

The New Testament Every Day

New Covenant Promises for Life



Home Group Leader's Guide

February – June 2023

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW.....	3
Session 1 The New Testament in You.....	8
Session 2 Gospel.....	13
Session 3 Forgiveness	17
Session 4 Cross	21
Session 5 Faith	25
Session 6 Salvation.....	29
Session 7 Love.....	33
Session 8 Witness.....	38
Appendix 1 NT Bible Reading Plan.....	42
Appendix 2 Guide to leading communion.....	43

OVERVIEW

The New Testament Every Day Home Group Series

SERIES PASSAGE

Jeremiah 31:31-34 (ESV)

“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

A. About the series: The New Testament Every Day

We are taking this year to look at the WHOLE NEW TESTAMENT and we are aiming for every person at FGAM to take the time to read all of it. This is not aimed at turning us into Bible scholars, but we want to take the time to re-establish the foundations of our faith and reading and understanding the new Testament will help us to apply it to our lives. This series will complement our Bible reading as we look in greater depth at seven major themes of the New Testament: Gospel, Forgiveness, Cross, Faith, Salvation, Love and Witness.

As we read and go through this series, let’s keep in mind that the goal of the writers was not to eloquently detail issues of “theology,” but it was to prepare Christians, even new believers, to live well in the real world. That’s why we have termed this series, the New Testament for Every Day because we will see how each of the themes can transform our every day lives.

*The series aims to demonstrate how relevant, powerful
and practical the word of God is for life today.*

B. Introduction to the Series

FGAM is on a multi-year transition to become a church that supports the healthy growth of the whole household spiritual walk. Instead of the church being a place where you buy pre-prepared food (e.g. Coles), we are gradually transitioning to being place that helps you grow your own food (e.g. Bunnings). Part of this transition is equipping the church to be active and personally invested in their own spiritual development, instead of just blindly following traditions, culture or even expectations from others.

In 2023, our FIRM FOUNDATION year, we will go through some key books of the New Testament, and look to see how they give us insight into how we can build Christ-like life today. Life is still evolving post pandemic, so we can expect many significant changes and developments this year, but first among them will be the rebuilding of the foundations of our Faith.

Coinciding with the launch of this series will be the launch of FGAM's Bible reading plan aimed at helping us to read through the whole of the New Testament. Starting 5th February and going for the year, we are including space in each home group session to encourage one another in this journey.

*The New Testament Every Day aims to build a firm
foundation for our faith*

A. Overview of the Sessions

This is an extended Home Group series of 8 sessions, covering 7 major concepts of the New Testament. A video delivered by Ps. Chris Ong accompanies each of the home group sessions.

SESSION	TITLE	BOOK	KEY APPLICATION POINTS
Session 1	New Testament in You		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The New Testament is a new covenant with new promises • Not like the Old Covenant of outward observances, the new covenant is written on our hearts • NT Bible Reading Plan aims and purpose
Session 2	Gospel	Mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gospel is good news • It's not just a message of salvation and promise of afterlife • It's also an ethos to live by and a task to be done
Session 3	Forgiveness	Acts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background to acts • Forgiveness is essential in spreading of the gospel and establishing the church • Forgiveness is also a commandment
Session 4	Cross	Romans 1 Corinthians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cross was a cruel punishment • We can experience God's power through the cross • Cruciformity is how the cross changes us • Communion as a home group
Session 5	Faith	Galatians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith is about trusting in someone reliable and dependable • Faith is not just about gaining, it's about dying to our own life • Faith is about recognising that we are children of God and heirs of his promises
Session 6	Salvation	1 Timothy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salvation means rescue • Salvation is not just promise of an afterlife • We are saved FROM something and FOR something
Session 7	Love	1 John	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God is love • Love's fingerprints are all through the Bible • Jesus gave two commandments on love that summed up all other laws • The book of John explains the outworking of love in a believer's life.
Session 8	Witness	Revelation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revelation is a book written to encourage believers to be confident and bold in their witness of Christ • There are many different ways we can witness • Witnessing is something we do with great reward

The suggested format for each session in the New Testament Every Day series is:

SESSION ACTIVITY	TIME
Worship / Opening Prayer	5-15 mins
Welcome and Session Introduction	5 mins
Read Scripture (session passage)	2 mins
Watch session video	5 mins
Highlight the Main Point	10 mins
Discussion	30 mins
Bible Reading Plan	10 min
Closing/personal Prayer	10 mins
TOTAL TIME	75-90 mins

C. Leading the Sessions

The New Testament Every Day series is filled with scripture and discussion about understanding and application of fundamental themes in the New Testament. It will require some preparation by the leader. Suggest that the leader prepares early and tries to answer the questions themselves before reading the answer guide.

WE ENCOURAGE YOUR GROUP TO WATCH THE VIDEO FOR EACH SESSION. This will give a clear explanation of each of the key topics and put you in a good position to have a good discussion around the questions.

The aim is to use the discussion questions to provide have practical insights as well as debunking stereotypes or cliché answers. Try to listen carefully and steer the discussion towards more holistic, real life answers. Do not hesitate to reach out if you would like further pastoral assistance for any of the sessions.

Note that Communion is suggested for session 4, as well Sessions 2, 4 & 7 have break-away group discussions - members may wish to do some preparation for before the session.

*There is time allocated in each Session for discussion of
the Bible Reading Plan*

D. Resources

The "The New Testament Every Day" Leader's Guide and Member's Notes are available for download at <http://fgam.org.au/media/homegroup-materials>.

If you are unable to access the files, would like a USB stick with the downloaded videos please contact Ps. YC Goh on 0425 799 576 or yc.goh@fgam.org.au.

FGAM's Bible Reading plan has been designed for the adult home groups, with additional options for youth and primary aged kids. The plans are available from the office (megan.griffith@fgam.org.au) or you can get it by subscribing to our mailing list. A link is available at <https://fgam.org.au/brp>.

Recommended Reading: *"15 New Testament Words of Life"* by N. K. Gupta (Zondervan Academic, 2022). This provides a new testament theology for real life and forms the basis for this series.

This Home Group series will complement our Sunday preaching series called "15 Words the Change Everything" starting in January and continuing until 16th April 2023. Messages are available at <https://fgam.org.au/media>.

Keywords: *New Testament • Foundations • Christian Faith • Every Day living*
F.A.I.T.H. emphasis: T – Teachable in Discipleship

Session 1

The New Testament in You

Key Verse: *“This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”*

Hebrews 10:16 (NIV)

A. Introduction

When the Bible was written it was intended to help us get to know God and to be an essential element of our faith journey. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says “All scripture is breathed out by God ... so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work”. It’s profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness. Jesus himself said that “Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” ([Matt 4:4](#)). This means that the Word of God is like food for us, life even.

While this is true, how many of us have ever read the whole Bible or even the entire New Testament? Maybe we have, but how long ago? 2023 is a year to re-establish firm foundations, and towards this goal we will all be reading the New Testament together.

Remember that, the New Testament contains teachings and principles that can be applied to a wide range of situations. It includes practical wisdom on topics such as relationships, work, parenting, and personal growth, as well as guidance on how to deal with difficult emotions and situations. It can also be a source of comfort and encouragement in times of trouble or challenge.

This Home Group series on “The New Testament Every Day” will complement our Bible reading as it looks at seven foundational concepts of the New Testament, unpacking God’s promises to his people to help them live positive, hope-filled lives for the benefit of humanity and to the glory of God.

The whole New Testament builds the foundation for understanding this new covenant promises and Jesus Christ

B. Watch Session Video

This Session introduces us to the new series by looking at how God intended the New Testament to impact the lives of those who follow him. It is to be His laws written on our hearts and in our mind ([Jer 31:31-34](#)).

