

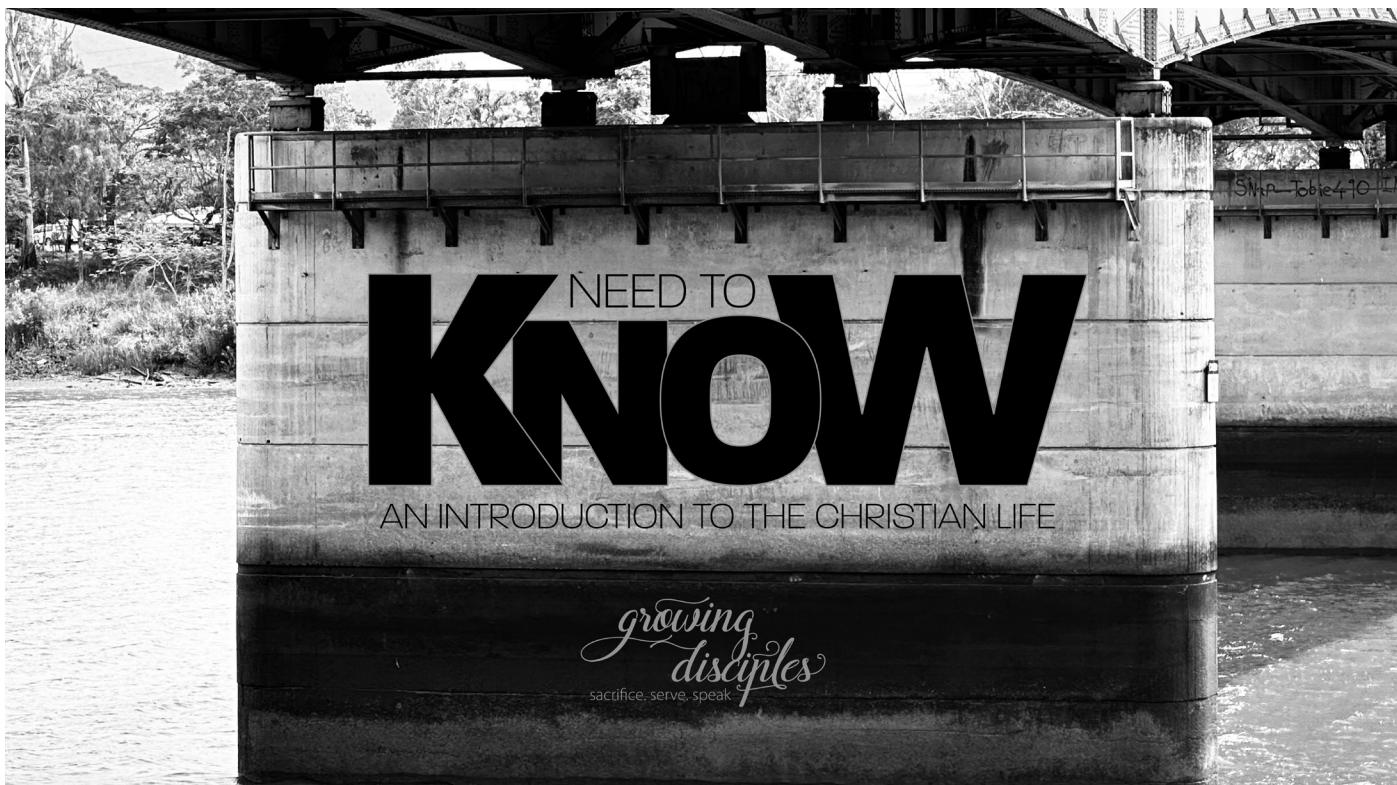
NEED TO
KNOW

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

rockypc SERIES COMPANION

TERM 1 2025

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak



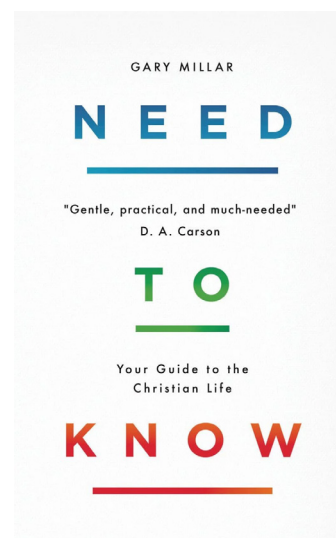
Coming to faith in Jesus can be an overwhelming experience that is joyful, daunting, confusing, peaceful, hopeful, convicting and transforming, all at the same time. In this series, we'll be going back to the basics of what we need to know, in order to live as people who belong to Jesus. That doesn't mean it will be simple, because we'll be covering a lot of topics, such as knowing God as Father, Son and Spirit and what it means to be 'in Christ'. We are going to work hard to see some big ideas, but our prayer is that this series will give you increasing confidence in living for Jesus. We hope to gain clarity on **WHAT WE BELIEVE** and **WHY IT MATTERS**.

There will be something for you, whether you are not yet a Christian, just new to faith, struggling to hang on to Jesus, or have been going strong as a disciple for years.

We will loosely be following a book by Gary Millar, called *Need to Know*. You can grab a copy of his book as a further help.

As we do discuss these things, it may sometimes seem like it's too much to take in, and/or we'll never get our heads around the way God is at work in us and in the world. But we can take heart and approach the task with **CONFIDENCE**, because God has revealed himself in his word, the Bible. So, what he wants us to know and what we need to know can be found there.

However, we also want to approach this task with **HUMILITY**, because we stand in a long line of people who've thought about these things before us — and there are some things that we still can't piece together. This is because we are finite humans who are trying to understand and infinitely wise, eternal and unlimited God. So, we humbly acknowledge that he is beyond us in many ways. But this is good news, because who wants a God they can totally understand. No, our God is bigger and better and greater and more magnificent than we can describe and that should be a source of comfort and assurance. ... but more on this in the weeks ahead.



TERM PLANNER

DATE	BIBLE TALK TOPIC	GROWTH GROUP
Week of Monday 27 January		Starting Well
Sunday 2 February	KNOWING GOD — FATHER & SON	
Week of Monday 3 February		Study #1 — FATHER & SON
Sunday 9 February	KNOWING GOD — SON & SPIRIT	
Week of Monday 10 February		Study #2 — SON, SPIRIT & BEING UNITED WITH CHRIST
Sunday 16 February	KNOWING GOD — UNITED WITH CHRIST	
Week of Monday 17 February		Study #3 — GOD'S WORD & WILL
Sunday 23 February	KNOWING GOD — HEARING HIS VOICE & KNOWING HIS WILL	
Week of Monday 24 February		Study #4 — PRAYER
Sunday 2 March	KNOWING GOD — A LIVING RELATIONSHIP THROUGH PRAYER	
Week of Monday 3 March		Study #5 — SIN, TEMPTATION, REPENTANCE & FAITH
Sunday 9 March	KNOWING OURSELVES — SIN & TEMPTATION, REPENTANCE & FAITH	
Week of Monday 10 March		Study #6 — HOLINESS
Sunday 16 March	KNOWING OURSELVES — TRANSFORMATION & HOLINESS	
Week of Monday 17 March		Study #7 — CHURCH & MISSION
Sunday 23 March	KNOWING COMMUNITY — WHY WE NEED CHURCH	
Week of Monday 24 March		Study #8 — JOY & SUFFERING
Sunday 30 March	KNOWING COMMUNITY — MISSION & EVANGELISM	
Week of Monday 31 March		Study #9 — LIVING FOR JESUS
Sunday 6 April	LOVING GOD IN JOY & SUFFERING	(school holidays)
Sunday 13 April	LOVING JESUS & LIVING FOR JESUS	(school holidays)

HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF THIS SERIES COMPANION

ON YOUR OWN— Work through the questions before your GROWTH GROUP so that you've started thinking about the topic before you arrive. You can take a look at the extra passages at the end of each study, if you have time. And there is another book you could check out for each topic too.

