



Charis Discipleship Course



CHARIS
MINISTRIES AFRICA

A new way of living

Transformational Mission 1

Mel Welch

'As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. you did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last. This is my command: Love each other.'

John 15:9,16-17

Contents

Transformational Mission 1

1. Who is God?
2. The Whole Story - God's love Story and plan of restoration.
3. Who is Satan?
4. Who is Jesus?
5. Who am I? What is my place and purpose?
6. Kingdom lifestyle – a new way of living.

Transformational Mission 2 - Transformed to transformers!

7. Called to be witnesses in my generation.
8. The role of the Holy Spirit.
9. What is mission?
10. What is culture?
11. Cross-cultural mission
12. What is my part?
 - A case study of ACTS

1. Who is God?

Imagine a world without God!

Some of you may still be asking IF there is a God and if so, what is He like? Let's look at what the Bible has to say about the character and nature of God. Open your heart to consider the possibility that the God you see rise out of the pages of the Bible really is the one and only God of the universe who created you and knows you.

Look up the verses

- **He is the Creator of heaven and earth** - Genesis 1:1- 2:3/ Hebrews 1:10/Job 38:4-11/Romans 1:20/Hebrew 11:3
- **He was there before the beginning of the world and has no end** – Revelation 1:8/Hebrews 1:11-12/Isaiah 43:10/Isaiah 44:6,8/Deuteronomy 4:35/Psalm 90:2
- **God is greater than anyone and everything** – 1 Samuel 2:2/Isaiah 43:11/Revelation 1:17-18.
- **He is the highest authority** – Isaiah 55:9/Matthew 28:18/Daniel 7:13-14/1 Corinthians 15:27.
- **God is Spirit** – John 4:24/1 Timothy 1:17/Colossians 1:15/John 1:18/John 6:46/1 John 4:12.
- **God is holy and righteous-** Revelation 15:4/Isaiah 6:1-3/Revelation 4:8/2 Corinthians 6:16-18/Isaiah 52:11
- **He knows everything and nothing is hidden from Him** – Psalm 139:7-10/Psalm 94:9/Matthew 10:30/Luke 5:2
- **God never changes, He is faithful, constant and steadfast** – Malachi 3:6/James 1:17/Deuteronomy 7:9/1 Thessalonians 5:24/1 Corinthians 1:9.

- **God is LOVE, He loves us, His people and the world He has created** -John 3:16/Ephesians 5:1-2/1 John 3:1/Hosea 11:1-4.
- **God is compassionate, merciful, and forgiving** – Lamentations 3:22-23/Psalm 103:2-4,8/Exodus 34:6.
- **God speaks to us and desires a relationship with us** – He speaks to us through His Word- Psalm 119:105, through the prophets – Hebrews 11, and His Son Jesus – John 1:14/Hebrews 1:1-3 and the Holy Spirit- Romans 8:14-16,26-27.
- **God is ONE but He is THREE persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit (The Trinity)** – Genesis 1: ‘In the beginning ‘God’ = Elohim which is Plural. Genesis 10:7: Come let US go down..’. Genesis 1:26 ‘Let us make man in OUR image’.
Father - Matthew 6:9,26/**Jesus**-Hebrews 1:3/John 14:6-11/John 8:58(By saying ‘I AM’ Jesus was saying He was God – Exodus 3:13-14)/**Holy Spirit** -John 14:16-20,23.

Task

1. Look up (Google) and find 4 facts about the universe. Eg. How big is it? How many planets, stars are there? How many different species of plant, bird, insect, reptile, fish and animal is there?

Reflect on the vastness of the universe and ask yourself the question: Where did it all come from? Some people believe it came from an explosion. Do you think that is possible? Can you see a Designer’s hand behind it all?

2. Understanding the Whole Story of the Bible



The bible is a story that can be divided into 6 acts:

Act 1 – In the Garden of Eden - Genesis 1-2

In the beginning God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) creates a perfect and beautiful world free from sin, sickness, pain, death, and anything bad.

The pinnacle of His creation is man and woman whom he created out of love and in His own image and commissions them to tend and care for creation. They are free to eat from the tree of life which means they can live forever like God.

There is harmony, peace, equality, fruitfulness, freedom and loving, just relationships.

He gives them one command: Do not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

Act 2 - The Downfall - Genesis 3

This idyllic paradise however is shattered in a moment when Adam and Eve are tricked into disobeying God by Lucifer (Satan) and eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Their disobedience and rebellion have catastrophic results and bring separation and shame between God and his created ones. God is angry but does not destroy them, in fact he makes clothes for them out of animal skin (death enters). They are banished from the garden of Eden and sent to live outside of paradise where there will be sickness, disease, pain, weeds, toil and death.

They broke their relationship with God, putting themselves above God:

- They believed **their** way (manipulated by Satan) was better.
- They no longer lived freely but were **self**-conscious and ashamed.
- They tried to defend and excuse **themselves**.

However, there is a seed of hope in **3:15** with the promise of a future Deliverer who will defeat Satan and bring salvation to the world.

Act 3 – The Old Covenant – Genesis 4 – Malachi

God's plan was to deliver his created ones from Satan's control and make a way for them to come back into his family.