- The name New Testament means new covenant. A new promise of God that came with Jesus of him reaching out to all people everywhere.
- The whole New Testament builds the foundation for understanding this new Covenant and Jesus Christ
- The New Testament is comprised of sections which are Jesus centric
 - The Gospels
 - Acts of the Apostles
 - Letters from the Apostles
 - Revelation
- Through the Holy Spirit, the new covenant is in our heart, giving us access to
 - Deep knowledge
 - Inside principals take the place of outside compliance
 - Love becomes the ruling motivation

C. Read Scripture: [Jeremiah 31:31-34](#)

The Book of Jeremiah is a prophetic book in the Old Testament. It is named after the prophet Jeremiah, who lived in the Kingdom of Judah during the reigns of five kings just before the fall of Jerusalem and the exile to Babylon. The book contains his messages of judgment and warnings of impending disaster for the people of Judah due to their disobedience to God. It also contains his messages of hope and restoration for the future. It was a critical time in Israel's history and the message of hope and restoration written in 31:31-34 points to the time of the a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah, which will be different from the old covenant given to Moses. The new covenant will be characterised by the inward transformation of the people's hearts, with God writing his laws on their hearts, resulting in them knowing and following him. The passage also mentions that this new covenant will be for all people, including both Israelites and Gentiles.

This prophecy is also reiterated in Hebrews 10:16.

D. Main Point

This series looks at foundational concepts in the New Testament for application in our Every Day life.

The word “Testament” comes from the concept of the “will” (*testāmentum*), which is linked to the promise of something. This word was chosen because it represents the promises, or covenants, that God has made with humanity.

The Old Testament (a compilation of 39 books written by different authors) describes a time where God made a series of agreements, or covenant promises, with mankind. The most famous of which is the Ten Commandments (including do not steal, do not murder etc.), which form the basis of our legal system today. However, despite our best intentions, these religious and societal laws resulted in a repeating cycle of broken promises that no one was able to keep.

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, through this prophet, God promised a new covenant. This was not one made on tablets of stone or in the regulations of religion, but rather one that would come from the inside as it would be written on our hearts. The New Testament gives us a picture of this New Promise, as conceived of by God the Father, brought to fruition by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

This year, as we read the New Testament (27 books) and explore some of its major concepts, keep in mind that it’s not to learn a set of religious rules or practices, or become skilled at understanding and explaining theology. Rather, it is to grow in our understanding and application of this new covenant relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

E. Discussion Questions

1. Let’s start with a poll. What is the most challenging issue when reading the Bible (choose two most relevant answers)?

- Language or style – how the Bible is written
- Don’t feel that reading the Bible personally is essential
- Struggle to understand what it means
- Lack of relevance or application to my life
- Not enough time in the day
- Lack motivation, it’s boring and a chore
- Poor discipline (you want to but can’t)
- No challenge at all, I love it and read it (almost) every day!
- Other (please elaborate)

What is something that would help you to read the Bible this year?

Answer Guide: This discussion point is aimed at being real about the challenges people in your home group face when trying to read the Bible. The leader can take note of the responses so that they can better help and encourage the group as we read through the whole of the New Testament together this year.

2. Read Hebrews 9:14-15 and 9:28. What are the two new covenant promises bought by Jesus’ death and how does that impact our life today?

Answer Guide: In this passage, the author is explaining the superiority of Jesus Christ's sacrifice to the old Jewish system of animal sacrifices. They state that Christ, through his death and resurrection, has obtained eternal redemption for humanity, which was not possible through the Levitical priestly system. Under the old system, the blood of animals could only cleanse the flesh and provide temporary atonement for sins. However, Christ, as the eternal high priest, offered himself as a once-for-all sacrifice for sin, obtaining eternal redemption for all who believe in him. This redemption is possible by the blood of Christ, which was shed once and for all on the cross, and provides eternal cleansing from sin and access to the presence of God.

The two main promises and applications are:

1. To forgive our sins and cleanse our hearts. Having a clean heart, free from guilt and the bondage of sin allows our heart to be changed and God's spirit to indwell us and become our inner motivation. This is giving us a new heart and a new mind mentioned in Jer 31:31-34). We can make better choices in life, not just for ourselves and our families, but for the benefit of others.

2. The promise of Christ appearing for a second time to bring us salvation. Because we are forgiven and cleansed, we can be confident before God. We are told that Christ is returning again, not to die again but to bring God's children to the Father for eternity. It impacts our lives, as it gives us hope beyond this life. It provides motivation to obey God in this life.

3. As a Christian, how do we get to “Know the Lord” and have a living relationship with Him in the context of this New Covenant? (It can't be just head knowledge, or another set of rules that we are to follow).

Answer Guide: In Jeremiah 31:33, the use of the word “In our HEART” is meant to convey that this new covenant requires:

- 1. Deep knowledge: e.g. We know something by heart. This means, we know it so well and so deeply that it's almost automatic*
- 2. Inside principles take the place of outward compliance: eg. Instead of just following rules to avoid punishment or to make people happy, we've “taken it to heart” and it's something that we really want to do ourselves*
- 3. Affection becomes the ruling motive: Heart is used because we are to LOVE this new covenant. You cannot avoid the association of the Heart with affection/love.*

As your home group discusses this, figure out ways that each member will try to make the New Testament a personal part of their lives.

This is a good time to discuss how you are implementing the Churchwide Bible Reading Plan. You don't need to follow the plan to have the New Covenant in your heart, but you do need to do something as a Christian that will help you know it in your Heart.

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best).

Remember Bible Reading plans for adults, youth and kids are available for download at fgam.org.au/brp.

You don't need to follow the plan to have the New Covenant in your heart, but you do need to do something as a Christian that will help you know it in your Heart.

G. Prayer

Pray for God's grace to enable each person to read the New Testament this year. Ask God to open up new treasures, insights and experiences through it.

Pray for needs.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 2, we will look the first of the major concepts: The Gospel as it is seen in the book of Mark.

Session 2

Gospel

Key Verse: *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God."*

Mark 1:1 (ESV)

A. Introduction

In this series we are covering foundational concepts for the Christian faith. Session 2 is the "Gospel". Today we often think of the "gospel" to refer only to the message of Jesus Christ and the salvation that he offers with the promise of an afterlife. We will discover in this session that it's not just a message for personal or even global salvation, it's also an ethos to live by and a task to complete.

The New Testament begins with the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) in the New Testament are called the "Gospels" because they contain the real-world story of Jesus' life, teachings, and the events of his death and resurrection which changed the whole world. These are the central aspects of the salvation message as well as being tools for Christian living.

The Gospel of Mark emphasises that the story of Jesus was the start of the gospel that was the to set into motion the next stage in God's plan to transform the world to be more like the Kingdom of Heaven, using human agents.

The gospel is the central message of the faith and is based on the belief that Jesus is the Son of God and the saviour of humanity. It is the message that Christians are called to share with others and to live out in their own lives.

B. Watch Session Video

Ps. Chris Ong highlights the following in this video session:

- The gospels are the historical accounts of Jesus life on earth.
- The word "gospel" means "good news"
- Three things about the gospel
 - It's a message – tells of the way of salvation for all of humanity
 - It's an ethos – Jesus' values for us to embrace in our lives
 - It's a mission – something for us to help fulfil

C. Read Scripture: [Mark 1:1, 14-18](#)

The book of Mark is one of the four gospel books of the New Testament that describes the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. It is believed to be the earliest of the four gospels, and it is written in a straightforward, rapid style that emphasises Jesus' actions and teachings.

D. Main Point

These days we may think of the gospel as a theological formula for personal salvation and promise of an afterlife. However, the word "gospel" is a far more comprehensive. The word Gospel comes is a translation of the Greek word "εὐαγγέλιον" or *euangelion*, which is a compound word of "εὖ-" (eu), which means "good," and "-αγγέλιον" (-angelion), which means "message" or "tidings". Together, the gospel means "good message" or "good tidings."

If we are honest the world today is not often filled with good news. One reading of today's news exposes us to the nearness of evil and corruption, and we are confronted constantly by brokenness, in our own lives of that of those around us. These are the problems Jesus came to fix. That's why the gospel message is good. It tells about what God has done, is doing, and will do in fulfilment of his promises to bring a glorious, beautiful, just, and unifying kingdom, a kingdom with Jesus as Lord and Messiah.

The book of Mark begins by announcing the arrival of Jesus and the "beginning of the gospel," signalling that the period that followed was the start of a new era. The Gospel is not a simple formula for personal salvation and a way to heaven, it's a bigger message of what Jesus has done, is doing, and will do in the fulfilment of his promise to usher in a kingdom that is unified (3:24), prosperous (4:32), glorious and full of power (9:1), generous and humble, caring for and attentive to all (10:14, 23-25).

