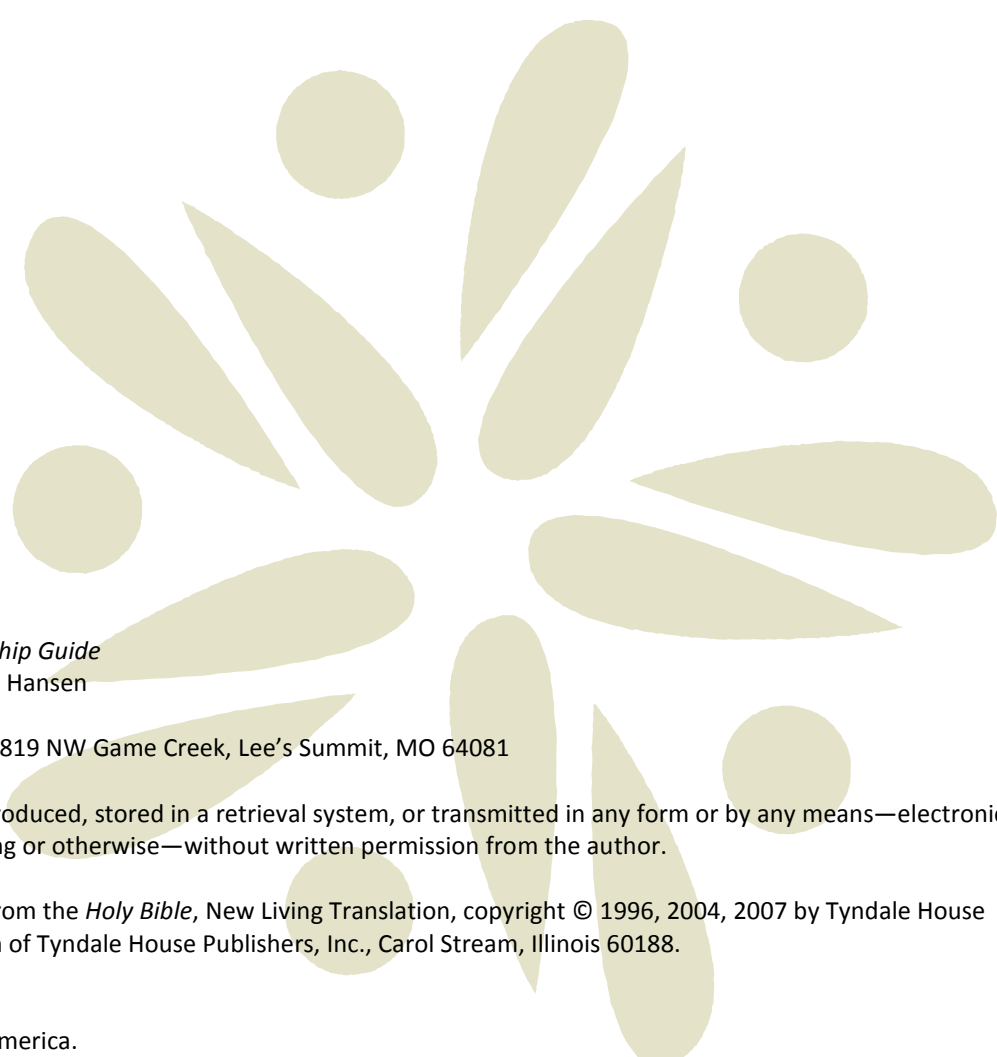


becoming like Christ

A Discipleship Guide

by Matt Hansen





Becoming Like Christ: A Discipleship Guide
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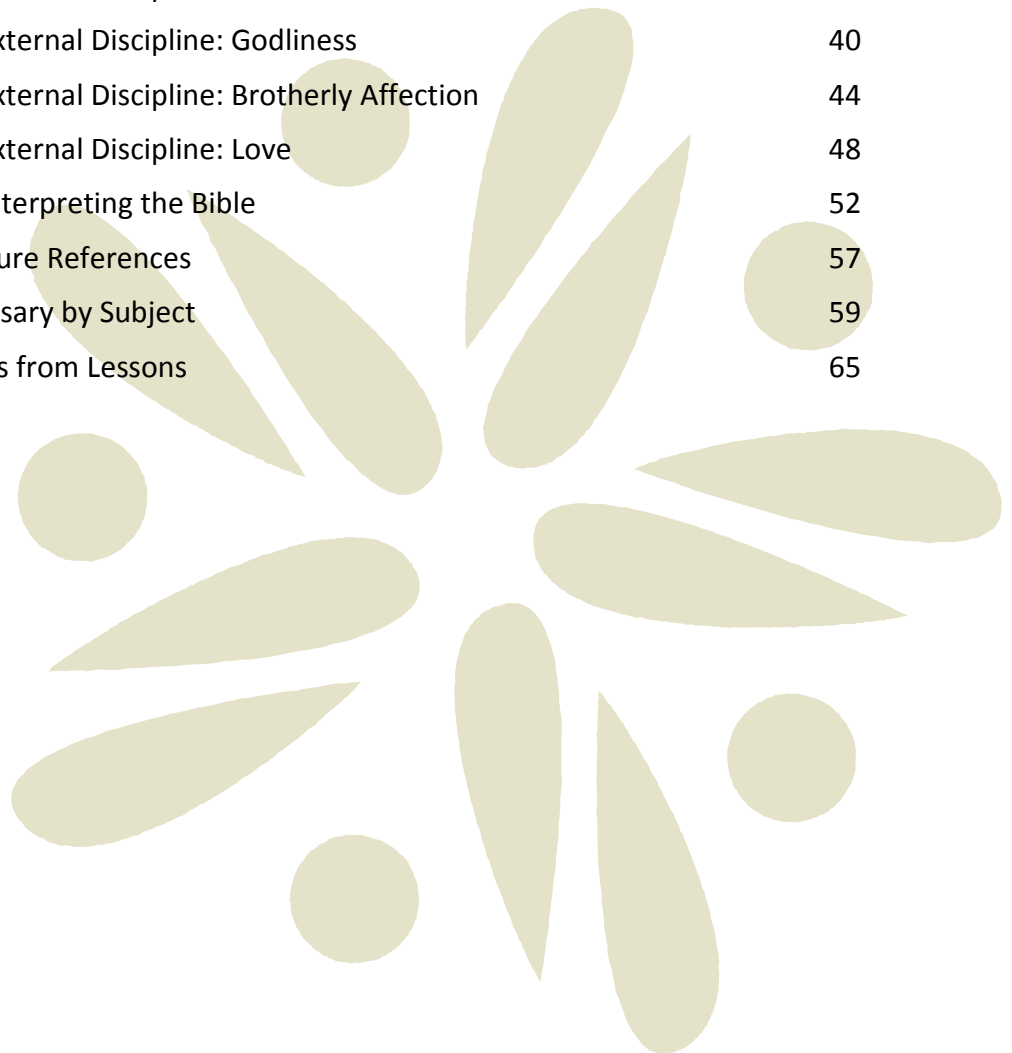
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How To Use This Discipleship Guide

What is the purpose of this Discipleship Guide?

To become like Christ. This guide was written to help new and mature Christian believers become like Christ themselves so that they may likewise disciple others to become like Christ.



“So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect in their relationship to Christ.” (Colossians 1:28)

To support the central theme of becoming like Christ, the key scripture on which the entire Discipleship Guide is founded is 2 Peter 1:3—11. It describes eight disciplines for every Christian believer to help them “share in His divine nature” (v. 4); as we follow these disciplines diligently (v. 10), He promises that He will empower us (v. 3—4) to ensure we remain “productive and useful” (v. 8) and “never fall away” (v. 10).

What is the format for each discipleship lesson?

The content for each lesson is designed to fill about one hour of discussion. Naturally, more time can be used to expound on the subject, answer questions, or to especially connect with each other on a more personal level.

Each lesson begins with one introductory page followed by three pages of lesson content. The introductory page for each lesson includes:

- A brief summary with key points
- Inspiring hymn lyrics that are relevant to the lesson
- A Bible reading homework for that lesson
- A progress meter illustrating how far along you are in the Discipleship Guide (example shown at right)



What do the symbols mean throughout the guide?



A quoted passage of scripture. All scriptures come from the New Living Translation (NLT).

