

The **Bible** Unpacked

Foundations Study Series

The Bible's teaching condensed
for young believers

Paul Mallison

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Part G. Relating to People

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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?

31. Love

The importance of love could hardly be more emphatically stated by the Bible. Love should encompass every area of our lives and be the basis of all that we do in relating to people. Other personal qualities reflective of love are also discussed in this chapter.

Loving Others

What love is

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

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

Let love be your only debt! *If you love others, you have done all that the Law demands.* ⁹In the Law there are many commands, such as, “Be faithful in marriage. Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not want what belongs to others.” But *all of these are summed up in the command that says, “Love others as much as you love yourself.”* ¹⁰No one who loves others will harm them. *So love is all that the Law demands.* ROMANS 13:8–10 CEV

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

Love your enemies and do good to them

Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. ... ³¹Treat others in the same way that you would want them to treat you. LUKE 6:27B–28, 31 NET

Showing Mercy

Show mercy – and God will show you mercy

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. LUKE 6:36 ISV

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

Forgive others and God will forgive you

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

Further Things to Do

Be humble, gentle and patient

Be humble and gentle in every way. Be patient with each other and lovingly accept each other. EPHESIANS 4:2 GW

Be generous and share with others

[PAUL, TELLING TIMOTHY WHAT TO SAY TO CHURCH MEMBERS:] *Command them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share with others.* 1 TIMOTHY 6:18 GNT

Things to Avoid

Avoid anger

Do not become angry easily, ²⁰because anger will not help you live the right kind of life God wants. JAMES 1:19B–20 NCV

Do not hate

You must not hate your fellow citizen in your heart. LEVITICUS 19:17A NCV

Do not murder

You shall not murder. EXODUS 20:13 ISV

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 mentions a number of characteristics of love. Which of these do you: value the most; and/or need to bear in mind the most (in order to better love others)?

Do you have enemies? What can you do to love them?

How are we better off for forgiving someone, than not forgiving them? (Do not limit your answer to just what is mentioned in the verses.)

Can you think of someone that you should be more patient with? Is there anything you could do to help yourself be more patient?

How do you deal with your anger? Do you have any tips on how to control anger?

32. Justice

Topics encompassed by the theme of justice together form a very large proportion of what the Bible says about how to relate to other people. Following these teachings involves not only doing what is right ourselves, but also ensuring that others are treated fairly – notably the needy.

General

Act justly

No, the LORD has told us what is good. *What he requires of us is this: to do what is just, to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God.* MICAH 6:8 GNT

Do what is right

[GOD:] *Learn to do what is right! Promote justice!* ISAIAH 1:17A NET

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

Do not show favoritism

[PAUL, TO TIMOTHY:] Before God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, I solemnly charge you to *carry out these commands without prejudice or favoritism of any kind.* 1 TIMOTHY 5:21 NET

Honesty

Speak the truth

You must do these things: Speak the truth to each other. ZECHARIAH 8:16 GW

Act honestly

Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need. EPHESIANS 4:28B CEV

Do not steal, lie or deceive

You must not steal, you must not tell lies, and you must not deal falsely with your fellow citizen. LEVITICUS 19:11 NET

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. EXODUS 20:16 NET

Caring For the Needy

Defend the cause of the needy

Defend weak people and orphans. Protect the rights of the oppressed and the poor. ⁴Rescue weak and needy people. Help them escape the power of wicked people. PSALMS 82:3–4 GW

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; defend the rights of all those who have nothing. ⁹Speak up and judge fairly, and defend the rights of the poor and needy.” PROVERBS 31:8–9 NCV

Provide the needy with food and clothing

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

She [Dorcas] spent all her time doing good and helping the poor. ... ³⁹So Peter got ready and went with them. When he arrived, he was taken to the room upstairs, where all the widows crowded round him, crying and showing him all the shirts and coats that Dorcas had made while she was alive. ACTS 9:36, 39 GNT

Treat foreigners the same as your native-born

The foreigner who resides with you must be to you like a native citizen among you; so you must love him as yourself... LEVITICUS 19:34A NET

Caring for the needy is a vital part of true religion

What God the Father considers to be pure and genuine religion is this: to take care of orphans and widows in their suffering and to keep oneself from being corrupted by the world. JAMES 1:27 GNT

Why is it more important to do what is right and just than to make sacrifices to God (Prov 21:3)?