As we look at the Scripture we see that the gospel isn't just a message of something to look forward to, but it's an ethos to live by and a task to share with others.

*If Mark is right, the gospel is good news to a people
who see and experience a world devastated by sin, evil,
and corruption.*

E. Discussion Questions

1. **The Gospel message is transformative. What is the message? How can it transform our lives?**

Answer Guide: the gospel is good news to a people who see and experience a world devastated by sin, evil, and corruption. It's highly transformative as it tells us about God, our creator who sent his son Jesus Christ to come to earth, live a sinless life, die a criminals death on the cross so that our sins could be forgiven. God did not allow him to rot in the grave, but raised him from the dead, proving that he has power over death and sin. This impacts all of our lives as it gives us an opportunity to be reconciled to God, and live out our time on earth with purpose and hope. There are so many problems in the world, conflict, climate change, overpopulation, pollution, energy crisis, unsustainable economies. Without the hope of the Gospel and a future we would be completely and utterly lost.

2. **Discuss the different ways the word Gospel is used in scripture (Refer to [Matt 4:23](#); [24:14](#); [Mark 1:14-15](#), [38](#); [2:17](#), [8:35](#); [13:9-10](#), [16:15](#); [Acts 20:24](#); [Phil 1:27](#)) in relation to the following:**
- a. **The Gospel as a message**
 - b. **The Gospel an ethos for us to live by**
 - c. **The Gospel as our mission**

Answer Guide:

- a. *Message: It's a message - tells of the way of salvation for all of humanity. Mark 1:15 refers to the good news that Christ is sharing. The response to the good news is that people repented and were baptised. Some were called to follow him closely and they obeyed without hesitation. Jesus came that he may share the news by preaching in many places.*
- b. *It's an ethos - Jesus' values for us to embrace in our lives. Phil 3:15 shows Here "gospel" is conceived of as much more than a story of God's activities; it is a standard, an oath, an ethos, a guide for the way Christians should live.*
- c. *It's a mission – it is a task for us to complete, something that must be fulfilled before Jesus returns (Mark 16:15, Matt 24:14).*

3. **In light of the use of the word Gospel, what do you think Jesus means when he said "for those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake and for the sake of the gospel will save it" (Mark 8:35). Ask each member: Why is the Gospel good news for you PERSONALLY**

Answer Guide: The Gospel is such good news that it's actually worth giving up our lives for the sake of it! Often we don't think about this this way, and sometimes we don't even believe it. This wrong believe leads us to wanting to grab at the things that the world tells us we need in life. Spend some time as a Home Group discussing in real practical terms why the Gospel is worth giving your life to and what that means. The less "churchy" and less "theoretical" language you use the better. Try to get a real world understanding of where everyone in your home group is regarding the Good News of the Gospel.

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best). Remember the link to the plans can be accessed at fgam.org.au/brp.

G. Prayer

Pray for us God's grace and power to enable us all to live in the fulness of the Gospel. Pray for needs.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 3, we look closer at the message of the New Testament as we study Acts and the Forgiveness.

Session 3

Forgiveness

Key Passage: *“And Peter said to them, “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.””*

Acts 2:38 (ESV)

A. Introduction

In this session we expand on the message of the gospel as we look at the book of Acts. We will see that the response to the gospel message is repentance and forgiveness. The New Testament teaches a lot about forgiveness and how it impacts covenantal relationships, between us and God as well as with each other. Seeking forgiveness is to recognise our mistakes and acknowledge our wrongs and ask the other party to forgive us. These actions show humility, respect and honour to the other party and brings us personal freedom.

Forgiveness is also something that followers of Christ are commanded to give to others. This is irrespective of whether the other party seeks it. It is a part of reflecting the heart of God in forgiving our sins and for us to be generous in relationships.

Forgiveness can bring a most powerful transformation to our lives.

B. Watch Session Video

In this session video, Ps. Chris Ong introduces the book of Acts and speaks about forgiveness with the following points:

- The book of Acts
- We need to recognise things are broken and we need a saviour
- There's no forgiveness without repentance
- Forgiveness restores relationships
- Followers of Jesus are commanded to forgive

C. Read Scripture: [Acts 2:36-39](#); [Luke 11:4](#), [17:3-4](#)

Luke believed to be the author of the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts of the Apostles. He was a medical doctor and companion of the apostle Paul.

The Gospel of Luke is the third book of the New Testament and is a historical account of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Luke's Gospel emphasises the compassion and mercy of Jesus, and it gives attention to social outcasts and the marginalised.

Acts of the Apostles is the second book written by Luke and is a continuation of the Gospel of Luke. It provides a historical account of the spread of the gospel message and the growth of the early Christian church from the ascension of Jesus Christ to the imprisonment of the apostle Paul. The book emphasises the work of the Holy Spirit and the role of the apostles in establishing the early church. It also includes accounts of the preaching of the gospel, the miracles performed, and the challenges faced by the early church.

D. Main Point

Acts continues on from Luke and tells of the acts of the apostles as they established the church. At the heart of the story of Acts is forgiveness, everywhere people hear the story of Jesus Christ and are invited to be reconciled to God through the forgiveness of sins.

The scripture is very clear that the Gospel of the New Covenant, is not just God giving a free pass to everyone. Our forgiveness came at a great cost and we are expected to acknowledge some level of responsibility for our own brokenness and turn away from it... for all have sinned (Rom 6:23a). This is called repentance and opens up the door to experiencing the power of forgiveness.

The New Testament speaks of “covenantal forgiveness”. This forgiveness exists in the bounds of an existing relationship. We know where we stand with the other person (or with God), and we seek to acknowledge our wrongs, ask for forgiveness and aim to live differently. ***We are motivated because we love the other party and value the relationship.*** This is the type of repentance that God is seeking. One that is based not on fear or avoidance of punishment, but one that seeks to have the barriers removed and love restored.

Did you realise that forgiveness is also something that followers of Christ are commanded to give to others? In [Luke 11:4](#) forgiveness is an essential part of a foundational prayer Jesus taught his disciples. We are also commanded to release forgiveness to others ([Luke 17:3-4](#)) and to prevent bitterness from imprisoning our soul ([Matt 18:21-35](#)). This is irrespective of whether the other party seeks it. Jesus forgave the people while he was on the cross and they had not repented. They did not know what they were doing. Until they repented there could be no remission of sin and no relationship, but what forgiveness does is release the other person from me. It turns the problem over to God to see justice. The decision we make is to no longer hold it in our power to judge. It reflects the heart of God in forgiving our sins, and shows us how to be generous in relationships and keep our hearts pure.

E. Discussion Questions

1. What do you think Acts 2:38 means: **“And Peter said to them, “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.””**? What sins are we repenting from?

Answer guide: Discuss how repentance and forgiveness is a core part of the New Covenant. How have we been beneficiaries of God’s forgiveness? This should be a good revision for your home group to see if they can articulate the core basics of what the “Sinner’s Prayer” means:

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. In Your Name. Amen. — Sample Sinner’s Prayer by Billy Graham

What sins are we repenting from? It would be good to know if your home group understands the sins we’re repenting from.

2. What are some of the principles of covenantal forgiveness?

Answer guide: A covenant is an agreement between two parties. In a relationship we enter into covenants motivated by love (e.g. marriage). Forgiveness restores the broken promises or unmet expectations in a relationship. Complete forgiveness allows things to continue with no barriers. Trust can be rebuilt only after forgiveness is given and received.