WITH YOUR GROWTH GROUP—Don't be afraid to stop and talk about things that grab your attention or raise questions for you. In the midst of some big ideas, we want to see how they lead us to praise God and follow him with wholehearted devotion.

ON SUNDAY—Make sure you bring your SERIES COMPANION along with you, so that you can keep track of any questions you have and record the way that God's Spirit is helping you to understand His Word and grow in your love for Jesus.

These series companions are designed to be used as either a print version, or interactively on a device. Use whichever method is most helpful for you.

*growing
disciples*
sacrifice. serve. speak

KNOWING GOD — FATHER AND SON

HEBREWS 1v1-6

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

What is hard for us in talking about the one God as Trinity (Father, Son and Spirit)?

The first key thing we need to know as Christians, is to know God as Trinity. Trinity is not a word used in the Bible, but it is a theological term that helps explain who God is, as one God in three persons. From the beginnings of Christianity, people have been trying to understand and explain this big idea (while refuting heresies). The Nicene Creed from the 4th Century AD puts it this way:

‘We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty;
Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
True God from True God,
Begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through Him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven.
By the power of the Holy Spirit
He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
And was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life;
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
And the life of the world to come.
Amen.’

Rather than trying to understand how the one God can be three persons, we’re going to focus on the relationship between Father and Son this week, and how the Spirit draws us into that relationship next week. These are weighty topics, but we’re going to work hard to understand them because it is something essential to knowing God. There will be some extra material at the end of each study if you want to dive deeper. We are going to avoid analogies, because they inevitably lead us into error.

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 8v4-6

Paul is alluding to the *Shema*, a central Jewish creed that was recited every day, from Deuteronomy 6v4

‘Hear, O Israel, The LORD our God, the LORD, is one.’

1. What can we know about the one God in v6?

2. What do we learn about ourselves in relationship to Father and Son?

READ HEBREWS 1v1-6

3. What is the Father's purpose in all of creation and salvation?

4. How is the relationship between Father and Son described? (cf Colossians 1v15-17)

We've had hints in the Old Testament of a Son who would have the office and title of reigning heir, for example, Psalm 2.

READ PSALM 2

5. What is the relationship between God and this Son?

Jesus steps into this office as *THE Son*.

READ ROMANS 1v1-4

6. How is Jesus the awaited Son and heir?

READ JOHN 5v16-30 (you can also read vv1-15 for context)

Jesus isn't just a son who is a Messiah-heir, like David. He is the real Son of his Father.

7. How does the Father feel about his Son? What does this lead him to do for his Son?

8. How are Father and Son distinct, yet equal and inseparable?

9. How does the Son respond to his Father? Is he an unwilling participant in his Father's work?

10. How is there both love and order within this relationship?

READ JOHN 17v1-5; 20-26

11. Was God needy or lonely without us? How are we included in the Father's eternal love and glorifying of his Son?

12. In 1-2 sentences, summarise what we've seen about Father and Son today.

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY** together.

What has caused you to marvel about God today?

How has your understanding of God's purposes in salvation grown, as you've seen the Father and Son?



How can you be sure of the Father's love for you? Do you have to twist his arm to listen to you? Do you have to fear approaching him?

Some people caricature the Father as the stern God and the Son as the compassionate human, who has to placate him. How would you respond to this kind of thinking?



What questions do you still have?



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God who is Father, Son and Spirit. Pray that we would know him. Praise the Father from whom all things came and for whom we live. Praise the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.
- Praise the Father for showing us himself through his Son, the radiance of his glory, his image and representative. Praise him as the risen king, the heir of all creation who rules at the Father's right hand.
- Praise the Father and Son for loving one another throughout eternity, working together for our salvation. Honour the Father as the Son does. Honour the Son as the Father does.
- Praise Father and Son for including us in their love, and drawing us into relationship and unity. Pray we'd have confidence in their love for us.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

The passages we've looked at today, saw just a small cross section of what the Bible teaches about Father and Son. So we haven't just plucked a few verses out. If you want to take a deeper dive into God as Father and Son, take a look at the passages below. Or check out this book by Andrew Moody.

FATHER AND SON ARE EQUAL AND ETERNAL

John 1v1-3, 14; 10v58; Ephesians 3v14-21; Titus 2v11-13; 2 Peter 1v1; 1 John 1v1-3; 2v22-24; 4v14-15; 5v20; 2 John 9; Revelation 1v8,17; 21v6; 22v13-16

SEEING THE SON IS SEEING THE FATHER

Matthew 11v27; John 8v56-58 (Exodus 3v14-15); 12v44-45; 14v5-14; 2 Corinthians 4v4; Jude 24-25; Revelation 21v22-23

SON IS AN OFFICE - MESSIAH

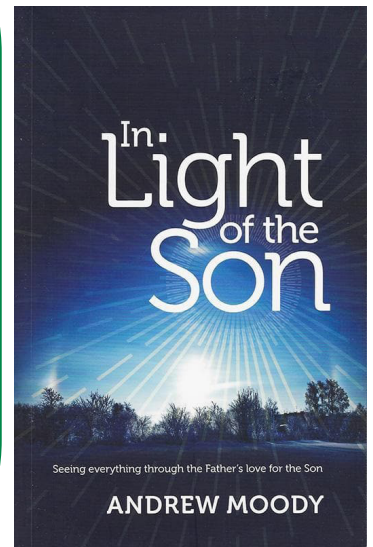
2 Samuel 7; Daniel 7; Jeremiah 23v5-6; John 1v49; Hebrews 3v6; 4v14; 7v28

HEIR WHO RECEIVES CREATION AND KINGDOM

Acts 13v32-34; Colossians 1v15-20; Ephesians 1v3-14; Hebrews 1v10-13 (Psalm 110); 1 Peter 3v21b-22; Revelation 4-5

HE'S A REAL SON, BELOVED

Matthew 3v17; 17v5; John 3v16; 15v9-10; Romans 8v32; Galatians 4v4; Hebrews 5v7-10