Are there any situations where you find it hard not to show favoritism?

Is telling a lie ever justifiable?

Why would God consider caring for the needy to be part of "genuine religion" (James 1:27)?

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

33. Wisdom

Wisdom is one of the attributes most highly valued in the Bible. Thankfully the Bible says much about how we can gain wisdom. The Bible also contains very astute advice on other topics associated with wisdom, notably speech – a key medium that we use in relating to others.

Wisdom through God

Fearing God is the beginning of wisdom

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

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

Ask God for wisdom

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

Obedying God's commands brings wisdom

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *I have greater wisdom than those who are old, because I obey your commands.* PSALMS 119:100 GNT

Wisdom through Others

Pay attention to instruction

[A WISE TEACHER:] *Apply your heart to instruction and your ears to the words of knowledge. ...¹⁹Listen, my child, and be wise, and guide your heart on the right way.* PROVERBS 23:12, 19 NET

Take notice of correction

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

Wise Speech

Be quick to listen and slow to speak

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

Use few words

The more we talk, the less sense we make ... ECCLESIASTES 6:11A CEV

Speak graciously

The words spoken by the wise are gracious ... ECCLESIASTES 10:12A ISV

Remember that our words are determined by our “heart”

[JESUS, TO THE PHARISEES:] Offspring of vipers! *How are you able to say anything good, since you are evil? For the mouth speaks from what fills the heart.* ³⁵*The good person brings good things out of his good treasury, and the evil person brings evil things out of his evil treasury.*

MATTHEW 12:34–35 NET

In v. 35, “treasury” refers to the thoughts and feelings that people have stored up in their hearts.

Foolishness

Fools spurn and lack wisdom

Fearing the LORD is the beginning of moral knowledge, but *fools despise wisdom and instruction.* PROVERBS 1:7 NET

Wisdom is unattainable for a fool; in court he does not open his mouth. PROVERBS 24:7 NET

Foolishness involves acting contrary to God

Then Samuel said to Saul, “*You have acted foolishly. You haven’t obeyed the commandment of the LORD your God, which he commanded you.* For then the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel forever, ... 1 SAMUEL 13:13 ISV

How can one distinguish between godly wisdom and worldly wisdom?
What is the difference?

Do you actively try to gain more wisdom? What things should you do
- or do differently - to achieve this?

What personality traits or attitudes help us to readily accept correction?

How do our hearts determine our words (cf. Matthew 12:34-35)?

What aspects of your speech do you need to improve in order to
speak more wisely? What can you do about them?

34. Common Relationships

The Bible contains discerning insights and directions regarding our relationships with those who we have the most contact with. As such these teachings are among the ones which are the most often applicable in our lives.

Spouses

Husbands should love their wives

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ... ³³Nevertheless, each one of you must also love his own wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

EPHESIANS 5:25, 33 NET

Wives should submit to their husbands

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. EPHESIANS 5:22 GNT

Do not commit adultery

You shall not commit adultery. EXODUS 20:14 NET

Parents and Children

Parents should care for their children

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Instead, we were gentle when we were with you, *like a mother taking care of her children.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7B GW

Parents should teach their children about God and his deeds, inspiring them to trust and obey God

[A PSALMIST:] ... *we'll declare to the next generation the praises of the LORD; his might and awesome deeds that he has performed. ...* ⁷Then they will put their trust in God and they will not forget his awesome deeds. Instead, they will keep his commandments. PSALMS 78:4B, 7 ISV

Children are to honor their parents

“Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment accompanied by a promise, namely, ³“that it may go well with you and that you will live a long time on the earth.” EPHESIANS 6:2–3 NET

Children are to obey their parents

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing to the Lord COLOSSIANS 3:20 NET

Citizens and Governing Authorities

Citizens should obey the governing authorities, which are established by God

Obey the rulers who have authority over you. Only God can give authority to anyone, and he puts these rulers in their places of power.

