

FAST-TRACK GUIDE

Welcome to week 5 and 6 of Fast-Track! We trust that the first 4 weeks have been life-giving and challenging to you as a disciple of Christ. The call to “come and follow Jesus” is radical and all-consuming and it should be the pursuit of our lives to do just that. The next four weeks will make clearer how Christ has made it possible for us to follow him through salvation, and then how it provides for us in our following of him through our union with Him, the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. All these sessions should lead to great discussion and conversation but ultimately we are praying that it will lead to much life-change as we step out in faith in this journey.

To get the most out of this course we ask you to do (and ask your group to do) 3 things:

- 1. Make every effort to attend all ten weeks**
-each week builds upon itself
- 2. Bring your bible and a notepad and pen**
-come to engage with the scriptures and to write down observations, thoughts and questions as you go
- 3. Do the take-home work and application points**
-faith is a muscle and it can only grow when it is worked and stretched.

5 Ways to contribute more to your group

1. Be transparent.

Life-groups are only transformational when people can be real and authentic with one another, especially about their struggles.

In your life-group meetings, consider giving the gift of going second to others

“When you go first, you give everyone in your church or your community or your small group or your blog, the gift of going second .It's so much harder to be first. No one knows what's off limits yet and you're setting the boundaries with your

words. You're throwing yourself on the honesty grenade and taking whatever fall out that comes with it. Going second is so much easier. And the ease only grows exponentially as people continue to share.

Being willing to be the first to answer a question or share your "ugly side" with the people in your life-group gives them permission to be real — good, bad or ugly. Go ahead, be the first.

2. Pay attention.

It's easy for your mind to wander to the stresses of the day or all you have to do the next day while you are at life-group. Why not take a notebook to your group each week and write down people's prayer requests as well as things that are highlighted to you as everyone discusses.

People are more willing to share when they know someone is truly paying attention.

3. Hang out together outside of life-group

If this isn't your group's strong suit, you may need to be the one to invite people over for a meal or arrange to go play mini-golf together. You may also want to take the initiative to get to know some of your group members individually by meeting for coffee. Why not also look out for each other at church each week on a Sunday?

4. Remember it's not about you

We may join a life-group for personal reasons and desires, but the ultimate purpose just might not have anything to do with our spiritual goals or purposes.

Small group life is genuinely more about others than it is about self. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's quote from his classic book *Life Together* says '*The Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged...The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother.*'

5. Go

At some point you will feel completely exhausted the night your group meets. Go anyway.

You will also likely have the greatest last-minute opportunity arise on that night. Go anyway.

Additionally, the finale of your favorite TV show will, you guessed it, be on that night. Go anyway.

You will only get as much out of your small group as you put into it. Making your life-group a priority allows you to truly invest in community. Plus, you honor fellow members by valuing them enough to show up ... every time.

WEEK 5

SIN AND SALVATION (NOTES TO WORK THROUGH IN THE SESSION)

Hebrews.2:1-4

The writer to the Hebrews is reminding us today, of the importance of the message of _____, and that we must not _____ it, as it represents the alternative is an eternal destination without God.

Part One

Understanding Salvation Correctly

Adam and Eve's first disobedience is called _____ sin.

What this means is that _____ born after their act of rebellion, is born _____ sin, or _____ sin.

Ephesians 2:1-3 "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 of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath"

Because of our sin nature:

1. We are _____ (verse 1)
2. We are _____ (verse 2)
3. We are _____ (verse 3)

Our first death is our _____ death

Our second death is our _____ death, if we die without Christ

The Good News

God's plan, from the very beginning, was that He would not leave His creation in that sinful state. He put in place a plan of restoration for all who would accept

His offer of salvation. God moved first to begin to bring restoration to his creation.

Ephesians.2:4-5/8-9 *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.”*

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.”

How does God make us alive?

In order for sin to be dealt with, a _____ had to be made. And that sacrifice had to include the shedding of _____, to pay the price for our sins. Jesus became the perfect and final sacrifice for us, if we repent of our sin and receive His forgiveness and Grace.

Jesus was able to pay for the sins of the whole world and be the perfect sacrifice because:

1. Jesus was born _____
- Jesus was conceived by the _____, and not by human conception. This meant that the original sin was not passed on to Jesus when He was born, and He was born without sin.

-2 Corinthians.5:21

2. Jesus lived a life of perfect _____
-He never sinned in thought, in word or in action.

-1 Peter.2:22

-Philippians.2:8

-Hebrews.5:8

Part Two

How do we respond to God’s Offer of Salvation?