Even though the passages are written in the guide for convenience, you’re encouraged to also look them up in your own Bible.



Discussion questions that pertain to the immediate subject. Please take plenty of time to carefully review these and treat them as opportunities to grow and connect with the one being discipled.



Homework to dig deeper. The homework is designed to encourage daily Bible reading. It would be more effective if the person leading the discipleship also does the same homework and then use the questions as opening discussion during the next lesson.



Answers for the fill-in-the-blanks throughout the lesson. The numbers correspond to the numbers by the blanks. Key words were selected for these answers to help reinforce certain concepts and points from the lesson. Please use these as opportunities to expound on the subject matter with the one being discipled.



An excerpt from a Christian hymn that is relevant to the current topic. Hymns reflect the rich Christian heritage of the Church. They generally convey deep theological concepts into simple, yet powerful poetry that have served the Church for hundreds of years.

A Message for the Discipleship Leader

If this is your first time leading discipleship, then congratulations! This can be a rewarding experience. As well, even though you are the one leading the discipleship, no doubt you may find yourself to be the one growing in your Christian walk.

Suggested Schedule for All Discipleship Lessons

Believe it or not, the goal is not to complete this Discipleship Guide. The goal is to build a trusting relationship that will help encourage the one being discipled into a long and deep journey of becoming like Christ. For example, when a father teaches his daughter to ride a bike, he could provide all the necessary instructions about balance, speed and steering. But she will not fully learn and apply it until her father runs alongside, holds and steers the bike steadily, and gives positive encouragement until she can ride independently. Likewise, discipleship means running alongside a younger believer until he or she can confidently continue on the Christian journey themselves.

This Discipleship Guide has twelve lessons with each lesson designed to cover at least one hour of discussion. With twelve lessons, the discipleship plan could simply involve meeting for twelve weeks to discuss each lesson. It is recommended that only one lesson be discussed at a time so that the content won't become overwhelming, but instead be thoughtfully contemplated until you meet again.

Please don't feel limited to twelve weeks. A good start could be to spend the first few weeks getting to know each other by sharing each other's testimony and experiences. You could also do light homework such as reading a chapter a day from the book of John and discussing later what you've learned.

Suggested Plan for Each Discipleship Lesson

Here are some suggestions of how you may lead each session in order to help build a relationship:

- Begin and end your session in prayer; include any special needs he or she may have
- Discuss personal events that happened since prior meeting (e.g., family, friends, work, church, etc.)
- Discuss the Bible reading homework from the prior week
- Talk through the lesson together:
 - Fill in the blanks; use these as key opportunities to go into deeper discussion
 - Look up each passage in the Bible even though most are already written out
 - Answer the discussion questions; start by sharing your own answers and experiences
- Plan for the next meeting and Bible reading homework during the week

What if they ask a question I can't answer?

You're not expected to have all the answers. This guide is designed to equip you in the basic essentials of Christianity. If you don't have an answer, then let it be a challenge for each of you to find the answer and discuss it next time.

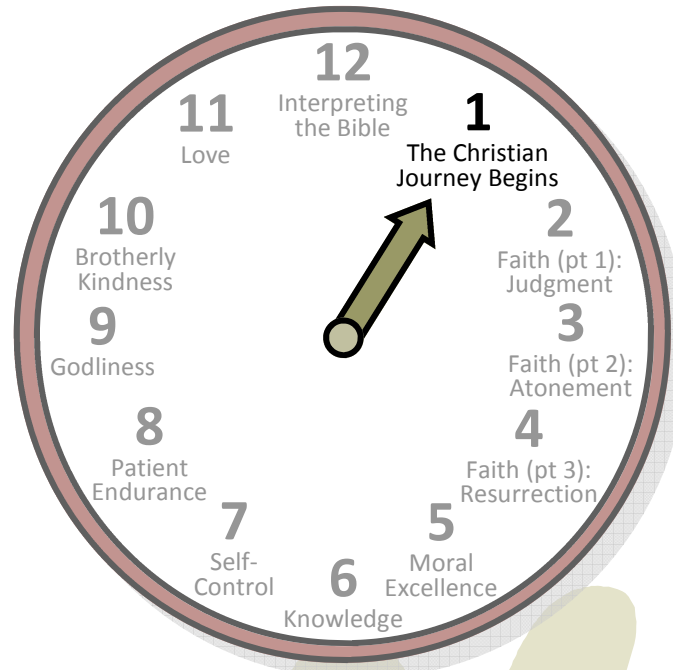
How can I teach others to become like Christ when I have difficulty with it myself?