- He calls Abram to become the Father of all nations (Abraham). He and his descendants (Isaac, Jacob, 12 sons including Joseph) become the called, distinct people of God who are to reflect the holy and just character of God in the midst of the other nations. God establishes a covenant with his people through the law of circumcision. *If you.....then I will.....*
- Circumstances eventually lead the people of God to be slaves in Egypt and God raises up Moses to deliver them from the evil Pharaoh. Through a series of miracles God powerfully rescues them and leads them out of Egypt on a journey to settle them in their own land-the promised land of Canaan. This journey that should have lasted 11 days took 40 years due to their disobedience and rebellion.
- During this long period God gives the Law through Moses -the Ten Commandments + many ceremonial and civil laws as well as establishing the sacrificial system, the priesthood and the Temple of His presence, as a way for his sinful people to be able to come to God in all his holiness. The only way people could approach God was through their priest who would offer animal sacrifices to cleanse them from sin and receive forgiveness.
- Joshua follows Moses and is the military leader who leads the people of God into the promised land conquering all the resident tribes and eventually as promised they settle in the land.
- Judges are anointed by God to rule – like Samuel, Gideon, Deborah.
- The people ask for a king because they want to be like the other nations and though God is angry and warns them, they will suffer oppression under bad kings he granted their request.
- God anoints Saul as the first king. He begins well but disobeys and God calls David who is a man after his own heart. Solomon his son is chosen to build the 1st temple in Jerusalem. The kings that follow are a mix of good and bad. God punishes his people for their disobedience by using powerful nations of Assyria, Babylon and Persia to oppress and fight against them. In 930 BC the kingdom is divided - Israel in the north and Judah in the south.
- In 722 the northern kingdom falls and in 586 Judah also falls, the Temple is destroyed, and the people of God are exiled. This is God's judgement on his rebellious people.

- His people eventually do return after 70 years and the walls and temple in Jerusalem are rebuilt.
- God raised up prophets to warn his people to repent, worship Him alone and obey his covenant laws. There are periods of obedience and disobedience, periods of faithful worship and idolatry, periods of peace and conflict.
- Between the OT and the NT there is an intertestamental period of 400 years when God is silent. The time is ripe for a Saviour. The people of Israel and Judah are waiting for the Messiah to save them from their enemies and restore their inheritance as God's chosen people. **However, when He does eventually come, will they recognise him?**

Act 4 – New Testament – Jesus the Messiah

God had sent many prophets to his people to direct and warn his people how to live righteously amongst the other nations. To be a light that reflected the character of the true God. However, the Israelites did not always obey and so God had a better plan and that was to send His Son, Jesus into the world who would deliver them from their enemies, however the 'enemies' would not be the other nations but – SIN, SATAN AND DEATH and Jesus would not only be their Deliverer but the Deliverer of the WHOLE WORLD!

John the Baptist sent one last prophet to warn his people and call them to repentance and prepare the way for Jesus. He lived in the desert and preached and baptised with water those who responded to his message. One day when he was baptising, he saw Jesus and declared: *'Look the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!'* (John 1:29) He baptised him at that moment the heavens opened, and the Spirit came down as a dove and remained on him and a voice from heaven said: *'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'* (Matthew 3:17).

- Jesus proclaimed himself as the Messiah at the start of his ministry when he was 30 years old. He entered the temple and turned to the prophet of Isaiah 61 which prophesied about the coming Messiah. He read: *'The Spirit of the Lord is on me. Because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the*

oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.' (Luke 4:18-19) He then said: *'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'* (4:21)

- Jesus set out his mandate and after being tempted by the devil for 40 days and nights he moves out into this ministry of liberation and deliverance bringing the Good News about God and His kingdom of forgiveness, grace, reconciliation, love, freedom, peace, justice and righteousness. He chose 12 young men to be his disciples and taught them about His kingdom and about the true character of God. He performed countless healings amongst the disabled, blind, deaf and sick and delivered many from demons. He reached out with love to the outcasts in society: tax collectors, certain women, prostitutes, Samaritans, beggars and included them in his message of salvation for all who chose to believe and follow him.
- Jesus had a mission not only to reveal the true nature of God and establish the kingdom of heaven here on earth, but to offer his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. He was the Lamb of God, who laid down his life to cleanse the whole world and reconcile man back to God. The sin that entered in the Garden of Eden and brought separation from God and death was dealt with on the Cross where Jesus poured out his blood and died in our place. The moment he died the curtain in the temple tore in two, opening the holy of holies to all people allowing all who trust in Jesus to enter the presence of God. (Hebrews 10:19-22). No longer would it be only the high priest who could approach God on behalf of the people. By his death Jesus defeated Satan. His time is now short and soon he will be banished to hell forever.
- The Jewish religious authorities did not recognise Jesus as the Messiah for whom they were waiting. They were waiting for a powerful military conqueror who would fight against their enemies and restore their land. But Jesus was a wandering preacher, a miracle worker and humble carpenter and although he spoke with authority and drove out demons, they chose not to believe in him. Jesus highlighted their false piety and ritualistic empty religion and reached out to the margins of society saving 'the least' and the outcast considered impure and unclean and worthless by them.
- After his death he was put in a tomb, but after 3 days he rose again proving himself to be the Son of God and for 40 days he showed himself to his disciples

and many others. His death and resurrection brought reconciliation to all things and the promise of eternal life to all who believe. After 40 days he ascended into heaven declaring: *'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age,'* (Matthew 28:18-20)

Act 5 – The Church of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God

Before Jesus left to go back to His Father, he told his disciples to: *'wait for the gift my Father promised. For John baptised with water but in a few days, you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.'* (Acts 1:5) and declared to them: *'You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.'* (Acts 1:8).

