

The **Bible** Unpacked

Section II. What to Do

This series of studies is based on the
Concise Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*.
These aim to address the needs of
NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

For more information and free downloads go to:
www.thebibleunpacked.net

Concise Study Series

A look at the Bible's teaching
for new and young believers

paul mallison

An Appeal on Behalf of Persecuted Christians

Over 200 million Christians in at least 60 countries are denied basic human rights solely because of their faith. (Source: World Evangelical Alliance) Every year many Christians are killed because of their faith.

Through prayer, encouragement and practical assistance we can assist and fellowship with persecuted Christians in their suffering. You can play a vital part in this through contacting one of the organizations listed below. Most produce regular news/prayer letters.

Barnabas Fund – www.barnabasfund.org

It provides material and spiritual support in response to needs identified by local Christian leaders.

Christian Faith and Freedom – www.cffreedom.org

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity International – www.csi-int.org

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide – www.csw.org.uk

It advocates for freedom of religion and justice for persecuted believers.

Compass Direct – www.compassdirect.org

This is a Christian news service providing news, reports, interviews and analyses of situations facing persecuted Christians.

Open Doors – sb.od.org; www.opendoors.org.au

It provides Bibles and other Christian materials, to prepare believers for persecution and equip them to maintain a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/; www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to join-rpb@hub.xc.org.

The Bible League – www.bibleleague.org/persecuted; www.bibleleague.com

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com; www.persecution.com.au

VOM provides Bibles, literature, radio broadcasts and other assistance to help persecuted Christians spread the gospel. They also send material aid.

Then the King will answer, 'I tell you the truth, anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me.' Matthew 25:40 NCV

The Bible Unpacked™

Concise Study Series

A look at the Bible's teaching
for new and young believers

Section II. What to Do

Composed by Paul Mallison

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Overview of *The Bible Unpacked*


There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next longest edition. As such they have similar structures. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text along with questions. For more details and free downloads of all the material, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.

 **Two-Minute Edition:** Key Bible teachings for people "on the run"
For giving to non-Christians.


 **Pocket Edition:** Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth
Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.

 **Concise Edition:** A look at the Bible's teaching for new and young believers. For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.




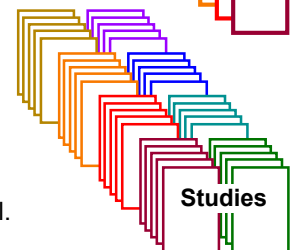
 **Foundations Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers consolidating their faith. For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.




 **Intermediate Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers growing in the faith. For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.



 **Comprehensive Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for believers established in the faith. For a comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Useful as a study or a devotional tool - and preparing talks. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.



 **In-Depth Edition:** A compilation of the Bible's teaching for teachers and students of the Bible. For Christians keen to gain a deep understanding of their faith. Useful for speakers preparing talks, study groups leaders, Bible students and Bible colleges. It is also in an electronic version, which is a PDF file.



Topics in This Series

Section I. What to Know

- Part A.** God and Spiritual Powers
- Part B.** God and the World: Basics
- Part C.** God and the World: Jesus Christ
- Part D.** God and His Own People

Section II. What to Do

- Part E.** Relating to God
- Part F.** Church Life
- Part G.** Relating to People
- Part H.** Persevering

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A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present an overview of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are two booklets in the series, based on the two sections of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Concise Edition*. Each booklet has four parts, with questions added.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics included.

The material contains Bible verses. Before the verses are headings, which reflect what the verses say – in particular the parts of the verses in *italics*. The verses are sometimes followed by a comment.

The verses often have a brief introduction. Usually these state who is speaking and often who they are speaking to. Apart from God and Jesus Christ, the main speakers are:

- Moses – who lead the Israelites out of Egypt and taught them God's laws;
- David – Israel's greatest king who wrote many of the psalms, most of which are essentially prayers;
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

Note that although each part has five major headings and also five questions at the end, there is not usually one question for each heading.