HISTORICAL HERESIES & THEIR MODERN EXPRESSIONS

HERESY	MODERN EXPRESSION	ANALOGY	ERROR	PASSAGES MISUSED	CORRECTIVES
Arianism	Jehovah's Witnesses		Jesus is not God; Jesus is not eternally begotten, he was created; 'There was a time when he was not'	Proverbs 8v22 Acts 2v36 Romans 8v29	John 1v1-3; Revelation 1v8,17; 21v6; 22v13-16
Modalism	Oneness Pentecostalism	Water/Ice/Steam Someone who is concurrently a son, father and grandfather in different relationships	God is in 3 alternating forms, but not co-existent and not co-eternal	Deuteronomy 6v4 John 10v30 Acts 2v38 with Matthew 28v19	Matthew 1v13-17 1 Timothy 2v5
Adoptionism	Mormanism		Jesus is not God's Son from eternity, but was adopted by God	Psalm 2v7 Mark 1v9-11 Acts 13v32-33 Romans 1v3-4 Hebrews 5v5-10	John 10v58 17v5, 24
Kenosis	New Apostolic Reformation		Jesus emptied himself of divinity while on earth, performed miracles only as a man, but in Spirit's power, so we can do greater miracles than him Jesus doesn't remain fully God The Spirit makes him (and us) divine	Philippians 2v7 John 14v12	2 Corinthians 8v9 John 1v1-3, 14 Colossians 1v15-20
Subordinationism	Some forms of Complementarianism		The Son is eternally inferior to the Father in his own being, because he is sent from the Father and obeys him	John 5v19; 30; 6v57; 14v28 1 Corinthians 11v3	John 5v21-27; 10v28-30; Colossians 1v19
Non-hierarchical	Some forms of Egalitarianism		There is no order/hierarchy within the eternal relationships of the trinity (only in the incarnation of Jesus)	Mark 13v32; John 10v28-30; 17v1-5	Colossians 1v15-20 1 Corinthians 15v23-28 1 Corinthians 11v3
Partialism		3 leaf clover Egg (with shell, yolk and white)	God is in 3 parts that only form God when they come together	Matthew 3v16-17; 28v19	Deuteronomy 6v4 John 5v19-30
Docetism	Islam Belief that Jesus' resurrection was spiritual, not bodily		Jesus was not truly or fully human His death & resurrection were illusions or made up	1 Corinthians 15 Philippians 2v7	John 1v14 1 John 4v2-3 2 John 7 Colossians 2v9-10 Hebrews 2v14-15
Unitarianism	Unitarian Universalist Association		There is one God but Jesus is not divine because he is a distinct person, as a son. Links with humanism, rationalism and universalism (all people are saved and there is no eternal judgement)	John 8v17-18 Acts 10v38 1 Timothy 2v5 1 Corinthians 3v23 John 20v17	John 1v1-3, 14; 10v58 Ephesians 3v14-21 Titus 2v11-13 2 Peter 1v1 1 John 1v1-3; 2v22-24; 4v14-15; 5v20; 2 John 9
Tritheism	Some Seventh Day Adventists		There are 3 gods	Matthew 28v19	Deuteronomy 6v4 Mark 12:29-32; Ephesians 4:6; James 2:19

KNOWING GOD — SON AND SPIRIT

LUKE 4v1-21

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Share something about your Dad with the group. A quirky fact? Something about your relationship? Something else?

Last week, we saw Jesus, the eternal Son and heir of the Father. Father and Son glorify one another in an eternal relationship of love. Today, we will see how the Spirit of God empowers the Son, uniting us to him and to the Father, so that we are sons and heirs too.

READ DEUTERONOMY 34v5-12; 2 KINGS 2v1-18

1. How did God's Spirit empower Moses and Elijah?

2. What happened as Moses and Elijah's lives ended?

The Old Testament is brimming with stories of how the Spirit of God fills certain people and empowers them to lead and save his people. Moses wishes that the Lord would put his Spirit on all people (Numbers 11v24-29). But throughout the Old Testament, his wish remains unfulfilled, while Ezekiel looks forward to a day when God will cleanse and hearts through his Spirit (Ezekiel 36v24-27). Into these long years of longing steps Jesus.

READ LUKE 1v26-35; 3v21-22; 4v1, 14-21; JOHN 3v34-35; ACTS 10v37-38; ROMANS 1v1-4

3. In what ways did the Spirit empower Jesus?

'Because of the Spirit, Jesus lives in the world and gives life to others. Because of him, God and Jesus are one. Because of him, the baby born in Bethlehem grows up to become everything God wants him to be: saviour, revealer, ruler.'

Andrew Moody, *In Light of the Son*, 2015

READ JOHN 14v15-21, 26; 15v26

4. What do you notice about the relationships between Father, Son and Spirit?

We will think more about the Spirit being given to us shortly.

Early church theologians expressed the nature of the Spirit in the Nicene Creed:

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life;
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son;
With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

READ ROMANS 8v9-11

5. What is the Spirit's work in believers?

The Spirit joins us to Jesus, so that we are one with him. The Bible talks about this as being 'in Christ' or 'united to Christ'. This concept appears all over the New Testament (for a small sample see: Romans 8v1; 1 Corinthians 1v2; 2 Corinthians 5v21; Galatians 2v20; Ephesians 2v10; Philippians 2v1-2; Colossians 2v6-7; 1 Thessalonians 4v16; 2 Timothy 2v11-13; 1 Peter 5v10; 1 John 2v5-6). When we are united to Jesus, what is true for him becomes true for us.

READ ROMANS 8v14-17

Last week we saw Jesus as the Son and Heir of his Father.

6. How does this become ours through the Spirit?

READ ROMANS 8v26-30

7. What is God's will and purpose for us, through the Spirit? (see also Ephesians 3v16-21)

There is a lot more that could be said about the Spirit working in the lives of believers. If you want to look into it further, check out more passages at the end of the study.

8. In 1-2 sentences, summarise what we've seen today about Father, Son and Spirit.

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are **DEEP IN THE WORD**, **SEEKING GOD**, on **MISSION**, as we **SERVE** in **COMMUNITY** together.

How does it impact you to think about being adopted as a child of God? To be joined to Jesus, caught up in the love of Father and Son, through the Spirit?

What do you want to say to him in response?

SEEKING GOD

This study has focussed on how God's Spirit joins us into the loving relationship between the Father and the Son. This is his main role, that all of his other roles flow from.

What are the dangers in getting the emphasis skewed in another direction?



SEEKING GOD

What has been your experience of receiving God's Spirit?



SEEKING GOD

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that Jesus is filled with the Spirit in power in his life and resurrection.
- Praise him for giving us his Spirit who lives in us, giving us life and joining us to Jesus. Praise him for advocating for us and reminding us of Jesus' words.
- Thank God that he adopts us as sons and heirs, by his Spirit. Call out to him as Abba, Father.
- Pray that God might continue to work for our good in conforming us to Jesus' likeness, by his Spirit.

MORE WAYS THE SPIRIT WORKS IN US:

Genesis 2 & Psalm 104 — Spirit breathes life into all creatures
Matthew 3v11-12 — Spirit baptises us in repentance
John 3v5-8 — Spirit gives us new birth into God's kingdom
John 4v21-26 — Spirit enables us to worship Jesus in truth
John 7v37-39 — Spirit is living water for the thirsty who come to Jesus
John 16v13-14 — Spirit guides us in truth and glorifies the Son
Acts 1&2 — Spirit enables ordinary people to speak the gospel
Acts 6v1-10; Colossians 1v9 — Spirit gives wisdom to serve
Romans 5v5 — Spirit pours God's love into our hearts
Romans 8v26-27; Ephesians 6v18 — Spirit intercedes for us in prayer
Romans 15v13 — Spirit's power fills us with joy, peace and hope
Romans 15v16 — Spirit sanctifies and makes the unclean acceptable to God
1 Corinthians 2v9-16; Ephesians 1v17 — Spirit helps us understand the mind of Christ
1 Corinthians 12v3 — Spirit enables us to call Jesus our Lord
1 Corinthians 12v7-11 — Spirit gives gifts to body of Christ for the common good
1 Corinthians 14 — Spirit gives prophecy and languages for strengthening, comforting and encouraging the body and to praise God
2 Corinthians 1v21-22; 5v5; Ephesians 1v13 — Spirit is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance
2 Corinthians 3v3 — Spirit writes God's words on our hearts
Galatians 5v5 — Spirit enables us to wait by faith for God's righteousness
Galatians 5v18-25 — Spirit leads us and grows his fruit in us
Ephesians 2v19-22 — Spirit unites us to Jesus and one another, like a temple.
Ephesians 5v18, Colossians 3v16 — Spirit fills our hearts with songs to the Lord
Ephesians 5v8-6v9 — Spirit fills us to enable us to live thankful, humble lives
Ephesians 6v17; 1 Peter 1v10-12 & 2 Peter 1v20-21 — The Spirit breathes out the Word of God
1 Thessalonians 1v5 — Spirit gives joy in suffering
2 Timothy 1v7 — Spirit gives us power, love and self-discipline
Titus 3v5 — Spirit washes and renews us

KNOWING GOD — UNITED TO CHRIST

ROMANS 8

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

KNOWING GOD BY HEARING HIS VOICE

JOHN 1v1-18

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? Do you like to talk?