About a week later the prophecy of Jesus came true and the Holy Spirit was sent from heaven to be with and empower the disciples and all who would believe in their message. The Church of Jesus Christ was born, and the age of grace inaugurated! The rules for membership were/are simple- trusting and believing in Jesus, through whom we have forgiveness of sins and reconciliation to our Father in heaven and being filled with and living by the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit distributes gifts to believers, which are given to help us to grow in our faith and relationship with God as well as equipping us to reach more and more people with the Good News of salvation. Believers are to be united in love with one purpose to show the world that Jesus is alive and the way to eternal life. Prayer and worship are the life blood of the church that keeps us living in the presence of God anytime, anywhere, all the time.

The Church as the body of Christ lives in the world but is not of the world. The church lives in the kingdom of God which is a spiritual kingdom with different standards whose foundation is SELFLESS LOVE and whose King is Jesus, who is our model Example of living a life of giving love. The task of the church is to witness to the world that Jesus is God and that God loves the world and wants to be reconciled with everyone. Although Satan is a defeated foe he remains for now, and blinds the minds of unbelievers and tempts believers to turn away and disobey God.

Act 6 - The finale -The restoration of all things!

This is the final act of God's salvation story when God's original plan of dwelling in perfect, holy union with us will be restored at the renewal of all things. God will create a new heaven and a new earth and all those who have lived for Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit will dwell together with God forever. Satan, his demons, and all unbelievers will be sent to hell, a place of eternal punishment.

'Look God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people and god himself will be with them and be their god. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.

I am making everything new!

Those who are victorious will inherit all this and I will be their god and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars - they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.'(Revelation 21:3-5,7-8)

Task

(i)The whole story of the bible has been described as a divine love story and a story of salvation and rescue. Using your imagination create a collage of **the whole story of the Bible** following the 6 Acts. You can draw on paper or create using IT on the laptop.

3. **Who is Satan?** *A cosmic battle!*



It is important to learn what the bible says about Satan, who he is, where he came from, what he does and why.

Where did he come from? Mutiny in the ranks.

Satan is a created being with a free will. He was created by God as an angel and his name was Lucifer. He was the most beautiful of the mighty angels and he became proud. He wanted to become like God and rebelled against Him and so God cast him out of heaven along with 1/3 of the angels who chose to follow him.

[Read these 2 passages Isaiah 14: 12-14 and Ezekiel 28:14-19.](#)

Lucifer became Satan and the angels with him are demons. He wants to control the world and in some sense, he does, all who do not believe in God and follow Jesus are under his power. His one aim is to cause people to rebel against God. He hates God and anything good.

- Satan roams about the earth looking for someone to devour like a lion (Job 1:7/1 Peter 5:8).
- He is God's arch enemy and although he is powerful, he is no match for God who is all powerful. Satan can only be in one place at one time, but God is everywhere.
- Satan can only work within limits set by God (Job 1:12/Isaiah 54:16). God can use Satan's evil activities and turn them for good (Genesis 50:19-20) Satan thought he had killed Jesus, but the crucifixion of Jesus was God's superior plan of salvation through which all men can be reconciled to God. (Hebrews 10:10).
- Satan is the arch enemy of the followers of Jesus, and he attempts to turn believers against God with all kinds of temptations to cause them to rebel or sin against God. Just as he tempted Jesus in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-11)
- Satan is a murderer and a liar and deceiver (John 8:44).
- Satan is the accuser of the brethren (Revelation 12:10-11)
- Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14) which means he is difficult to recognise sometimes and might be in the church.
- Satan blinds the eyes of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- Satan is called the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit that is now at work in all who are disobedient. (Ephesians 2:2)

- Satan is called the prince of this world by Jesus (John 12:31).
- Satan will one day be cast into the lake of fire in hell forever. (Matthew 25:41/Revelation 20:10)

How can we overcome Satan in our daily lives?

In Ephesians 6:12 we are told our enemies are not flesh and blood but the evil powers in the heavenly realms who rule behind people influencing their thoughts, words and actions for evil. So how can we resist and overcome Satan and his evil influence in our lives? We are taught to pray and use the weapons of righteousness to fight against Satan and his demons. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

We do not need to fear Satan, because Jesus is greater than he is and at the name of Jesus he and his demons flee!

Ephesian 6: 10-18 is a blueprint of how to resist Satan and his schemes to get us to rebel against God. We fight him by living righteous and honest lives that please God so that we can draw upon his power and stay close to him daily.

We say no to all sexual activity outside of marriage. We say no to dishonest dealings with money, stealing money that is not ours and greed. We say no to pride and living selfish lives looking for power, status and wealth. We say no to hating others, causing dissension, gossip and slander. We worship God alone and do not visit the witchdoctor who follows Satan and his powers. We do not believe Satan's lies in difficult times that tell us God does not care and has abandoned us.

We pray and worship constantly making sure nothing comes in to ruin our relationship with Jesus. We confess our sins to God and each other. We always seek peace and unity. We share our resources with others whether we are rich or poor. We are generous with what we have because it all comes from God. We care for the poor, the vulnerable, the widow and the orphan and help those who are suffering. We are honest and truthful and live in the light with everyone. We are kind to everyone we meet. We trust in God's love for us always, even in difficulties knowing that He is our Good Shepherd who is always working for our good.

Task

1. Look at your country – what evils can you identify where Satan is at work? E.g.- corruption....
2. Look at your family – do you see Satan’s influence and activity? Does your family still worship their ancestors, visit the witchdoctor?
3. Look at your own life – are there areas where Satan is tempting you and where you struggle to do what is right?

