

The **Bible** Unpacked

Foundations Study Series

The Bible's teaching condensed
for young believers

Paul Mallison

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for young believers

Part E. Relating to God

Paul Mallison

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This copy made: 23-Dec-20.

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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 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;
- 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 more information on *The Bible Unpacked* and free downloads, go to the website: www.thebibleunpacked.net.

Users are asked to pray regularly for persecuted Christians and, if possible, support them financially. These things can be done through organizations that provide aid to them and/or prayer notices, such as those listed under [Supporting Persecuted Christians](#).

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?

21. Being Right with God

In using the expression “right with God”, this chapter has in view being made righteous in God’s eyes, which involves the forgiveness of one’s sins. The following teaching looks at the key issue of getting right with God – and at things to do in association with this.

Getting Right with God

Turn from sin to God and believe in Jesus Christ

[PAUL:] I gave solemn warning that *they should turn from their sins to God and believe in our Lord Jesus.* ACTS 20:21B GNT

We need to believe that Jesus is the Son of God – the Christ (or Messiah) who the OT speaks about. 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 forgiven and thus considered righteous by God. In conjunction with this we are granted eternal life.

Believing in Jesus Christ brings forgiveness of sins

In addition, all the prophets testify that *people who believe in the one named Jesus receive forgiveness for their sins through him.* ACTS 10:43 GW

Believing in Jesus Christ brings eternal life

[JESUS:] 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 God’s forgiveness

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

Do What Is Right

Obey God, along with believing

And by the command of the eternal God it [the message about Christ] is made known to all nations *that they might believe and obey.*

ROMANS 16:26B NCV

Obedience is vital for acting in a way that is consistent with both our belief and being considered righteous by God.

Do good deeds, which are an essential part of true faith

His [Abraham's] faith and his actions worked together; his faith was made perfect through his actions. ... ²⁶So then, *as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without actions is dead.* JAMES 2:22, 26 GNT

Live By the Holy Spirit

We have been freed from the law to live by the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] In the past, the law held us like prisoners, but our old selves died, and *we were made free from the law. So now we serve God in a new way with the Spirit, and not in the old way with written rules.* ROMANS 7:6 NCV

Through what Jesus Christ has accomplished, God's people have been freed from the Mosaic Law as the means of being right with him. We are instead to live by his Spirit.

Living by the Holy Spirit involves: being both alert to and responsive to the Spirit's guidance; and relying on the Spirit's power, to help us and change us. Along with this, our minds should be focused on things of the Spirit (cf. Romans 8:5 below).

Instead of living by sinful human nature, live by the Holy Spirit

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Now *we do not live following our sinful selves, but we live following the Spirit.* ⁵Those who live following their sinful selves think only about things that their sinful selves want. But *those who live following the Spirit are thinking about the things the Spirit wants them to do.* ROMANS 8:4B–5 NCV

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

What is meant by believing in Jesus Christ?

How can we be sure of God's forgiveness?

Why is it important for believers to do good deeds?

How do we live by the Holy Spirit?

22. Having Faith in God

Faith in God is absolutely fundamental to the Christian life. We in fact need to continually live by faith, doing so in all areas of our lives. The verses in this chapter give astute guidance on this critical subject.

What Faith Is

Faith involves believing in God

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] Through Christ *you believe in God*, who raised Christ from the dead and gave him glory. *So your faith and your hope are in God.* 1 PETER 1:21 NCV

This links belief with faith (and hope). As such, it reflects that having faith in God involves believing in him. Such belief includes believing what he says.

We must also trust in God

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. PROVERBS 3:5 NET

Trusting in God is a key part of having faith in God. Having faith in God can be defined as believing and trusting God. For we are to believe in God and what he says, and also confidently trust in him and what he says in regard to our own lives. One could say having faith means that: in our minds we are to believe and in our hearts we are to trust.

Faith is based on what we hope for

[PAUL, TO THE COLOSSIAN BELIEVERS:] When the true message, the Good News, first came to you, *you heard about the hope it offers. So your faith and love are based on what you hope for, which is kept safe for you in heaven.* COLOSSIANS 1:5 GNT

Now *faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see.* HEBREWS 11:1 NET

The hope Christians have is not a groundless longing, but a confident assurance.

What to Have Faith For

Have faith that God will fulfill what he promises

[PAUL, TO MEN SAILING ON A SHIP WITH HIM IN A BAD STORM:] For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve came to me ²⁴and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul! You must stand before Caesar, and God has graciously granted you the safety of all who are sailing with you.' ²⁵Therefore keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will be just as I have been told. [ACTS 27:23–25](#) NET

Have faith that God will care for you

Through faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, received promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴put out raging fires, escaped death by the sword, found strength in weakness, became powerful in battle, and routed foreign armies. [HEBREWS 11:33–34](#) ISV

Various people of God are spoken of here as having faith that God would take care of them when facing very difficult circumstances.