Here are some principles around covenantal forgiveness:

- *When we are injured by another, it establishes a debtor relationship. One person owes the other something.*
- *We forgive by cancelling the debt someone owes us for the wrong done to us. We don’t expect them to pay us back. We don’t try to get even.*
- *My motivation to forgive is my own forgiveness. I can never repay God what I owe. When someone else does evil to me, they can never repay it either. But when I recognise the forgiveness, I have already received, I won’t hold them accountable for their evil.*
- *When we refuse to forgive someone else, it is the same as saying “I would never do such a thing”. When we realise our own evil, we know that we can and most likely will do the same things to others.*
- *Misery is assured if I fail to forgive.*
- *Unforgiveness can lead to bitter roots and a poisoned soul corrupting your entire life.*

3. How should we then forgive others? What do we do with forgiveness when it is all one sided?

Answer Guide: The Bible calls us to radical love and forgiveness (Matt 6:27-36) irrespective of the other party’s attitude:

- *Love your enemies and bless those who curse you*
- *Be loving and generous towards. Your enemies without expecting back*
- *Be merciful because your father in heaven is merciful*

We may feel that this approach condones injustice. So much so that it puts us off forgiving some people since they don't deserve it. We don't want to see that they (or even evil) has won.

HOWEVER, IT IS IMPORTANT TO RECOGNISE THAT FORGIVENESS IS DIFFERENT FROM RESTORATION

Jesus forgave the people while he was on the cross and they had not repented. They did not know what they were doing. Until they repented there could be no remission of sin and no relationship, but what forgiveness does is release the other person from me. It turns the problem over to God to see justice. The decision we make is to no longer hold it in our power to judge.

What God knows is that when we harbor unforgiveness against another person it hardens us and causes bitterness that grows until it rages in our soul. If left unresolved it will ultimately impact our whole life like tentacles creeping in and crushing our heart, until all that comes out of us is tainted with darkness and the poison of bitterness. We are trapped in a spiritual winter, bleak and cold and often alone. Forgiveness gives us the way out. It opens the door to let the sun rise again, bringing light and warmth to life.

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best). Remember the link to the plans can be accessed at fgam.org.au/brp.

G. Prayer

Some may be struggling in a relationship where there is no forgiveness or it is all one sided. Pray for those who are experiencing hurt and who are struggling to forgive.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 4, we look deeper at the message of both the gospel and forgiveness as it forms the basis for understanding the Cross.

Select someone to lead communion in the next session.

Session 4

Cross

Key Passage: *“The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

1 Corinthians 1:23 (NIV)

A. Introduction

In our series on major themes in the New Testament, we have covered the Gospel and Forgiveness. This session we will look at the Cross which is at the crux of our faith. We know that according to the New Testament, the wages of sin is death ([Rom 6:23](#)), however, God loves us and has provided a way for us to be reconciled to Him through the death of his son Jesus on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins. The resurrection of Jesus back to life showed that the Father accepted the sacrifice and conquered death. Jesus died on the cross as it was the ultimate form of punishment that could be imposed on a human in those days. Jesus His death on the cross is seen as a sacrifice that satisfied God's wrath towards the sin that separated us from himself, and to make a way for eternal life for all who believe in Him ([Is 53:4-12](#)). Jesus abolished death and bought life and immortality to light, but this came at a high price. Christ had to sacrifice his own life. There is no greater gift and no other has achieved what Christ has done.

The outworking of the cross is practical. It's something that intended to shape our thoughts and our actions. As we explore the concept of Cruciformity in this session, we discover how the cross can shapes our thoughts and actions.

Cruciformity is becoming more like Jesus through embracing the message of the cross

B. Watch Session Video

In this session video, Ps. Chris Ong introduces the book concept of the Cross.

- What is the cross? It's a form of cruel punishment.
- Why the cross was necessary
- Irrespective of our circumstance we can experience God's power
- Cruciformity shapes our lives by
 - Prioritising our obedience to the will of God
 - Informs our worldview

- Shapes our value towards all of mankind
- Provides hope in a broken world

C. Read Scripture: [Isaiah 53:4-12](#); [Romans 6:6-11](#)

The background to Isaiah 53 is the context of the Babylonian exile, when the people of Israel were forced to leave their homeland and live in Babylon. During this time, they felt forsaken and oppressed by their captors, and they cried out to God for help. Isaiah's message in this chapter was meant to bring hope and comfort to the exiled people, by reminding them of the coming messianic figure who would bring salvation to the world. This passage reminds them of promised messianic figure, coming as a suffering servant, but described as bearing the sins of the people and being punished for their sake. This is all part of God's plan to save his people and bring salvation to the world.

The book of Romans in the New Testament was written by the apostle Paul to the early Christian community in Rome. He was addressing the issue of sin and its impact on the lives of believers. Chapter 6 focuses on the idea of being dead to sin and alive in Christ. Paul argues that through faith in Jesus, believers are set free from the power of sin and calls on them to embrace a new lifestyle characterised by obedience to God and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. The argument reflects Paul's understanding of the nature of sin, the power of God's grace, and the role of the believer in living a transformed life in Christ.

D. Main Point

The Cross is a very familiar term (and symbol) in Christian circles, but do we really understand its meaning? Jesus was crucified on a cross as it was the ultimate form of punishment that could be imposed on a human in those times, far crueller than hanging or beheading. It was not for his own sins Jesus willingly endured this punishment, it was for ours. Isaiah 53:5 says *"He was pieced for our rebellion and crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be made whole. He was whipped so we could be healed."* The cross not only enables forgiveness of sin, it shapes us into a different person. This is called Cruciformity (i.e. the cross-forms). As part of our relationship with Christ, we are exhorted and challenged to take up our cross daily ([Matt 10:38](#), [Luke 9:23](#)), or be continually re-formed) as we journey with him.

Here are four major areas Cruciformity challenges the way we live.

1. It's an attitude of surrendering our own rights and prioritising obedience to God's will, whatever the cost.
2. It's a worldview where believers see reality in a new light: where leading is serving ([Mar 10:44](#)), losing is winning ([Matt 19:30](#)), weakness is strength ([2 Cor 12:9](#)), and foolishness is wisdom ([1 Cor 1:24-25](#); [2:3-5](#)).
3. It's an attitude of love towards others. Others are of such worth and value that we ought to be willing to accept others who have little or nothing.
4. It's so we can live in hope. Ultimately, the cross signals and affirms to a broken world that God will make all things right one day.

The summary of our rights, social standing and love, is that we would willingly give up any of these to better another's welfare, position, or to demonstrate generous love.

E. Discussion Questions

1. Why did Jesus have to die such a cruel death on a cross?

Answer guide: He had to die as a criminal, being punished by God in our place, as he bore the sins of the world ([1 Pet 2:24](#)).

It was not just his painful death but also the rejection and humiliation he endured leading up to it. He was despised by all of society, publicly ridiculed and taunted, disowned by his closest friends, treated cruelly, pierced, whipped severely and humiliated as he died naked on the cross. This is why we know we can be confident when we come to him in our time of need ([Heb 4:16](#)). He fully understands our pain, torment and desperation, he experienced it all and more.

2. To understand the term Cruciformity, take some time to discuss in small groups, each of the ways the message and application of the Cross shapes the life of a believer:

1. How does wholeness and healing reshape our life?
2. How does the cross challenge us to rethink our rights?
3. How does the cross inform our view of social standings?
4. How can the cross enable us to be generous in love?

Answer guide: Form small groups. Have them discuss various aspects of one of the questions, then come together and have a representative from each group share the main points with the whole group.

1. Wholeness and healing - changes our shape because it fills the void in our hearts and wounds in our soul to allow us to enjoy freedom physically, emotionally and spiritually. It frees us from sin and infirmity and enables us to participate more meaningfully in life. It shapes our conversations and interactions as we are now different, less insecure, less self-centred, more confident, more accepting and more humble. It changes something on the inside that has a natural outward expression.
2. Our rights - are things that are owed to us or we can expect to can enjoy. Jesus himself gave up his rights as the Son of God and willingly submitted to the will of the Father by going to the cross. This act of selflessness and humility serves as an example to us to follow and strongly emphasises the importance of putting the needs of others before our own.
3. Our social influence - is seeking to be noticed and noteworthy. Everyone wants to be accepted and be apart or at the head of the crowd. In the NT we see that social interactions dictated the value place on people. It mattered greatly who is invited to meals, where they sat and what they ate. Paul has a lot to say to the Corinthian church about social bustling. He describes social gatherings as doing more harm than good and how they dishonoured God

through displays of favouritism to some and neglect of others ([1 Cor 11:17-22](#)).

