

# The **Bible** Unpacked

## **Foundations Study Series**

A compilation of the Bible's teaching  
for believers consolidating their faith

paul mallison



# The Bible Unpacked™

## **Foundations Study Series**

A compilation of the Bible's teaching  
for believers consolidating their faith

## **Part F. Church Life**

Composed by Paul Mallison

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## A Quick Word

This series of studies aims to present a compilation of the Bible's teachings in a clear and readable order. There are eight booklets in the series, based on the eight parts of the book *The Bible Unpacked - Foundations Edition*. Each booklet has five chapters, with questions added.

See *Topics in This Series* towards the end of this booklet for a full listing of all the topics. Note that studying booklets alternatively from the two major sections (*What to Know* and *What to Do*) would add variety.

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 led 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;
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and other prophets – who spoke to the people of Israel on God's behalf; and
- Paul, Peter, John and other leaders of the early church – who spoke to various groups and wrote letters to believers.

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

Paul Mallison

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## 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 and/or to other people; or
  - (b) any other area of your life (e.g. attitudes, values or behavior)?

If so, are there any specific steps you could take to do this?



## 26. Being One Body

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| Do Things Together ..... | 3 |
| Love Each Other.....     | 4 |
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The New Testament deals extensively with how we should relate to other Christians and with issues vital for the life of the church. The topics in this chapter are amongst the most prominent themes.

## Be One Body

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### Church members form one body – the body of Christ

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH:] *A person's body is only one thing, but it has many parts. Though there are many parts to a body, all those parts make only one body. Christ is like that also. ...*<sup>27</sup>*Together you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of that body.* 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12, 27 NCV™

The term “the body of Christ” figuratively depicts the spiritual union of Jesus Christ with his people. Moreover, it points to the unity Jesus Christ’s people have together in their relationship with him.

While the worldwide church is the whole “body of Christ”, each local church is a form of “the body of Christ”. And in each case the many members together make one body.

### Be united as one

*Now the whole group of believers was one in heart and soul, and nobody called any of his possessions his own. Instead, they shared everything they owned.* ACTS 4:32 ISV

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] *... be united by the same mind and purpose.* 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10 NET

In the last clause, Paul urges his readers to be united by having the same Christ-centered thinking and objective.

### Be at peace with each other

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA:] *Be at peace among yourselves.* 1 THESSALONIANS 5:13B

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN ROME:] Therefore, *let's keep on pursuing those things that bring peace* and that lead to building one another up.

ROMANS 14:19 ISV

### Submit to one another

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS:] *Submit yourselves to one another because of your reverence for Christ.* EPHESIANS 5:21 GNT

## Do Things Together

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### Meet together with other believers

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

HEBREWS 10:25A GNT

### Have fellowship together – and with God and Jesus Christ

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] What we have seen and heard we declare to you so that *you, too, can have fellowship with us. Now this fellowship of ours is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus, the Messiah.*

1 JOHN 1:3 ISV

The concept of “fellowship” involves sharing and participating in a partnership concerning a common interest or purpose, which for believers is their faith and life in Christ. This is shown in the Greek word translated as “fellowship” (“koinonia”) which emphasizes participation. Believers participate in Christ and church activities, and in each other’s lives.

The above verse shows that the fellowship believers have together is not only based on their common relationship in Jesus Christ, but is also a fellowship with God, Christ and the Holy Spirit

### Participate together in church activities

*They [the disciples] gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.* ACTS 1:14 GNT

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN CORINTH:] My friends, I ask you <sup>16</sup>to obey leaders like them and to do the same for *all others who work hard with you.* 1 CORINTHIANS 16:15B–16 CEV

Church members should participate together in God’s work, cooperating with each other.

### Share together in both joy and suffering

*Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.*

ROMANS 12:15 NET

Fellow believers may well be primarily in view here.