It's good to question your "qualifications" to disciple others! We need to humbly be aware of our own constant need for Christ in our lives. So, just relax and be open and honest about your own faults. The point is not to appear like a model Christian, but to point others to the perfect model: Christ Himself.

What if we have a hard time staying on track with this Discipleship Guide?

Don't let following this guide get in the way of building a relationship. Let this guide serve as a guideline rather than a rigorous curriculum with a strict deadline. Get to know each other on a personal level first, then use this guide to support your discussion.

Lesson 1: The Christian Journey Begins



Lesson Summary

- A Christian is someone who has a relationship with God by being adopted into His family. This adoption is only possible because Jesus purchased us to be His very own by taking the punishment we deserve.
- Salvation is like a marriage. It starts with a commitment and continues as a life-long process.
- God's purpose for Christians is to become like Jesus Christ; 2 Peter 1:3—11 states that He will empower us to become like Christ when we diligently follow eight disciplines (explained more in this guide).



Bible Reading: *Galatians*

- Minimum Homework: Read the entire book once (1 chapter per day)
- Stretch Goal: Read the entire book twice (2 chapters per day)



Hymn: **My God, Accept My Heart This Day**

(written by Matthew Bridges, 1848)

My God, accept my heart this day, and make it always Thine,
That I from Thee no more may stray, no more from Thee decline.
Before the cross of Him who died, behold, I prostrate fall;
Let every sin be crucified, let Christ be all in all.

Anoint me with Thy heavenly grace, adopt me for Thine own,
That I may see Thy glorious face, and worship at Thy throne.
Let every thought, and work, and word, to Thee be ever given;
Then life shall be Thy service, Lord, and death the gate of Heaven.

Lesson 1: The Christian Journey Begins

What does it mean to be a “Christian”?

A Christian isn't just someone who is a follower of Jesus Christ. It isn't just someone who follows His teachings or has a high respect for Him. Following Jesus as a Christian is like a young boy following after his father – he wants to look like him, talk like him, do what he does, and grow up to be just like him.

Becoming like Christ is more than just asking “_____”¹; Christian acts don't make us Christian. Just as a boy following his father's actions are only meaningful because of their father-son relationship, in the same way our actions are only meaningful when we first have a _____² with Christ by being adopted into God's family.



How would you have defined what a Christian is before reading this? How does this change your view?

How are we adopted into God's family?

We can only come to God through Jesus Christ who said:



“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6)

It's only through Jesus that we can be adopted into God's family:



“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God...you received God's Spirit when He adopted you as His own children. Now we call Him, 'Abba, Father'. For His Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children.” (Romans 8:14-16)

This adoption process occurs when we get “saved” or “born again”. Just as an orphan is rescued or saved from his present circumstance of having no mother or father and is adopted into a new family, Christians are rescued or saved from their circumstance of having no _____³ with God and then being _____⁴ into His family.

The adoption process of salvation for Christians can most simply be described as follows:

- God will judge us for our sins and we cannot save ourselves from this “death sentence”
- Although He was innocent, Jesus willingly suffered the death sentence we deserve
- God will _____⁵ Jesus' death for ours to set us free from our death sentence