4. **Who is Jesus?**

- He is the Son of God (Matthew 3:17/John 1:18, Hebrews 5:8/1 John 2:23)
- He created the universe (Colossians 1:16-17, John 1:2-4)
- He is the Saviour of the world (John 3:16-17, 2 Timothy 1:10, Titus 3:4-6)
- The Lamb of God, the sacrifice for our sins (John 1:29, Revelation 5:7, 1 Peter 1:18-20)
- He is the exact representation of God -Jesus shows us what God is like (Hebrews 1:1-3, John 1:14)
- He is the Light of the world (John 8:12, John 1:4)
- He is the Bread of Life (John 6:48-51)
- He is the Good Shepherd (John 10:11,14-15, Psalm 23:1)
- He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life - (John 14:6, 10:10)
- He is the Resurrection and the Life (John 11:25)
- He is the true Vine (John 15:5,7-8)
- He is the First and the Last (Revelation 1:17)
- He is the Head of the Body/Church (Colossians 1:18)
- He is Reconciler of all things (Colossians 1:19-20, Ephesians 1:10)
- He is our Friend (John 15:13-15)
- He is our Teacher and Example (Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 11:29, John 13:15)
- He is our Intercessor (Romans 8:34, Ephesians 2:6, Hebrews 7:25)



Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born to Mary and Joseph, and he lived a normal human life (John 1:14) until he was 30 years old, when he started his ministry/mission and was baptised and commissioned by the Holy Spirit (Mark 1:9-11, Luke 4:18). The bible says he went about doing good (Acts 10:38) healing the sick, touching the untouchables (lepers), delivering people from demons, and teaching about salvation and the kingdom of God. Jesus was arrested and crucified on a cross for our sakes, where he paid the price for our sins and became the bridge between us and God, reconciling us to the Father. After 3 days he rose from the dead and appeared to his disciples for 40 days. He then ascended to heaven and returned to the right hand of the Father. He promised to send the Holy Spirit to be with us and be our Guide, Teacher,

Counsellor and Comforter. After 10 days the Holy Spirit came and filled all the believers and the Mission of Jesus continued through Christ's disciples.

Task

- **Read** about the suffering of Jesus in these passages: Luke 22:39-44, Matthew 27:27-31, 45-54. Now **read** about Jesus glorified as Lord in heaven in Revelation 1:10-18.

Compare and contrast these 2 pictures of Jesus as man + Jesus as Lord and reflect on **Philippians 2:6-11**.

- Imagine a world if Jesus had never come - no Saviour. What would it be like? How does it make you feel?
- **Watch the JESUS FILM**

5. **My identity** - **Who am I? What is my purpose? What is my place?**



You are created in the image of God: Genesis 1:27

Profile - Since God is spirit (John 4:24) then we too must be spiritual beings in a physical human body. There is a physical world that we can see, touch, taste, smell, hear, feel and a spiritual world that is unseen but can be discerned and sensed.

We are body, soul and spirit. Our soul is our personality that is influenced by our outer life and our inner life, our spirit which was dead is made alive when we come to Christ and God comes to dwell in it by the Holy Spirit.

We are all descended from one couple Adam and Eve. They were physically alive and also spiritually alive and connected to God.

Purpose - Adam and Eve were given a purpose to rule over the earth and steward and tend to all the animals, the plants and living creatures. Their life was given meaning and focus by the work God gave them to do and they were fully satisfied and fulfilled. (Genesis 1:28)

Place of belonging— Adam and Eve had a privileged place in the universe. They were the pinnacle of His creation and his pride and joy. They were the created out of love for relationship with God. They talked and walked together in the Garden of Eden. They had a special close intimate relationship with no shame and nothing to hide. They had food, shelter, companionship, and peace and security. (Genesis 1:29-30).

BUTThe consequences of the Fall

When Adam and Eve were tempted by the crafty snake (Satan) to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the tree God told them not to eat from, they ate and so disobeyed a direct order of God. In that one moment (Genesis 3:6) the perfect unbroken communion they had with God was broken and they hid. The result was devastating, and death entered the story. Adam and Eve suffered spiritual death, separation from God because of their sin (their physical deaths came 900 years later) and they were banished from the garden by God.

As a result, we too are born spiritually dead, because we are descended from Adam and our nature became sinful- **Romans 5: 12:** *'Therefore just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.'*

Ephesians 2:1- *'As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is at work in those who are disobedient.'*

The results of the spiritual death on our lives:

- **Fear, guilt and shame – Genesis 3:10** – When Adam and Eve realised that they were naked and knew they had disobeyed God they hid. The once unbroken sweet fellowship was shattered, and fear and shame became emotions that would dominate their lives and those after them as they do ours. Sin brings fear of punishment and guilt which destroys our peace.
- **Loss of purpose** – Boredom, frustration, hard graft, aimlessness, laziness, dissatisfaction, replaced a God ordained calling and deep fulfilment.
- **Loss of security** – the divine protection was gone, and danger lurked everywhere. Adam's son Abel was murdered by his brother Cain. Death was an impending reality.
- **They felt rejection-** Adam and Eve were banished by God from the Garden and were rejected by God. We are born with this sense of rejection with a longing to belong, fit in and be accepted by others.
- **They felt weak and powerless** – the power of God within them had gone and so they felt alone, weak and powerless.
- **They felt depressed and angry** -the curse God put on them was terrible and must have left them very discouraged and perhaps angry at and blaming God, each other, and Satan. Arguments, conflict, and hatred led to murder.