Social status and material possessions are not ultimately important. Jesus, who was fully God humbled himself by becoming fully human, was born in a manger, lived a simple life and ultimately died on a criminal's cross. This shows that our worth and value as individuals do not come from our earthly status or possessions but from our relationship with God and obedience to him ([Phil 2:6-9](#)). Cruciformity means thinking of the other, especially those who have little or nothing.

4. *Generous in love - Giving and receiving love is a fundamental need and brings enjoyment and fulfilment to our lives. The Cross teaches us about the nature of love. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross shows us that love is selfless and willing to suffer for the benefit of others. It also teaches us that love is not limited by our own human understanding or expectations. Jesus loved not just his close friends, but also his enemies, and even those who crucified him. This kind of love is not always easy to understand or put into practice, but it is the standard of love to which we are called as followers of Jesus.*

3. We remember Jesus' death and resurrection every time we take communion. What are some of the ways we can remind ourselves to be formed by the cross during communion?

Answer Guide: It is challenging to be open to doing things differently, but it starts with being honest with our failings. Communion is a time where we pray and talk to God. Come to him for a fresh start through repentance and receiving forgiveness and empowerment.

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best). Remember the link to the plans can be accessed at fgam.org.au/brp.

G. Prayer

The way of the cross is a challenge to every believer. You may like to have communion as part of the home group. A guide can be seen in Appendix 2. Ensure to allow time for people to pray for themselves before praying for one another.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 5, we look closer at core concept of Faith, how we live a life of faith and trust in God.

Session 5

Faith

Key Passage: *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”*

Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)

A. Introduction

This session we discuss the important concept of Faith. Faith is not something that can be intellectually or rationally proven, it is not just an opinion, or a feeling. It's not about holding some strange beliefs. Faith is a reasonable, personal conviction that is rooted in historical events and in the revelation of who God is. Christian Faith means to put your trust in God and in his plan for your life, even when you may not understand or agree with what is happening.

It means trusting that God is good, loving and in control even when things are difficult or don't make sense. It is something that is nurtured and grown over time. It can be developed through reading the Bible, prayer, fellowship with other believers, and through personal experiences with God. It is a journey that requires a persistent effort to draw near to God, listen to his word, and obey his will.

*Faith is knowing and becoming one with God
through Jesus Christ*

B. Watch Session Video

In this session video, Ps. Chris Ong introduces the book of Galatians and Romans as he speaks about Faith.

- Faith begins with death
- Christian faith is not just about gaining but about losing our own life
- Faith in God is trust in someone dependable and reliable
- Faith is not a theology but in the context of trust
- Faith is about recognising that we are children of God and heirs of his promises.

C. Read Scripture: [Galatians 2:20](#); [3:8-9](#); [3:23-29](#)

The Book of Galatians is a New Testament letter written by the apostle Paul to churches in the region of Galatia in Asia Minor, written around 49-55 AD.

The book emphasises the importance of faith in Jesus Christ, rather than relying on works of the law (such as circumcision, food laws, and other Jewish customs), as a means of receiving salvation and righteousness before God. Paul argues that salvation and justification come by faith alone, not by works of the law. He teaches that faith in Christ frees individuals from the constraints of the law and empowers them to live by the Spirit. This is for all people, regardless of their background, as all are equal in Christ and that salvation is available to all who have faith in Him.

D. Main Point

The essence of Faith is to put your trust in something or someone. Christian faith is based on scripture which is grounded in reality that God exists as the creator of the world. It's anchored on Christ who's an actual person, who was born into this world, lived a sinless life, died a cruel death in our place and was raised from the dead so that those who believe, turn and receive the forgiveness of sins may experience eternal life.

We learn from the example of Abraham in Genesis and other patriarchs of the Old Testament, that faith was all about being in relationship with a God in the context of a covenant promise. Trusting him with their whole being (mind, heart and body). In Israel's experience this was mostly lived out in day-to-day relationships, observances, work and service to God. Occasionally God commanded them to rise up as their faith was tested. Did they really trust God knows what's best for them?

Faith in the New Testament is about entering into a new covenant relationship with our Father God. We live by faith daily by dying to our own wants and wishes ([Gal 2:20](#)) and experience the blessings of God ([Gal 3:8-9](#)). Through faith we can know his provision and have hope for the future as heirs of his promises ([Gal 3:23-29](#)).

Practically speaking, it's not only security in the afterlife, but faith means to put your trust in God and in his plan for your life, even when you may not understand or agree with what is happening, right here right now. It means trusting that God is good, loving and in control especially when things are difficult or don't make sense. That's why it's important for us to encourage each another in our Faith, especially in times of testing.

E. Discussion Questions

1. How would you personally define faith? How has your faith developed over time?

Answer guide: This question allows people to share from their own understanding and experience in their relationship with God. There is no right or wrong answer, as such. Ensure that most of the group has time to share. Might be good though to discuss common misunderstandings of what Faith is (if you happen to hear it):

- Faith is basically religion and doing a whole bunch of rituals (it's not, it's trust)
- Faith is just trusting Christ for forgiveness of sin (it's not only that, it's trust for all of life)
- Faith is blind obedience: Faith is based on things we can know (sure we can't know everything), but Faith can be investigated, prodded, tested and if it's true it will hold up
- Faith itself is the thing that is important: No, the OBJECT of our faith is important. WHO are you placing your trust on? It needs to be on Jesus
- The AMOUNT of Faith is all-important: No, you can be a baby Christian and just starting out, and still place your faith in Christ.

2. How does your faith shape your daily life and decisions? When do you struggle with Faith?

Answer guide: This question flows on further from people to share from their own experience in their relationship with God. Their faith and belief in God should shape their daily decisions as well as the life decisions. For example:

- *Their choice of career and workplace*
- *their friends and motivation when helping them*
- *How and why we spend money.*

People commonly struggle with faith in times of personal testing and trial, or when they see or experience a lack of fairness and justice. These things do not mean that God is absent, but we can draw on our faith to know there this is not the end of the story and we can be confident that God will bring justice in the situation as he knows best.

3. When does Faith become legalistic? How do we balance out obedience to God through faith and works?

Answer guide: Faith becomes legalistic when it turns into religion. Faith is dynamic and changing. There is grace and flexibility. Faith is about relationship with God and maintaining that relationship always requires faith. Faith is about praying for others and expecting God to act. It is about believing and trusting and experiencing him in all situations.

It is an act of faith to seek after justice, show compassion and mercy towards others, especially those who are marginalized in society. This is what James in his book of practical wisdom, taught as true religion (James 1:27).

Faith must be GENUINE or it's not faith at all.

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best). Remember the link to the plans can be accessed at fgam.org.au/brp.

G. Prayer

Pray for those who maybe struggling with Faith. If anyone has a gift of Faith, release it to others through laying on of hands. Pray for needs.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 6, we look at the major Christian concept termed Salvation.

Session 6

Salvation

Key Passage: *“For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.”*

1 Timothy 4:8-10 (ESV)

A. Introduction

This session we will talk about Salvation. It builds upon the previous sessions of the gospel (message of hope), forgiveness, the cross and faith. Christian salvation refers to the experience we can enter into through faith in Jesus Christ and trusting in the sacrifice he made on the cross so that humanity can be forgiven of sin and reconciled to God eternally.

Salvation in the New Testament is not the end in itself. Rather, it is the foundation from which we gain access to a new life (renewal through the Holy Spirit) and an opportunity to fulfil our calling in life ([1 Tim 1:15-16](#), [2 Tim 1:9](#)).

Salvation is a gift. We are saved from something and for something.

B. Watch Session Video

In this session video, Ps. Chris Ong introduces the book of 1 Timothy and speaks about salvation, making the following points:

- The word salvation means rescue
- Chris tells a story of some islander boys being lost at sea and what happened when they were rescued
- We are saved by God for a purpose.

C. Read Scripture: [1 Timothy 4:8-10](#), [Luke 1:67-79](#), [2 Tim 1:9](#)

Paul wrote two pastoral letters Timothy a young pastor in the church at Ephesus. In his first letter, Paul offers guidance on leadership, pastoral responsibilities, and the teachings of the faith.

