

Faith Foundations – Participant’s Guide

Welcome to this Faith Foundations Guide which has been prepared to support you at the beginning of this discipleship journey. These first six sessions are based on the foundational topic of understanding what it means to say that ‘Jesus is our Lord and Saviour’ and below are some helpful pointers to use this tool as effectively as possible:

- This guide is designed to encourage brainstorming and discussion between you and the person leading you. The purpose of this practice is to promote thinking, processing and the discovery of meaning, implications or conclusions from God’s Word.
- Many of the questions ask what a Bible verse ‘means’ or ‘implies’. The purpose of this is to elicit your understanding of its meaning *using your own words*, not a mere repetition of the words or passage. Asking what a passage or verse implies encourages thinking beyond the words themselves in order to explore a deeper understanding of God’s Word and how it applies to our personal lives and experience.
- Some sessions are longer than others, so you may not conclude each session each time you meet. The guide doesn’t have to be completed within a specific time frame, so each session can be picked up from where you left off and worked through at your own pace.
- The goal of this guide is not about offering short or quick answers but about thoroughly processing and thinking through biblical truths and issues more critically.
- It’s okay not to understand or have an answer to a question. This guide is about providing opportunities to learn and explore the subjects together with your leader so faith foundations can be strengthened leading to a deeper relationship with and experience of Jesus. The guide is relevant for anyone who has a desire to learn and explore foundational truths related to faith.
- There is space in the guide to write down notes during the sessions so you can review them between your meet ups.
- Please note: The names ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ are used interchangeably in this guide.

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Session 1 - Understanding what ‘Jesus as Lord and Saviour’ means

Q. When someone is a believer in someone or something, what do you think is meant or implied by the word ‘believer’?

Q. What do you think it means to believe in Jesus?

When someone first puts their faith in Jesus it is crucial to understand that it isn’t a blind leap of faith because our response of faith is based on solid biblically and historically based facts. The next section will look at what the Bible says about people using their mind when thinking about salvation through faith in Jesus.

Acts 17:11-12 (NLT)

¹¹And the people of Berea were more open-minded than those in Thessalonica, and they listened eagerly to Paul’s message. They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth. ¹²As a result, many Jews believed, as did many of the prominent Greek women and men.

Q. According to verse 11, the Bereans were ‘open-minded’. What does ‘open-minded’ mean?

Q. They also ‘listened eagerly’. What does this imply?

Q. Some people are neither open-minded nor eager to listen to the message of salvation through Jesus. Why might this be?

Q. Verse 11 says, ‘They searched the Scriptures day after day to see if Paul and Silas were teaching the truth.’ What does this tell us about the Bereans?

Q. What does the Berean’s approach to Paul’s message tell us about using our mind or intellect with regard to the message of salvation through Jesus?

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Scripture almost always references Jesus as both Lord and Saviour, not just Saviour. If believers ignore the Lordship part of their relationship with Jesus, their transformation into Christlikeness will most likely be very limited because Lordship speaks of Him being the master of our lives in its entirety and believers responding by following Him, walking in His truth and surrendering to Him. So, in this session we’ll unpack more fully what it means to believe in Jesus and make him our Lord and our Saviour.

A. Jesus Christ is Lord of All

Read Acts 10:36 (NIV)

³⁶*You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.*

Q. This verse states that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. What does the word ‘Lord’ mean or imply in this verse?

Q. If Jesus is Lord of all what does this mean or imply for you personally?

Romans 10:9 (NIV)

⁹*If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

Q. What might be the significance of declaring with your mouth that Jesus is Lord?

B. Jesus is Our Saviour

2 Timothy 1:9-10 (NLT)

⁹*For God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from before the beginning of time—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus. ¹⁰And now he has made all of this plain to us by the appearing of Christ Jesus, our Saviour. He broke the power of death and illuminated the way to life and immortality through the Good News.*

Q. What does the word ‘saviour’ mean?

Q. What does ‘Jesus is our Saviour’ imply (verse 10) and why is it important to understand this truth?

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Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Q. God saved us when we believed. In order to be saved what does someone need to believe?