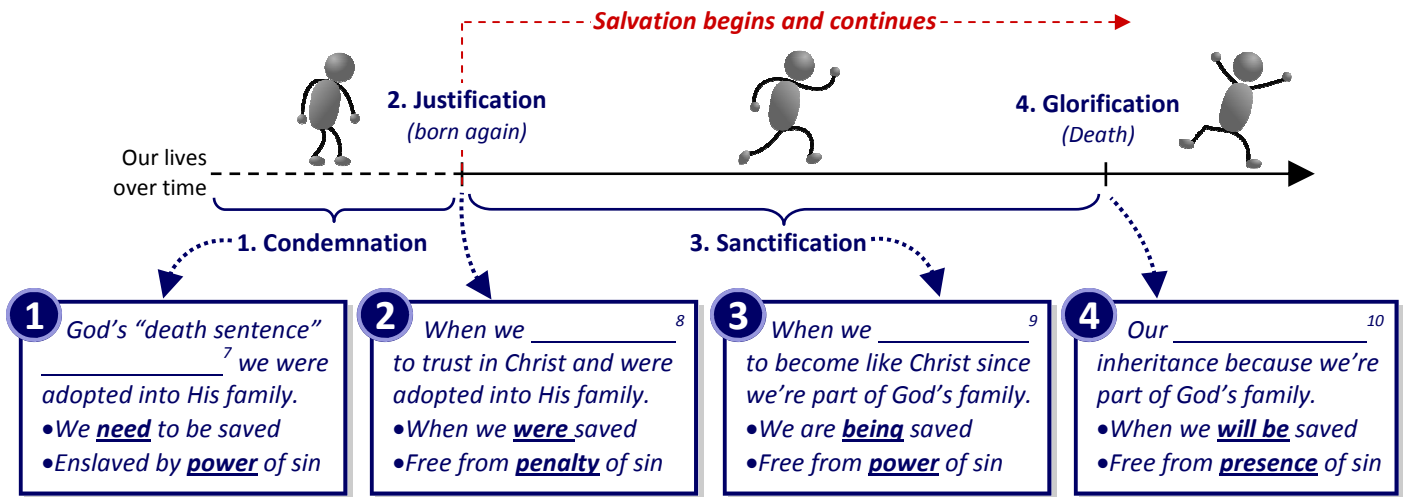
Would you consider yourself to be a part of God's family? Why or why not?

What do I do now that I'm saved and part of God's family?

The process of salvation is only the beginning. It's like the wedding day for newlyweds – it's a wonderful time of joy and celebration, but it's only the beginning of a journey they promise to share until death. For Christians, the “wedding day” is called _____⁶ – the moment our Christian journey begins. But what happens after that?

Lesson 1: The Christian Journey Begins (continued)

The salvation process through the life of a Christian can be summarized by the following four steps:



If you consider yourself to be a Christian (a part of God's family and trusting in Him for salvation), then you are now living in the _____¹¹ process where you are becoming like Christ.

How do I become like Christ?

If Jesus is perfect and never sinned, then how can God ever expect us to be like Him? The answer is that we can't – not in our own strength, that is. We can never become like Christ until we first understand that it's impossible for us to be like Him by our own effort. Even so, the wonderful part of this sanctification process is that Jesus gives us the _____¹² to become like Him.



"By His divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life...He has given us great and precious promises...that enable you to share His divine nature..." (2 Peter 1:3-4)



"For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him." (Philippians 2:13)

So our Christian journey _____¹³ with faith in Christ where we are _____¹⁴ by Christ to reach a _____¹⁵ of becoming like Christ. It begins, ends, is always about, and is always for Christ!

What does God promise if I try to become like Christ?

Read 2 Peter 1:3-11. It is a passage that explains how to become like Christ. It also describes that if we are faithful in our pursuit to become like Christ, then God promises the following:

- We will "escape the world's _____¹⁶ caused by human desires" (v 4)
- We will "be more _____¹⁷ ...in [our] knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (v 8)
- We will never be "short-sighted or blind, forgetting [we] have been cleansed from [our] old sins" (v 9)
- We will "never _____¹⁸ away" (v 10)
- We will be given "a grand entrance into the eternal Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (v 11)



Are these promises encouraging for your Christian walk? How have you struggled with these in the past?

Lesson 1: The Christian Journey Begins (continued)

These promises sound great! So what do I do now?

