

Know Jesus

Four Conversations About Following Jesus



Know Jesus is the Christian Church in the Wildwood (CCW) guide for having conversations about salvation and the Lordship of Jesus. We believe that this whole world needs to hear the message of Jesus - His life, death and resurrection - and the grace-gift of eternity that He is offering to each of us. Let's face it, this can be an intimidating message to share with others, so this tool was created to guide you through four conversations that you will need to have as you share this amazing news with others.

What you need to know about the *Know Jesus* guide:

- Each of the four conversations in this guide range from 30 - 60 minutes.
- While the four conversations are meant to be had in order, there's no mandate on how quickly you move through them. You could have all four conversations at once or you could pace them out over multiple weeks. The goal is to gauge your conversation-partner and determine when taking a pause in the conversation is a healthy thing.
- *Know Jesus* is very easy to use. Each conversation is broken down into:
 - **Introduction:** An overview of the main ideas and goals that you will have during this conversation. The introduction also includes a few tips on what you can do to prepare for the conversation you're about to have.
 - **Start Here:** Each Start Here section includes an example of a conversational bridge (something that you can say to get the conversation moving) and some introductory questions.
 - **Conversation:** The Conversation is broken down into multiple key ideas - each of which includes (1) a Bible passage to read, (2) some important questions to ask, and (3) some talk points (helpful information that you may want to use as you are discussing the questions).
 - **Challenge:** Every conversation includes one or two challenge activities that bring the conversation home and make it more practical. (Note: Only include challenges that you are willing to take yourself).
 - **Additional Resources:** If you're looking for something more, the additional resources include videos, books, and other study resources to enhance the conversation.
- If you ever have any questions or concerns, the Discipleship Ministry team is ready to coach you through these conversations or offer a wingman in the conversation. We're dedicated to your success at growing God's Kingdom!

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TOOLS AND TIPS

Tips for Sharing the Gospel with others:

- **This is a conversation, not an argument.** Rarely has anyone been argued into the Kingdom of God. So remember: this is a conversation that you're having with someone about Jesus - the ultimate source of LOVE and HOPE. Your conversation should be centered in these same traits. If someone is unreceptive to the message, don't pressure them!
- **Check for receptiveness. Don't offer a solution if they don't recognize a problem.** Being 'saved' means that you must first be 'lost'. As you interact in your relationship, be careful to recognize appropriate moments to begin these conversations. Not everyone is ready for these conversations (check out the section on discernment below).
- **Grace wins.** It's all too easy to turn salvation into a checklist of things that we have to do in order to earn God's favor. But this is about God's story and Jesus' sacrifice. We cannot earn grace, we just need to respond to it.
- **Be real and transparent.** There are two facets to being real: (1) Genuinely care about the other person and (2) transparently share your story. If you truly care about this person, be willing to share the ugliness and brokenness that God has saved you from. As Paul said, God's '*power is made perfect in weakness* (2 Cor. 12 9)'; so don't be afraid to share your own weaknesses.
- **Be prepared.** You already have the *Know Jesus* guide in hand, so read through it and get the questions YOU have answered before you sit down with someone else. Before every conversation, review the major ideas and scripture.
- **Ask many questions.** Jesus was the master of asking perceptive questions. As His followers, we need to learn how to do this as well. Asking questions takes the focus off of us and centers it on the life of your conversation-partner.
- **Pray. A lot.** Ultimately it is God's Spirit that works in us to lead to a transformed life. This isn't the result of our own power or efforts. As a result, make God a part of the conversation as often as possible by pray-

ing with and for your conversation-partner.

- **Discipleship is the next step.** In salvation, we choose a new life in Jesus that will put us on a path of life-long transformation as we continue to become more like our Lord and Savior. Salvation is just the beginning. Make sure that you help your conversation-partner discover their Next Step and they continue on the path towards becoming like Jesus.

Discerning when someone is ready for this conversation:

There are three participants in every salvation conversation: God, the person sharing, and the person hearing. We know that God is always faithful and is doing His part. You get to play your part by starting this conversation with a friend or family member. But, at times, the third person in the conversation - the hearer - is simply not receptive to this conversation. Here are some simple ways to discern if someone will be ready to start the conversation:

- **Spiritual questions or interests.** If someone is already asking you probing questions about what you believe and 'why', that's a good sign that it's time to start this conversation. 1 Peter 3:15 tells each of us that we should *'always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.'*
- **A recognition of brokenness.** Rock-bottom is nobody's dream, but it's often an incredible opportunity to discover the hope that can only be found in Jesus. When you have friends and family members who have discovered the bottom, always extend help and hope.
- **Behavior changes coinciding with the work of the Holy Spirit.** According to Jesus, the Holy Spirit is at work within the lives of non-Christians, convicting them of sin and their need for a right relationship with God (John 16:8). One way we can discern if someone is ready for this conversation is if we see the work of the Spirit in their life. Is their life or behavior shifting towards things that honor God? Are they expressing the need to change? It's time to start the conversation.
- **Stretching circumstances.** Change creates all kinds of opportunities for starting the conversation. Be aware of stretching circumstances in the lives of the people around you. Examples of these type of circumstances include: a move, the death of a loved one, the birth of a child, change in a job, and more. Our goal isn't to manipulate these situations. Instead, we need to speak into the midst of the change with love, boldly proclaiming biblical truth and the need for a real relationship with God.