## Love Each Other

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### Love each other as Jesus Christ loved us, even dying for us

[JESUS:] This is my command: *Love each other as I have loved you.* <sup>13</sup>*The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends.*  
JOHN 15:12–13 NCV™

### Love is expressed by loving actions

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *Now, suppose a person has enough to live on and notices another believer in need. How can God's love be in that person if he doesn't bother to help the other believer?* <sup>18</sup>*Dear children, we must show love through actions that are sincere, not through empty words.* 1 JOHN 3:17–18 GW

## Care for Each Other

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### Pray constantly for each other

*Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people.*  
EPHESIANS 6:18 CEV

### Encourage each other

*You must encourage one another each day. And you must keep on while there is still a time that can be called "today."* HEBREWS 3:13A CEV

### Help each other

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] *Carry one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.* GALATIANS 6:2 NET

*God is always fair. He will remember how you helped his people in the past and how you are still helping them.* HEBREWS 6:10A CEV

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Why is it important to meet together with other Christians?

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

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How do you show love to people in your church? What else can you do?

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What steps could you take to pray more consistently for members of your church?

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Can you think of a time when another person encouraged you? How did this affect you? Who can you encourage?

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## 27. Worshiping God

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Worship of God involves honoring him, recognizing his worthiness. As such it includes acknowledging God’s divine characteristics and wonderful deeds.

Worship is done directly through praise and thanksgiving – and by making offerings to God (giving to him from what we have). It is carried out both in church groups and privately.

Note that serving God is also a form of worshiping him. As such the following chapter on serving God is also relevant to this chapter’s theme.

## Basics

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### We must worship God – and God alone

[GOD:] *Worship only me, the LORD your God!* EXODUS 23:25A CEV

Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. He sent his angel and saved his servants, who trusted him. *They disobeyed the king and risked their lives so that they would not have to honor or worship any god except their own God.* DANIEL 3:28 GW

### Worship God for his greatness and deeds – and because he is God

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *All the nations, whom you created, will come and worship you, O Lord. They will honor your name. <sup>10</sup>For you are great and do amazing things. You alone are God.* PSALMS 86:9–10 NET

### Live righteously in order to acceptably worship God

[GOD, TO UNGODLY PEOPLE IN ISRAEL:] *You twist the truth and stomp on justice. ... <sup>21</sup>I, the LORD, hate and despise your religious celebrations and your times of worship. <sup>22</sup>I won’t accept your offerings or animal sacrifices— not even your very best. <sup>23</sup>No more of your noisy songs! I won’t listen when you play your harps. <sup>24</sup>But let justice and fairness flow like a river that never runs dry.* AMOS 5:7B, 21–24 CEV

## How to Worship God

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### Worship God in spirit

[JESUS:] But a time is coming — and now is here — when the *true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth*, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers. <sup>24</sup>*God is spirit, and the people who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.* JOHN 4:23–24 CEV

To worship “in spirit” is primarily an inward activity, rather than being centered on the performing of ceremonial acts (which was such a main part of OT worship). It involves our spirit – and thus our mind and will.

To begin with, our heart and/or conscience must be right before God. Then we must be honest and open in approaching God (to worship in “truth”, cf. John 4:23–24 above), and fully focused on God. Not least, we must worship by the Holy Spirit (cf. Philippians 3:3). This involves: being conscious of the Spirit; relying on the Spirit’s help to relate with God; and being open to the Spirit’s promptings.

### **Worship God with reverence and awe**

[THE WRITER, TO BELIEVERS:] Let us be grateful and *worship God in a way that will please him, with reverence and awe;*<sup>29</sup> *because our God is indeed a destroying fire.* HEBREWS 12:28B–29 GNT

## **Worshipping Together**

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### **Join with fellow believers in worshipping God**

Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people replied “Amen! Amen!” as they lifted their hands. *Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.* NEHEMIAH

8:6 NET

[A CALL TO FELLOW ISRAELITES:] *Come! Let’s bow down and worship! Let’s kneel before the LORD, our creator!* PSALMS 95:6 NET

### **Offer praise and thanksgiving together**

*They [Israelites] praised the LORD and gave thanks as they took turns singing: “The LORD is good! His faithful love for Israel will last forever.” Everyone started shouting and praising the LORD* because work on the foundation of the temple had begun. EZRA 3:11 CEV

### **Pray together**

*They [the apostles] gathered frequently to pray as a group, together with the women and with Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.* ACTS 1:14 GNT

## Offerings

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### **We are also to worship God with offerings**

He [God] is wonderful! Praise him and *bring an offering into his temple. Worship the Lord*, majestic and holy. 1 CHRONICLES 16:29 CEV

This implies that giving offerings (or gifts) to God is a part of worshipping him.