Q. What does verse 8 imply when it says, ‘when you believed’?

C. Repentance and Putting Faith in Jesus

Repentance

Q. How would you define ‘repentance’?

Acts 20: 21 (NIV)

²¹ I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

Q. Why do you think the writer uses the word ‘necessity’ when he talks about repenting from sin and turning to God’?

Q. What is the meaning of ‘repenting from sin’?

Q. What does ‘turning to God’ mean?

Repentance is not just feeling sorry for our sins. True repentance means that we are serious about changing our mind, attitude and behaviour. It means that we make a decision to change our focus and direction of our lives from our human sinful and selfish ways to seeking and following God and his ways.

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Q. How would you evaluate your life regarding repentance (turning away from sinful and selfish ways to follow God and his ways)?

Faith

Q. How would you answer someone if they asked you ‘What does faith mean?’

Acts 20: 21 (NIV)

²¹I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.

Q. This verse talks about ‘having faith in our Lord Jesus’. What does ‘faith in Jesus’ mean or imply?

Q. How would you evaluate your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Saviour?

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Session 2 – The Forgiveness of Sins

Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT)

¹³You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. ¹⁴He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

Q. According to verse 13 how many of our sins has God forgiven?

Q. What does ‘all our sins’ imply?

Q. What would happen if only some of our sins were forgiven?

Q. Some people might say: if all our sins are forgiven, we can sin as much as we want. What is your response to this?

Verse 14 says: He cancelled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

Q. What does this verse mean?

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Romans 5:20-21 and 6: 1-7 (NLT)

²⁰God’s law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God’s wonderful grace became more abundant. ²¹So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God’s wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

6 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of his wonderful grace? ²Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? ³Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? ⁴For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.

⁵Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. **⁶We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. ⁷For when we died with Christ, we were set free from the power of sin.**

Q. What can you conclude from verses 6:1-2?

Q. Verse 4 says, ‘now we also may live new lives.’ What does this mean?

Q. Verses 6-7 talk about ‘being set free from the power of sin.’ What does that imply for us personally?

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 16-20, 57 (NLT)

³I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me. Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. ⁴He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, just as the Scriptures said.

¹⁶And if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised. **¹⁷And if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless, and you are still guilty of your sins.** ¹⁸In that case, all who have died believing in Christ are lost! ¹⁹And if our hope in Christ is only for this life, we are more to be pitied than anyone in the world.

²⁰But in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. He is the first of a great harvest of all who have died.

⁵⁷But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.

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Q. What conclusion can we draw from verse 17?

Q. Verse 57 talks about victory over sin and death. What does that mean for us personally?

Q. Do you believe and trust in the fact that God has forgiven all your sins? Why or why not?

Q. Are there any areas in your life where you are struggling to see victory over sin?

Key Reflection

Because of Christ’s death and resurrection God has forgiven all our sins and given us victory over sin and death. Through forgiveness, God provides us with the freedom to live new lives. We don’t need to carry the burden of past sins and failures because through our faith in Christ all our sins are forgiven. True freedom and joy however don’t come only from the forgiveness of sins; they come from living a new life of following and obeying Christ. We are now free from the penalty, power and guilt of sin, so that we can know Christ and live new lives.

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Session 3 – Knowing you’re a child of God – you will never be rejected

John 1:12-13 (NLT)

¹²But to all who believed him and accepted him [Jesus], he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

Q. These verses refer to being children of God. What does being someone’s child imply?

Q. What thoughts does being God’s child conjure up?

Q. What does verse 12 say about how to become a child of God?

Key Reflection

When we believe and trust in Jesus we are believing and putting our faith in a real person who is alive and present in the here and now, not in a principle or true statement or merely a historical person.

Q. What does it mean for you personally that you are a child in God’s family?

John 6:37-39 (NLT)

³⁷However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. ³⁸For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. ³⁹And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day.

Q. In verse 37 Jesus said: I will never reject them. What did he mean by that?

Q. What thoughts or feelings does this conjure up for you personally knowing that Jesus will never reject you?

Q. Do you accept and trust in the fact that you are a child of God and that he will never reject you?

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Q. Why is it important to believe and accept this fact that you are a child of God and that He won’t reject you?

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Session 4 – Knowing that Christ is in you - he will never leave or abandon you

Romans 8:10 (NLT)

¹⁰And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God.