For free downloads and information on other study series based on editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, go to: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

Paul Mallison

Are you ready for Jesus Christ's return? If you knew he was returning in the next twelve months, what would you do differently?

Explain in your own words what it means to "live according to the Spirit" (cf. Romans 8:3b-5)?

Why is pride so bad?

How can we bring ourselves to trust in God during hard times?

What attitude and actions should be part of our response to those who persecute us?

Persecution

When facing persecution, trust in God

[PAUL, TO THE BELIEVERS AT CORINTH:] My friends, I want you to know what a hard time we had in Asia. *Our sufferings were so horrible and so unbearable that death seemed certain.* ⁹*In fact, we felt sure that we were going to die. But this made us stop trusting in ourselves and start trusting God, who raises the dead to life.* ¹⁰*God saved us from the threat of death, and we are sure that he will do it again and again.* 2 CORINTHIANS 1:8B–10 CEV

Do not be afraid

Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Instead, fear the one who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹*Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will.* ³⁰*Even all the hairs on your head are numbered.* ³¹*So do not be afraid; you are more valuable than many sparrows.* MATTHEW 10:28–31 NET

Remain faithful to God and Jesus Christ

[JESUS CHRIST, TO BELIEVERS:] Don't be afraid of anything you are about to suffer. Listen! The Devil will put you to the test by having some of you thrown into prison, and your troubles will last ten days. *Be faithful to me, even if it means death, and I will give you life as your prize of victory.* REVELATION 2:10 GNT

Suggestions for Study Groups

Preliminary matters:

- Beforehand the leader should: check the context of any verses they are not familiar with; and review the questions. If need be, they should compose questions more applicable to the group.
- Each person should have a Bible, for things such as checking a verse's context. It would also be helpful to have Bible commentaries on hand.
- Pray before beginning the study. Ask God for help in understanding the meaning of the verses and to affect your lives through them. Also pray together at the end.

Doing the study:

- Ideally, read the material and answer the questions prior to the meeting. Then share answers and discuss any issues arising from the material in the meeting.
- Alternatively, read the material and answer the questions in the meeting – reading either aloud as a group or individually (prior to sharing answers). If reading as a group, **try having one person read the headings, another read the verses and another read the comments.** Additionally, a fourth person could read the Bible references.

General or concluding questions:

If time permits, conclude with one or more of the following questions:

- What is something that you either: **did not know** before; gained **greater insight** into; or **needed reminding** of?
- What verse would be helpful to memorize and bear in mind during the next week?
- In taking the verses seriously, is there anything you should change in:
 - (a) how you relate to God or to other people; or
 - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?
 Are there any specific steps you could take to do this?

Major Pitfalls

Do not be proud

Be friendly with everyone. *Don't be proud and feel that you are smarter than others. Make friends with ordinary people.* ROMANS 12:16 CEV

Do not love money

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be satisfied with what you have. For God has said, "I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." HEBREWS 13:5 GNT

Turn from sexual sin

Then Jesus told her [a woman who had been caught in bed with a man who was not her husband], "I am not going to accuse you either. You may go now, but *don't sin anymore.*" JOHN 8:11B CEV

Hard Times

In hard times, trust in God

[DAVID, TO GOD:] When they plot together against me, they figure out how they can take my life. ¹⁴*But I trust in you, O LORD! I declare, "You are my God!"* ¹⁵*You determine my destiny! Rescue me from the power of my enemies and those who chase me.* PSALMS 31:13B–15 NET

Persist in prayer to God

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] LORD, you are the God who saves me. *I cry out to you day and night.* PSALMS 88:1 NCV™

Take comfort in God's word

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *When I suffer, this comforts me: Your promise gives me life. ...* ⁵²*I remember your laws from long ago, and they comfort me, LORD.* PSALMS 119:50, 52 NCV™

In v. 50 the psalmist speaks of God's promise renewing his life, through the hope that it gives.