Over the last couple of weeks, we've thought about knowing God as Father, Son and Spirit as we're bound up into their loving relationship. But how can we get to know him?

From the very first page of the Bible, we learn that God is a speaking God (as he speaks all of creation into being). The whole Bible is a record of how God speaks to individuals (prophets), and through them to whole nations and the world. His words show what he's like, for example, that he is the I AM, the eternal God of all (Exodus 3v14). Even in narrative books of the Bible, God speaks to explain what his actions reveal about him. For example, the plagues on Egypt are a judgment demonstrating God's power and glory (Exodus 9v13-16). The book of Esther is the exception that proves the rule, as he doesn't speak at all! Throughout the first half of the Bible, God speaks over and over again to show himself to his creation and especially Israel.

Peter was a close friend of Jesus. As he writes to Christians, he wants them to know the reliability of the Jewish scriptures (what we call the Old Testament), spoken by prophets and of the gospel message about Jesus (known as the New Testament), spoken by Jesus' apostles.

READ 1 PETER 1v10-12; 2 PETER 1v16-21

1. Who authored the words of the Bible (both Old and New Testaments)? What is significant about this for how we read the Bible?

READ HEBREWS 1v1-2

2. What are various times and ways you can think of that God spoke through Old Testament prophets?

3. How has God spoken in the last days?

READ JOHN 1v1-3, 14-18

4. How is Jesus God's final word to us?

READ LUKE 24v13-27, 44

5. Is the Bible about us? Is it a guidebook? A rule book? Life hack manual? What/who is the Bible really about?

The speaking God spoke by his Spirit, through prophets who wrote down the Scriptures. But God spoke most clearly and beautifully in the person of his Son, Jesus. And the word about Jesus is still the way we hear God speak today.

READ HEBREWS 3v7-15; 4v12

The Holy Spirit speaks to us when we read Psalm 95, Numbers 13-14 and Hebrews.

6. How does God's word work in us, by his Spirit?

READ 2 TIMOTHY 3v14-17

7. How is the Bible both necessary and sufficient for those who have faith in Christ Jesus? How does it grow us?

READ PSALM 19v7-11; COLOSSIANS 3v16-17

8. Is the reading the Bible something to be endured? Knowledge to be gathered? Something optional for Christians? How do David and Paul feel about God's word?

growing disciples

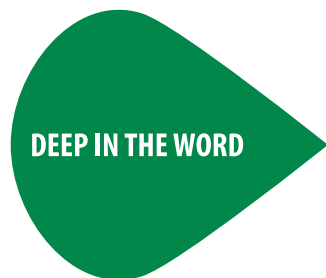
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How would you describe your attitude towards God's word?

What has been challenging for you today?

What do you want to ask God to change in you, by his Spirit?



What are the different contexts in which you hear God's voice through his word?

How can you take steps to grow in listening to him?



How can we help one another to keep sharing in Christ by his Word?

How can the message of Christ dwell richly in **rockypc**?

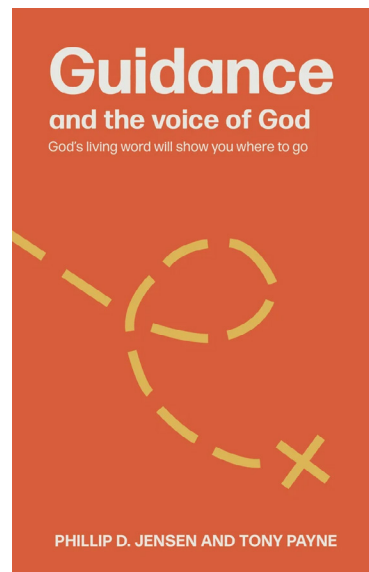
PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God, who shows himself to us as he speaks in the Bible. Praise God for the prophets of the Old Testament who were carried along by the Holy Spirit, for our sake.
- Praise God for speaking to us by his Son Jesus. Thank him that his Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us. Praise Jesus who is full of grace and truth from his Father, making him known.
- Praise God that the whole Bible points to Jesus. He is the awaited saviour, who fulfills all God's promises. Pray that we would read the Bible to see how it points to him.
- Thank God that he still speaks to us by his Spirit as we read his Word. Pray that we would listen and keep sharing in Christ.
- Pray that we would encourage one another to keep holding onto Jesus by his word. Pray that we wouldn't have hard hearts towards him.
- Pray that God would use his word to teach, rebuke, correct and train us for righteousness. Ask that we'd know it's all we need to be equipped to serve him.
- Ask forgiveness for when we haven't loved God's word. Pray that we would cherish it and love to listen to him. Pray that it would dwell amongst us richly and fill our hearts with thankfulness.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

God used various ways to speak to his people throughout the Bible. God could speak in any of these ways to us today. **BUT THE ONLY WAY HE PROMISES TO SPEAK IS THROUGH HIS WORD, BY HIS SPIRIT. SO THIS IS THE ONLY WAY WE SHOULD EXPECT TO HEAR FROM HIM.**

If you're getting tangled up in how to make decisions because you think you must get a direct word or sign from God, then check out this helpful book.



KNOWING GOD BY PRAYER

LUKE 11v1-13

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

If your prayer life were a colour, what would it be? Tell us your reasons.

Last week, we learned that God speaks to us in a person — his Son. Jesus reveals who God is, his heart for us and his grace and truth in action. The whole of the Bible is about Jesus. We delight in knowing God as we hear his voice in the Bible, through his Spirit. As God speaks to us in his Word, he invites us to respond to him in prayer. Today, we're thinking about speaking to God. We pray because of who God is, so we are going to start by looking at his character.

READ ACTS 17v24-31

1. How do we know God is all-powerful?

God is strong and able. We're not talking to a weak and ineffective God.

2. What is his relationship with all of humanity?

God is a kind Father to everyone he has made. And he wants us to seek him.

READ PSALM 115

3. How is our God better than idols?

READ ISAIAH 59v1-20

4. What prevents us from coming to God? What is it about his character?

God's holiness would keep us at bay. Yet his holiness also draws us near.

READ PSALM 65v2-4; HEBREWS 10v19-22

5. How does God act in holiness to draw us to his throne room?

Having seen God's power, goodness, relational nature, holiness and mercy; we can look at *why* we should pray to him.

READ LUKE 11v1-13

6. How is our relationship with God a reason to pray?

READ 1 JOHN 1v8-2v2

7. Why *must* we pray?

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 5v16-18

8. Why else *must* we pray?

READ 1 JOHN 5v13-15

9. What does God promise when we pray?

There is lots to say about *what* to pray. But we're just going to see Paul's example of what to pray in one passage.

READ COLOSSIANS 1v9-12

10. What are Paul's priorities in praying for the Colossian Christians?

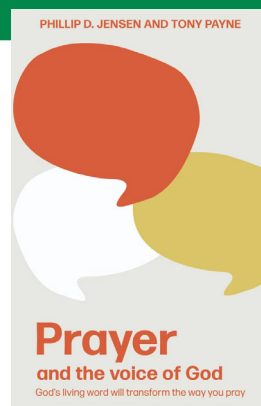
Prayer isn't emptying our minds, as some religions do in meditation. It's full of thoughtfulness and purpose. Rather than being self-focused and small, prayer is asking for God to bear out his will in ours and others' lives. Prayer is joyful and thankful, rather than somber and fearful. And prayer is responding to truth about God, e.g. Christ has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (2v3), so Paul prays that God would fill the Colossians with understanding and fruitful knowledge.