THE WORD OF GOD

This first conversation revolves around a key idea that will shape the next three conversations: the Bible is the Word of God. If the Bible is the Word of God, then:

- It will share with us the story of human brokenness and God's grace and love
- It is our source material for understanding God's will for our lives
- It will guide the conversation in how we should respond to God, Jesus, and His Spirit.

In the following conversations, all of the points that we will be making will be drawn directly from God's Word. Therefore, if we can't agree on God's Word as the basis for truth, then the following conversations will hold no weight.

The goal of this first conversation is two-fold:

- To recognize the Bible for what it is: the inspired Word of God.
- To establish this ground-rule: the Bible will be the filter for all the facts (this means that we will always turn to the Bible when establishing what is true).

Prepare for this conversation by (1) using the guide at the beginning of this packet and (2) making sure that your conversation-partner has a Bible. It may help if you gift your conversation-partner with a Bible so that you are reading the same version.

Remember: As much as possible, let the individual that you're conversing with read the scripture and answer the questions before you chime in. Act as a guide rather than a teacher.

START HERE

Discover the individual's belief background and what their beliefs about Jesus are by asking questions such as:

- What are your thoughts on God?
- What is your experience with the Church?
- What do you believe about Jesus?

Say something like:

As we're talking today, I want us to focus on the Bible and what it may have to teach us about God, Jesus, and our lives. For that to work, first we need to figure out what we actually believe about the Bible.

Ask: What do you believe about the Bible?

CONVERSATION

Key Idea: The Bible is from God.

Read: 2 Timothy 3:16 - 17

Ask:

- What is this verse's claim about the Bible?
- What would it mean if we truly believe that 'all Scripture is God-breathed'?
- How does this line up with your own interaction with the Bible?

Talk Points:

- If we believe that 'all scripture is God-breathed' then it should shape how we live, what we believe, and our entire perspective on the world.
- The Bible is full of truth. If these are God's Words, then we can find nothing truer.
- The Bible is a credible and reliable document. It's been authenticated by archeology, historical analyzing of the text, internal consistency, and even extra-biblical writings. Not only that, but it's truths continue to impact lives of people in all nations of this earth (be sure to check out some of the great resources at the end of this conversation for more on this).

Key Idea: The Bible is the primary filter for our ideas and practices.

Read: Matthew 15:1 - 9

Ask:

- What actions of the teachers of the law does Jesus challenge?
- What does Jesus say that the teachers are nullifying as a result of their tradition? According to Jesus, what is the result of choosing tradition over God's Word?
- Can you think of any religious practices that you have experienced that you never filtered through Biblical truth?

Talk Points:

- Traditions and creeds are not a good substitute for the Word of God. Choosing ritual over the Bible leads to worship that misses the mark.
- We should strive to make sure that every 'religious practice' we participate in is substantiated by God's Word.

Read: Acts 17:10 - 12

Ask:

- What quality made the Bereans 'noble' in character?
- How often do you check a teaching against what the Bible actually says?

Talk Points:

- It's our responsibility to dig in and find the truth according to scripture. We should filter every teaching through the Bible.

Key Idea: The Bible should shape our lives.

Read: Hebrews 4:12 - 13

Ask:

- How does the writer of Hebrews compare the Bible to a sword?
- Have the words of the Bible ever 'cut' into your life?

Talk Points:

- 'Cutting' leads to pain. In this case, the cutting done by the Bible is more like a scalpel. A scalpel, in the right hands, can lead to healing and wholeness. In the same way, the Bible cuts through the wrong things in our lives in order to reveal truth and love.

Read: John 8:31 - 32

Ask:

- What did Jesus tell those who believed in Him that they must do?
- What did Jesus mean when He said '*the truth shall set you free*'?

Read: 1 Timothy 4:16

Ask:

- What two things does the writer of 1 Timothy say that we should watch closely? Why should we watch these things closely?

Talk Points:

- Intellectual belief in something is not enough. Everything that we truly believe in shapes how we live. In the same way, believing that the Bible is true and that Jesus is real is not the goal. True belief means that we will follow Jesus' teachings and live like Him. We must not only believe what the Bible says - we must do what it says.
- Religious belief is ineffective if it does not lead us to live more like Jesus.

CHALLENGE

Say something like:

We just read some bold claims about the Bible. I hope that we end this conversation with an understanding that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, that it should be the filter for how we live and what we think, and that we will always turn to the Bible when establishing what is true. Is this something that we can agree on?

Ask:

- If you believe that the Bible is God's Word, how might this change how you interact with it?

Each conversation includes a challenge to action. This conversation includes two:

- 1. Read the Bible:** Commit to begin digging into the Bible regularly. If the Bible is God's words, then they are words that we should know! (Note: We recommend starting with the Book of John)
- 2. Commit to the Bible as a Filter:** In the subsequent conversations, we may come across some tough truths or perhaps even ideas that run counter to what you've believed. It's important to agree that the Bible will be the filter for our conversation and that we will turn to it to discover the truth.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Youtube: The Ten Minute Bible Hour** (Did God Write the Bible?)
- **Youtube: The One Minute Apologist**
 - #150: Why can we Trust the Bible?
 - #407: How do we show someone the Bible is trustworthy?
 - #438: How can I Trust the Bible if Man Wrote it?
 - #473: Is the Bible Historically Reliable?
 - #723: Does Science Clash with Scripture?
 - #279: Can Jesus Handle My Doubts?
- **Youtube: Science vs. The Bible** (Jon Jorgenson)
- **Website: www.zachariastrust.org** (Article: 'Why Trust the Bible?')

