

The **Bible** Unpacked

Foundations Study Series

The Bible's teaching condensed
for young believers

Paul Mallison

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Part F. Church Life

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 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 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?

26. Being One Body

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

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. ...*²⁷*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

Be at peace with each other

[PAUL, TO THE CHURCH IN THESSALONICA:] *Be at peace among yourselves.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:13B

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

Meet together with other believers

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

HEBREWS 10:25A GNT

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 ¹⁶to 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.

Love and Care for Each Other

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.*

¹³*The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends.* JOHN

15:12–13 NCV

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

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

In what way/s are church members one body?

What is meant by: "Submit to one another" (Eph 5:21)? What are some situations in which we ought to do this?

Why is it important to meet together with other Christians?

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

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

27. Worshiping God

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.

Basics

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

Live righteously in order to acceptably worship God

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

How to Worship God

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. *²⁴God 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.

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*; ²⁹*because our God is indeed a destroying fire.* [HEBREWS 12:28B–29](#) GNT

Worshipping Together

Join with fellow believers in worshipping God

[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

Offerings

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

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

Pray for the persecuted

What things do people today effectively worship instead of God?

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

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

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

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

28. Serving God

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

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

How to Serve God

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.* ³⁰Show your mighty power, as we heal people and work miracles and wonders in the name of your holy Servant Jesus. ³¹After 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

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. ⁸The Spirit gives one person the ability to speak with wisdom, and the same Spirit gives another the ability to speak with knowledge. ⁹The same Spirit gives faith to one person. And, to another, that one Spirit gives gifts of healing. ¹⁰The 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

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. ¹²He 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

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; ¹⁰if 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. ¹¹And 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

Pray for persecuted Christians

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

How can we ensure our work will produce "fruit that will last" (John 15:16)?

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

If you are aware of your spiritual gift, how do you or could you use it to build up the church?

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

29. Significant Practices

It is important for each Christian to understand all significant church practices. Prominent amongst these are baptism, the Lord's Supper, confessing Jesus Christ and observing the Sabbath day of rest.

Baptism

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.

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 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

The Lord's Supper

Observe the Lord's Supper

[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, ²⁴gave 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

The Lord's Supper 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.

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

Things to confess about Jesus Christ

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

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. ⁹For six days you may labor and do all your work, ¹⁰but 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. ¹¹For 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

But it is permissible to do good things on the Sabbath

People are worth much more than sheep, and so *it is right to do good on the Sabbath.* ¹³Then Jesus told the man, “Hold out your hand.” The man did, and it became as healthy as the other one.

MATTHEW 12:12–13 CEV

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

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

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

What does "confessing" Jesus Christ involve?

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

30. Church Leadership

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.

Leading the Church

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, ⁹I 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:] *Rather, we wanted to set an example for you to follow.* [2 THESSALONIANS 3:9B GW](#)

Caring For Church Members

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

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

Pray for persecuted Christians

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

What aspect of care do you value the most in a church leader?

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

Why is the Bible critical for Christian teaching?

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

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
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37. Spurning Sin
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.



Two-Minute Edition – *Key Bible teachings for everyone.* 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.



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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.



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
Foundations Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

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

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