

COMMUNITIES OF

HOPE

Christians Starting
New Congregations

Entering the Kingdom



The Kingdom of God

Entering the Kingdom

This study is designed for new believers or older ones who may not be familiar with the commands of Christ and the apostolic teaching on them regarding entering God's kingdom. The study focuses on obedience from Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

The study is considered “basic” because it focuses on the basics of what it means to enter the kingdom of God. These are found in Peter’s instructions to the first converts in Acts 2:32-47. It is designed to get a person grounded in his or her faith and integrated into a local body.

This material is arranged in an order which will hopefully be easy to follow and is designed to build upon the foundation this study establishes. This study is designed for disciples who desire a “primer” which will lead into a longer-term discipleship relationship. For those unequipped to enter into a longer-term discipling relationship, we hope this study will still enable them to ground new believers in the faith, establishing a foundation which can be built on by others in the church.

The study can be used in several ways:

1. We recommend that you use the questions in these studies as a guide to discuss the corresponding passages. You should prepare by praying that the Lord would speak to the new believer through His Word. Continue in prayer

during the discussion time. Using this method, the new believer needs no preparation, although you might ask him or her to read the passage ahead of time. Remember: The questions in this study are to be used to start discussion rather than be seen as a rigid study to which you should adhere. Flexibility is encouraged.

2. A second way this can be used is for you to give the study to the new believer. He or she is asked to answer the questions in preparation for the time when you two will get together to study the relevant portion. Once again, when you get together be flexible and willing to dig. This approach may be preferred with an older believer.
3. The least preferred way is for you to give the new believer this study to work through on his or her own with no help or follow up.

We hope that these studies will be helpful to those desiring to obey our Lord’s command to “make disciples of all nations.”

Permission was given for reprinting of Bible studies by Dick Scoggins with the Fellowship of Church Planters International.

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Study 1: Faith

Faith is only as good as the object in which faith is placed. The object of our faith is Jesus, who is the Christ. The Jewish people were looking for a leader who would deliver them from their oppressors. They didn't recognize Jesus as God's promised Messiah.

Read Acts 2:32-37.

1. What did the people of Israel do to Jesus?
2. Why did this happen to Him?
3. How did God respond?
4. Jesus came as the suffering servant but how is He now described in verse 36?
What does this mean for you?
5. Was there evidence that these people believed in Jesus after hearing what Peter had to say?
What was their response in verse 37?

Conclusion

1. What is the difference between hearing truth and believing truth?
2. The people at Pentecost in Acts 2 had heard Jesus, had listened to Him teach, and had seen Him demonstrate His power, but had not responded in faith before His crucifixion.
What is the response to Jesus that God is looking for on the part of all people?
3. How have you responded to Jesus?
4. What will it mean for Him to be the object of your faith?

Study 2: Repentance

*Entering the kingdom of God begins with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Jesus said that He came that we might have an abundant life (John 10:10). The Bible teaches that we are born sinful, cut off from God. Jesus Christ died to pay for that sin and rose from the dead in order to continue a living relationship with those who will come to Him by faith. The abundant life consists of living in relationship with our Lord and God. The first step in entering the kingdom of God is **repentance**. In Acts 2:38, Peter gives this as the first instruction to those who were “pierced to the heart.”*

This study will look at the conversion of the apostle Paul as he entered the kingdom of God.

Read Acts 9:1-30.

1. What was Saul's (the apostle Paul's original name) life like before he became a follower of Jesus?
2. In what ways did his life change?
3. What caused the change?
4. One of the first signs that a person has truly met Jesus is repentance—a realization that one has missed the mark and not lived as God would have wanted him to. What is the evidence that Paul repented of his sin?

Conclusion

1. What are the evidences that you have repented of your sin?
2. Once a person has entered into the kingdom of God, he begins a new life, which will be progressive, involving daily, ongoing repentance as God reveals things which are not pleasing to Him. When we sin, we are to confess our sins (1 John 1:9). Have a time of confession for particular sins which might be getting in the way of your relationship with the Lord.