Standing Firm

Continue following Jesus Christ’s teaching

So Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him, “*If you continue to obey my teaching, you are truly my followers.*” JOHN 8:31 NCV™

At all times have faith and pray

At all times carry faith as a shield; for with it you will be able to put out all the burning arrows shot by the Evil One. ...¹⁸Do all this in prayer, asking for God’s help. Pray on every occasion, as the Spirit leads. For this reason keep alert and never give up; pray always for all God’s people. EPHESIANS 6:16, 18 GNT

Be ready for Jesus Christ’s sudden return

So you, too, must be ready, because at an hour you are not expecting him the Son of Man will come. MATTHEW 24:44 ISV

Rejecting Sin

Use God’s word to avoid sin

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *I treasure your word above all else; it keeps me from sinning against you.* PSALMS 119:11 CEV

Live by the Holy Spirit

God did this [sent Jesus to deal with sin] so that the righteous demands of the Law might be fully satisfied in us who *live according to the Spirit, and not according to human nature.* ROMANS 8:4 GNT

Living by the Holy Spirit involves: focusing on what he wants; paying attention to his promptings; and relying on his power.

Ask God for forgiveness of sin

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Wash away all my guilt and make me clean again.* PSALMS 51:–2 NCV™

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The Bible has much to say about our relationship with God. As well as saying what is required to begin this relationship, the Bible contains vital and practical instructions about how we should relate to God.

Being Right with God

Believe in God and seek him

We must believe that God is real and that he rewards everyone who searches for him. HEBREWS 11:6B CEV

Turn from sin to God and believe in Jesus Christ

[PAUL:] To Jews and Gentiles alike I gave solemn warning that *they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.*

ACTS 20:21 GNT

We need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God – the Christ (or Messiah) promised by God earlier in the Bible. We also need to believe that he is the means of forgiveness of sins, with what he accomplished by his death. As such, we are to trust in him for God's forgiveness of our own sins. In doing so we are considered righteous by God, and granted eternal life.

Believing in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness of sins

All the prophets spoke about him [Jesus], saying that *all who believe in him will have their sins forgiven through the power of his name.*

ACTS 10:43 GNT

Believing in Jesus Christ brings eternal life

For this is the way God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that *everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.* JOHN 3:16 NET

We can be sure of being forgiven

But if we confess our sins to God, *he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away.* 1 JOHN 1:9 CEV

We can be sure of life

[JOHN, TO FELLOW BELIEVERS:] *We know that we have left death and come over into life; we know it because we love our brothers and sisters.* 1 JOHN 3:14A GNT

Loving fellow Christians is a sign of having spiritual life.

Part H. Persevering

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Each believer's relationship with God will face many different kinds of challenges. In order to overcome these, it is vital to know both what they involve and the Bible's teaching about how to face them.

Having Faith in God

Do not fear – trust in God

[DAVID:] *When I am afraid, I will trust you.* ⁴I praise God for his word. *I trust God, so I am not afraid. What can human beings do to me?* PSALMS 56:3–4 NCV™

Do not worry

Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks. ⁷And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7 NCV™

Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

Love God with all your heart

Jesus answered: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.* ³⁸*This is the first and most important commandment.* MATTHEW 22:37–38 CEV

Fear God and nothing else

[GOD, TO ISAIAH:] *Don't be afraid of what they [other people] fear; do not dread those things.* ¹³*But remember that the LORD All-Powerful is holy. He is the one you should fear; he is the one you should dread.* ISAIAH 8:12B–13 NCV™

Persistently read God's word and obey it

He is to keep this book [of God's teachings] near him and read from it all his life, so that he will learn to honor the LORD and to obey faithfully everything that is commanded in it. DEUTERONOMY 17:19 GNT

The instruction to read from God's teachings "all his life" is given for the king, but is very relevant to each of God's people.