The specific background of 1 Timothy 4:8-10 is a warning against false teachings that were spreading in the church at Ephesus. In these verses, Paul is encouraging Timothy to maintain his focus on physical training and spiritual discipline as well as avoiding false teachings, as they are essential for the development of a healthy faith.

The passage in Luke is a declaration of Faith made by Zechariah after the birth of his son John, and having received back his ability to speak. The salvation he speaks about was that which the nation of Israel was looking forward to the day when they could serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness (v. 75).

D. Main Point

Salvation is a term widely used in scripture and is not just restricted to the New Testament. It was used in any kind of situation where people needed to be rescued from a dire predicament. For example, the Old Testament is full of stories where God saved the Israelites in conflict (e.g. [Ex 14:13](#) & [2 Chron 20:17](#)); personally, God rescued Hannah from the humiliation and taunts related to her childlessness ([1 Sam 2:1](#)). Even [Psalm 42:5](#) was a song written to remind people not to lose hope in life, for God is a God who rescues and saves.

In the New Testament, Mary was instructed by the angel to name her child Jesus (meaning Saviour; [Luke 1:31](#)) as he was destined to be the saviour of the world ([1 Tim 4:10](#), [Acts 4:12](#), [Tit 2:11](#)). At that time, in ancient Greece, the concept of salvation was viewed as “*protective guardianship, sheltering the vulnerable from harm, and also promoting their welfare and increasing their quality of life*” (Nijay Gupta). This statement reflects the fact that salvation is viewed in the context of a close relationship. We are also invited to have an intimate experience of salvation from Jesus, where we are forgiven our deepest sins and every secret action and intention of our hearts can be touched and cleansed by Jesus. We are saved from sin and its consequences, including death and separation from God, and gain the promise of a meaningful life on earth and hope of an eternal life in heaven.

E. Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to be saved and what is the ultimate goal of salvation? Try to use your own words to describe salvation

Answer guide: We are saved by repenting of our sins, receiving the forgiveness of Christ and obeying God.

“Being “saved” is not just about being rescued from sin and death. The “saved” need leadership, a tutor and guide to help them flourish. What are the requirements for flourishing in a Christian life?

The ultimate goal of salvation Flourishing as a Christian requires self-reflection, repentance, obedience and self-discipline.

Might be good though to discuss common misunderstandings of what Salvation is (if you happen to hear it):

- Salvation means I go to heaven: Yes it does mean that, but it is not ONLY that*
- Salvation is something I can inherit: No, there are no grandchildren in the kingdom of God. Just cause you're born into a Christian family doesn't mean that you are saved*
- Salvation through Church attendance etc: No, there needs to be genuine faith for salvation not just attending of meetings*
- Salvation through works: "I do things in the name of Christ, and I do good things", is not the same as "I place my trust in Christ alone"*
- Salvation through understanding scripture and theology: Even satan believes in God, and has an understanding of scripture. It's FAITH and reliance on God that saves you*
- Salvation is a moment in time: Sometimes people think that they said the sinner's prayer a long time ago and that's why they're good, Even though their heart has gone away from God and there's no genuine faith. Salvation is a state (what state are you in?)*
- Universalism: This is basically the thinking that "God is so good that he won't punish everyone" so we're all saved.*

2. What is salvation according to Galatians 2:20?

Answer Guide: Galatians 2:20 "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 of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." This verse expresses the fundamental truth that through salvation in Jesus Christ, a believer is united with him in his death and resurrection, and their old self has been crucified with Christ. As a result, they are no longer defined by their sin and selfishness, but by their new identity in Christ. This transformation leads to a changed life lived in faith, obedience, and love, as the Holy Spirit works in and through them. Thus, Galatians 2:20 highlights the transformative power of salvation and the central role that faith in Jesus plays in a believer's life and relationships.

3. How does salvation impact the way we live and treat others?

Answer Guide: Salvation impacts the way we live and treat others by transforming our hearts and giving us a new identity in Christ. This transformation leads to a change in behaviour and attitudes, as we strive to live in accordance with God's will and love.

Living out our salvation is done by loving others as Christ loves us, which includes acts of kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. Salvation also gives us a greater understanding of the value and dignity of every person, as we recognise that all people are created in God's image and worthy of love and respect.

F. Bible Reading

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best). Remember the link to the plans can be accessed at fgam.org.au/brp.

G. Prayer

Pray for you to live our salvation the way God intends. Pray for needs especially those that need deliverance from a difficult situation.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 7, we look at biblical Love through the lens of John's writings in the New Testament.

Session 7

Love

Key Passage: *“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.”*

1 John 3:16-18 (ESV)

A. Introduction

This series we have been looking at core themes presented in the New Testament. This session we look at Love. The new commandment which Jesus gave to his followers was about Love: love God and love our neighbour. This session we will be looking at covenantal love through studying the book of John. John highlights Jesus' commandment by saying that commands us to love those in God's family and those in need. This is so important, that John writes if we fail to love then it brings into question the genuineness of our relationship with God.

God is love and love comes from God

B. Watch Session Video

In this session video, Ps. Chris Ong introduces the book of 1 John and speaks about Love, making the following points:

- Jesus' commandment on love
- Scriptures on love
 - [Matthew 22:37-40](#)
 - [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#)
 - [John 13:34-35](#)
 - [Galatians 5:14](#)
 - [1 John 2:16-17](#)
- Is the way we are loving the way Jesus wants us to love?

C. Read Scripture: [1 John 3:16-18](#)

1 John was a letter written by John the Apostle to address false teachings in the early Christian community and provide guidance on how to live a faithful Christian life. John focuses on the importance of knowing the truth, living in obedience to God, and having a close relationship with Jesus. He points out challenges and tests that indicate the genuineness of our faith. A key to which is the need for loving one another and living in fellowship.

D. Main Point

There's so much to say about love! Love comes from God. Jesus came because of God's love for us ([John 3:16](#)). We love God as he first loved us. We grow in love as we live according to God's ways. God's love compels us to serve God and love others.

Jesus, in his preaching, summed up the entire 613 religious laws found in the Old Testament in just two commands. First, to love "Love God" and the second to "Love your neighbour as yourself". It's fundamentally important to understand the concept of love for our lives.

In the book of 1 John, we see that loving our neighbour is more than "good Christian behaviour". It is evidence of life transformed by Christ and true Christian wisdom ([4:7](#)). First John teaches a theology of communion with God through Jesus Christ which, in turn, connects believers to each other.

Ultimately, to learn about true love we are look to scripture for how to love (e.g. [Matt 22:37-40](#); [1 Cor 13:4-7](#); [John 13:34-35](#); [Gal 5:14](#); [1 John 2:16-17](#)). Jesus is also our model of love, a noble, sacrificial love that transforms. This love is not a fleeting "here today and gone tomorrow" feeling or spur of the moment action, it is world changing and never fading. How does our love measure up?

E. Discussion Questions

1. 1 John provides several key passages on the theme of love which can apply in our every day life. Discuss in small groups insights about love from the following passages.

- [1 John 4:7-12](#)
- [1 John 2:1-11](#)
- [1 John 3:11-24](#)
- [1 John 4:16-21](#)

Answer guide: The letter of 1 John, written by John the Apostle who also authored the gospel of John, letters 2 & 3 John and the book of Revelation. 1 John provides several key passages on the theme of love and how it impacts our every day.

One of the key themes in 1 John is that love is a proof of salvation. John encourages his readers to love one another as a way of demonstrating their love for God, and as proof that they have truly been born of God.

Another major theme of 1 John is the idea that true Christianity will be evidenced by love. In the letter, John encourages his readers to practice love and to avoid anything that would stand in opposition to love such as hate, envy and greed.