Q. What does the fact that Christ lives within you imply?

Q. What is the importance of Christ living in us?

John 14:16-18 (NLT)

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. ¹⁷He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognise him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. ¹⁸No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you.

Q. Jesus spoke about not leaving us as orphans in verse 18. What was he implying when he said this?

Q. If Christ is in your life and he has promised to never leave or abandon you, how many times do you need to put faith in him to be saved and receive the gift of eternal life?

Q. Have you put your faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and the gift of eternal life?

Q. According to the verses above where is Jesus **at this moment** in relation to you?

Q. Do you accept and trust in the fact that Jesus now lives in you and will never leave or abandon you?

Session 5 – New Life in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:16-17 (NLT)

¹⁶So we have stopped evaluating others from a human point of view. At one time we thought of Christ merely from a human point of view. How differently we know him now! ¹⁷This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

Q. Verse 17 refers to becoming a new person when we belong to Christ. What does this mean?

Q. Verse 17 also talks about the ‘old life’ and that it has gone. What does this mean?

Romans 6:12-14 (NLT)

¹²Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. ¹³Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So, use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. ¹⁴Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God’s grace.

These verses help us understand more about what it means when we say, ‘the old life is gone’.

Q. If the ‘old life has gone’ verse 14 talks about sin no longer being our master. What does it mean for us personally if sin is no longer our master?

Q. What happens when we let sin be our master?

Q. According to verse 17 a ‘new life has begun’, what does this mean?

Galatians 2:20 (NLT)

²⁰My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

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Q. What does this verse say is new or different about your life?

Q. Where verse 20 says, ‘So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God’, what does it mean to you to trust in Christ?

Q. What things can we trust Christ for?

Q. What can help us trust Christ more?

Key Reflection

Trusting in Christ (living by faith in him) means that we are choosing to believe in and depend on him and the truths of his Word instead of on our feelings or on someone or something else. It involves putting our faith and confidence in him alone. As we increasingly trust in Christ, we will experience more and more of our new life in him.

Because of our trust in God and his Word we have been given the gift of a new life in Christ; we have been born again (1 Peter 1:23). We aren’t just improved or made better we are new people because of our faith in Christ. We were spiritually dead, but now we are spiritually alive. Therefore, we can live new lives that reflect Christ living in and through us. As believers in Christ, we have a new nature and identity; we are now children of God and followers of Christ.

Q. Do you accept and trust in the fact that you have a new life in Christ?

Q. If you answered ‘yes’ to the above question, what does having a new life in Christ mean to you personally?

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Session 6 – Eternal Life with God

John 17:3 (NLT)

³And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth.

Q. What does this verse tell us about eternal life?

Eternal life is about a personal relationship with God both now and for eternity – not just living ‘someplace’ forever. It is about experiencing an intimate and fulfilling relationship with Christ now and for eternity in heaven.

1 John 5:11-13 (NLT)

¹¹And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. ¹²Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have God’s Son does not have life. ¹³I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life.

Q. What does the word ‘eternal’ mean?

Q. When does eternal life begin for believers in Christ? When does it end?

Q. According to verse 12 what determines who does and doesn’t have eternal life?

Q. Verse 13 says it is possible to know we have eternal life. How do you **know** you have eternal life with God?

John 10: 27-29 (NLT)

²⁷My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, ²⁹for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father’s hand.

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Q. Verse 28 says ‘I give them eternal life, and they will never perish.’ What does this verse tell us about eternal life?

Q. What did Jesus mean by these verses: No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else?

Q. Do you accept and trust in the fact that you have eternal life with God? Why or why not?

Q. If you answered ‘yes’ to the above question, what does having eternal life with God imply for you personally?

Summary of Sessions

To believe in Christ means to trust in him to save you and to follow him as your Lord. It means that:

- You are saved from the penalty and power of sin now and forever in heaven – you have eternal life with God.
- You have a new identity and new life based on your relationship with Christ – you are a child in God’s family.
- Christ lives in you, and he will never leave you.
- You are choosing to turn away from sin (repent) and to follow and obey God.
- You can live a purposeful and meaningful life right now by trusting Christ to guide and direct your new life in him.