1. _____ for sin

-Mark.1:14-15

-To repent is to literally do a _____ degree turn from one way of living (our old life), to another (our new life in Christ).

2. To _____ and have faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord

-Romans.10:9

3. To _____ out our new life in _____

-John.14:15

-Romans.6:5-8

-Luke.3:8

Four biblical words to help bring understanding to salvation:

1. Atonement

-Rom.3:25

So atonement has two meanings, one being _____, and the other meaning that God's anger towards sin is _____. Jesus atoned for our sins, and in this way, we are forgiven.

2. Propitiation

-1.John.4:10

-Jesus carries the _____ weight of God's anger and turns it to _____

3. Reconciliation

-2.Corinthians.5:17-19

In the process of salvation, our relationship with God is restored, and we are _____ to God. In the same way, we should then tell others so that they can also be reconciled to God, and in that way, we become _____ of reconciliation.

4. Redemption

-Ephesians.1:7

-To redeem means to _____ something _____

-Jesus bought us back for Himself, at the price of His _____ on the cross.

John 14:1 "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

-Salvation gives us a reason to have _____ for tomorrow,
and gives us a reason to _____ for today to bring others to a
saving knowledge of Jesus Christ

WEEK ONE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions and Applications:

Read

Read Ephesians.2:1-10 together

Discuss

*What does it mean to be dead, disobedient and doomed without Christ?

-Do we truly believe that without Christ we are in this terrible state?

-Do we truly believe that our family and friends who are not in Christ are in this terrible state?

-If this is true, how should this determine Christians to live?

*According to this Ephesians passage, when did Christ make us alive to him?

-What does it mean to be saved by grace through faith?

*The word "repentance" has a number of connotations in people's minds.

-What have you grown up believing that repentance was?

-What makes up repentance? (confession, turning, heart-change, submitting to God)

-Is repentance a one-time thing or an on-going life-style?

*In Romans.10:9 it says, "If we confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord, you will be saved"

-Why do you think the writer emphasised the mouth and the heart in relation to salvation in this scripture?

-We often emphasize Jesus as Saviour but this scripture calls us to acknowledge Jesus as Lord. Why do you think that is? ("If Jesus is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all")

*In John.14:15 it says, "If you love me, you will keep my commands"

-what do you think Jesus was meaning when he said this?

-What is the difference between "you will keep my commands if you love me" and "if you love me, you will keep my commands"?

*In Luke.3:8 it says, "Produce faith in keeping with repentance"

-how do we produce fruit?

-what fruit is the writer talking about here?

*Which of the four words (Atonement, Propitiation, Reconciliation, Redemption) leaps in your heart the most? Why?

Application Questions (to be answered before you finish):

Why is The Good News good news to me?

How can I more live with Jesus as my Lord this week?

What fruits of repentance can I ask the Holy Spirit to help me produce this week?

TAKE HOME APPLICATION POINTS:

Week Five

GOAL= Resist the drift (#ResistTheDrift)

It is human nature to take the foot off the pedal and slip into neutral after any length of time in doing something. In order not to just go through the motions and drift as we get to the halfway stage of Fast-Track, make it a priority to put your heart in gear as we resist the drift together as a community on this mission.

HELPFUL TIPS TO ACHIEVE THIS GOAL THIS WEEK=

- Set your alarm for 30 minutes earlier than your usual wake up time (and refuse the snooze!)
- Get a cup of tea/coffee, your bible and your notepad and pen. Find a comfortable (but not put-you-back-to-sleep comfortable) chair.
- Before you read anything, close your eyes and ask the Holy Spirit to help you stay awake, keep you focused and most importantly to help you encounter Jesus as you read and pray.
- Read the prescribed scripture for the day (see bible reading plan at back of this booklet).
- Use the REAP method (Read, Examine, Apply and Pray)
 - Look for context (see your guide notes for extra help with this)
 - Look for Jesus (see your guide notes for extra help with this)
 - Look for application (see your guide notes for extra help with this)
- Step out in boldness with each practical application and don't shrug them off as optional extras. Embrace the Nike philosophy and "just do it!"

Day Twenty-Nine

Read - Psalm.29 and Romans.3:9-31

Watch - The Bible Project: Letter to the Romans Ch. 1-4

Apply -

In Romans.3:9-31 underline all the absolute terms speaking of us as humans (e.g. no one, everyone etc.)