Have faith that God will do what you ask

[DAVID:] LORD, in the morning you will hear me; in the morning I will present my case to you and then wait expectantly for an answer. [PSALMS 5:3](#) NET

What Not to Do

Do not be afraid

[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

Never worry about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks. ⁷Then God's peace, which goes beyond anything we can imagine, will guard your thoughts and emotions through Christ Jesus. [PHILIPPIANS 4:6–7](#) GW

What does having faith in God involve doing?

How does trusting in God help you?

Why is hope important for faith? Can you think of any other reasons why hope is important?

What is something that you need to learn to have faith in God to do?

What will you do the next time you get afraid or worried? (You could nominate a verse to learn, in order to recall when faced with fear or worry.)

23. Loving, Fearing and Obeying God

Love and fear are arguably the two prime emotions or attitudes that we should have towards God. Love and fear of God are both closely associated with obeying him. They are very strong, compelling emotions and provide the primary emotional motivation for obeying God (cf. Deuteronomy 10:12–13). Their importance is underlined by the fact that obeying God ought to be a constant aim of every Christian.

Love God

Love God with all your heart – which is most important

Jesus answered: *Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.* ³⁸*This is the first and most important commandment.* ³⁹The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, “Love others as much as you love yourself.” ⁴⁰*All the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets are based on these two commandments.*

MATTHEW 22:37–40 CEV

Love for God is shown by obeying him

We show our love for God by obeying his commandments, and they are not hard to follow. ¹ JOHN 5:3 CEV

Fear God

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

God's people should not live in fear of his punishment

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] *God is love, and those who live in love live in union with God and God lives in union with them.* ¹⁷*Love is made*

perfect in us in order that we may have courage on Judgment Day; and we will have it because our life in this world is the same as Christ's. ¹⁸*There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment.* 1 JOHN 4:16B–18 GNT

Knowing and expressing the love of God drives out fear of punishment from God (v. 18).

Fearing God is closely associated with obeying him

[A WISE TEACHER:] *Fear God and keep his commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.* ECCLESIASTES 12:13B NET

Obey God

Obey God's word

“Rather, how blessed are those who hear God's word and obey it!” LUKE 11:28B ISV

Persistently read God's word

He should keep it [a copy of God's teachings] with him all the time and read from it every day of his life. DEUTERONOMY 17:19A NCV

Follow Jesus Christ

Follow Jesus Christ

Jesus then told the crowd and the disciples to come closer, and he said: *If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross and follow me.* MARK 8:34 CEV

In order to follow Jesus, we must set aside our own desires, no longer having ourselves as the focus of our lives. To “take up your cross” implies a willingness to bear any cost.

Make Jesus Christ your Lord

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

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

How is fearing God different to fearing people or things?

How does fearing God help and/or benefit us?

What measures could you take to more effectively read and learn God's word?

Choose one aspect of Jesus Christ's example that you should imitate better. What is a situation you are likely to encounter in which you could do so?

24. Connecting with God

This chapter looks at how believers can get close to God, even knowing him. It then discusses the key topic of prayer – the prime means of communicating with God.

Seeking God

Seek God with all your heart

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

Persistently focus on God

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *I remember you while I'm lying in bed; I think about you through the night.* PSALMS 63:6 NCV

Praying to God

Pray to God as a caring father

Therefore, *this is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy.* MATTHEW 6:9 ISV

[JESUS, TO A CROWD:] *Bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children. How much more, then, will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!* MATTHEW 7:11 GNT

Having a holy and loving Father in heaven should inspire us to make requests of him, doing so in awareness of him being such a Father.

Pray in the Holy Spirit

[JUDE, TO BELIEVERS:] *Pray in the Holy Spirit, ...* JUDE 1:20B ISV

Having the Holy Spirit, believers are to pray "in the Holy Spirit". As such we are to consciously rely on the Holy Spirit's help in our prayers.

How to Make Requests

Ask for things in Jesus Christ's "name"

[JESUS, TO HIS DISCIPLES:] In that day you will ask the Father for things in my name. I mean, I will not need to ask the Father for you.

JOHN 16:26 NCV

To ask in Jesus Christ's "name" is to do so in accordance with all that his name signifies. It is prayer that is consistent with Jesus Christ himself and his purposes – and made on his authority.