The way back

Because of the Fall we lost our place of belonging in God's family, we lost our purpose as His children and our personhood or identity became devoid of God's life-giving Spirit.

As a result, human beings seek to find significance, belonging and acceptance, purpose and meaning in many ways.

Finding it through our accomplishments, our qualifications, and careers.

Finding it through our appearance – nice clothes, nice house, nice car.

Finding it in relationships – family, friends and in sexual relationships.

But human effort can never make up for what we have lost. We cannot escape death which comes to us all and that impacts every human being and the way they live. We were designed to live forever with God and for His purposes.

So, what is the answer?

5.(a). A renewed Identity – A new me!

The only possible answer is to restore our relationship with God. For our spirits to be made alive again and to regain our **true identity as God's children** and live with and for God again.

The Good News!

Have you wondered why the gospel is called Good News? Because it is!

*'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, **that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him.'* (John 3:16-17)

God sent Jesus to undo the works of Satan, to defeat him and his hold over the world. At the Cross he died in our place and took our punishment which results in death, so that we can be reconciled to God free from condemnation and be born again of the Spirit and so become spiritually alive once again. Jesus came to restore our eternal life:

'I have come that they might have life and have it to the full.' (John 10:10)

Adam and Eve lost their (and our) eternal life, Jesus restored it.

'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies.'
(John 11:25)

That life starts as soon as we receive Christ - his life within us through his Spirit.

'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.' (John 3:3)

When we turn away from sin and turn to Jesus, God welcomes us into His kingdom and puts His Spirit in us -we are born again spiritually to a new life with Jesus.

'He who has the son has life, he who does not have the son does not have life.' (1 John 5:12)

Repent and be baptised! In response to this inward spiritual change God asks us to be baptised in water as an outward sign, proclaiming to the world that we are now washed and made clean by Jesus sacrifice and we leave behind our life of unbelief, sin and idolatry and rise up to a new life with Jesus.

We repent = we change direction away from sin and the devil towards Jesus and God's kingdom. (Mark 16:16)

We are baptised = we are washed and made clean. (Acts 22:16/Hebrews 10:22)

Suddenly *our identity and sense of belonging* is restored:

- God's child, a member of Christ's body.
- We have a clear purpose - We become ministers of reconciliation with Christ.
- We have eternal life and so all fear of death disappears – our future is secure.

Task

Below is a list of what the Bible says about your new identity in Christ (taken from Freedom in Christ course).

1. Read through the list about who you are as a Christian. No matter what you might feel, or what others say about you this is what God says about you! You just need to believe it and live in your new identity.
2. Are there any you find hard to believe? Why do you think that is?
3. In your own words tell the group - What is the Good News/the Gospel?

I am Significant – I am no longer worthless, inadequate, helpless,¹ or hopeless. In Christ I am deeply significant and special.

Matthew 5:13,14 I am the salt of the earth and the light of the world.
John 15:1,5 I am a branch of the true vine, Jesus, a channel of His life.
John 15:16 I have been chosen and appointed by God to bear fruit.
Acts 1:8 I am a personal, Spirit-empowered witness of Christ.
1 Corinthians 3:16 I am a temple of God.
2 Corinthians 5:17-21 I am a minister of reconciliation for God.
2 Corinthians 6:1 I am God's fellow worker
Ephesians 2:6 I am seated with Christ in the heavenly realms.
Ephesians 2:10 I am God's workmanship, created for good works.
Ephesians 3:12 I may approach God with freedom and confidence.
Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me!

I am Secure- I am no longer guilty, unprotected, alone or abandoned. In Christ I am totally secure.

Romans 8:1,2 I am free forever from condemnation.
Romans 8:28 I am assured that all things work together for good.
Romans 8:31-34 I am free from any condemning charges against me.
Romans 8:35-39 I cannot be separated from the love of God.
2 Corinthians 1:21,22 I have been established, anointed, and sealed by God.
Philippians 1:6 I am confident that the good work God has begun in me will be perfected.
Philippians 3:20 I am a citizen of heaven.
Colossians 3:3 I am hidden with Christ in God.
2 Timothy 1:7 I have not been given a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind.
Hebrews 4:16 I can find grace and mercy to help in time of need.
1 John 5:18 I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me.

I am accepted – I am no longer rejected, unloved or dirty. In Christ I am completely accepted.

John 1:12 I am God's child.
Romans 5:1b I have been justified.
1 Corinthians 6:17 I am united with the Lord, and I am one spirit with Him.
1 Corinthians 6:19,20 I have been bought with a price. I belong to God.
1 Corinthians 12:27 I am a member of Christ's Body.
Ephesians 1:1 I am a saint, a holy one.
Ephesians 2:18 I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit.
Colossians 1:14 I have been redeemed and forgiven for all my sins.
Colossians 2:10 I am complete in Christ.

¹ N Anderson & S Goss *Freedom in Christ*, (Monarch Books 2009) pp 17-18

5.(b). What is my purpose? Living up to my new name!

'Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new is here!' (2 Corinthians 5:17)



In the NT believers are called 'saints,' 'holy ones,' 'righteous ones' over 200 times! What a name to live up to! We are given a gift, a new godly nature by God who puts His Spirit in us and then works in us slowly changing us into the likeness of Jesus.

We have a complete make-over!

- **Created to be good and do good.**

We become carriers of God's holy loving presence.

'Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies.' (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Imagine putting a small light into a big room. Imagine the light, it is dim and there are shadows because the light is small. But then imagine that light growing and glowing bigger and brighter and watch the room become less dim and the shadows disappear. This is what God's Spirit is doing in us. He is turning up the light of God's goodness and holiness and love in our hearts so that our lives become beacons of light full of God's love, goodness, compassion, and holiness.



'You are the light of the world. A town on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bow. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.' (Matthew 5:14-16)

'For you were one darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of the light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of the darkness, rather expose them. (Ephesians 5:8-11).

'For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.' (Ephesians 2:10) and John 15:16.

'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you, might go and bear fruit - fruit that will last. This is my command: love each other.' (John 15:16-17)

When we turn to Jesus and away from sin, we choose something wonderful. We are adopted into God's family. God becomes our Father, a loving Father. Jesus is like a brother (but also our Lord) and the Holy Spirit is the one who makes His home in us.

Task

1. Reflecting on the above, in your own words what is the purpose of your life?

2. What good things can you do in your daily life that will bring a smile to Jesus and your Father in heaven? List 10 things and then share them with the group.

- I am called to be and do good, **BUT what happens when I do bad?**

It is important to remember that we are a work in progress. Like a baby that grows to be a toddler then a young child, then a teenager and finally to be an adult. We are growing and sometimes we fall and fail. Does God, our Father and Jesus our Lord abandon us when that happens?

No! God is patient with us. He loves us and will never stop loving us even when we disappoint him by our wrong thoughts, attitudes, words and actions. He is a merciful and gracious God who forgives us quickly when we say sorry and are honest with him.

'You Lord are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. (Psalm 86:5)

'As a Father has compassion on his children, so the lord has compassion on those who fear him.' (Psalm 103:13)

'For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him as far as the east is from the west, so far as he removed our transgressions from us.' (Psalm 103:11-12)

'If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' (1 John 1:8-9)

'Therefore, there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:))

Obviously, the aim is NOT to sin but when we do, we can be assured that God will forgive us if we repent. God loves honesty and a humble spirit.

Task

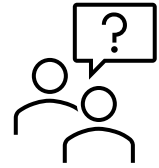
- **Read the parable in Luke 18: 9-14 Discuss together**

1. Are you most like the pharisee or the tax collector?

2. Spend some time now in prayer confessing any sin in your heart and asking God to forgive you.

5.(c). Where do I belong? A new place!

Not only are we given a new identity and a new purpose, but we are given a new place of belonging.



*'For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness **and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves**, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.'* (Colossians 1:13)

*'For you died and **your life is now hidden with Christ in God.**'* (Colossians 3:3)

*'And **God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.**'* (Ephesians 2:6)

*'But **our citizenship is in heaven.**'* (Philippians 3:20)

In the moment we say yes to Jesus we are transferred into another **kingdom**, a spiritual realm where Christ reigns and is King. It is a kingdom of love, peace, joy, hope and light that will never end. It is a kingdom of truth and goodness. We become part of God's heavenly family and take our place as his beloved children. We no longer belong to the world.

'See what great love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God!' (1 John 3:1)

'My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of it.' (John 17:15-16)

God lift us out of the darkness, out of the pit that ends in death and places us in an eternal kingdom-wow!

- **This new place is a place of belonging.**

God is a relational God as seen in his very nature - He is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit who live in complete unity and together are God. This relational unity is what he desires for is children. No one likes to feel alone, and as a Christian even if you have lost or are estranged from your family or friends for some reason, you become part of God's big global family with millions of brothers and sisters all over the world as well as part of a local church family.

Friendship When Jesus came, he called 12 disciples to be with him. He lived with them and taught them everything they needed to know about the new kingdom and who he is. He shared his heart and life with them. **He was their friend.**

Jesus calls us friends too: *'Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his masters business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from my father I have made known to you.'* (John 15:13-15)

Think about that kind of close relationship-a friend. God is not distant and angry. Jesus shows us that the kind of relationship he had with Peter, James, John etc is what he wants with us too! Jesus wants to be your close friend. He wants to spend time with you, talking with you, relaxing and listening to you. He also has things to say to you 😊

One of Jesus' last prayers before he left to die on the cross was:

*'My prayer is not for them alone (the disciples). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, **that all of them may be one, father, just as you are in me and I am in you.** may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. **I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity.** Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me,'* (John 17: 20-23)

A Church family When we decide to give our lives back to God, he puts us in a family, the church, and joins us together by putting His Spirit in us-that is the glory he talks about here. It is God's Spirit in us that joins us together in Christ.

The apostle Paul describes our new place as **a household and a temple**. There is a sense of being cemented together brick on brick becoming a place where God lives in the midst of us.

*'You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens [in a new kingdom], with God's people and **also members of his household**, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become **a holy temple in the Lord**. And in him, we too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.'* (Ephesians 2: 19-22)

'You also are like living stones are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.' (1 Peter 2:5)

The spiritual sacrifices are holy, selfless lives full of praise, worship and prayer, and acts of love all of which bring glory to God.

Chosen! Have you ever felt ignored or left out? Have you felt cast aside or invisible? Well, when you become a Christian that changes because God your heavenly Father chooses you – you are specially chosen by God to be his child, to be his friend, to become part of his royal priesthood, you are special and receive a special calling to live as a child of the light, a child of love like Jesus.

'But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.' (1 Peter 2: 9-10)

The church is described as **the body of Christ** - Jesus is the head and we form the different parts of his body, living, breathing walking as one. The church is bigger than any one denomination. The vision Jesus had was not a church that was divided but unified.