Hearing God's voice in his word always leads us to respond in by speaking to him in thankfulness, wonder, repentance, asking for his help and intervention.

Even if we aren't sure how to put words to our prayers, God promises His Spirit will take our mumblings to God (Romans 8v26-27). We also know that God delights in working out his kindness, compassion and love towards us (Romans 8v28-30).

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Do you have questions about whether God needs us to pray or if there is any real power in our prayers? If you want to think more about what prayer is, why we don't pray, how to pray and what to pray for, then check out this book.



growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What stirs your heart to want to pray?

What holds you back?

What hope is there for when we fail?



'Prayer is not a matter of technique but of relationship.' Jensen & Payne, 2019

What difference do you think our view of God makes to how we pray? If he is a stern, distant boss? An unknowable mystery? A mate, who's the same as you? A kind and powerful Father?



How can you grow in this area of your relationship with God? How can we help one another in this?



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he is willing and able to answer our prayers. Thank him for hearing us as we cry out to him.
- Praise God for his holiness and mercy in drawing us near, through Jesus' death for us.
- Thank God that he is our Father, who is good and kind. Thank him that we can come to him, with shameless audacity, in the power of his Spirit.
- Confess our dependence on God's grace in our sin and suffering.
- Ask forgiveness for so often failing to talk to our generous God.
- Praise God that he promises to answer our prayers, in line with his good will. Pray that we would believe this and keep asking him.
- Pray that our prayers would be constant, in faith and humility to the one who can hear us and help us.

KNOWING OURSELVES — SIN & TEMPTATION, REPENTANCE & FAITH

JAMES 4v1-10

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

What makes 'sin' a dirty word in our cultural moment?

Previously, we've seen that God's word exposes our hearts:

"For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account." Hebrews 4v12-13

Today we're going to think about whether there's any hope for us when sin rises up in our lives.

READ GENESIS 3v1-10

There are multiple ways to describe the nature of Adam and Eve's sin eg they sin by disobeying; they sin by rebelling against God.

1. What are some other ways can we describe the sin in this story?

The sin of the first two people has far reaching effects on all of creation (Genesis 3v7-24). Shame, hiding, blame and a struggle for power are part of our relationships. Life is full of pain, frustration and struggle. And we find ourselves far away from God, cast away with death hanging over us.

Sin and its effects pass from one generation to another, so that we live it and feel it too.

READ PSALM 51v5-6; HEBREWS 3v12-13; ROMANS 7v14-24

2. How is sin ingrained in us?

READ ROMANS 7v25-8v8

3. What has God done for sinners like us?

Thanks be to God for his deliverance through his Son, Jesus! We are now set free from condemnation, and death. We are freed to live by the Spirit, rather than our fleshly, sinful desires. And yet, we still feel the pull of sin.

James writes to Christians, saved by Jesus, and yet, he describes the way sin is still at work in them.

READ JAMES 1v13-18; 4v1-10

4. What is the cause of these Christians' sin? How does it display itself?

Remember the cause of Eve's sin in Genesis 3v6?

5. How does our sin set us against God?

6. How should we respond to our temptations, desires and sin?

7. What hope is there for if we come to God in humble repentance?

8. James doesn't use the word 'faith' here. But how is the same concept of faith at work, as sinners turn to God? (see also 1 Timothy 1v13-17)

Martin Luther unwittingly began the Reformation movement in 1517, by nailing his 95 theses on the Wittenburg church door. The first thesis was 'When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent', he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance'.

In the face of our temptations and sins, we can run to God over and over again, knowing that he draws near to humble sinners. He never runs out of grace, as his mercy is poured out abundantly. We can have faith that he lifts us up with passionate love, as he longs to see his Spirit purifying us.

growing disciples

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What desires are within you, tempting and leading you to sin? Think for yourself for a few minutes.

To help you think about your desires, Gary Millar shares some of his in *Need to Know*:

- *A very strong desire to prove himself*
- *A very strong desire to be right*
- *A very strong desire to be accepted and liked*
- *A very strong desire to be first*
- *A very strong desire to indulge himself*
- *A very strong desire to be appreciated*



SEEKING GOD



What do you find hard about turning to God in your sin?

What do you struggle to believe about God, as you acknowledge your sin?



Jl Packer, in *A Passion for Holiness* says repentance is:

- Realistic recognition that we have wronged God
- Regretful remorse at having dishonoured God
- Reverent requesting of God's pardon
- Resolute renunciation of sin
- Requisite restitution to those we have hurt

Spend some time repenting to God together.

PRAYER IDEAS

- Confess that we call God a liar and accuse him of holding out on us. We seek to be like God, deciding good for ourselves. In our disobedience, we want autonomy from him. Our sin leaves us alienated from God and one another, hiding in shame.
- Praise God that he has delivered us through Jesus Christ our Lord. Praise him for sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.
- Praise God that he has set us free from sin and death. Thank him for his Spirit who lives in us, changing our desires.
- Confess that our sin is deeply ingrained in us, hardening our hearts and deceiving us. Acknowledge that it's in our very nature to sin.
- Confess the desires that tempt us and lead us to sin against the God who saved us. Repent and seek forgiveness for our unfaithfulness.
- Pray that we'd come to God in humility, submitting ourselves to him. Pray that we'd mourn our sin.
- Ask that we'd have faith in God's abundant mercy and grace that lifts us up.

KNOWING OURSELVES —
TRANSFORMATION & HOLINESS
ROMANS 6v1-14, TITUS 2v11-3v8 & GALATIANS 5v13-26

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

'How little people know who think that holiness is dull. When one meets the real thing... it's irresistible.' CS Lewis
Is holiness dull or irresistible to you?

Last week, we saw that in our temptation and sin, we can run to God. We humbly cling to him in repentance and faith, and he pours out his abundant mercy.

God himself is holy in purity, justice, kindness, wisdom, love and power (see Revelation 4v8-11; 5v9-14). He is far beyond us, in all of these ways. His holiness is dangerous for sinful humanity (Isaiah 6v1-5). Yet, in his holiness, he draws us near.

READ HEBREWS 10v10-16

1. How can sinful people draw near to a holy God?

Through a sinless Saviour, we *are* holy, in our position before God. There is nothing to add to Jesus' once-for-all declaration that we are now holy. And yet, we are also *being made* holy, in a progressive transformation. We often struggle to see how this could happen in our lives. Our sin plagues us and it seems like nothing will ever change. It turns out that we don't need more to do, more rules or life hacks. We have all we need already, as a gift from God himself.

'To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours: Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.' 2 Peter 1v1-3

READ HEBREWS 12v4-13

2. How does God the Father grow us in holiness?

READ ROMANS 6v1-14

3. How does God the Son change the way we view ourselves?

READ GALATIANS 5v16-26

4. How does God the Spirit transform our desires?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2v12-13

5. Whose work is it to grow us in holiness?

READ COLOSSIANS 2v16-3v14

God works in us, as we actively participate.

6. So do we need to add more rules to make us more holy?

7. What do our hearts need to love and cherish?

8. What do our minds need to know and remember?

When we want to change, Tim Chester says we're motivated by trying to prove ourselves to God and we think we can add to what Jesus has already done at the cross. Or we want to prove ourselves to others (seeking their praise or fearing their condemnation). Or to prove to ourselves that we have willpower and the ability to justify ourselves. It is all about me and what I can do.

