

# How Shall We Then Live

A Course for People Who Want to Walk with God

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Assignments to Accompany the Teachings

For Home Groups or Mentoring Relationships

## First Series: THE BASICS (Learning to Connect with God)

THE BASICS Teaching #1: Why Walk with God?

Food for the Backpack (Scriptures intended for a daily quiet time)

Hebrews 11:6 --He is a rewarder

Ephesians 2:10 --A purpose for living

Matthew 7:24-27 --Building on the Rock

Matthew 7:28-29 --Jesus possesses a unique authority

John 3:31-36 --Jesus, the only one who sees clearly...

Matthew 24:4-8 --...who warns us about deception

Matthew 16:24-26 --...and who challenges us to think beyond the comfortable  
fascinations all around us

Heart-prodders (For private reflection or group discussion)

Q.: Most people have the impression that the main thing Jesus offers us is life after death. Yet most of Jesus' teachings—over 95%--have nothing to do with life after death. To the contrary, they are all about life before death. How do you account for this?

Q.: If God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (see first scripture assignment), which of the four rewards I have listed seem the most relevant to you just now?

Q.: What other rewards are you aware of, which I have not listed?

Assignment, Week One: Set a time each day to read the scriptures and meditate on the questions, between weekly meetings. Make an effort to be faithful to that daily quiet time. This is your attempt to make God a priority in your life. It doesn't need to be long, at least not at first. You are merely establishing a good habit here—making consistent time for God in your life. Mere Christianity. When you get together with the others, tell each other how it went, and encourage each other.

## THE BASICS Teaching #2: THE QUEST

### Food for the Backpack:

Matthew 7:13-14,24-29 --How to build a life so it won't self-destruct

I Timothy 1:1-7 --The pattern

Galatians 5:6 --The pattern, in brief

I John 3:11-24 --Loving. And believing

I John 5:1-5 --Overcoming by believing and loving

John 6:28-29 --The necessity of faith

John 13:34-35 --The necessity of love

### Heart-prodders

Q.: Divorce, crime, addiction, suicide, poor health: just a few symptoms of the brokenness of life all around us. Behind the statistics lies a great deal of human pain. How have these patterns affected you? Do you believe that God could help you find your way to "life more abundant?" (See John 10:10.)

Q.: There is a timing issue. Is it the right time for you to set your foot on this quest—finding the abundant life of Jesus by following His pattern of "faith working through love?"

Q.: It's like boarding a train. Confront your doubts, your fears. Are there legitimate reasons why you would prefer to play it safe, and not get on board?

### Assignment

Address these questions, doubts and concerns in writing in a prayer journal. (For now, this could be a simple Steno Notebook or other blank book of some kind. We

now, this could be a simple stone notebook or other blank book of some kind. We will teach about prayer journaling soon.) Discuss these questions and doubts openly in your group, as others discuss theirs.

## THE BASICS Teaching #3: SURRENDER TO GOD

### Food for the backpack

Matthew 11:28-30 --“Come to me...and find rest for your soul”

Revelation 3:19-20 --Let Him in. He doesn’t force His way with anyone

James 1:5 --God’s loving, accepting nature. Believe it!

Matthew 19:16-26 --Surrender vs “doing good”

Matthew 10:37-39 --The one who loses his life will find it

John 1:9-13 --An invitation to be “born of God”

John 3:1-17 --Not a mental decision only, but a transformation of the heart

### Heart-prodders

Q.: Does the invitation to “let go and let God” seem fearsome or welcome to you? What prevents you from taking this up as an experiment, moving beyond pondering it, to actually trying it?

Q.: Are there areas of your life that are begging to be surrendered to God? Look for areas of perpetual conflict, high stress and chronic failure.

### Assignment

Write down (in the quickie prayer journal you just started last week) how you feel about the various areas of your life that would be most likely to profit if you surrendered them over to God (as in Question 2). At next week’s meeting, share these with the group. At the group meeting, take some time to surrender these to Him in prayer, as you wish.