'Just as a body though one has many parts but all its parts form one body, so it is with Christ. Now you are the body of Christ and each of you is a part of it.' (1 Corinthians 12: 12,27)

'He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church.' (Colossians 1: 17-18a)

'And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church which is his body the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.' (Ephesians 1:22-23)

Task

1. How does it make you feel to be part of God's family? To be the friend of Jesus?

2. Are you part of a local Christian group or church?

3. Read again Jesus' vision of the church in **John 17: 20-23** then find out: How many church denominations are there in Mozambique? In the world?

Has the church failed? Or do the different denominations just reflect our differences as people?

Can we still fulfil Jesus' prayer 'to be one'? How?

4. Think about your town, do the Christians in different denominations help each other, pray for each other, celebrate Jesus together? What can you do to bring change?

6. Kingdom lifestyle – A whole new way of living!

When Jesus came, he introduced a whole new way of living and modelled that way that is why he said: *Follow me!*

Jesus said: *'I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'* (John 14:6).

We need to follow Christ's example doing the kind of things he did and following his teaching.

Here is one example:

- One day Jesus was dining with his disciples he got up from the table and washed their feet as an act of loving service and he said to them:

'I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.' (John 13:15)

So, what does this life with Jesus look like?

We can look at Jesus' teaching in **Matthew 5-7** the Sermon on the Mount to find out the answer.

Matthew 5-7 – A Blessed life

Jesus went up on a mountainside and taught his disciples.



- ***'Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven'*** – Matthew 5:3

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. – Matthew 5:5

A Christian is humble and totally dependent on God every day for guidance, forgiveness, and power to live righteously.

Clashing world's value – independence and pride – I can live my life how I want. I am in control. I'll do it my way!

- ***'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness for they will be filled.'*** (Matthew 5:6)

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.' Matthew 5:8

When we come to Christ, we receive a fresh start, a clean heart and are made righteous by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. But that is not the end of the story because we have to grow up in Christ and let His Spirit change our behaviour and attitudes. Those who earnestly seek to be like Jesus will be satisfied and changed and will have an unbroken relationship with God. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Clashing worldly value – pursuing personal needs even if that means wrong behaviour and using deception.

- ***‘Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.’*** (Matthew 5:7)

God has shown us mercy by forgiving us and reconciling us to him through Jesus. We should therefore be quick to forgive those who offend or hurt us and treat people with gentleness and compassion.

Read the parable Jesus taught in Matthew 18:21-35.

What can you learn from this?

Read the parable in Luke 10:25-37. Showing mercy to those we see suffering expresses our love for God and neighbour.

The priest and the Levite did not want their day to be interrupted. They were on their way to the temple and touching a man who might be dead would make them unclean and they would need to perform ceremonial cleansing rites according to the law, Leviticus 21:1-3) Jesus was showing them that showing mercy was a higher virtue than being ceremonially clean.

Clashing worldly value – treating people harshly and wielding power without compassion.

- ***‘Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God’*** (Matthew 5:9)

As God’s children we are called to create a climate of peace. Peace with God and our neighbours. Sometimes that is not easy, and we have to work hard at getting along together (James 3:18). By being quick to forgive, not taking offence easily and letting offences go. Maintaining good relationships is one of the most difficult parts of life and only possible if we follow the way of Jesus.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 How does your behaviour match up to Jesus’ standard?

Clashing worldly value – causing disorder and strife by our selfish behaviour.

- **Salt and light (Read Matthew 5:14-16)**

Think about the qualities of **salt**- what are its benefits? What do we use it for?



Jesus uses everyday examples to help us understand what our lives should look like. As salt is seasoning for food so that it is not bland but tasty so our lives should bring a positive influence for good on those around us.

Can you think of ways we might bring a good influence in our families, friendship groups, communities?

Salt is also used to preserve meat and fish to help it last longer so too our faith should be enduring through good and bad times. We are called to be faithful and reliable people whom God and people can depend on. *Are you someone people can trust? Can you keep a secret that someone shares with you?*

Now think about **light** – *what are the benefits of light?*



Jesus says we should not hide our light like putting a lamp under a bowl we should instead put it on a stand so it can give light to everyone. We are called to let the good in us, God's love, shine out and touch people around us so they will see our good deeds which will bring them to faith in God.

How do we sometimes hide our light?

Being quiet when we should speak out against some injustice.

Going along with the crowd when we know something is wrong.

Letting sin come into our lives and dim our light.

Hiding our faith from others and being afraid to talk about our love for Jesus.
Ignoring the needs and suffering of others.

How can we let our light shine and avoid the darkness? (Ephesians 5:8-20, Acts 10:38, Ephesians 2:10)

What good things can you do this week for your family? Your friends? Your church? Your community?

- **Revenge or Forgiveness? - Love your enemies!**

Read - Matthew 5:21-24/5:38-42/5:43-48.

When we become angry with someone it can lead to deep resentment and bitterness and be like a poisonous weed in the garden of our hearts spreading and squeezing out all the good in us.



Read - Ephesians 4:26-27/31-32.

Jesus teaches us to forgive quickly just as he forgives us quickly. He says if we try to pray whilst harbouring anger and unforgiveness in our hearts he will not listen to us or answer our prayers— (Isaiah 58:3-4/Luke 11:4).

When someone treats us harshly our flesh wants to retaliate and take revenge, but Jesus says living by the Spirit does the opposite Matthew 5:38-42.