1 John 4:7-12

- *God is love and that those who love have been born of God and know him.*
- *Verse 8 is the key verse, and foundation of the entire letter proclaiming that "God is love".*
- *Love is responsive. We love because God loves first.*
- *The verses that follow explain the meaning of God's love and its implications to humanity.*
- *The evidence that we continue to experience God's love is shown by our love for one another (v.11-12)*

1 John 2:1-11

- *God is so motivated by his love that he calls us his children. We become part of his family.*
- *Our identity may not be apparent to those around us know don't know God.*
- *Keeping God's commandments is evidence of our love for God.*
- *John also warns against being deceived by false teachers and fake Christians, who willingly do the wrong thing (fail to practice righteousness)*
- *Our love for others is evidence that we belong to God.*

1 John 3:11-24

- *This passage highlights the necessity of loving fellow believers as a way of demonstrating our love for God.*
- *God's love is transformative, as Jesus loved us and laid down his life for others so we are to lay down our lives for others. This is to demonstrate sacrificial love in putting others first.*
- *Harbouring hatred excludes us from the promises of God*
- *It states that "love in action" is what sets a Christian apart from the world, and encourages the readers to practice love in their actions towards one another.*

1 John 4:16-21

- *We learn to trust God more the more we understand his love for us*
- *As we live according to God's will and purpose for our lives, his love in us continues to grow and brings us to perfection*
- *As we become more like Christ we grow in confidence and are unafraid to stand before the throne of judgement*
- *God's perfect love can cast out any fear we carry*

- *John emphasizes that love is the only way to truly know God and that those who love have been given eternal life.*
- *We are commanded to love others (just as we are commanded to forgive)*

2. How does Biblical love inform and guide our relationships with others, including those who are difficult to love? What are some practical things we can do to show love in challenging situations?

Answer Guide: Biblical love calls for a love that is patient, kind, selfless, and forgiving. It calls for putting others before oneself and loving one's neighbours as oneself. To love those who are difficult to love, we are called to extend grace and forgiveness, just as God has shown us grace and forgiveness. Practically, this may involve treating others, irrespective of whether we like the other, with dignity, seeking to understand their perspective, and finding ways to serve them.

Practical things that can be done for those who are difficult to love include:

- *Practice empathy and try to understand their perspective*
- *Pray for them*
- *Treat them with respect and dignity*
- *Seek opportunities to serve them*
- *Practice forgiveness*
- *Be patient*
- *Choose to respond with kindness instead of anger*
- *Seek wise counsel from trusted friends or leaders*
- *Focus on common ground and shared values*
- *Look for ways to build bridges and find common ground.*

3. Discuss and compare the covenantal love with counterfeit love given the types of experiences we face today where love can be repelling or let loose in unbridled and self- and other-destructive passion.

Answer Guide: There are ways love can be counterfeited. When we are not secure in real love, our insecurities can drive us to be repelled from genuine offers of love.

Love that focuses on emotion or on self can lead to actions that are self-serving without care that they can be toxic and destructive. This can relate to another person or in chasing after things of the world that have no lasting value.

It can be purely a passion or emotional feeling, while this is not bad in itself, the action of love comes in times of conflict or disagreement. Our actions at this time will expose the substance or absence of love in that relationship.

False love is cheap and fleeting and we are warned about that in 1 John 2:16-17

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using. It may be necessary to make adjustments along the way. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best). Remember the link to the plans can be accessed at fgam.org.au/brp.

G. Prayer

Pray for someone in your life you are struggling to love. Pray for other needs.

H. Looking Forward

In Session 8, our final session, we look at the major concept termed Witness through the book of Revelation.

Session 8

Witness

Key Passage: *“And Peter said to them, “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.”*

Revelation 1:1-2 (ESV)

A. Introduction

In this series, we are covering seven major concepts of the New Testament, the final of which is the term Witness.

1. Gospel
2. Forgiveness
3. Cross
4. Faith
5. Salvation
6. Love
7. Witness

“Witness” may not be a popular term in modern Christianity so much so, that we may struggle to talk about it. We hope that this session will break down some of our stereotypes and mis-conceptions on how to witnessing.

In this final session we will look at witness through the eyes of the book of Revelation so we can gain a better understanding of the importance of remaining faithful in our witness for God, even in the face of persecution and opposition.

We need to be public advocates for Jesus (and his Way) no matter what!

B. Watch Session Video

In this session video, Ps. Chris Ong introduces the book of Revelation and speaks about being a witness. Revelation helps Christians see the world through the eyes of God, helping them know that their public witness is valuable, honourable and effective.

Ways we can witness include:

- Our lifestyle
- Authenticity through accountability and integrity

- Respecting and seeking justice
- Generosity
- Using our gifts and resources
- Outflow from our life
- Personal fulfillment with peace and joy as a witness
- Living of life with the presence of Jesus and the Holy Spirit

C. Read Scripture: [Revelation 1:1-2](#); [2:10](#); [12:11](#)

The Book of Revelation is the final book of the New Testament in the Bible. It was written by the apostle John and is considered a prophetic book, as it contains vivid and often symbolic visions of the end of the world and the ultimate triumph of God's kingdom.

In terms of being a witness for God, Revelation emphasizes the importance of staying true to one's faith in the face of persecution and opposition. It portrays believers as "witnesses" of Jesus, who are called to endure suffering and remain faithful even unto death. The book also highlights the ultimate reward for those who remain faithful, which is the fullness of God's kingdom and eternal life.

D. Main Point

The whole of the New Testament is a witness to God, his goodness, forgiveness, power and love in the face of evil, self-seeking and the corruption we see in the world. Revelation as a literary genre is unequalled. It is filled with intense imagery of both good and evil.

One of the purposes of the book of Revelation is not so much about rapture and the end times, but to help Christians see the world through God's eyes so that they will know that their public witness is valuable, honourable and effective. This truth stands, irrespective of how the message is received or how the messenger is treated.

There are many ways we can be a witness to God as we live out our lives, here are some examples:

- We can demonstrate by a genuine lifestyle showing authenticity through accountability and integrity. Being faithful in relationships, treating others fairly. Not living a double life.
- Demonstrate respect and seek justice. Christians have pioneered many social justices causes over millennia. In our age, we must take a stand against laziness, apathy and prejudice.
- Generosity – willingly sharing with others testifies to God's generous character
- Recognise our gifts and use our resources – we can be a witness when we use our talents and resources to advance God's kingdom, rather than being content with doing only the minimum required of us or just doing what benefits ourselves.

- Abundant Life – those who live in a way that is vitally connected to Jesus have life flowing through them ([John 15:4-5](#)). This is not intangible but it is one that has outcomes flavoured with love and generosity, peace and faith.
- Personal fulfilment through serving others often comes with happiness as well as achieving goals we would not otherwise attempt on our own.
- Living life with in obedience to the holy Spirit. Following his lead will certainly create opportunity for sharing his truth and the story of the gospel with others.

In summary, our lives witness as we live a life that is characterised by right living: honesty, transparency, personal integrity, faithfulness in relationships, justice-seeking in the world, as well as compassion and mercy towards others, especially those who are marginalised in society. These traits are a testimony to God's character in contrast to much of what goes on around us in the world today.

E. Discussion Questions

1. What ways do you witness for God? From the list above, which ways do you find easiest and which are the most challenging?

Answer guide: Reflect on the list above and have people share about witnessing. It's not something we talk about a lot. Sometimes we feel guilty for not being a better witness and avoid the topic. Probe to see if there are any questions or concerns. Perhaps other may add some more to the list.

2. How do you balance the call to share your faith with the need for respect for others' beliefs?

Answer guide: Sharing our faith through sharing the message of the gospel with others is challenging. There are several points to consider:

- 1. Listen: Take the time to understand the other person's point of view.*
- 2. Be empathetic: Put yourself in their shoes and imagine what it's like to hold their beliefs.*
- 3. Focus on common ground: Find areas of agreement and build on that.*
- 4. Be respectful: Avoid language or arguments that are condescending, dismissive, or offensive.*
- 5. Be open: Be willing to have your own beliefs challenged and be open to learning from others.*
- 6. Be patient: Conversations about faith can take time, be patient and don't force the conversation.*
- 7. Ask questions: rather than telling, ask what the other person thinks and what their ideas are about faith*
- 8. Respect boundaries: If someone doesn't want to talk about faith, respect their decision and move on.*

By following these guidelines, you can share your faith in a way that is respectful of others' beliefs and can lead to meaningful conversations and understanding.

3. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in helping us to be a witness for God? Also, talk about what your Home Group can do to be a witness

Answer Guide: By relying on the Holy Spirit, we can be more effective witnesses for God and have the courage and boldness to share our faith with others, by:

- *Empowerment: The Holy Spirit gives us the power to share our faith with others, even in difficult situations.*
- *Guidance: The Holy Spirit leads and guides us in sharing our faith and in choosing the right words to say.*
- *Comfort: The Holy Spirit provides comfort and encouragement to us, especially when we face opposition or rejection.*
- *Conviction: The Holy Spirit convicts the hearts of those we share our faith with, leading them to a deeper understanding of God's love and truth.*
- *Gifts: The Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts such as wisdom, knowledge, and discernment to use in sharing our faith effectively.*

F. Bible Reading Plan

Check in on your home group to see where they are at with the Bible Reading Plan. Perhaps take some time for people to share what they are learning, or strategies that they are using.

Perhaps talk about how you can encourage one another to keep going even after this current series is over. It's best if your home group comes up with its own style (one that suits the needs of your group the best).

It's not too late to join the Bible Reading program. Just go to fgam.org.au/brp to receive the links to the plans for adults, youth and kids.

G. Prayer

Pray for each other that you may have opportunities to witness for Christ and express your faith in God so that others will see and come to know Christ.

If you have any feedback on this series, don't hesitate to write to any of our pastoral staff or to Ps Chris Ong, at chris.ong@fgam.org.au.

Appendix 1

FGAM's New Testament Reading Plan

**FGAM
NEW TESTAMENT
READING PLAN**

Week 1 (Feb) Day 1 Matt 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Matt 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Matt 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Matt 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Matt 7 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 2 Day 1 Matt 8-9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Matt 10-11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Matt 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Matt 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Matt 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 3 Day 1 Matt 15-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Matt 17-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Matt 19 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Matt 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Matt 21 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 4 Day 1 Matt 22-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Matt 24-25 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Matt 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Matt 27 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Matt 28 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 5 Day 1 Mark 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Mark 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Mark 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Mark 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Mark 5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 6 Day 1 Mark 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Mark 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Mark 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Mark 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Mark 10 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 7 Day 1 Mark 11-12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Mark 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Mark 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Mark 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Mark 16 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 8 Day 1 Luke 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Luke 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Luke 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Luke 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Luke 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 9 Day 1 Luke 7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Luke 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Luke 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Luke 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Luke 12 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 10 Day 1 Luke 13-14 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Luke 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Luke 16 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Luke 17 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Luke 18 <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 11 Day 1 Luke 19-20 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Luke 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Luke 22 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Luke 23 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Luke 24 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 12 Day 1 John 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 John 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 John 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 John 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 John 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 13 Day 1 John 7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 John 9-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 John 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 John 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 John 13 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 14 Day 1 John 14-15 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 John 16-17 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 John 18-19 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 John 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 John 21 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 15 Day 1 Acts 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Acts 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Acts 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Acts 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Acts 7 <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 16 Day 1 Acts 8-9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Acts 10-11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Acts 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Acts 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Acts 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 17 Day 1 Acts 15-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Acts 17-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Acts 19 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Acts 20 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Acts 21 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 18 Day 1 Acts 22-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Acts 24-25 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Acts 26 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Acts 27 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Acts 28 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 19 Day 1 Romans 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Romans 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Romans 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Romans 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Romans 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 20 Day 1 Romans 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Romans 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Romans 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Romans 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Romans 11 <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 21 Day 1 Romans 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Romans 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Romans 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Romans 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Romans 16 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 22 Day 1 1 Cor 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 Cor 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 1 Cor 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 1 Cor 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 1 Cor 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 23 Day 1 1 Cor 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 Cor 8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 1 Cor 9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 1 Cor 10 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 1 Cor 11 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 24 Day 1 1 Cor 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 Cor 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 1 Cor 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 1 Cor 15 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 1 Cor 16 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 25 Day 1 2 Cor 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 2 Cor 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 2 Cor 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 2 Cor 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 2 Cor 6 <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 26 Day 1 2 Cor 7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 2 Cor 9-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 2 Cor 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 2 Cor 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 2 Cor 13 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 27 Day 1 Gal 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Gal 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Gal 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Gal 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Gal 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 28 Day 1 Eph 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Eph 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Eph 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Eph 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Eph 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 29 Day 1 Phil 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Phil 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Phil 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Phil 4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 30 Day 1 Col 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Col 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Col 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Col 4 <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 31 Day 1 1 Thess 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 Thess 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 1 Thess 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 1 Thess 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 1 Thess 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 32 Day 1 2 Thess 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 2 Thess 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 2 Thess 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 33 Day 1 1 Tim 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 Tim 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 1 Tim 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 1 Tim 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 1 Tim 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 34 Day 1 2 Tim 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 2 Tim 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 2 Tim 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 2 Tim 4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 35 Day 1 Titus 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Titus 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Titus 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Philemon <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 36 Day 1 Heb 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Heb 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Heb 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Heb 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Heb 6 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 37 Day 1 Heb 7-8 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Heb 9-10 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Heb 11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Heb 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Heb 13 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 38 Day 1 James 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 James 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 James 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 James 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 James 5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 39 Day 1 1 Peter 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 Peter 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 1 Peter 4-5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 2 Peter 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 2 Peter 3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 40 Day 1 1 John 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 1 John 4-5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 2 John <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 3 John <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Jude <input type="checkbox"/>
Week 41 Day 1 Rev 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Rev 3-4 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Rev 5 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Rev 6 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Rev 7 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 42 Day 1 Rev 8-9 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Rev 10-11 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Rev 12 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Rev 13 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Rev 14 <input type="checkbox"/>	Week 43 Day 1 Rev 15-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 2 Rev 17-18 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 3 Rev 19-20 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 4 Rev 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Day 5 Rev 22 <input type="checkbox"/>		

Appendix 2

A Guide to Sharing Communion

Sharing in communion as a home group is chance to remember the cross and what it means for each of us. It is both an act of worship and a blessing of strength and grace that we can receive through fellowship with God and empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

ABOUT COMMUNION

Communion is the regular remembrance and celebration of the Lord's sacrificial death. The breaking and eating of bread has to do with Christ's body being broken on the cross. The drinking from the cup has to do with the shedding of Christ's blood whereby we are forgiven ([Matt 26:26-28](#); [1 Cor 11:23-24](#)).

This time of remembrance was initiated by Jesus just before His death. Because we tend to be forgetful people, in the Old Testament believers were called to remember the faithfulness of God through various memorials. In the New Testament, this is the way Jesus wants us to remember His love and forgiveness of our sins ([1 Cor 11:23-26](#)).

WHO CAN TAKE COMMUNION?

Any person who has believed in or trusted the Lord Jesus Christ alone for his or her salvation. This means it is possible that some members of your group may not want to participate and that is perfectly fine.

WHO CAN SERVE/LEAD COMMUNION?

Anyone can lead communion if they have a sincere heart of faith towards God. You do not need to have a Pastor present. The home group leader should make the decision if they want to lead it or ask someone else to serve this celebration.

HOW TO SERVE COMMUNION

There are many ways to serve communion. The Bible does not dictate a certain method. Here is a suggested method:

1. Place a loaf of unsliced bread or metze biscuit on a platter and some grape juice in a nice cup on a table in the middle of your group.
2. Begin your time of celebration by choosing one or two passages of Scripture that remind us of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection.

- [Psalm 22](#)

- [1 Corinthians 15:1-8](#)
- [Galatians 2:16-21](#)
- [Ephesians 2:1-10](#)
- [Philippians 2:1-11](#)
- [Isaiah 53](#)
- [Mark 15:21-29](#)
- [John 19](#)

3. After reading the Scriptures, pass the bread around and ask each group member to tear off a small piece. Remind them that this bread represents the body of Jesus which was broken on our behalf.

4. Read [1 Corinthians 11:23-26](#).

5. Next pass the cup of juice around and have everyone dip their bread into the cup. After everyone has dipped, remind them that the cup represents the blood of Jesus which was shed for us.

6. After the bread and juice have been consumed, encourage everyone to spend a few minutes in prayer and reflection.

7. Conclude your celebration in worship by singing a song and having a time of prayer in thanks to God.

The important thing to remember is that this is a time of reflection and celebration.

If you need the communion elements please ask the church office.