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Now that you've established the Bible as the Word of God and the filter for the coming conversations, it's time to start the second conversation: light and darkness. In this conversation, you'll be talking about the devastating effects of sin on this world and the love-filled efforts of Jesus to remedy our brokenness.

The goal of this second conversation is:

- To personalize the sin and brokenness that causes every person to be separated from a right relationship with God.
- To discover the hope and promise that Jesus' death and resurrection can bring into our lives.

Prepare for this conversation by (1) using the guide at the beginning of this packet and (2) making sure that you're ready to share the transformative story that a life with Jesus has given you.

START HERE

It's time to discover some core beliefs about your conversation-partner's view of salvation.

If they consider themselves to be a Christ-follower, ask these key questions:

- When did you realize that you were lost and in need of a Savior?
- How were you saved?
- What does it mean for you to have Jesus as 'Lord' of your life?

If they are not a Christ-follower, ask these key questions:

- What do you think that it means for 'Jesus to save us'? What would He save you from?
- This life is full of brokenness, heart-ache and pain. When you experience these things, where do you find hope?

Say something like:

As we're talking today, we're going to take a look at what the Bible has to say about this world's brokenness and God's solution to all of that hurt and pain. Remember, we'll be turning to the Bible as the source of truth for our entire conversation.

CONVERSATION

Key Idea: There is light (or good) and darkness (or evil) in this world. Each of us resides wholly in one of the two.

Read: 1 Peter 2:9 - 10; John 3:19 - 21

Ask:

- What do these verses say about 'darkness'? What do they say about the 'light'?
- Do you feel that you are living in the light or in the darkness? Why?

Talk Points:

- Every person is either in the darkness or the light. There is no middle ground.
- The darkness consists of people who do not belong to God and have not experienced His mercy. Many avoid Jesus because He is of the light which is the anathema to the darkness in their life.
- The light consists of the people of God who have experienced God's mercy. They follow Jesus and do God's work.

Key Idea: Darkness is a result of the brokenness that we have caused.

Read: Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8

Ask:

- What do these verses say about sin?
- According to God's Word, who has sinned?
- How has sin shown up in your life?

Talk Points:

- Sin is the brokenness that we bring into our relationship with God and others. It is rebellion against God and His Law. Galatians 5:19 - 21 has a list of examples.
- Drive this point home: Every person has sinned. Having any amount of sin in our life causes us to live in the darkness.

Key Idea: There are consequences to living in the darkness.

Read: Romans 6:23; Isaiah 59:1 - 2

Ask:

- What are the consequences of having sin in our life?
- How much sin causes us to face these consequences?

Talk Points:

- The consequences of sin are (1) separation from God, (2) physical and eternal death and (3) punishment in hell. There are a variety of other life-costs to living in the darkness: broken relationships, lost love, etc.
- Consider asking this question: Who is better off - Adolph Hitler or Mother Theresa? It doesn't matter if you're Adolph Hitler or Mother Theresa, sin always has the same consequences.
- For visual learners: Image 1: Sin and 2: Fall Short (p.24).

Key Idea: Jesus gives us an opportunity to live in the light.

Read: Ephesians 2:1 - 5; John 3:16, 8:12, 14:6

Ask:

- What do these verses have to say about being saved?
- What is our only path towards a right relationship with God?

- How have you tried to have a right life without trusting in Jesus?

Talk Points:

- Grace means ‘an undeserved gift’. We can do nothing to earn salvation. It is only through the undeserved death of Jesus that we can hope to have a right relationship with God. Jesus came to this earth, lived His life, died a horrible death on the cross, and defeated death for each of us.
- For visual learners: Image 3: Cross (p.25).

Key idea: There are promises to living in the light.

Read: Romans 8:1 - 2; John 1:9 - 13

Ask:

- What are the promises made to those who choose to follow Jesus?
- How does the grace and forgiveness that God offers make you feel?

Talk Points:

- Through Christ, we are offered a release from the consequences of sin, are made into a new creation and are adopted as children of God. These are just a few of the promises that God makes to us. Other examples include: the Holy Spirit and forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38), the Fruit of the Spirit developing in our lives (Gal. 5:22 - 23), eternal life (John 3:16), and that He will be with us to the end (Mt. 28:20).
- Share your story. Tell of how God brought you from darkness into light.
- For visual learners: Image 4: Hope (p.25).

CHALLENGE

Say something like:

We just talked about the most important story that any of us will ever hear. We are a part of that story and have to choose whether we will live in darkness or light. I challenge you to consider what you want your eternal legacy to be and to choose the life that God designed you for - a life of light, love, and wholeness.