In our battle against sin, we need to acknowledge these lies and keep preaching the truth to our own hearts.

Change comes when we love God more than our sin. Tim Chester says we can cultivate a delight in

God's greatness (so I don't have to be in control)

God's glory (so I don't have to fear others)

God's goodness (so I don't look for satisfaction elsewhere)

God's grace (so I don't have to prove myself)

You Can Change, Tim Chester

READ GALATIANS 6v7-9

9. How do you think we tend to sow to please our flesh?

10. What will it mean to sow to please the Spirit instead?

growing disciples

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What has warmed your heart today, as you've seen how God works to make us holy and grow us in holiness? What do you want to cherish about him?



What is one area of your life where you need to grow in holiness? What would you like to change?

What lies are you believing? What truths do you need to turn to?

How are you sowing to please your flesh? How can you sow to please the Spirit instead?



Do you sometimes feel like nothing is changing in you? What do you need to know and believe?



How can our **rockypc** COMMUNITY grow together in holiness? How can we help one another?

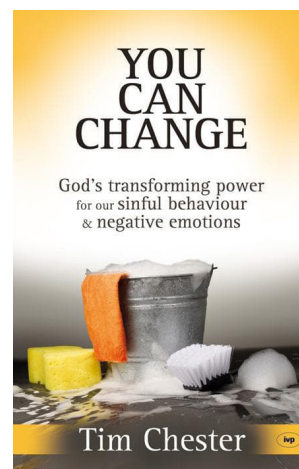


PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God for making us holy through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Praise him that we can now draw near to the holy God.
- Thank God for making us increasingly more holy, in his image. Thank him that he disciplines us as a Father.
- Praise him that we're united to Jesus in his death and resurrection, so that his grace is now our master.
- Praise him for his Spirit who grows his fruit in us so that our desires are changed.
- Pray that we would work out our salvation with fear and trembling, as God works in us.
- Pray that we wouldn't rely on rules to change us. Pray that our hearts would be set with Christ who reigns in heaven. Pray that God's forgiveness would grow our love and compassion.
- Pray that our minds would be set on the life we have in Christ. Ask that we'd know we've been made new in him.
- Pray that we'd live to please God's Spirit, rather than following our flesh.
- Pray that **rockypc** would be a COMMUNITY that can share our struggles and failures honestly. Pray that we'd meet one another with grace and compassion. Pray that we'd help one another delight in Jesus.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you want more help with growing in holiness, check out this book by Tim Chester



KNOWING COMMUNITY — WHY WE NEED CHURCH

HEBREWS 10v19-25

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

How long have you been part of **rockypc**? What first brought you to be with us?

Last week, we thought about how the holy God draws us in and grows us in holiness. Holiness is never a solitary pursuit. God has never just been saving individuals to worship him on their own. He has always had far greater plans.

READ EXODUS 19v3-19

1. What is happening as this group of people assembles at Mount Sinai?

God formed the people of Israel as he rescued them. They were to be a kingdom and a nation belonging to him. And so he gathered them to hear his voice. Belonging to God, meant belonging to one another. The Old Testament traces the story of the people of Israel who are eventually scattered in judgement (rather than gathered in blessing), as they are sent into exile. But when Jesus comes to this fractured nation, he begins a new gathering around himself, around a new mountain and a new word.

READ HEBREWS 12v18-24

2. What is happening as this group of people assembles in the heavenly Jerusalem?

READ EPHESIANS 2v11-18; 3v10-11

3. How important is this new people God has created, in Christ Jesus?

God had eternal purposes to make a new people through Christ.

As those who are far away are drawn near and bitter enemies become united, God's wisdom is on display to the cosmos; and, anyone who has put their faith in Jesus is gathered in the heavenly Jerusalem now.

This is an unseen reality for us right now.

Flowing out of this truth, we are also included in local, visible gatherings called churches.

rockypc is not a fragment of the greater whole, as though we are a puzzle piece that doesn't display the full picture. Each local gathering (or church) is a full representation of the heavenly reality.

God gives us multiple pictures of the communities he's gathering.

READ EPHESIANS 3v19-22

4. How are we a temple to the Lord?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12v12-26

5. How are we Jesus' own body?

READ 1 PETER 5v1-5

6. How are we God's flock?

READ 1 THESSALONIANS 4v9-10

7. How are we God's family?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 11v2-4

8. How are we Jesus' bride?

All of these pictures highlight how precious we are to God, that he would be so intertwined with us that we become his body, his family and his bride. Church is the place he cares for us as he shepherds us by his word. If we delight in all that Jesus has done to unite us to him and to one another, we want to keep gathering as his church.

READ HEBREWS 10v19-25

v19-21 summarises the author's message in the rest of the book. v22-25 explains the implications, with 3 'let us' exhortations

9. What has Jesus won for us? v19-21

10. What does this mean we'll keep doing? v22-25

11. When we meet as brothers and sisters, what will we focus on?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 14v20-25

Paul is in the middle of comparing the use of prophecy with the use of foreign languages (tongues) in the gatherings of God’s people. Don’t get caught up in what these 2 gifts are at this point. But notice what we want for any unbelievers who come to our gatherings.

12.As we welcome unbelievers to church, what do we want them to hear, believe and know? How do we want them to respond?

growing disciples

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What has struck home to you today about church? As the gathering of God’s saved people? About its importance in God’s plans? About what we’re like as Jesus’ temple, body, flock, family and bride?

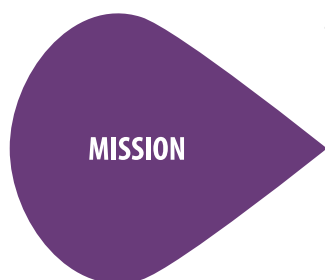


What would you say to someone who says ‘I don’t need to go to church to be a Christian’?



Are you in danger of falling out of the habit of gathering with God’s family? What would keep you away?

What do you need to remember when you feel the tug of those things? Or the struggle is immense?
See the box on the next page for more help with this.



What needs to change at **rockypc** for more unbelievers to join us, to be convicted of their sin and to worship God, knowing he is really among us?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God that he has brought us to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, to thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to his church, to himself, to Jesus our mediator.
- Praise God that he has united us together as a new humanity. Praise him for bringing us who were far away, near to him. Praise him that as enemies become united in Jesus, the whole universe can see God's wisdom and power.
- Praise God for making us his church as his temple, dwelling with us. Praise him that we are built on Christ and his word.
- Praise him that we are Christ's body who need one another, as we love and care. Pray we would honour one another and use our gifts to serve.
- Praise God that we are God's flock with pastors who watch over and teach us. Pray they would lead with integrity and that we'd follow with humility.
- Praise God that we are his family. Pray that our love for our brothers and sisters would grow.
- Praise God that we are Christ's bride, beloved and precious to him. Pray that together, we would be devoted and faithful to him.
- Praise God that Jesus is our great high priest, whose blood means we can approach God with confidence.
- Pray that we'd keep drawing near to him with full assurance of guilt cleansed.
- Ask that we'd hold on to the hope we profess in our faithful Saviour.
- Pray we'd stay in the habit of meeting together. Ask that we'd spur one another on to love and good deeds, looking forward to Jesus' return.
- Pray that our friends and family who don't yet believe would join our gatherings. Ask that they'd be convicted of their sin and see that God is among us. Pray they'd fall down in worship of the God who can save them.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

