arrived and when shown the poor mans house thought, "I can only imagine what my place will be." After being led past the large mansions and into the streets with the smaller houses, he was led to a place where there were small shacks and some were even falling down. When the Angel said "welcome home," the man was shocked and said, "are you joking? The poor man had a mansion that was even better than mine back on earth and I am led to this small broken down shed? Something is wrong." The Angel replied, "Well certainly I understand your surprise, but try as we have, we could only build with the supplies that you sent us."

### **Conclusion & application**

God wants us to start building now! That we might look above and not beneath! That we would be the head and not the tail; that we would show love and kindness, that our prayers might be filled with our own personal action to give of ourselves.

We cannot conclude this study without first repenting for where we have forgotten God's plan for us. For where we have neglected His eternal purpose for us and begin even more to give Him honour in what we do.

What has been of value to you from this study?

**Next week:** Bring stories of how this study has changed what you do. You never know what supplies you might send God this week to build a mansion for you!

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## What is – The church?

**Last week:** We studied our DESTINY. More than temporal, our destiny is eternal. We saw how we shall even judge Angels, that we shall reign with Christ and what we do now, matters!

**How did you apply eternal actions into your week?**

### Introduction

The Church is without doubt God's ultimate eternal plan; it is never ending, as one day we will rule and reign with Christ. It is not an organisation, it is an organism. It is alive with one head the Lord Jesus Christ and millions of God fearing people with purpose and passion to spread the Good News . It is a Church of order but is full of the Holy Spirit. God's people meet in buildings called Churches as they have done since the first Disciples, but it is the message we carry within us, the hope we share and the Love we have that makes us family!

### Three part structure

**Point 1.** 1. Congregation 2. Celebration 3. Corporation

- a. The Celebration Read Acts 2:42 Notice they met in the temple and they met in each others houses
- b. Read Acts 20:7 and Acts 20:18 The first day is Sunday; this was a breaking from the Old Testament as the Sabbath Day was fulfilled in Christ, that Christians enter the "REST" that is in God daily. The Disciples started the first Church services and showed their new found freedom in God – This is commonly known as the CELEBRATION

**Point 2.** The Corporation (for want of a better description) is the financial aspect of the Church

- a. In Romans 16:23 Paul greets the Church and a man by the name of Erastus who was the Treasurer. God instigated integrity in the Church with the words of Jesus – Luke 20:25 "And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar what is Caesars and to God the things of God
- b. In Acts Chapter 4 and 5 we read that Peter collected from God's people those possessions they had determined to give

**Point 3.** The Congregation is the Church in action! It is where we live, where we work, it is God's people "in the market place" of the world. Read Mark 16:15

**Transition:** God is a God of order! The Church is a place of safety and learning, it is a place where the lost can find truth, where the weak can find strength and the sick can be healed. This is not only on Sunday, it is every day of the week.

### God's garden

**Point 4.** Read Genesis 2:8-9 and Genesis 2:15 We notice three principles for the Church today

- a. **1.** In verse 8, God "PUT" Adam in the Garden **2.** In verse 15 God "PUT" Adam in the garden. It appears that He put Adam there twice - Why?
- b. **3.** Verse 9 tells us that there was food pleasant to the sight and obviously good to eat. In verse 15, Adam was put in the Garden to tend to it.

**Discussion:** The Garden of Eden although very real, was also symbolic of the Church – Way back in Genesis, God had designed the ultimate plan. A place where we could have nourishment and all we need to grow and a place where we could tend to the needs of others.

How can we fulfill God's ultimate plan and be God's garden?

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### The Church is equipped

**Point 6 Read** Ephesians 4:11-12 Question: The five fold ministry gifts to the Church, Apostle, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, teachers are for the equipping of the Saints (The Church) but who is in the work of the ministry? How should this ministry be performed?

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### Conclusion & application

The Church is a place of communion, 1 Corinthians 11:25. When we meet, it is a place of praise and worship, of teaching and of security. It is where our natural and spiritual gifts will grow.

**Discussion:** How has the Church helped you?

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### Conclusion & application

We are family! We are the Church, we are a royal priesthood, we are the body of Christ, we have purpose; we have authority we have a message; and His message, the Good News is to be spread to every person.

**Warning:** We should be careful how we speak of the Church; many people recklessly speak of it as if it is simply an organisation and forget that the Church is the body of Christ. It is not perfect yet. It is all of us, growing and maturing in God. The bible calls us the body of Christ; Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-20.

How can we apply this passage and grow closer? How can we be involved?

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Matthew 5:14

*“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.”*

## Precious promises

### **Psalm 3:3-6**

But You, O LORD, are a shield for me, My glory and the One who lifts up my head. I cried to the LORD with my voice, And He heard me from His holy hill. I lay down and slept; I awoke, for the LORD sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people. Who have set themselves against me all around.

### **Psalm 5:11-12**

But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. For You, O LORD, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.

### **Psalm 18:1-3,28,35**

I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I will call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies.

For You will light my lamp; The LORD my God will enlighten my darkness. You have also given me the shield of Your salvation; Your right hand has held me up, Your gentleness has made me great.

### **Psalm 20:1-5**

May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble; May the name of the God of Jacob defend you; May He send you help from the sanctuary And strengthen you out of Zion; May He remember all your offerings, And accept your burnt sacrifice .May He grant you according to your heart's desire, And fulfill all your purpose. We will rejoice in your salvation, And in the name of our God we will set up our banners! May the LORD fulfill all your petitions.

### **Psalm 23:1-4**

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

### **Psalm 28:7**

The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart greatly rejoices, And with my song I will praise Him.

### **Psalm 34:4**

I sought the LORD, and He heard me, And delivered me from all my fears.

### **Psalm 37:3-6**

Trust in the LORD, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the LORD, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD, Trust also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, And your justice as the noonday.

**Psalm 55:22**

Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

**Psalm 62:1-2**

Truly my soul silently waits for God; From Him comes my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be greatly moved.

**Psalm 91:1-2; Psalm 91:14-16**

He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High  
Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust."

"Because he has set his love upon Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, And show him My salvation."

**Psalm 38:4-6, 9;15-18;21-22**

For my iniquities have gone over my head; Like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering Because of my foolishness. I am troubled, I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

Lord, all my desire is before You; And my sighing is not hidden from You.

For in You, O LORD, I hope; You will hear, O Lord my God. For I said, "Hear me, lest they rejoice over me,  
Lest, when my foot slips, they exalt themselves against me." For I am ready to fall, And my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare my iniquity; I will be in anguish over my sin.

Do not forsake me, O LORD; O my God, be not far from me! Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation!

**Psalm 94:19**

In the multitude of my anxieties within me, Your comforts delight my soul.

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