Each conversation includes a challenge to action. This conversation’s challenge is:

- 1. Light and Darkness Card:** On a notecard, write ‘light’ on the top of one side and ‘darkness’ on the other. On the ‘darkness’ side, list the sin in your life. Dig deep and write down anything that you’ve done that has caused brokenness in your relationship with God and with other people. After you are finished, flip the card over to the ‘light’ side. Take some time to envision what a ‘new life’ in God might look like. Write down a list of things that you think might change in your life if you were to choose to walk into the grace that God is offering.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **The Gospels:** For more on Jesus and His life, death, and resurrection, read one of the four Gospel accounts. We recommend the Gospel of John.
- **The Passion of the Christ:** This movie gives a vivid picture of Jesus' last days on this earth. If you're working with a visual learner, this is a great way to show what Jesus experienced.
- **Youtube: Jesus, Sin and You (message illustration):** A great visual that talks about the impact of sin and the need for Jesus.
- **Youtube: The One Minute Apologist:**
 - #727: What's a Christian's Relationship to Sin?
 - #724: Will God Send Me to Hell for Not Believing in Jesus?
 - #959: How Could a Good God Send Nice People to Hell?
- **Youtube: The Gospel in Six Truths**
- **Youtube: The Bible Project:** These two videos provide a great summary of the Book of John.
 - Read Scripture: John Ch. 1 - 12
 - Read Scripture: John Ch. 13 - 21

OUR CHOICE

The second conversation revolved around God and humanity's story. It's a story of light and darkness, brokenness and salvation. In the third conversation, continue on by talking about our part in responding to the free gift of salvation that God offers to each of us. If your conversation-partner has any previous experience with a church, it's critical that this conversation is centered on the Bible and NOT man-made traditions or beliefs. You can find an overview on false doctrines and a Bible-based response in Appendix 2.

The goal of this third conversation is:

- To discover our response to the grace-gift that God offers: faith, confession, repentance, and baptism.
- To choose to accept the new life that is available by making Jesus Lord in of one's life.

Prepare for this conversation by (1) using the guide at the beginning of this packet, (2) making sure that you understand the major principles about accepting a new life in Jesus (as outlined by the Bible and this conversation), and reviewing some of the common misunderstandings about accepting this new life (Appendix 2).

START HERE

Say something like:

As we're talking today, we're going to take a look at what the Bible has to say about how we should respond to the opportunity that Jesus gives us to live in the light. Remember, the Bible will be our filter for this conversation. Ultimately, it's our choice as to whether we accept the hope and salvation that Jesus is offering. As we're talking, consider the choice you believe that you should make.

Start off the conversation with these questions:

- What is the greatest gift that you've ever received?

CONVERSATION

Key Idea: Accepting the grace-gift of God begins with conviction.

Read: Acts 2:36 - 37; 2 Corinthians 7:10

Ask:

- In Acts 2, what was the hearer's response to the news about Jesus?
- Why is conviction the starting point for a right relationship with God?
- What do you feel convicted about in your own life that points to a need for a right relationship with God?

Talk Points:

- 2 Corinthians makes it clear that 'feeling bad' is not the goal. Authentic conviction leads to a changed life.
- Ultimately, it is our choice to act on conviction. No one can force someone to follow Jesus. While Jesus is King over all the world, His Lordship in our lives is the result of our accepting the grace-gift that He offers.

Key Idea: Choosing to follow Jesus leads to being 'born again' or a 'new creation'.

Read: John 3:1 - 7; 2 Corinthians 5:17

Ask:

- What does Jesus say it means to be 'born again'? According to Jesus, how is one 'born again'?
- If you were a 'new creation', what would look different in your life?

Talk Points:

- Jesus says that being 'born again' is a matter of water and Spirit. We believe in the act of baptism that water and Spirit collide. This is the starting point for a new life (see below).
- For further information on when we should be 'born again', see Appendix 2.

Key Idea: At the root of a new life is FAITH in Jesus, His message and His resurrection.

Read: Acts 2:22 - 24; Hebrews 11:1, 6

Ask:

- How would you explain 'faith' to someone else?
- What do these verses say are things we must believe to experience a new life?
- What do you believe about God? What do you believe about Jesus?

Talk Points:

- Faith is a life-altering belief in someone or something. Faith can't be boiled down to a half-hearted belief because authentic faith pushes us to action. If we have faith in God, Jesus, and the Bible, then we will do what they say.
- Some of the core messages that we must have faith in are:
 - God is who He says He is (Heb. 11)
 - Jesus is from God and His miracles are the proof (Acts 2:22)
 - Our actions make us responsible for the death of Jesus (Acts 2:23)
 - Jesus has risen from the dead! (Acts 2:24)

Key Idea: A new life leads to a changed life through our CONFESSON and REPENTANCE.

Read: Acts 2:38 - 42; 1 John 1:5 - 10

Ask:

- What did Peter say the listeners must do in order to be saved?
- How would you explain 'repentance' to someone else? What does true repentance look like?
- What does it mean to 'walk in the light'? How would your life look different if you began to 'walk in the light'?

Talk Points:

- Repentance is making a U-turn in our life. We turn away from rejecting Jesus as Lord (and doing things our way) towards submission to His authority and Lordship. Authentic repentance means that we strive to live as Jesus lived.
- Repentance has a beginning, but 'living in repentance' is a choice we need to constantly make. Christ-followers mess up and will need to be real with their sins (confession) and recommit to living like Jesus (repentance).

Key Idea: A new life begins when we are BAPTIZED in Jesus' name.

Read: Romans 6:1 - 4; 1 Peter 3:21

Ask:

- According to these verses, what is baptism and what does it represent?
- Have you been baptized? If so, what role do you feel that your baptism played in your relationship with God?

Talk Points:

- Baptism is sharing in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6); but according to 1 Peter, this is more than symbolic. Through baptism, we gain entrance into the 'new life' that Jesus offers.
- According to Romans 3:25, it is the blood of Jesus that saves us. When we participate in His death, burial and resurrection, we come into contact with His blood.
- The Greek word for baptism means 'to be immersed'. Nowhere in Scripture do we find anyone being baptized without full immersion into water.