-Verse.23-24 of this passage are a succinct mini description of God and his saving work of us. Why not memorize these two verses and meditate on them today?

-In verse 24 we read of God acting with undeserved kindness towards us. Make a decision to act towards someone today with undeserved kindness. In doing so, you are behaving like God does towards us.

Day Thirty

Read - Psalm.30 and Romans.5:12-21

Watch – The Bible Project: Letter to the Romans Ch.5-16

Apply –

In verse.18-19 of the passage in Romans, we see the power of one sin as well as the power of one act of righteousness.

-Often we disqualify ourselves from being the change we want to see in the world because we feel that the problem is so big and that what we could do would be so small and insignificant.

-In light of verse.18-19, write down what one act of righteousness you could do today (towards your spouse, your family, your colleagues, your neighbour, a person in need) that you can entrust to God to multiply the effect. (e.g. write an apology note, give something away, speak with honour to your boss, spend time with someone who is lonely etc)

Day Thirty-One

Read - Psalm.31 and Mark.6:45-56

Compare – After reading Mark.6:45-56 flick back to Mark.4:35-41 which is another story of a storm. Write down the similarities and differences of these two storms

Apply –

-In the Mark passage we see the disciples struggling to recognize Jesus (“thinking he was a ghost”) while the crowds immediately realised who He was once they landed on the shore

-What situations in your life lead you to lose focus on Jesus? (for the disciples it was in their moments of fear)

-Often we aren’t able to recognize Jesus in those situations because our hearts have become conditioned to trusting our own strength at those times (the disciples hearts had become “hardened”)

-Write out a prayer inviting Jesus into those spaces and situations where your heart leans into it’s own strength rather than the Lord’s

Day Thirty-Two

Read - Psalm.32 and Mark.7:1-23

Take note – In Mark.7:1-23 you will notice some scriptures have an asterisk (*) after them. Follow that asterisk to the bottom of the page and find the scriptures that Jesus was referring to as he spoke. Look them up and underline them.

Apply –

Psalm.32 speaks about the joy in having your sin forgiven before making the connection to the act of confession.

-In following Christ we are called to not just say the right things but to actually follow up our words with obedience.

-How would you describe a hypocrite?

-Confess to God where you have been acting hypocritically and receive his forgiveness today.

Day Thirty-Three

Read - Psalm.33 and Mark.7:24-37

Worship – Psalm.33 opens with a burst of praise and a call to join in. Spend 10 minutes this morning singing praise to Jesus. Either YouTube a worship song you know or just sing out a new song that comes from your heart.

Apply –

In these passages in Mark we find Jesus performing miraculous healings.

-Jesus told us in the Gospel that we would do “even greater things”

-Part of our mandate as a follower of Christ is to pray for the sick and to see them get healed.

-What would you say disqualifies you from praying for people who are sick?

-Step out in faith and pray for someone who is sick today. It’s not you who makes them better, your job is just to pray and then watch what God can do.

Day Thirty-Four

Read - Psalm.34 and Ephesians.2:1-10

Take Note – Psalm.34 was written by David after he had pretended to be insane in front of Abimelech. Read the backstory in 1.Samuel.21

Apply –

-Read Ephesians.2:1-10 slowly and then a second time read it out loud.

-The purpose of this passage is to make us 100% convinced that our salvation was a work done totally by Jesus. We did not contribute anything to our salvation except our sin.

-Verse 1-3 paints a very terrible picture of what we once were before verse 4 declares, "BUT GOD".

-With this as our starting point in faith, what situation, challenge or sin-habit are you facing at the moment that looks terrible that you can declare BUT GOD over it in prayer?

Day Thirty-Five

Read – Psalm.35 and Ephesians.2:11-21

Take Note – In Ephesians.2:11-21 take note of all the language that refers to Israel, Jews and Gentiles. In this passage, the writer to the Ephesians is wanting them to know that our salvation goes deeper than just a nationalistic reality, and that in fact Christ has brought every race and people group into one new man in Himself because of His work on the cross.

Apply –

-If this is true, then our salvation is not just God making us right with himself but in the same breath calling us to live without prejudice and exclusivity in our hearts towards people who are different than us.

-In South Africa, we are needing the Gospel to break into the hearts of men and women afresh, as this alone holds the key to bring freedom to the racism that lies deep within each of us.

-In light of this, what is the most dangerous prayer you can pray for your own battle with racism, and that you can pray blessing and thanking God for people from a race different than yours?

-Finally, what practical step can you take today to "bridge the divide" between you and someone from another race that you normally wouldn't engage with?

