

The **Bible** Unpacked

Concise Study Series

Key Bible teachings
for new believers

paul mallison

The Bible UnpackedTM

Concise Study Series

Key Bible teachings
for new believers

Section II. What to Do

Composed by Paul Mallison

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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 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;
- 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

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?

Part E. Relating to God

Being Right with God

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 Jesus Christ to be the means of forgiveness of sins, with what he achieved 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 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

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 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

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

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

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

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?

Part F. Church Life

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

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.

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

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

How do we benefit in doing things with other believers?

What is involved in worshipping God?

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

What is the meaning of baptism?

Part G. Relating to People

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

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

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. MATTHEW 6:14 CEV

Justice

Do what is right

Do what is right and fair ... PROVERBS 21:3A 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

“If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn’t have any. If you have food, share it with someone else.” LUKE 3:11B CEV

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 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™

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

What does showing mercy involve doing?

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

Which of the instructions under the heading "Common Relationships" do you find the hardest to do? What can you do about this?

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

Part H. Persevering

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™

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.

Persecution

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

How can we use God's word to help us avoid sinning?

Explain in your own words what it means to "live according to the Spirit" (cf. Romans 8:4)?

Why is pride so bad?

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

What do you do or could you do to help Christians in countries where there is intense persecution?

The Seven Editions

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each one is an abbreviated version of the next longest one. Four of the editions have studies based on them, with the same text and questions added. For more details and free downloads, go to www.thebibleunpacked.net.

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Two-Minute Edition – *Key Bible teachings for everyone.* For giving to non-Christians.
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Pocket Edition – *Key Bible teachings for seekers of truth.* Largely for giving to inquiring non-Christians or young new Christians.
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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.


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In-Depth Edition – *The Bible's teaching expounded for Bible scholars.* For pastors, church leaders, Bible students and all who want a deep understanding of the faith. Available in a single pdf file with some 100,000 hyperlinks.

Supporting 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 based on locally identified needs.

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.

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

It equips believers for persecution and maintaining a witness to the Gospel.

Religious Liberty Commission – www.worldevangelicals.org/commissions/rlc

RLC defends and aids persecuted Christians. See also www.idop.org.

Religious Liberty Prayer Bulletin – rlprayerbulletin.blogspot.com.au

It provides weekly bulletins. Send a blank email to join-rlpb@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 helps persecuted Christians spread the gospel. It also gives material aid.

World Watch Monitor – www.worldwatchmonitor.org

It reports the story of Christians under pressure for their faith.

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

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

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NON-CHRISTIANS through to MATURE CHRISTIANS,
from TEENAGERS to ADULTS.

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