CHALLENGE

Say something like:

We just talked about what the Bible says about accepting the grace-gift of salvation; the acceptance of this gift is a choice that we make by placing our faith in Jesus, repenting and living a new life that begins when we are baptized in Jesus' name. It's my hope that you make that choice and make Jesus Lord of your life. Even if the answer is 'no' or 'not yet', I pray that someday your heart will be ready for living in the light.

Each conversation includes a challenge to action. This conversation's challenge is:

1. Read the Salvation Accounts in Acts: Read through the salvation accounts in Acts. Take note of what is asked of those convicted that they are living in darkness and what their response is.

Salvation accounts:

- Jewish people at Pentecost (2:37 - 41)
- Philip and the Samaritans (8:9 - 13)
- Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch (8:34 - 38)
- Saul the Pharisee (9:17 - 19)
- Cornelius and his family (10:34 - 48)

- Lydia (16:13 - 15)
- The Jailer and his family (16:25 - 34)
- Apollos (19:1 - 5)

2. Write a Confession: Many people repeat Peter's confession (Matt. 13:16) when they are baptized, but our confession can be as personal as a wedding vow. Write your own confession of who Christ is to you and think of it as your own 'vow' to God. If you have the opportunity, use this confession when you are baptized.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Youtube: God's Patience is Limitless (Priscilla Shirer):** Priscilla Shirer does a solid job explaining the on-going patience that God extends to us as we grow towards becoming the people He designed us to be.
- **Youtube: What is a Relationship with God?** (Jon Jorgenson)

FOLLOWING JESUS

The fourth conversation revolves around understanding what it means to follow Jesus. While living as a child of God comes with some incredible privileges, there still is a cost and personal sacrifice on this path. In this conversation, you'll look at what it truly means to make Jesus Lord of our lives. Along the way, you'll discover that our sacrifice amounts to very little in the face of knowing the overwhelming love that God has for each of us.

The goal of this fourth conversation is:

- To understand and accept the cost of following Jesus.
- To choose to follow Jesus and walk into a lifelong discipleship relationship with Him.

Prepare for this conversation by (1) using the guide at the beginning of this packet.

START HERE

Say something like:

Following Jesus is amazing! It's what we're designed for. But it also comes with a cost. When we decide to walk into the new life that Jesus offers us, it comes with the recognition that Jesus is Lord of all things - and that includes our lives. As we're making the choice to follow Jesus, we need to seriously consider the cost of what that will mean in our life.

Start off the conversation with these questions:

- When is a time that you have allowed someone else to 'be in charge' of your life? What was that experience like?
- When you think of the term 'surrender', what does it bring to mind?

CONVERSATION

Key Idea: Following Jesus means that we recognize Him as Lord. Lordship implies obedience.

Read: Philippians 2:5 - 11; John 14:12 - 15; Luke 6:46 - 49

Ask:

- What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord of all things? What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord of your life?
- Why is Jesus a Lord worth obeying?
- According to Luke 6, what is the consequence of failing to obey Jesus?

Talk Points:

- Authentic love of Jesus leads to whole-hearted obedience. This obedience is not the result of fear, resignation, or force; instead it is the result of love.
- Philippians 2 points out that Jesus' path to Lordship is a result of His sacrificial love for each of us. We do not follow a cruel taskmaster or evil despot; instead we follow a Lord who loves His people desperately.

Key Idea: Following Jesus comes at a cost.

Read: Luke 9:23, 14:26 - 33

Ask:

- According to Jesus, what is the cost of following Him?
- In what ways have you been putting human relationships before a relationship with Jesus? In what ways have you been putting 'stuff' before a relationship with Him?
- What might it mean to 'take up your cross'? What would that look like in your life?
- Jesus shares two stories about 'counting the cost'. What was the result of failing to count the cost? What might be the result of counting the cost when we are deciding to follow Jesus?

Talk Points:

- Jesus calls us to love all other things less than Him (or 'hate' those things) (14:26).
- 'Giving up everything' (14:33) means recognizing that all that you have ultimately belongs to God and it should be used as He wills. Sometimes this may mean literally 'giving something up'. At all times it means recognizing that you are, at best, a steward of the resources that God has left in your care.

Key Idea: Following Jesus gives us a mission and purpose.

Read: Matthew 28:18 - 20; Acts 1:8

Ask:

- What is the mission that Jesus gives to all of His followers?
- What does it mean to be a 'witness' for Jesus?

Talk Points:

- A disciple is someone who follows Jesus; who does what He does and lives how He lives.
- Obviously, we may not be called to Jerusalem, Judea, or Samaria; but we have our own version of these places. Our home, neighborhood, workplace, city, and county are our direct areas of responsibility. We are called to be Jesus' witnesses in these locations and should even take this message to every corner of the world.

Key Idea: Following Jesus means that we are pursuing a life of holiness.

Read: Colossians 1:21 - 23

Ask:

- How does God make us holy?

Talk Points:

- Holy means 'set apart'. We follow a God who is holy - wholly set apart from darkness and the sin it holds. God makes us holy by Jesus' death. As verse 23 relates, that holiness is dependent on the fact that we continue to follow Jesus.

Read: 1 Peter 1:14 - 16

Ask:

- What do you believe a holy life might look like?
- What is your part in maintaining the holy life that God desires to give you?

Key Idea: Following Jesus is a lifelong process that we call discipleship. Choosing to follow Jesus is just the first step.