What does Romans 12:21 say about how we should overcome evil with good-*how does that work?* Romans 12:14-21

If someone is persistently persecuting you, verse 19-20 shows that we need to trust that God will deal with the person. Our part is to pray although we God might lead us to confront the person and speak the truth in love. God does not think it right we stay in situations of abuse.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 and think about your behaviour. *Are you easily angered? Do you forgive quickly and forget? Are you angry at someone who has hurt you or offended you?*

Will you pray now and ask God for the grace to forgive them.

- **Lust or purity? – The battlefield of the mind!**

Read Matthew 5:27-30/18:6-9.

Jesus teaches that right thoughts are as important as right actions. Wrong thinking can lead to wrong actions. The mind is a battleground where we must defeat the enemy who comes to tempt us with lustful thoughts. The way to defeat him is to immediately obey God's word and refuse to entertain wrong thoughts. Do not open the door when the thoughts come knocking! If you have opened the door shut it quickly because sin is like an Olympic athlete and will sprint inside your life like a whirlwind and cause devastation in your family, your relationships, and your ministry to God. Jesus' warning is for our eternal benefit. Remember God loves us and so disciplines us.

Read Hebrews 12: 4-13 and Ephesians 5:1-20.

We are called to be holy like Jesus.

What does a holy life look like?

Do I need to repent/make changes and clean up my mind and my life?

- **Generosity or greed?**

Read Matthew 6:19-24/25-34.

Jesus taught a lot about money and possessions. 11 out of 39 parables were about money. In the whole bible money is mentioned more than 800 x! This shows the importance of the topic!

Money is not in itself evil; it depends on what we do with it. We need money to buy food, clothes, and shelter -to survive, but overspending on ourselves can lead to

greed and injustice. Whilst we overindulge there are others who do not have enough money to simply survive. The massive discrepancy we see in the world between the 'haves and the 'have-nots' are a result of greed, corruption and selfishness.

Read 2 parables of Jesus Luke 12:16-21 & Luke 16: 19-31

What do they teach us about the way we should live?

Jesus showed us that we are to live generous, selfless lives sharing with those in need trusting God to provide for our needs who will bless this way of living.

Luke 6:38- *'Give and it will be given to you. a good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.'*

'It is more blessed to give than receive.' (Acts 20:35)

- **Pride & hypocrisy or humility & truth?**

Read Matthew 6:1-4/5-8.

God sees our hearts and knows everything about us! Psalm 139:1-4/23-24/Proverbs 16:2.

He knows the reasons we do things, because he can see our motives.

Sometimes we can do things for show, to look good. God knows when we do that.

God wants us to be honest.

When we pray, he wants us to pray honestly not to sound good to others. He will only hear us if we pray from a truthful and humble heart.

Many of the pharisees were deeply religious, but full of pride and hypocrisy -

Matthew 23:27-28. They looked like a piece of fruit that looks succulent and juicy on the outside but when it is peeled is bad and rotting.

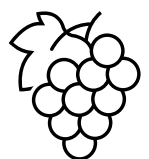


Read - Matthew 7:15-20 and Matthew 12:33-36.

Ask God to examine your heart now and answer the following questions:

Are you honest and transparent?

Or are you hiding sin, pride, and selfishness in your heart?



Are you bearing good fruit?

What good fruit is Jesus talking about here?



- **Daily bread – Prayer and Gods Word**

Read Matthew 6:9-14/7:7-7-12, 24-27 / Psalm 1:2-3.

When we become a Christian the foundation of our life moves from one kingdom – *the world*, to another – *the Kingdom of Jesus*. We become part of Christ's body and are to root our lives in Christ - Colossians 1:13, 2:6-7.

The new life we now live, we live to please God.

How often do you read your bible and talk to God?

Prayer, worship and daily bible reading – spending time with Jesus, the Father and the Holy Spirit is as crucial as eating and drinking. Without it we will not grow up in our faith and eventually we will die spiritually. Every day -morning and night it is good to be quiet and talk to God, read and study his word and listen for his voice and present your requests to him. You can pray all the time because prayer is simply talking to and listening to God, because we are in relationship with him, and he loves us. Prayer helps us resist temptation and the devil - Ephesians 6:18

Philippians 4:4-7 – Being thankful and singing our praise and worship to our loving and faithful God will help us grow closer to him.

Read the parable in Matthew 13:1-8 – [Discuss the 4 different soils.](#)

The seed is God's word and for it to grow we need to read it daily, obey it and apply it daily to our lives - **James 1:22-25.**

- **The Royal law - the key to a life well lived!**



Read Luke 10:27-28

This new way of living and new lifestyle as a Christian and follower of Jesus can be summarised by these 2 commands: *'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbour as yourself.'*

If we truly seek to love God with our whole lives, then we will be blessed and in the same way if we seek to love and not harm in any way our neighbours, then we will please God and He will bless our lives and we will grow and produce abundant fruit.

Read 1 Corinthians 13 and compare this to how you behave in your daily life with your family, friends, colleagues and strangers.

And finally - Reflect on this new way of living.

- What have you found the most challenging?
- Where do you struggle?
- How has God changed/is God changing you?

You are not alone! God has called us to be part of a big family and so we can help each other grow and mature (Galatians 6:2).



The key - God's aim is that we might become more and more like Jesus who is our great Example!

1 John 2:6: *'Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.'*

2 Corinthians 3:18: *'And we all with unveiled faces contemplate (reflect) the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.'*