ROMANS 13:1 CEV

Governing authorities should act and rule according to God’s laws

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] *If the king completely obeys the LORD’s commands, he and his descendants will rule Israel for many years.*

DEUTERONOMY 17:19–20B CEV

Servants and Masters

Servants should be obedient

Slaves, you must always obey your earthly masters. Try to please them at all times, and not just when you think they are watching. Honor the Lord and serve your masters with your whole heart.

COLOSSIANS 3:22 CEV

Masters must treat servants justly

Masters, treat your slaves with justice and fairness, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven. COLOSSIANS 4:1 NET

What are some specific things husbands should do in applying the teaching regarding loving their wives?

Should wives submit to their husbands? Explain your answer.

Is there anything that you need to do or change in how you relate to one or more of your family members?

Is there a situation where you find it hard to obey the governing authorities? Is there anything that you can or should do about it?

What do you need to keep in mind the most, in relating to your employer or employees?

35. Spreading the Gospel

The theme of spreading the gospel – or message about Jesus Christ – is very prominent in the New Testament. Likewise it should be also one of the main focuses of our lives. This chapter largely looks at what we need to say and do, in advancing the spread of the gospel.

Tell People the Gospel

Tell people the gospel message about Jesus Christ

Then Philip spoke. Starting with that passage, *Philip told the official the Good News about Jesus.* ACTS 8:35 GW

Note that the Greek word which is often translated as “gospel” basically means “good news”.

Tell all people, everywhere

Then he [Jesus] told them: *Go and preach the good news to everyone in the world. ...*²⁰*Then the disciples left and preached everywhere.* The Lord was with them, and the miracles they worked proved that their message was true. MARK 16:15, 20 CEV

What Things to Explain

Explain who Jesus Christ is

Soon he [Saul] went to the Jewish meeting places and started telling people that Jesus is the Son of God. ACTS 9:20 CEV

Tell people the results of Jesus Christ’s death

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

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

Tell people how they should respond

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

How to Spread the Gospel

Present the gospel accurately and plainly

[PAUL:] *We use no trickery, and we do not change the teaching of God. We teach the truth plainly, showing everyone who we are.* 2 CORINTHIANS 4:2B NCV

Spread the gospel bravely with God’s help

[PAUL, TO THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS:] *But our God helped us to be brave and to tell you his Good News.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2B NCV

Act in a way that is consistent with the gospel

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *The only thing that matters is that you continue to live as good citizens in a manner worthy of the gospel of the Messiah.* PHILIPPIANS 1:27A ISV

Insights on the Gospel

The gospel is not dependent on our presentation of it – but on the Holy Spirit and God’s power

[PAUL, TO THE CORINTHIANS:] *When I talked with you or preached, I didn’t try to prove anything by sounding wise. I simply let God’s Spirit show his power. ⁵That way you would have faith because of God’s power and not because of human wisdom.* 1 CORINTHIANS 2:4–5 CEV

There are many ready to respond to the gospel

Jesus said to his followers, *“There are many people to harvest but only a few workers to help harvest them. ³⁸Pray to the Lord, who owns the harvest, that he will send more workers to gather his harvest.”*

MATTHEW 9:37–38 NCV

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

How can we become braver in spreading the gospel?

What is something that you should be more mindful of in sharing the gospel?

What is one teaching in this section that you find particularly motivating or helpful for spreading the gospel?

Who do you know that you could share the gospel with? What steps could you take in order to do this?

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
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

Part E. Relating to God

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35. Spreading the Gospel

Part H. Persevering

36. Standing Firm
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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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 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
Foundations Edition of The Bible Unpacked.

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

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