Read: John 15:5 - 10

Ask:

- How does Jesus' illustration of a vine and branches compare to a life of discipleship?
- What kind of 'fruit' might a disciple of Jesus produce?

Talk Points:

- Jesus uses a very straightforward illustration about discipleship in these verses: a vine and its branches. A branch cannot exist on its own - it must be connected to the vine in order to thrive. Following Jesus works the same way. As disciples, we need to stay connected to our source for growth and continue doing life like Jesus.

CHALLENGE

Say something like:

No doubt, there's a cost to following Jesus. When we make Him Lord, we're saying that we will follow Him no matter the cost, do our best to complete His mission, and will live a life that honors Him during our time on earth. But I hope you understand that this cost is nothing compared to the greatness of living in the love of Jesus and God and having the promise of eternity with Them. We're at the end of this conversation guide, but I want to continue the conversation with you about what it means to follow Jesus!

Each conversation includes a challenge to action. This conversation's challenge is:

- 1. The Story of Stephen:** Read Acts 7:54 - 60. Stephen was the first disciple who was martyred. As you read, place yourself in his shoes. Reflect on these questions:
 - What was Stephen thinking in his last few moments?
 - Do you believe that he found Christ worth the cost?
- 2. Make the Choice:** It's time to make a choice about whether you want to recognize the Lordship of Jesus and become His follower. You can use Appendix 3 to help you make your choice.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Youtube: The Cost of Following Jesus** (Francis Chan)
- **Youtube: What to do After You've Been Saved** (Jon Jorgenson)
- **Youtube: Who is the Holy Spirit?** (One Minute Apologist)
- **Book: Jesus Freaks:** This book shares stories of martyrs - men and women who suffered for their faith in Jesus.

FOLLOW UP

Follow Up Questions

After completing the four conversations guide with your conversation partner, be sure to follow up. Start by asking these questions:

- What questions or concerns do you still have about what it means to follow Jesus?
- How can I help you as you make the choice as to whether or not to follow Jesus?

Making a Decision

If your conversation-partner is not ready to make this choice yet, don't force the issue. Continue to find opportunities to lovingly return to the conversation about what it means to be a follower of Jesus and continue to pray that the Spirit of God will shape their heart to be receptive to this message. Consider saying something like:

If you ever have any questions about any of the things that we've talked about, will you give me the promise that you'll come talk to me about it?

If your conversation partner is ready to make this decision, here's what to do next:

- **Find a body of water and get them baptized.** Where they get baptized is not important. We've had people get baptized in pools, hot -tubs, rivers, bathtubs, the ocean, and baptistries. If you need help in knowing how to baptize someone, please contact one of the ministry team at CCW.
- **Let us know!** We want to celebrate alongside of you, so let us know about this baptism by contacting our front office. We also love to get pictures and videos of the new lives that are coming into existence, so send us any media you can.

Ongoing Discipleship

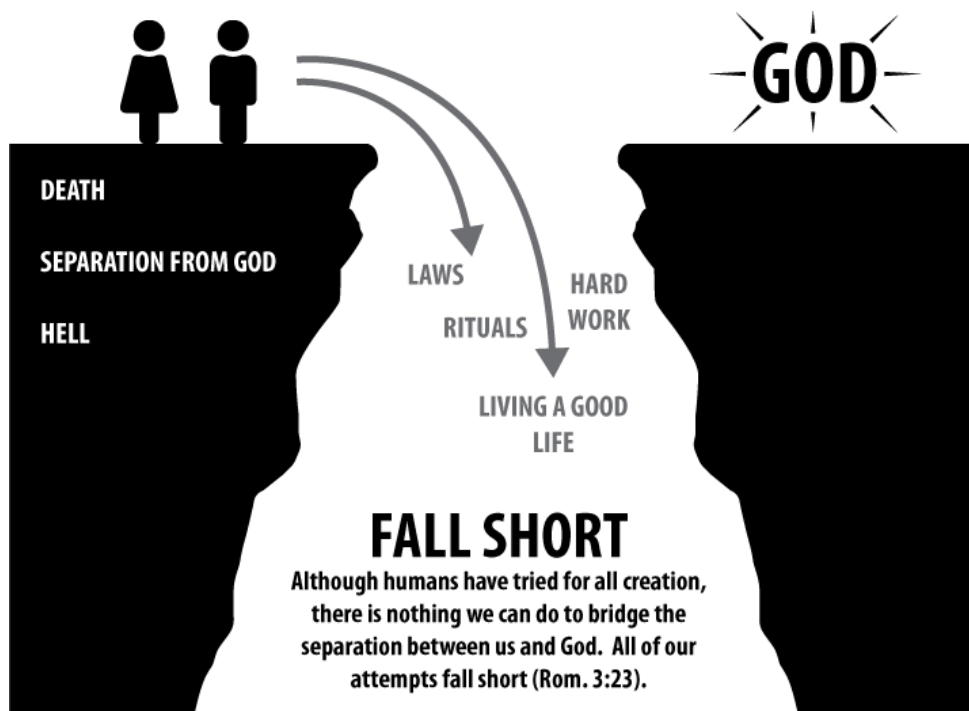
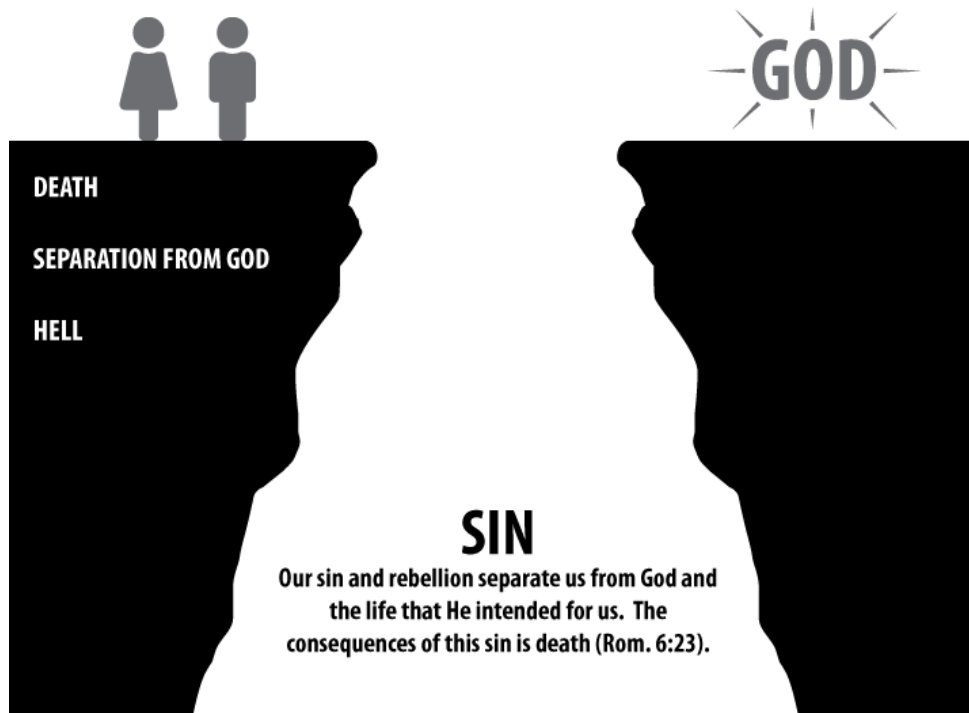
As we mentioned - discipleship is a lifelong process. Your job is just getting started! It's time to help your conversation-partner follow Jesus. We use some simple discipleship milestones that we call the Next Steps to determine what each person's next step in their relationship with Jesus looks like. Please contact our Discipleship Minister or stop by CCW's Next Step Station to continue on the journey towards becoming the person God designed you to be.