### **Give willingly**

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Each one of you should give just as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, because God loves a cheerful giver.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:7 NET

### **Give generously to God and his work**

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIAN BELIEVERS:] Therefore I thought it necessary to urge these brothers to go to you in advance and to arrange ahead of time *the generous contribution you had promised*, so this may be ready *as a generous gift and not as something you feel forced to do*. <sup>6</sup>My point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and *the person who sows generously will also reap generously.* 2 CORINTHIANS 9:5–6 NET

Note that in v. 5 Paul is speaking of a gift towards the support of needy believers.

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In your own words, explain what it means to worship God “in spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24)?

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How can we worship God “with reverence and awe” (Heb 12:28)?

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What do you do to worship God? Is there anything else that you should do?

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Why is it important to give to God?

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Is there any change you should make in how or what you give to God?

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## 28. Serving God

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The lives of each of God's people ought to be devoted to serving him. As this chapter shows, in serving God we need to rely on him and make use of the extraordinary spiritual gifts that he gives his people.

## Devotion to God's Service

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### 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™

### Serve only God

Then Jesus said to him, “Go away, Satan! Because it is written, ‘*You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.*’”

MATTHEW 4:10 ISV

### Stop living for yourself so as to live for Jesus Christ

[JESUS:] *If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow me.* LUKE 9:23B NET

We must deny ourselves – give up living for ourselves and what we want – and live for Christ instead, daily accepting the accompanying difficulties.

## How to Serve God

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### Do quality work that bears “fruit” – “fruit” that will last

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] And I gave you this work: to *go and produce fruit, fruit that will last*. Then the Father will give you anything you ask for in my name. JOHN 15:16B NCV™

Here “fruit” likely refers to spiritual outcomes of quality work for God’s kingdom.

### 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.* <sup>30</sup>*Show your mighty power, as we heal people and work miracles and wonders in the name of your holy Servant Jesus.* <sup>31</sup>After they had prayed, the meeting place shook. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and bravely spoke God’s message. ACTS 4:29–31 CEV

## Do God's work with other believers

[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

## Spiritual Gifts

### God gives believers a spiritual gift, through the Holy Spirit

*Something from the Spirit can be seen in each person, for the common good.* <sup>8</sup>*The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom, and the same Spirit gives another the ability to speak with knowledge.* <sup>9</sup>*The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And, to another, that one Spirit gives gifts of healing.* <sup>10</sup>*The Spirit gives to another person the power to do miracles, to another the ability to prophesy. And he gives to another the ability to know the difference between good and evil spirits. The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak in different kinds of languages and to another the ability to interpret those languages.* 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7–10 NCV™

The abilities to speak with wisdom and knowledge (v. 8) likely refer respectively to: giving wise advice or insight; and conveying spiritual truths/knowledge. The ability to prophesy (v. 10) concerns speaking messages from God, such as telling of a future event or of God's will about a certain matter.

The ability to know the difference between spirits (v. 10) appears to be the ability to tell whether something, such as a prophecy or teaching, is prompted by the Holy Spirit or a demonic spirit. (More gifts are mentioned below.)

### Use your spiritual gift to build up the church

It was he [Christ] who “gave gifts”; *he appointed some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, others to be pastors and teachers.* <sup>12</sup>*He did this to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service, in order to build up the body of Christ.*

EPHESIANS 4:11–12 GNT

## Being Guided By God

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The topic of being guided by God is very important to serving God. For we need to understand his will in regard to how we should serve him.