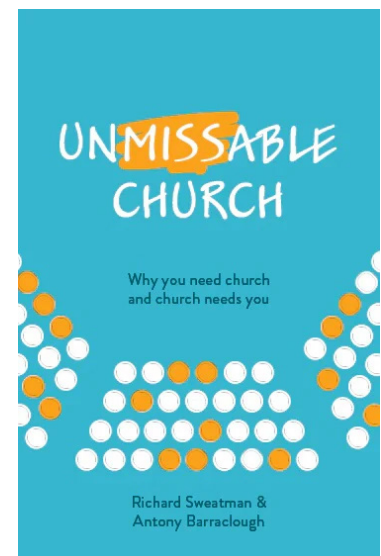
There are all sorts of reasons that people are not regular in meeting with other Christians at church. Richard Sweatman and Antony Barraclough talk through some of the big ones in their book *Unmissable Church*. For more help in your struggles, see what they say in these chapters:

'I don't deserve to be in church': Guilt

'I have other things on': Time and priorities

'It's complicated': Relationships

'I'm not well': Mental illness



KNOWING COMMUNITY — MISSION & EVANGELISM

MATTHEW 28v16-20, ROMANS 10v1-17 & 2 CORINTHIANS 5v11-6v2

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

Something I Was Reminded About:

A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

LOVING GOD IN JOY & SUFFERING

PHILIPPIANS 3v7-14

IN THE SPACE BELOW YOU CAN TAKE NOTES FROM THE BIBLE TALK. (IF YOU'RE USING THIS ON A DEVICE YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO CLICK AND START TYPING.)

Something I Never Knew:

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A Question I Still Have:

Something I Was Challenged To Think Differently About / Do Differently:

Something I Can Share:

A Key Verse:

My prayer in response to God's word:

When have you been most joyful as a Christian? What has killed/dulled your joy at other times?

We've spent all term thinking about knowing God. We have been united to Jesus by faith, so that we are now sons of God. We've been adopted into his family and nothing can change that. But our experience of being God's children varies. Tim Chester expresses it like this:

'God relates to us and in return we relate to God. So we contribute to the relationship. What we do affects our experience of God. Imagine two sons. Jack makes breakfast for his father every day and they chat for half an hour while they eat it together. Later in the day Jack and his father hang out together — flying a kite, playing football, reading a book. Meanwhile Jack's older brother, Phil, is embarrassed by his father. Phil stays in his room all day with his music turned up loud. On the rare occasions when Phil communicates with his father, it normally takes the form of dismissive grunts.

How many sons does the father have? The answer, of course, is two. And what did they do to become sons? Nothing. They were simply born as sons. But only Jack enjoys being a son. Only Jack experiences a good relationship with his father.'

Enjoying God p20-21

We have an inkling that knowing God should be joyful, though it doesn't always feel that way. Today we're going to think about how to cultivate joy in belonging to Jesus.

This term we have already seen three key ways to enjoy our God: by getting DEEP IN HIS WORD (Colossians 3v15-17), by SEEKING HIM (Matthew 7v9-11) and by being a COMMUNITY who love him together (Ephesians 3v14-19).

There are more everyday ways, we can rejoice in knowing our Lord!

READ PHILIPPIANS 3v7-14

1. What is Paul's greatest treasure?

2. How is this a treasure now, and for the future?

READ JAMES 1v17-18; 1 TIMOTHY 6v17-19

3. How does God treat us in every moment? How can we respond to a Father like this?

In every pleasure, we can enjoy our Father's generosity. We can joyfully thank him for the many beautiful aspects of his salvation, including that we gain Christ himself. And we can notice everyday gifts of our Father, and turn to him in thanks.

Repeatedly, God tells us he's a Father who can grant us joy, even in the midst of hardship.

READ JAMES 1v2-5

4. How can trials (of any kind) possibly be joyful?

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 1v3-11

5. What kind of Father do we have, even when we are in the midst of suffering?

READ MATTHEW 11v27-30

6. What kind of Lord do we have, even when we are weary and burdened?

READ ROMANS 8v26-27

7. What kind of help does the Spirit give, in our groaning?

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12v22-26; 1 THESSALONIANS 2v17-3v9

8. How can brothers and sisters bring us joy in trials?

Father, Son and Spirit are always near to us, even when life is painful. In fact, God uses these hardships to grow our perseverance, hope and dependence on him. In suffering, we often see God's compassionate, gentle and intimate care more clearly and beautifully. When we find it hard to feel joyful in suffering, we can lean into this kind of God. We can ask for and look for his comfort, rest and help. This may even lead to a deep joy that is more than happiness, or a smooth and easy life. And we can lean into our church COMMUNITY who can share in our suffering and joys. We can have great joy in seeing others grow in faith and love, in the Lord, in the midst of trials.

Most of our hardships are a result of living in a fallen world, with broken relationships, painful toil and failing bodies. And we can know joy in each of them. But God's Word tells us that there's a particular kind of suffering that can bring great joy, in a particular way.

READ 1 PETER 4v12-19

9. How is this particular suffering described?

10. How might suffering along with Christ be a joyful experience? (See also Hebrews 12v1-3)

growing disciples

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How might knowing a Father, who gives us his Son, and every good gift, bring you joy each day?

How will you cultivate joy in your generous Father?



What is it in God's character that you treasure in times of hardship?

When have you known joy in suffering? (in everyday life or because you follow Jesus)

How will you cultivate joy in your current trials? What do you need to remember in the trials that are around the corner?



What brings you joy in times of sufferings for our **rockypc** COMMUNITY?

How will we cultivate joy together?

PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God, who has given us the greatest treasure — Christ himself. Pray that we would delight in him now, and that we would press on to see him face to face in heaven.
- Praise our Father, who gives us every good gift. Pray that we would enjoy his gifts to us and give him great thanks.
- Pray that we would know God's joy in trials of many kinds. Pray that he would use these times to grow our perseverance, wisdom and maturity.
- Praise him that he is the God of all compassion and comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles. Pray that we'd rely on him, setting our hope on the one who can deliver us.
- Praise the Son who is gentle and humble in heart. Pray that we'd come to him for rest in our weariness and burdens.
- Thank God for his Spirit who knows us, who intercedes and groans along with us in weakness and pain. Pray that we would call out to God through him.
- Thank God that we can share together as a COMMUNITY when we're experiencing hardships. Pray that we'd rejoice to see the way others' faith and love grow. Pray that we'd mourn and rejoice together.

- Pray that we would have great joy in times where we are called to participate in Christ's sufferings. Ask that we'd praise God that we bear his name. Pray that we'd commit ourselves to our faithful Creator and be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you want more help in enjoying God, check out this book by Tim Chester



LOVING JESUS & LIVING FOR JESUS

PHILIPPIANS 2v1-11

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My prayer in response to God's word:

What do you think guides the average Australian's decisions about what is good and right?

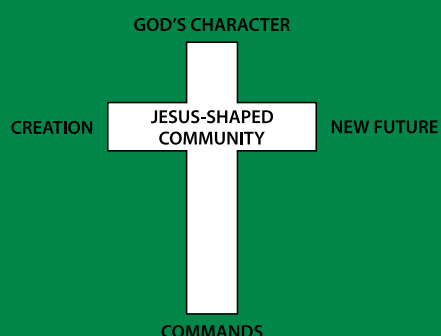
We started this series in seeing how we live in a Christ-powered world. We were made by him and for him (Hebrews 1v1-4; Colossians 1v15-20; 1 Corinthians 8v4-6). Knowing Jesus affects every part of our lives — how we think about ourselves, other people, the world; our passions and longings; our decisions, how we speak; and what we do. Being 'in Christ' shapes and directs our whole reality. As we get to know him better, we grow in living gospel-shaped lives.

'Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him' Colossians 3v17

But it might leave you asking, how can we know what living for Jesus looks like? Western ideas about how to live wisely and morally revolve around choosing between 1 of 4 principles - Rules, Rights, Values and Results. Each of these has their strengths, and resonates a little with us as Christians. But each fall short too. See if you recognise these approaches to living a moral life:

1. **Rules** — following codes of conduct etc helps with the complexities of life and gives parameters to it. But rules can't cover every aspect of our thoughts and feelings. We have to keep adding more to cover new challenges. And they often inflame our sinful desires (Romans 7v7-11; Colossians 2v20-22)
2. **Rights** — thinking about what every human needs and should receive as their rights, defends the vulnerable and promotes justice. But there is disagreement over what essential human rights are, and this approach fails to explain where the rights come from.
3. **Values** — living by certain values tries to describe a greater reality to life that goes beyond rules and rights. But in Western culture, values are self-chosen and can conflict with one another's values. They are often vague and tell us more about what a person hopes for and wants to be, than what they actually do or should do.
4. **Results** — thinking about how to live in light of future consequences can promote the good of society. However, it often boils down to 'the ends justify the means' so that I do whatever I want and however I want.

While we recognise some aspects of these approaches in God's word, they don't quite match what we know about a Christ-powered world. They often fail to acknowledge the taint of sin, or the impact of group-pressure on our human reasoning. The Bible has a bigger vision, that goes beyond rules, rights, values and results, to align ourselves with God's view of the world. We are going to see 5 aspects to this gospel vision. And then see how it works in one area of life, to help us use them in the rest of life.



1. The character of God
 2. Creation order
 3. Commands
 4. A new future
 5. A Jesus-shaped community
- (from 'Joined up Life' by Andrew Cameron)*

READ EPHESIANS 4v17-5v1

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

1. Without going into specifics about the sinful actions listed here, describe how God's character shapes our new selves?

READ GENESIS 1v24-31; 1 TIMOTHY 4v1-6

CREATION ORDER

2. How is the world imprinted with God's goodness and order?

3. What connection does Paul draw between the good created order and true living (and teaching)?

READ LEVITICUS 19v13-18; MATTHEW 22v34-40

COMMANDS

4. What motivates all of the commands of the Bible?

There are so many commands in the Bible, that sometimes people describe it as a 'rule book'. But this totally misunderstands the nature of biblical commands. God gave the Old Testament laws as fatherly instruction to Israel to teach them to love — both him and one another. Jesus exposes the hearts of Pharisees who use rules for their selfish gain, rather than to love (Matthew 15v1-9).

Christians often get tangled up when we think about how to obey Old Testament laws. Whenever we're reading these commands, we need to remember the story arc of the Bible. God chose to use Abraham's family to bless the whole world (Genesis 12v1-3). He gave this one family/nation laws to teach them to love, until the Son of God came. Christians are not bound by the Israelite laws. Through faith in the obedient Son, we can lovingly obey in the Spirit (Romans 8v1-4; Galatians 3v23-4v7; 5v13-26).

But this doesn't mean we totally disregard these Old Testament laws either (Matthew 5v17-20). As we read them, we take them as wisdom for living for Jesus (eg Romans 12v8-10)

Even New Testament commands (from Jesus and the apostles) are not given as rules to keep for their own sake, but as rules that promote love for God and for others (eg Matthew 5v21-26). So our love for God and others encompasses his rules, but it goes further. We don't just tick off rules, we ask 'how can I love others?'

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 15v19-26; 2 PETER 3v8-14

A NEW FUTURE

5. How does the future shape our HOPES in the present? How does it shape our ACTIONS?

READ PHILIPPIANS 2v1-11

A JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

6. How does Jesus shape a new community? How does this community think and act?

When we think about any aspect of living for Jesus, we can bring together all of these elements from God's word (God's Character, Creation Order, Commands, A New Future) to see the gospel reality. We need all of them to see God's world rightly. For example, if we focus on God's loving character and say 'love is love', so homosexual marriage is good, we're ignoring commands (1 Timothy 1v8-11) and creation order (Romans 1v18-27). Commands and creation reveal what shape love should take. Or if we focus only on our new future in Christ's reign, we can forget that we live in a Jesus-shaped community that suffers together to bring the gospel before he returns (1 Corinthians 4v8-17).

Putting all of this together is a life-long process, as we get to know God better, as we understand more of his word and how it applies to our world. And we can help one another in this as we share around the Bible and as we share life in Christ together. You don't have to have all of the answers on your own!

Thinking about these 5 elements will help us in every area of life. But to help us see it in action, we're going to focus on one issue (money), in one passage (1 Timothy 6) to see how it draws together. The Bible has much more to say about money, which you might be able to track down for yourself later!

READ 1 TIMOTHY 6v3-19

THE CHARACTER OF GOD

7. What is God like? How can we display his character in the way we think about, desire and use money?

CREATION ORDER

8. How does the creation order affect our attitude to money?

COMMANDS

9. What commands do you see here? How might they promote love for others?

A NEW FUTURE

10. How does our new future transform our view of riches?

A JESUS-SHAPED COMMUNITY

11. What role should money have in a Jesus-shaped community? What happens in a community when the opposite is happening? (See also 2 Corinthians 8v1-9)

growing disciples

At **rockypc** we have 5 core values — we want to be growing disciples who are DEEP IN THE WORD, SEEKING GOD, on MISSION, as we SERVE in COMMUNITY together.

What has been inspiring for you as we've thought about living for Jesus today? What has been challenging?

What steps will you take from here?



Take a few minutes to think back over the GROWTH GROUP studies for this term. What has been impactful for you? What do you want to remember/put into practice/praise God for?

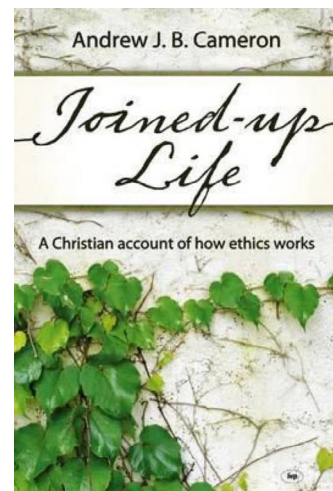


How can **rockypc** be a COMMUNITY that spurs one another on to live for Jesus in every moment?



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

If you want to dig deeper into how to live for Jesus, check out this book.



PRAYER IDEAS

- Praise God who is righteous and holy. Praise him that he is full of forgiveness and love in the sacrifice of Christ. Thank him for making us new. Ask that he would grow us to be like him, as his holiness rubs off on us.
- Praise God for his good world, full of blessing and order. Pray that we would love to live under our Creator's rule.
- Thank God for his good commands to us. Pray that we would delight to obey him, growing in love for him and others.
- Praise God that he has given us hope of a new future, through Jesus' resurrection. Pray that we'd live in light of the home of righteousness that is to come. Pray that we'd urge others to repent, and make every effort to be at peace with him, living spotless and blameless lives.
- Praise God for Jesus' humility in descending to the cross for us. Pray that we would have his mindset to show this same humility, compassion and love for all those he has joined into his COMMUNITY.
- Pray that we would pursue righteousness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness, that we might be like God. Pray that we'd receive whatever God gives as a gift from our Creator to enjoy. Pray that we would not be arrogant, and seeking our own gain with our money. Pray that we'd share generously and willingly, laying up real treasure, as we take hold of the life that is truly life. Pray that we'd be a COMMUNITY who is generous because Jesus has been so generous to us.
- Pray that God would use all that we've learned throughout this series to grow us the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ — that he might receive glory both now and forever.