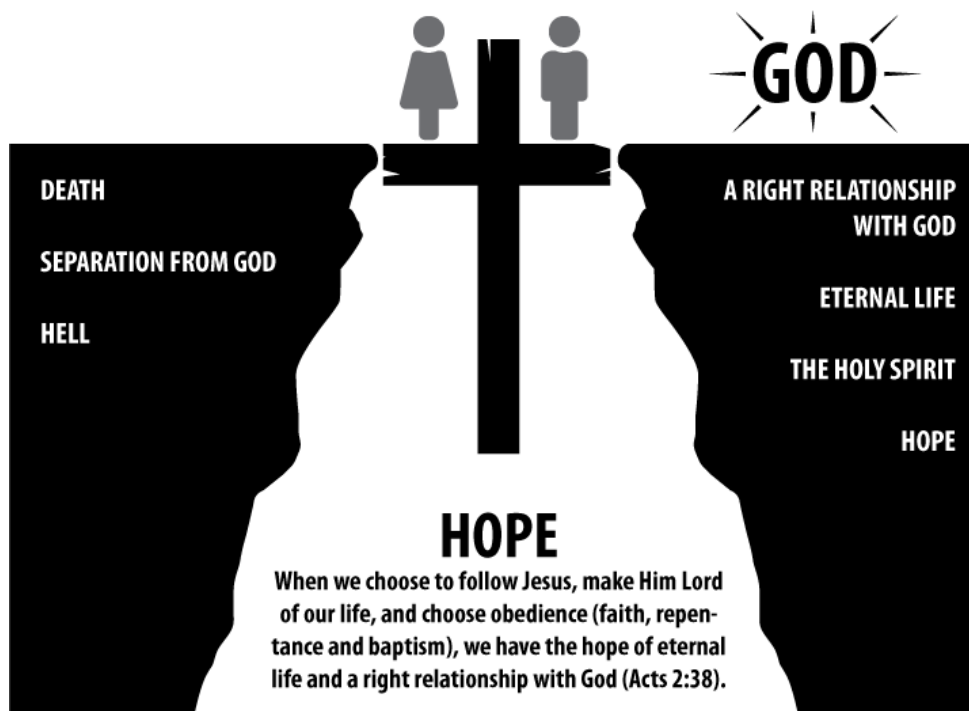
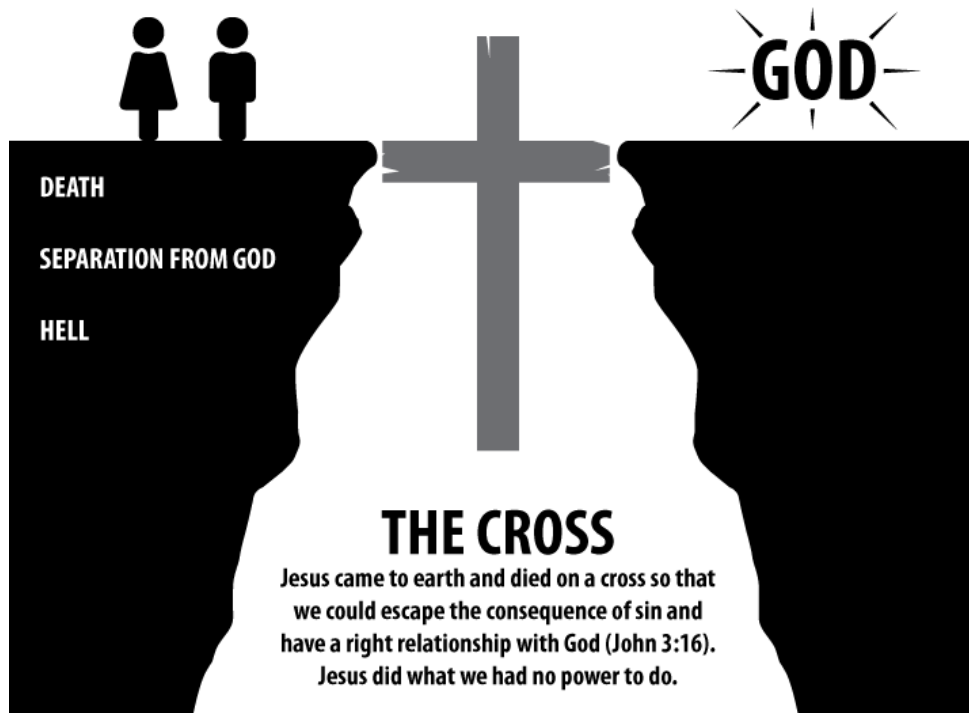
Appendices