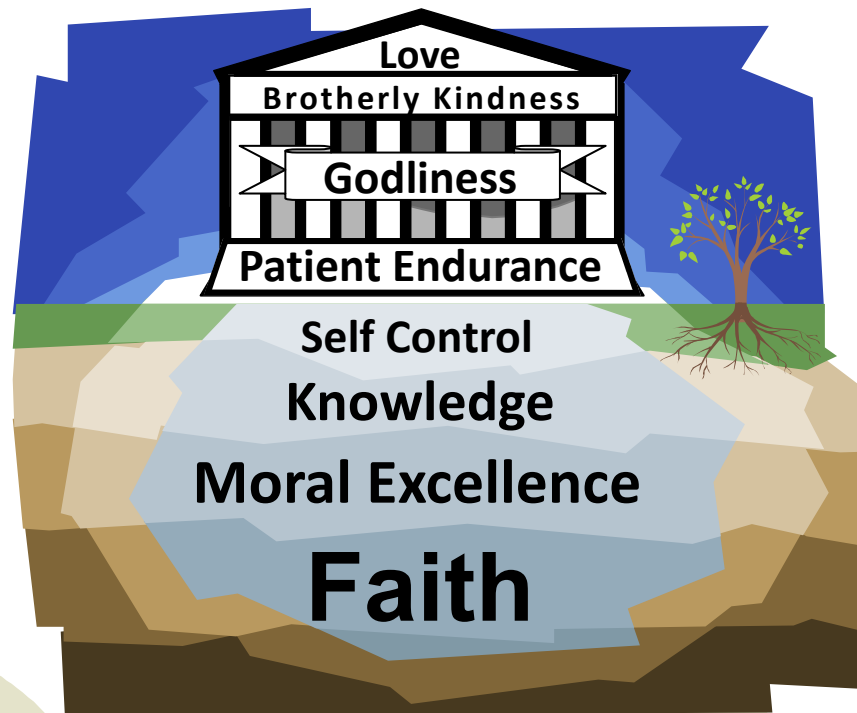
Peter states that we should “make every effort to respond to God’s promises” (v 5). He describes these as eight disciplines, four that are internal disciplines and four that are external disciplines:

External Disciplines:

These are visible by others and should be solidly based on the internal disciplines

Internal Disciplines:

These are generally not visible by others and are like layers of underground bedrock on which the external disciplines are built



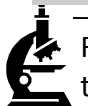
How can I learn more about these disciplines?

This discipleship study will explain these disciplines in greater detail in order to help us become more like Christ. It will begin with faith (the first discipline) by describing the _____¹⁹ of the gospel (judgment, Christ’s atonement and resurrection), and the _____²⁰ and historically traditional views of the Christian beliefs and actions for the remaining disciplines by asking:

- What should *Christians* believe and do about each discipline?
- What did *Jesus* believe and do about each discipline?
- What did *other Christians in Church History* believe and do about each discipline?



Which of the above disciplines do you feel you do well? Which ones do you need to strengthen?



Read the book of Galatians this week – one chapter per day (or as a stretch goal read it two times). What parts stood out to you the most? What unique characteristics about Christ does Paul describe? In what ways does this book help you to become more like Christ?



¹“What would Jesus do?” (WWJD); ²relationship; ³relationship; ⁴adopted; ⁵substitute; ⁶Justification; ⁷before; ⁸began; ⁹grow; ¹⁰future; ¹¹sanctification; ¹²power and ability; ¹³begins; ¹⁴empowered; ¹⁵goal; ¹⁶corruption; ¹⁷productive and useful; ¹⁸fall; ¹⁹essentials; ²⁰biblical

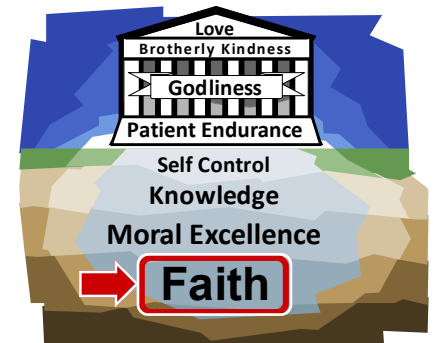
Lesson 2: Faith (part 1 of 3) - Judgment

What is Faith?

Faith is not just what you believe. In the Bible, it's always demonstrated with action (or "works"). Hebrews 11 states what many Christians describe as the "Hall of Faith":



"Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see." (Hebrews 11:1)



Faith is described here as "confidence" and "assurance". But the rest of Hebrews 11 describes the "Heroes of Faith" not just by what they said they believed, but by their _____¹ that proved what they believed. Here are examples of some of those heroes:



Hero of Faith

_____ ² (v 4)
 _____ ³ (v 7)
 _____ ⁴ (v 8 & 17)
 _____ ⁵ (v 28)
 _____ ⁶ (v 30)

How did they prove their faith?