WEEK SIX

OUR UNION WITH CHRIST (NOTES TO BE USED IN THE SESSION)

We have not just been set _____ by Christ on the cross, we have also now been _____ to Him.

Ephesians.2:12-13

*“You lived in this world without God and without hope. ¹³ **But now** you have been united with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought near to him through the blood of Christ.”*

The Doctrine of Union

“If we are to understand justification correctly, union with Christ has the highest degree of importance” John Calvin

“Union with Christ is the _____ of the whole doctrine of salvation, it’s not simply a phase of the application of redemption, it underlies every aspect of redemption” John Murray

“Once you have your eyes opened to this concept of Union with Christ, you will find it almost _____ in the New Testament” Anthony Hoekema

“This doctrine is the _____ which unites the spokes of _____ and keeps them in proper perspective” Michael Horton

What you _____ leads to how you _____

We can understand our union with Christ in Four Ways:

1. We are _____ Christ

-all through the Old Testament God showed the Israelite nation and individuals that He was not a God far off but was with them (cloud by day, pillar by night)

(tabernacle) (temple)

-“Shekinah” glory = God is my _____

-“Immanuel” God with us = God is my _____

(“I will never leave you nor forsake you”/ “I will be with you even to the very end”)

-Holy Spirit called the “parakletos” (GK) = the one who comes along side (raised with Christ) / -Together, connected,

2. We are made _____ Christ

-been given the mind of Christ

-been given His very nature

-renewing of our thinking to come in line with your new nature

-“The old has gone the **new** has come, I am a new creation”

(2.Corinthians.5:17)

-not just an upgrade, but brand spanking new!

3. We are _____ Christ

(store illustration)

4. Christ is _____ us

KABOD (Kavod) (weighty, heavy, substance of God)

Colossians.1:20

“Christ in you the _____ of

_____”

WEEK ONE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Questions and Applications

Read Ephesians.2:12 and 13 together

*Do you tend to often dwell more on “but I was” (your past) or “but I will be” (your potential future)?

*What does it mean when we say “what you believe leads to how you behave”?
-does this ring true in your life?
-what would be a negative and positive example of this?

*What is the difference between having God as your neighbour and having God as your resident?

*What could be the potential differences between a Christian who lives with God just as their neighbour versus one who lives knowing that God is their resident? (what would that person look like?)

*Do you truly believe that God never leaves you?
-what about when you sin?
-what about when you lose your temper?

*How can we walk in a greater realisation that Christ is with us?

Read 2.Corinthians.5:17

*What does it mean that we have been given a new nature?
-how do we get this new nature?

*What does it mean when we read in scripture that we have died with Christ?

*What other scriptures can you think of that point to us having a new nature in Christ?

*How would you describe the difference between being in Christ and having Christ in you?

*How would these realities of our union with Christ change the way we live?

Extra Questions (if time permitting)

*From Romans.8:1-2, what does it mean to be in Christ Jesus? What benefits are there for those who are found in him? Can you see more than one?

*Look at 1.Corinthians.1:30, Colossians.2:12, Galatians.2:20, Ephesians.2:8 , and Romans.6:17. What else do you learn about the phrase, “in Christ Jesus”? Read Romans.6:3-5. What role does baptism play in our being found in Christ Jesus?

Close

Read Romans.8:1-39 out loud together and then close in prayer by thanking God for our union with Him and the fact that now nothing can separate us from Him!

Application Questions (to be answered before you finish):

What truth about God and myself have I struggled to believe in the past that I am now going to fully embrace?

How will I let the truth that Christ is always with me affect how I live this week?

TAKE HOME APPLICATION POINTS

Week Six

GOAL= Resist the drift (#ResistTheDrift)

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Day Thirty-Six

Read-Psalm.36 and Ephesians.3:1-21

Take Note – In chapter 3 of Ephesians, we find that Paul (the writer of this letter) is declaring that the mystery of the ages is The Gospel and that the church is the vehicle to make it known.

Apply –

- Many people love the Gospel but struggle to love the church, and some people love the church but struggle to fully believe the Gospel. What side of the coin do you find yourself leaning more towards?
- Ask God to flood your heart with a deeper love for The Gospel and His church.

-If the church is not a building but rather the people of God, then how can you (as the church) carry The Gospel more effectively to those you meet today who have not embraced either a love for Jesus or a love for His church yet?