Tools for Life-Change

STORY IMAGES

These images outline the four major ideas in the story of our choosing between light and darkness. Use them with visual learners to better connect the ideas that are being talked about.





COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS

This is a non-comprehensive list of common false beliefs about salvation. Each includes the false belief as well as key scripture that can be used to reveal some truth.

False Belief: 'Pray Jesus into your heart.'

- This phrase is never found or used in the Bible.
- This phrase is never linked to salvation in the Bible.
- This belief is commonly defended using Revelations 3:20. This verse was not written to non-Christians on how to be saved. Rather, it is written to Christians and is about how to repent.

False Belief: 'Accept Jesus into your heart.'

- This phrase is never found or used in the Bible.
- This belief is commonly defended using Romans 10:9. Romans 10:9 is an incomplete statement on salvation and also excludes the need for repentance. When aligned with other key scripture on salvation, this verse holds true in that confessing our need for Jesus is ONE PART of our response.
- In other places, calling on Jesus' name is linked with baptism (e.g. Acts 22:16).

False Belief: Infant Baptism

- A baby cannot have faith, and faith is essential to baptism (Col. 2:12).
- A baby cannot, and has no need to repent.
- This belief is based on the doctrine of 'original sin', but Ezekial 18:20 teaches that there is no such thing as original sin.

False Belief: 'Baptism does not save you.'

- Baptism is the act of obedience that is commanded us for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).
- Baptism is our participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus (1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1 - 6).

False Belief: 'Baptism is a work. We are saved by faith alone.'

- Ephesians 2:8 is commonly used to defend this belief. The truth is, we cannot be saved through our own actions. Every act that is centered on our own efforts or will is futile. God, on the other hand, can require whatever action He wishes us to take.
- We are saved by faith in the working of God at baptism (Col. 2:12).

False Belief: 'Baptism is an outward sign of an inner grace.'

- This phrase is never found or used in the Bible.
- In Acts, there are multiple examples of individuals getting baptized without any additional witnesses: the Ethiopian Eunuch and Paul.
- Baptism is an actual participation in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (Rom. 6:1- 4).

False Belief: 'Baptism is not important. Even Paul said it wasn't in 1 Corinthians 1:10 - 17.'

- Paul himself was baptized (Acts 22:16).
- In 1 Corinthians, Paul is rebuking the division that is being created as a result of the 'importance' of the person doing the Baptism. He expresses his relief that his name isn't part of the divisiveness since he baptized only a handful of them.

False Belief: 'What about the thief on the cross? He wasn't baptized but Jesus said that they would see each other in paradise.'

- Baptism wasn't a necessity until after the resurrection of Christ. The thief could not take part in something that had not yet happened (Rom. 6:2 - 4).
- As the Son of God, Jesus had the right to forgive anyone He chose to during His ministry on earth (see Matthew 9:2 - 6 as an example).
- Jesus was talking to the thief, not us.

False Belief: Believer's Baptism

- This false belief includes any baptism as an adult that is done for any reasons other than what the Bible prescribes.
- In the Bible, the concept of 'believer's baptism' is reflected in John's (the Baptist) baptism. This baptism was superseded by baptism into Jesus. This is reflected in Acts 19:1-6 where a group of Ephesians needed to be baptized because they had only received the baptism of John, which did not include the promise of the Holy Spirit and was not linked to the resurrection of Jesus.
- Any dunk into the water does not constitute baptism. Baptism should always be done in a Biblical way and for Biblical reasons.

(adapted from the Acts Study Series)

My Decision

After praying, please circle one of the following selections:

I have made Jesus the Lord of my life and have been baptized into a new life.

I believe that Jesus is the Son of God and I would like to make Him my Lord and Savior.

I have more questions about what the Bible says about salvation and would like to speak to a Next Step Coach.

I am not ready to make a commitment to Jesus, but I would like this conversation to be revisited in the future.

My beliefs regarding salvation do not align with Christian Church in the Wildwood's.

I have no interest in recognizing Jesus as the Lord of my life.