Study 3: Baptism

When a person comes to Christ they are called to turn from their old way of life (in the kingdom of this world) to a new way of life (in the kingdom of God). Repentance involves turning away from the old (Acts 2:38,40), whereas baptism involves embracing the new kingdom.

Read Acts 2:36-41.

1. How did these new followers of Jesus seal their commitment?
2. Look at these other passages—Acts 8:12; 9:18; 10:48.
Was baptism the norm for those who desired to follow Jesus? Who was being baptized?
3. Baptism is the outward sign of initiation into the kingdom of God. How does baptism serve as a good picture to identify us with Christ? Read Romans 6:3-5.
4. How does baptism identify us with other members of His kingdom? Read Acts 2:41.
To who were the first believers added? When were they added?

Conclusion

1. How important is baptism to being obedient to God? To a growing faith?
2. Should you be added? To whom should you be added?

Study 4: Growing Together

The new believers were added to what became known as the church. This study will focus on what a church is. There is much misunderstanding about what a church is because of the traditions in which we have been raised in a “Christian” society, so we encourage you to approach this with an open mind.

Read Acts 2:41-47.

1. What were the activities of the early church as seen in these verses?
2. How could these things help you in your faithful walk with the Lord?
3. How important is meeting together with other believers? Read Hebrews 10:23-25.

Read Ephesians 4:11-16.

1. How do Christians grow?
2. What would be the consequence of neglecting or ignoring the ministry of gifted Christian leaders?
3. How would you define membership in the church? Read also Acts 2:41.
4. What are the benefits of having leadership to coordinate and oversee the activities of the body? Also read Hebrews 13:17 and Acts 20:28-29.

Conclusion

1. How important are other members in the church to your growth?
2. How important could your involvement in the church be to others?

Study 5: Church Life— Corporate Worship & the Lord's Supper

Worship: Worship is a basic need for every person. God seeks those who will worship Him. This demonstrates our love and devotion to Him.

A. Worship

Read John 4:20-24.

1. What constitutes true worship to God?
2. What does it mean to worship in Spirit? In truth?
3. Worship ought to occur in private all week long and then corporately as we meet together with the rest of the church. Read Acts 2:42-47. What elements of corporate worship do you see in these verses?
4. What did people do in the assembly meetings of the early church? Read 1 Corinthians 14:26.

B. The Lord's Supper

Read Acts 2:42, Luke 22:19-20, and 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

An important part of corporate worship is the Lord's Supper.

1. What are the purposes for coming together at the Lord's Supper?
2. What do followers of Christ need to watch out for as they assemble together?
3. In what ways is the Lord's Supper important to the life of the church?

Conclusion

1. What part do you need to take in healthy meetings of the body of Christ?
2. How would you prepare yourself to participate in the Lord's Supper?

Study 6: The Word of God

It was important to the early church to learn the teachings of Christ. It was essential for the spiritual growth of every Christian. God's Word is alive and powerful (see Hebrews 4:12).

Read Acts 2:42 and John 8:31-36.

1. As a follower of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit will give you a hunger for God's Word. How is the apostles' teaching mentioned in Acts 2:42?
2. What is the difference between reading the Word and "holding to the truth" (as one version translated John 8:31), or being "devoted" to the teachings (Acts 2:42)? How did it affect their lives?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and Romans 12:1-2.

1. What is God's plan for our lives?
2. What tool is He going to use? What is our responsibility?

Conclusion

1. What are some ways you could read the Bible so that it brings about changes in your life?
2. Do you have a regular plan of daily Bible study? If not, may we suggest studying one book at a time? Set up a regular time and place where you can take about 10-15 minutes to read and pray each day. (Start with the New Testament and become familiar with this before you begin studying the Old Testament.)

The Fellowship of Church Planters has a 30-day study guide through the book of Philippians which could be used as a starting point in learning how to read the Bible in a way that leads to transformation of life. To download this study guide go to www.dickcoggins.com.