Ask earnestly and persistently

I cried out with all my heart, "Answer me, O LORD!" PSALMS 119:145A NET

Jesus told his disciples a story about how they should keep on praying and never give up: ... LUKE 18:1 CEV

Believe that what you ask will be granted

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.

MATTHEW 21:22 GNT

Belief in prayer involves an understanding of God's will and genuinely trusting in God to fulfill his will.

God's Response to Requests

God answers those who obey and please him

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] And God gives us what we ask for because we obey God's commands and do what pleases him. 1 JOHN 3:22 NCV

God grants anything that is in accordance with his will

[JOHN, TO BELIEVERS:] We have courage in God's presence, because we are sure that he hears us if we ask him for anything that is according to his will. ¹⁵He hears us whenever we ask him; and since we know this is true, we know also that he gives us what we ask from him.

1 JOHN 5:14–15 GNT

What do you think about during times of inactivity (e.g. travelling on the train)? What could you do to remind yourself to focus on God in such times - as well as at other times?

How does one “pray in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 1:20)?

Do you need to make better provision in your daily routine for meeting with God? If so, what could you do?

If you believe, will you receive whatever you ask for in prayer? Explain your answer.

How should the promise that God grants anything that is in accordance with his will affect what we ask for?

25. Exalting God

We exalt God by doing such things as glorifying, praising and thanking him. Exalting God is a very common theme in the Bible and – as this chapter shows – should also be a very prominent part of our lives.

Glorify God by Your Actions

Glorify God by how you live

So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, *do everything for the glory of God.* 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 NET

God's people are identified with him and so their lives are in a sense a reflection on God. Thus they should seek to do everything in a way that will bring glory to God.

Do not dishonor God by your actions

[AGUR:] But if I am poor, I might *steal and bring disgrace on my God.* PROVERBS 30:9B GNT

Praise and Thank God

Praise God constantly

Through him [Jesus Christ] then *let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name.* HEBREWS 13:15 NET

[DAVID:] *I will praise the LORD at all times; my mouth will continually praise him.* PSALMS 34:1 NET

Give thanks to God always

Always give thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. EPHESIANS 5:20 NCV

... give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 ESV

Reasons to Praise God

Praise God because of his greatness

Praise God because he is great! DEUTERONOMY 32:3B NCV

Praise God for his love and faithfulness

[DAVID, TO GOD:] *I will sing praises to you before foreigners! ¹⁰For your loyal love extends beyond the sky, and your faithfulness reaches the clouds.* PSALMS 57:9B–10 NET

Praise God for his creative work

“Our Lord and God, you deserve to receive glory, honor, and power because you created everything. Everything came into existence and was created because of your will.” REVELATION 4:11 GW

Praise God for his salvation through Jesus Christ

[ZECHARIAH, SPEAKING OF THE SALVATION THAT WOULD COME THROUGH JESUS:] *Praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to save his people. ⁶⁹Our God has given us a mighty Savior from the family of David his servant.* LUKE 1:68–69 CEV

Rejoice Before God

Rejoice when giving praise and thanks to God

Sing to God! Sing praises to his name! Exalt the one who rides on the clouds! For the LORD is his name! Rejoice before him! PSALMS 68:4 NET

You godly ones, rejoice in the LORD! Give thanks to his holy name. PSALMS 97:12 NET

Rejoice in God always

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord [Jesus]. I say it again: rejoice!* PHILIPPIANS 4:4 GNT

What is one thing in your everyday life that you would approach differently if you kept in mind the command to “do everything for the glory of God” (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:31)?

What effect does praising and thanking God have on you?

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

What are you or should you be thankful for?

How does one “rejoice”? What does it mean?

Topics in This Series

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Part A. God and Spiritual Powers

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2. God's Character
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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

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38. Major Pitfalls
39. Hard Times
40. Persecution

The Seven Editions

There are seven editions of *The Bible Unpacked*, as shown below. Each edition is an abbreviated version of the next 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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Foundations Edition – *The Bible's teaching condensed for young believers.* For newer Christians. Study series is ideal for studies with newer believers.


- 

Intermediate Edition – *The Bible's teaching summarized for growing believers.* For developing a sound understanding of the faith. Studies are excellent for Bible study groups.


- 

Comprehensive Edition – *The Bible's teaching presented for Bible students.* For a more comprehensive knowledge of the faith. Studies are ideal for studying topics in detail.


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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 Solidarity International – csi-usa.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 – www.opendoors.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

This site provides weekly prayer bulletins.

The Bible League – bl.org.au/get-involved/bibles-for-the-persecuted

It supplies Bibles to persecuted Christians and provides training.

Voice of the Martyrs – www.persecution.com

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

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