God's guidance may come through such sources as: the Holy Spirit's promptings; an inner certainty (itself largely of the Holy Spirit); Scripture; circumstances; or advice from others. But God does not always guide his people by making them aware of his will. They may not even be aware of being guided by God, only realizing later that he did guide them.

The Bible actually says little about how we should find out God's guidance. But it does speak of how living a godly life and prayer are critical for being open to it.

### **In order to be guided by God, live a godly life**

[GOD:] *If you put an end to oppression, to every gesture of contempt, and to every evil word; <sup>10</sup>if you give food to the hungry and satisfy those who are in need, then the darkness around you will turn to the brightness of noon. <sup>11</sup>And I will always guide you and satisfy you with good things.* ISAIAH 58:9B–11A GNT

### **Pray, asking God to guide you (as in troubled times)**

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *Indeed, you are my rock and my fortress. For the sake of your name, lead me and guide me.* PSALMS 31:3 GW

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How do you serve God? What other work could you do for him?

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How can we ensure our work will produce “the kind of fruit that will last” (John 15:16)?

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What are the advantages of working with other believers in serving God?

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Which gift of the Holy Spirit do you think you have? If you are not sure, how could you find out?

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What should one do in seeking to be guided by God?

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## 29. Significant Practices

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It is important for each Christian to understand all significant church practices. Prominent amongst these are baptism, the Lord's Supper and confessing Jesus Christ. Observing the Sabbath is a further significant practice, observed by God's people for thousands of years.

## Baptism

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The Greek for “baptism” refers to washing in water.

### God’s people are baptized in (or into) the “name” of Jesus

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.

In this identification with Christ, baptism points both to the death of our old self in Christ’s death and to being raised up in union with him to live a new spiritual life (cf. Romans 6:3–5).

### Baptism signifies belief

But *when they believed what Philip was saying about God’s kingdom and about the name of Jesus Christ, they were all baptized.*

ACTS 8:12 CEV

Baptism is a declaration and confirmation of belief.

### Baptism signifies the washing away of sins

[ANANIAS, TO SAUL:] Get up, *be baptized, and wash your sins away, trusting in him to save you.* ACTS 22:16B NCV™

This should not be interpreted to mean that baptism in itself brings the forgiveness of sin. Rather, the external washing in water is symbolic of one’s spiritual cleansing.

## The Lord’s Supper

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### Observe the Lord’s Supper – in remembrance of Jesus and 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,* <sup>24</sup>*gave thanks to God, broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me.”* <sup>25</sup>*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

The Lord’s Supper, spoken of here, is regularly practiced in churches. It symbolizes and remembers Jesus Christ’s death for us. The breaking of the bread symbolizes the breaking of his body, and the pouring out of the wine symbolizes the pouring out of his blood – for the forgiveness of our sins.

In the above passage, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood” (v. 25), speaks of Jesus Christ’s blood, shed in his death, introducing the new relationship – or covenant – between God and his people. In part at least this was achieved by his death bringing forgiveness for the sins of God’s people.

## Confessing Jesus Christ

### Confess (or acknowledge) Jesus Christ, before others

[JESUS:] But I tell you, the Son of Man will acknowledge before God’s angels everyone who *acknowledges me before people*. LUKE 12:8 ISV

The NT speaks of confessing or acknowledging Jesus Christ. Usually it is indicated or suggested that this is done in the presence of others. Confessing Jesus Christ is an expression of commitment to him, as Lord, and involves stating what one believes about him. It is often done formally at one’s baptism and in church with the recital of creeds or “confessions”. In addition, many Christians will experience times in which they should acknowledge Jesus Christ and their faith in him before unbelievers – often at the cost or risk of being persecuted.