Day Thirty-Seven

Read - Psalm.37 and Philippians.1:1-11

Take Note – Psalm.37 is a classic and one that demands much careful attention and study. David wrote this Psalm at an old age and answers the question, “what to do when the bad guys win”

Apply –

-C. S. Lewis says, God in the Psalms is the “all-satisfying Object.” and Psalm.37:4 calls us to “delight ourselves in the Lord”. What does this mean to you?

-Oprah put forward that this was her favourite bible verse. Pastor and writer John Piper responded to her take on this verse in this short article. Read it by putting in this address into your web browser (desiringgod.org/interviews/is-oprah-right-on-psalm-37-4)

Day Thirty-Eight

Read – Psalm.38 and Philippians.1:12-30

Take Note – The book of Philippians was written by Paul while he was in prison. When he founded the church years before (which you can read about in Acts.16) he was also thrown in prison. It’s a letter about joy, humility, The Gospel and contentment, and it was all written from a man who was very familiar with a jail cell.

Apply –

-Underline every-time you see the words “joy”, “rejoice”, “The Gospel” and “The Good News” in this passage in Philippians.

-Paul’s joy was obviously not from his current natural circumstances but rather his confidence in his position in Christ because of The Gospel

-Study this passage as a recipe for true joy

-What can you do today that will fuel your joy in God?

Day Thirty-Nine

Read - Psalm.39 and Philippians.2:1-11

Take Note – This portion in Philippians.2 is so beautiful as it describes Christ giving up his position and taking up our nature so that we would have His nature. It is a practical call to copy Christ's example of humility but also a grand description of Jesus as our King who invited us into union with Him! Christ is our example and our substitute!

Apply –

- How can you take on the nature of a servant today and serve your family in a way that would surprise them?
- How can you exercise an attitude of humility and serving in a greater way in your community gathering this morning?
- Thank God that you don't have to serve in order to become united with Him, but rather can serve because you are already united with Him.

Day Forty

Read - Psalm.40 and Philippians.2:12-30

Watch – The world famous band U2 wrote a song out of Psalm.40 called "40". Why don't you take a watch and listen to this song as you read Psalm.40? (search U2 40 on YouTube)

Apply -

- In week one of Fast-Track we learnt how important context is when reading the bible.
- In Philippians.2:12-13 we find a verse than needs to be read with its surrounding verses to make sure we get the correct understanding
- Verse 12 calls us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" which is an obvious call to continue pursuing Christ and producing fruits in keeping with repentance
- But as you keep reading you will find verse 13 gives us the clue to how we are to work out our salvation. ("God IN YOU giving you the DESIRE and the POWER to do what pleases Him")
- What does verse 12 and 13 mean to you? How can you obey this?
- And most importantly, how do you reconcile this verse with knowing our union with Christ Jesus?

Day Forty-One

Read - Psalm.41 and Mark.8:1-21

Compare – In the beginning of Mark.8 we find Jesus feeding 4000. Flick back to Mark.6:30-45 and compare and contrast this occasion with the feeding of the 5000.

Apply –

- There's a lot of talk of bread and food in today's reading in Mark.
- We know that Jesus called himself "the bread of life" and was always calling people away from just mere natural hunger and to a spiritual hunger, but we see here that he didn't despise people's natural hunger though. He still actually fed.
- Search for scriptures that talk about our call as disciples/followers/apprentices/students of Jesus is to literally feed the hungry and write them down
- Prepare a container of food that you can take with you to work/school today that you can give away to someone who is hungry and in need.
- Why don't you also plan to give up one of your Saturday's in the future and join the Site 5 Dunoon Soup Kitchen team as they go in and put feet to their faith in this regard of feeding the hungry? (They meet every second Saturday at Life Changers Tableview at 8am for lifts, and are back by 10am)

Day Forty-Two

Read - Psalm.42 and Mark.8:22-38

Worship – Fuel your desire for Jesus by spending 10 minutes in worship of Him as you read Psalm.42 this morning. Listen to "No longer Slaves" by Jonathan David Helser on YouTube as you lean into Jesus this morning

Apply –

- We are exactly halfway through the book of Mark and we have the end in sight.
- It's here that we are given a strong reminder of Jesus' initial call to come follow him as He asks Peter "Who do YOU say I am?"
- Write out a brief paragraph of who Jesus is to you at this moment (stay away from the easy Christian answer, and rather pour out your heart)
- As you closely study Mark.8:34-38, hear Jesus calling you to the continually fresh pursuit of being His disciple/student/apprentice/follower.
- Examine your heart and ask the question afresh, "How closely am I following Jesus?"