Make Jesus Christ your Lord

Honor Christ and *let him be the Lord of your life.* 1 PETER 3:15A CEV

Connecting with God

Keep on seeking God, with all your heart

Now seek the LORD your God wholeheartedly and with your entire being! 1 CHRONICLES 22:19A NET

Come before God, meeting with him

[MOSES, TO LEADERS OF ISRAEL:] ... when all of Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he'll choose, read this Law aloud to them. DEUTERONOMY 31:11 ISV

Like the Israelites, believers can come before God, in awareness of his presence. As such, we can meet with him. Individual Christians typically set aside some time everyday to do this, focusing fully on God. Generally this involves reading the Bible, prayer and even meditation.

Pray to God, as a caring father

So pray this way: Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored, ... MATTHEW 6:9 NET

Exalting God

Praise God constantly

Our sacrifice is to keep offering praise to God in the name of Jesus. HEBREWS 13:15 CEV

Always be thankful

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, always give thanks for everything to God the Father. EPHESIANS 5:20 GNT

Do you have enemies or people that you do not get on well with? What can you do to love them?

Which characteristics of love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-7) do you: value the most; and need to bear in mind the most (in order to better love others)?

Who are the needy that you can help? How could you help them?

What does showing mercy involve doing?

What do you think are the main points to mention when telling someone the gospel?

Common Relationships

Love family members

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH:] In this way they [older women] will train the younger women *to love their husbands, to love their children*, ... TITUS 2:4 NET

Respect your parents

Respect your father and your mother ... EXODUS 20:12A GNT

Obey the governing authorities

Obey the rulers who have authority over you. ROMANS 13:1A CEV

Serve your employers wholeheartedly

Honor the Lord and *serve your masters with your whole heart.*
COLOSSIANS 3:22B CEV

Spreading the Gospel

Tell others the gospel message about Jesus Christ

Philip began to speak, and starting with this same Scripture, *he told the man the Good News about Jesus.* ACTS 8:35 NCV™

Tell people the results of Jesus Christ's death

What we mean is that *God was in Christ, offering peace and forgiveness to the people of this world. And he has given us the work of sharing his message about peace.* 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19 CEV

We are to tell others that because of Jesus Christ's death, their sins can be forgiven and they can be at peace with God.

Tell people how they should respond

[PAUL:] *I warned both Jews and Greeks to change their lives and turn to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.* ACTS 20:21 NCV™

Explain in your own words what a person needs to do to get right with God.

In difficult circumstances, what reasons do we have to trust God instead of being afraid?

Why do you think that loving God is the most important thing to do?

What does making Jesus Christ our Lord involve doing?

What measures could you take to help yourself to consistently praise and give thanks to God?

Justice

Do what is right

Do what is right and fair; that pleases the LORD more than bringing him sacrifices. PROVERBS 21:3 GNT

Defend the needy

Speak up for people who cannot speak for themselves. Protect the rights of all who are helpless. PROVERBS 31:8 GNT

Provide for the needy

John told them, “*If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn’t have any. If you have food, share it with someone else.*”

LUKE 3:11 CEV

Wisdom

Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom

The beginning of wisdom is to fear the LORD, and acknowledging the Holy One is understanding. PROVERBS 9:10 NET

Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom as it leads us to base our thinking and life on God and his teachings – the source of true wisdom for life.

Ask God for wisdom

[JAMES, TO BELIEVERS:] *If any of you need wisdom, you should ask God, and it will be given to you.* JAMES 1:5A CEV

Take notice of correction

If you refuse to learn, you are hurting yourself. If you accept correction, you will become wiser. PROVERBS 15:32 GNT

Be quick to listen and slow to speak

[JAMES, TO BELIEVERS:] My dear friends, *you should be quick to listen and slow to speak* or to get angry. JAMES 1:19 CEV

Love

Love others as you love yourself – which sums up God’s law

But *all of these* [commands] are summed up in the command that says, “*Love others as much as you love yourself.*” ROMANS 13:9B CEV

The whole moral law – all that involves our relationships with other people – is summed up by the command to love others as ourselves. In doing so, we fulfill or carry out God’s law.

Act according to what love involves

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or ⁵rude. Love isn’t selfish or quick tempered. It doesn’t keep a record of wrongs that others do. ⁶Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. ⁷Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. 1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–7 CEV

Note that the following topics involve other actions and personal qualities that are reflective of love.