### Things to confess about Jesus Christ

For the Jewish leaders had already agreed that anyone who *confessed Jesus to be the Christ* would be put out of the synagogue. JOHN 9:22B NET

And everyone will *confess that Jesus Christ is Lord* and bring glory to God the Father. PHILIPPIANS 2:11 NCV™

If anyone *confesses that Jesus is the Son of God*, God resides in him and he in God. 1 JOHN 4:15 NET

## The Sabbath

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### **The Sabbath is holy – keep it holy by resting on it**

[GOD, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *Remember the Sabbath day to set it apart as holy.* <sup>9</sup>*For six days you may labor and do all your work,* <sup>10</sup>*but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or the resident foreigner who is in your gates.* <sup>11</sup>*For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.* EXODUS 20:8–11 NET

Israel was to observe the Sabbath as a sign of being God's people, identifying themselves with him by resting on the seventh day as he did. The necessity for Christians to observe the Sabbath has been the subject of debate.

### **But it is permissible to do good and necessary things on the Sabbath**

Jesus left and went into one of the Jewish meeting places, <sup>10</sup>where *there was a man whose hand was crippled. Some Pharisees wanted to accuse Jesus of doing something wrong, and they asked him, "Is it right to heal someone on the Sabbath?"* <sup>11</sup>*Jesus answered, "If you had a sheep that fell into a ditch on the Sabbath, wouldn't you lift it out?"* <sup>12</sup>*People are worth much more than sheep, and so it is right to do good on the Sabbath."* <sup>13</sup>*Then Jesus told the man, "Hold out your hand."* *The man did, and it became as healthy as the other one.*

MATTHEW 12:9–13 CEV

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What is meant by being baptized in (or into) the name of Jesus Christ?

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Does a person need to be baptized to be a Christian?

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Explain the significance or meaning of the Lord's Supper?

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What does "confessing" Jesus Christ involve?

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What are the advantages or benefits of keeping the Sabbath holy?

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## 30. Church Leadership

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For a church to function effectively it is critical that leaders know and do what is required of them. It is also important for church members to know what they should expect of leaders – and how to support them.

## Required Characteristics and Attitudes

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### Leaders must be godly

*Church officials are in charge of God's work, and so they must also have a good reputation. They must not be bossy, quick-tempered, heavy drinkers, bullies, or dishonest in business. <sup>8</sup>Instead, they must be friendly to strangers and enjoy doing good things. They must also be sensible, fair, pure, and self-controlled.* TITUS 1:7–8 CEV

### Leaders must be wise

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *Select wise and practical men, those known among your tribes, whom I may appoint as your leaders.* DEUTERONOMY 1:13 NET

### Leaders must have a deep love for church members

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] *Because of our love for you we were ready to share with you not only the Good News from God but even our own lives. You were so dear to us!* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:8 GNT

## Leading the Church

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### Provide good leadership

*Elders who provide effective leadership must be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard in speaking and teaching.* 1 TIMOTHY 5:17 NET

### Be gentle and sparing in the use of authority

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] *Instead, we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother tenderly caring for her own children.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7B ISV

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] *For this reason, although in the Messiah I have complete freedom to order you to do what is proper, <sup>9</sup>I prefer to make my appeal on the basis of love.* PHILEMON 1:8–9A ISV

## Be an example for others to follow

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] *You know what you must do to imitate us. We lived a disciplined life among you.* <sup>8</sup>*We didn't eat anyone's food without paying for it. Instead, we worked hard and struggled night and day in order not to be a burden to any of you.* <sup>9</sup>*It's not as though we didn't have a right to receive support. Rather, we wanted to set an example for you to follow.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:7–9 GW

## Caring For Church Members

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### Pray for church members

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] *We have not stopped praying for you since the first day we heard about you. In fact, we always pray that God will show you everything he wants you to do and that you may have all the wisdom and understanding that his Spirit gives.*

COLOSSIANS 1:9 CEV

### 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™

### Work hard at helping church members

[PAUL, SPEAKING TO CHURCH MEMBERS OF EPAPHRAS:] *For I can testify that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.* COLOSSIANS 4:13 NET

### Confront church members over sin

[GOD, TO EZEKIEL:] *Son of man, confront Jerusalem with her abominable practices ...* EZEKIEL 16:2 NET

### Teach God's word to church members

Paul lived in Corinth for a year and a half and *taught the word of God to them.* ACTS 18:11 GW