Brought an acceptable offering
 Built a boat
 Left home and sacrificed Isaac
 Kept the Passover
 Marched around Jericho

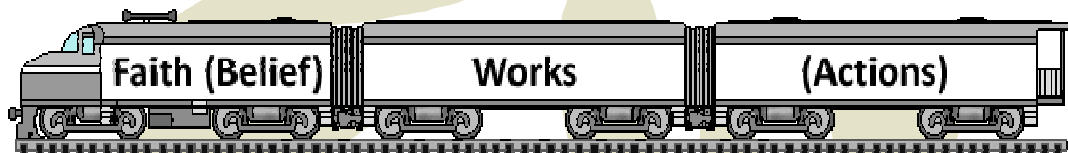
We know that these people had faith because their actions demonstrated their beliefs. Just as no one would normally attempt to skydive if they didn't first believe that the parachute would save their life, in the same way we only take action on what we _____⁷.



"What good is it...if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions? Don't you remember that...Abraham was shown to be right with God by his actions when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see, his faith and his actions worked together. His actions made his faith complete. ...we are shown to be right with God by what we do, not by faith alone." (James 2:14, 21-22, 24)

Beliefs = Actions

As an example, a train consists of both a locomotive and the railcars it pulls. The railcars without the locomotive go nowhere, and the locomotive without the railcars has no purpose.



In the same way, our beliefs and actions are inseparable, but our beliefs always _____⁸ (or give direction to) our actions (just like a locomotive). So it all starts with what we believe.

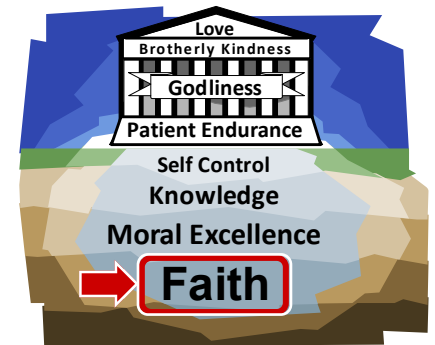


If your friends and family were to only look at your actions, what would they think you believe? What actions should you change to be consistent with your beliefs?

Lesson 3: Faith (part 2 of 3) - Atonement

What is Atonement?

It's simply restoring something that's broken, such as repaying a debt, making a restitution for something wrong, or making amends. We learned in Lesson 2 how from a Christian perspective, we are the ones that are in debt to God because of our sin. The debt we owe is a death sentence. Overall, our relationship with God was _____¹.



How do we restore our relationship with God?

How do we make amends with Him? How do we make restitution to God for our sins? Quite simply, we never can and we never will! Not without Christ, that is.

Think of it this way. Imagine you were broke and had to pay a fine of \$100,000 or else you'd have to go to jail. To avoid going to jail you would need someone who was able and willing:

- ABLE = the person must have \$100,000 available
- WILLING = the person must agree to pay the \$100,000 fine for you

The richest man in the world may be able to pay your fine because \$100,000 may be easy for him to pay. But would he be willing to pay it on your behalf? Probably not.

But our situation is far worse than that! Our debt to God is like being a prison inmate on death row. To pay this debt, it would require someone who was _____² and _____³ to pay our death sentence for us. Our problem is that no one is able to pay our death sentence because everyone is under the same death sentence!



"all people...are under the power of sin. As the Scriptures say, 'No one is righteous—not even one.' ...the entire world is guilty before God. ...For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard." (Romans 3:9-10, 19, 23)

It's like everyone in the world is stuck on God's death row with us. So it doesn't matter if anyone was willing to pay our death sentence for us, no one is able to pay it anyway.



Have you ever been in a situation where it seemed impossible to get out? How does that compare to the situation of everyone being stuck on God's death row?

If everyone is guilty, then how can we ever get off of death row?

Jesus was the only One both ABLE and WILLING to pay our death sentence and save us from God's death row. How did He prove He was able and willing?

1. ABLE: Jesus proved He was able by first becoming a _____⁴. This qualifies Him as an acceptable substitute for us on God's death row.



"Because [we] are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could He die, and only by dying could He break...the power of death." (Hebrews 2:14)