Show mercy, and God will show you mercy

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. MATTHEW 5:7 NET

Forgive others, and God will forgive you

If you forgive others for the wrongs they do to you, your Father in heaven will forgive you. ¹⁵But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. MATTHEW 6:14–15 CEV

Be humble, gentle and patient

Be always humble, gentle, and patient. Show your love by being tolerant with one another. EPHESIANS 4:2 GNT

Be selfless

Do not seek your own good, but the good of the other person. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:24 NET

Be generous

... be generous and ready to share with others. 1 TIMOTHY 6:18B GNT

Part F. Church Life

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It is in their church life that believers have some of their most significant relationships. And it is through these relationships that they make many of their most significant contributions to God’s kingdom. So not surprisingly, the Bible has much to teach us about how we should relate to fellow Christians.

Being One Body

Meet together with other believers

Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing.

HEBREWS 10:25A GNT

Be united

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] My dear friends, as a follower of our Lord Jesus Christ, I beg you to *get along with each other. Don't take sides. Always try to agree in what you think.* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 CEV

Love each other as Jesus Christ loved us

[JESUS:] *My commandment is this: love one another, just as I love you.* JOHN 15:12 GNT

Help each other

Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. GALATIANS 6:2 NET

By helping each other in need, we effectively obey Jesus' teachings.

Worshipping God

Worship God together

Ezra [a priest] praised the great LORD God, and the people shouted, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed with their faces to the ground and worshiped the LORD. NEHEMIAH 8:6 CEV

Worship God in spirit

[JESUS:] *God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.* JOHN 4:24 CEV

To worship "in spirit" is primarily an inward activity, rather than being centered on the performing of ceremonial acts. It involves our spirit – and thus our mind and will.

Part G. Relating to People

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Relationships with other people are involved in just about every part of our lives. Note surprisingly then, the Bible has many significant and helpful things to say about how to relate to other people (including people outside of our church).

We need to remember that the better we follow the Bible's instructions, the better our relationships will work.

Serving God

Do God's work together

[PAUL, TO SYZYGUS:] And, my true partner, I ask you to help them. *These women have worked together with me and with Clement and with the others in spreading the good news.* PHILIPPIANS 4:3A CEV

Be devoted to God's work

Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your work in the Lord is never wasted. 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58B NCV™

Pray to God for help in the work

[THE BELIEVERS, PRAYING:] *Lord, listen to their threats! We are your servants. So make us brave enough to speak your message.* ³⁰*Show your mighty power, as we heal people and work miracles and wonders in the name of your holy Servant Jesus.* ACTS 4:29–30 CEV

Significant Practices

Baptism, in the name of Jesus Christ

On hearing this, *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* ACTS 19:5 ISV

By being baptized in or into the “name” of Jesus Christ, a person declares their identification and relationship with Jesus Christ and also their commitment to him.

The Lord's Supper, in memory of his death

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] For I received from the Lord the teaching that I passed on to you: that *the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took a piece of bread,* ²⁴*gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me.”* ²⁵*In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said, “This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me.”* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–25 GNT

Church Leadership

Leaders should be an example for others to follow

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] We had the right to ask you to help us, but we worked to take care of ourselves *so we would be an example for you to follow.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:9 NCV™

Leaders should strengthen members in the faith

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] You are our dear friends, and *everything we do is to make you stronger.* 2 CORINTHIANS 12:19B NCV™

Church members should obey their leaders

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] We have confidence in the Lord that *you are doing and will continue to do what we command.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:4 ISV

Watch out for false teachers

Be careful of false prophets. They come to you looking gentle like sheep, but they are really dangerous like wolves. MATTHEW 7:15 NCV™

Why do you think it is important to meet together with other believers?

How do we benefit in participating and sharing in things with other believers?

What does encouraging others involve doing?

What is involved in worshiping God?

How do you or how could you serve God and his people?