## Church Members' Duties to Leaders

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### Obey your leaders

[PAUL, TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] He has made us sure that *you are obeying what we taught you and that you will keep on obeying.*

2 THESSALONIANS 3:4 CEV

### Give your leaders material support

*Those who are being taught the Christian message should share all the good things they have with their teachers.* GALATIANS 6:6 GNT

## False Teachers

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### 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™

### Test teachers by comparing their teaching with the Scriptures

They [believers in Berea] were very willing to receive God's message, and every day *they carefully examined the Scriptures to see if what Paul said was true.* ACTS 17:11B GW

### False teachers can be recognized by their "fruit"

*You will recognize them by their fruit. Grapes are not gathered from thorns or figs from thistles, are they? <sup>17</sup>In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit.* MATTHEW 7:16–17 NET

As used here, "fruit" is that which one's inner being or character produces – basically one's words and actions. In a secondary sense, the effect of one's words and actions – particularly on other people – is also one's produce or "fruit".

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State two or three key ways in which a leader should be an example for others to follow.

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What things should a church leader do to strengthen members in the faith?

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What can you do to encourage or help your church leaders?

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Why is the Bible critical for Christian teaching?

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How can we recognize false teachers and teaching?

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## Topics in This Series

### Section I: What to Know

#### Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

1. God's Being
2. God's Character
3. Jesus Christ
4. The Holy Spirit
5. Angels, Demons and Satan

#### Part B. God and the World: Basics

6. God's Creation
7. God's Sovereignty
8. God's Word
9. The Problem of Sin
10. God's Judgment

#### Part C. God and the World: Jesus Christ

11. God's Promised Messiah
12. Jesus Christ's Mission
13. Salvation through Jesus Christ
14. The New Order
15. 'The Last Things'

#### Part D. God and His Own People

16. The Standing of God's People
17. Keys to God's Interaction with His People
18. God's Transformation of His People
19. God's Care of His People
20. God's Plans for His People

### Section II: What to Do

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24. Connecting with God
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27. Worshipping God
28. Serving God
29. Significant Practices
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#### Part G. Relating to People

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32. Justice
33. Wisdom
34. Common Relationships
35. Spreading the Gospel


#### Part H. Persevering


36. Standing Firm
37. Spurning Sin
38. Major Pitfalls
39. Hard Times
40. Persecution

## 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](http://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:** *Key Bible teachings for new believers*  
For either new or young Christians. Suitable to give to non-Christian friends. Has study series based on it.




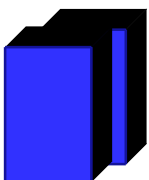
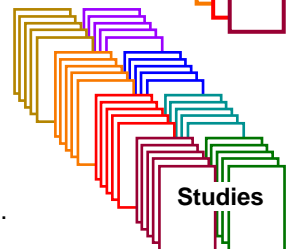
 **Foundations Edition:** *A compilation of the Bible’s teaching for believers consolidating their faith.* For newer Christians.  
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For Christians keen to gain a deep understanding of their faith. Useful for speakers preparing talks, study groups leaders,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



## 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](http://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](http://www.cffreedom.org)

It advocates on behalf of and aids persecuted Christians.

### **Christian Solidarity International** – [www.csi-int.org](http://www.csi-int.org)

CSI works to defend religious liberty and help persecuted Christians.

### **Christian Solidarity Worldwide** – [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)

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

### **Compass Direct** – [www.compassdirect.org](http://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](http://sb.od.org); [www.opendoors.org.au](http://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/](http://www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc/); [www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx](http://www.ea.org.au/ea-family/Religious-Liberty.aspx)

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also [www.idop.org](http://www.idop.org)  
Receive weekly updates by sending a blank email to [join-rlpb@hub.xc.org](mailto:join-rlpb@hub.xc.org).

### **The Bible League** – [www.bibleleague.org/persecuted](http://www.bibleleague.org/persecuted); [www.bibleleague.com](http://www.bibleleague.com)

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and also provides training.

### **Voice of the Martyrs** – [www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com); [www.persecution.com.au](http://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



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