As you give your heart to Jesus in an act of surrender, it may be a good time to be baptized. Baptism is a sacrament of the Church. Each church has a slightly different way of explaining and doing baptism, so I will leave that to you to accomplish in the way that seems best in your situation. But if you have not been baptized, please talk to someone about receiving that sacrament soon. This is the way Jesus Himself recommends starting our journey with Him (John 3:22-30).

## THE BASICS Teaching #4: ASK FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

### Food for the backpack

Zechariah 4:6 --He’s not a power-and-might King, but a by-My-Spirit King

Matthew 3:15-17 --The Trinity all together in one story—Father, Son and Holy Spirit

John 16:7-11 --The Holy Spirit: better than having Jesus in the flesh!

John 16:12-15 --The Holy Spirit speaks what Jesus gave Him to say to us.

John 16:12-15 --The Holy Spirit speaks what Jesus gave Him to say to us.

Luke 11:11-13 --Just ask!

Acts 8:9-25 --Asking for the Holy Spirit and surrendering to Jesus go together.

Galatians 3:1-6 --Ask by faith. Believe and accept the promise for yourself.

### Heart-prodders

Q.: Does the promise of the Holy Spirit elicit fear or fascination for you? Are you excited or repelled by this promise? Examine your emotions: where do they come from?

Q.: Have you known other people who claimed to be “Spirit-filled?” What was your impression of them? Is that encounter influencing how you feel about this promise?

### Assignment

Pray for each other in your group. If you are not ready to ask for the Holy Spirit, start studying the scriptures related to this promise. (Every person or group of people is different. Maybe you need to spend several weeks looking at what God promises about the Holy Spirit. You can use a concordance, which locates every passage that uses a specific word, in this case, “The Holy Spirit.” Do your own study, to move toward the day that you will be ready to ask! Don’t rush this!)

## THE BASICS Teaching #5: NURTURING THE ANOINTING

### Food for the backpack

1 John 2:20-27 --The anointing of the Holy Spirit ministers to and protects us

2 Corinthians 3:16-18 --The Holy Spirit removes the veil of deception from our hearts and minds

John 17:25-26 --The anointing leads to the love of God, the same love that the Father has for the Son

Hebrews 12:1-3 --Joy in yielding to God

Psalms 22 --How Jesus became King of the Nations, birthing the Gospel of the Kingdom

John 14:15-21 --The Spirit of Truth will make known God’s thoughts toward us

Revelation 20:1-3 --God’s ultimate triumph: destroying the Deceiver, setting us free from deception

### Heart-prodders

Q.: What this lesson implies is: we have deception in our lives that we are unaware of, and only God can reveal it to us and set us free from it. Do you see any evidence that this might be true? Is there a matrix of deception in the world?

Q.: Is God trying to reveal anything to you right now, about Himself or yourself?  
Why would you care about what He might want to tell you?

### Assignment

This week, try taking consistent time for God each day, according to whatever your schedule will allow. Take one verse (in the above list) and meditate on it. Expect the Holy Spirit to whisper to you, using that verse. Ask Him to apply the verse to your life. Write down (in your journal) whatever thoughts occur to you. Finally, report to your group what happened during your daily quiet time, and how you felt about it. Pick one of the seven verses that seemed most meaningful to you and share how it spoke into your life. If any of the verses was perplexing to you, see how the others felt about that verse.

## THE BASICS Teaching #6: MAKING ROOM FOR THE ANOINTING

### Food for the backpack

Mark 15:37-39 --Why Jesus died: to destroy the barrier between us and God  
Matthew 6:6 --Create a quiet, private space for God in your life  
Hebrews 10:19-22 --Draw near to God...  
Mark 1:35-39 --...as Jesus did, leaving us an example to follow  
Isaiah 50:4-7 --A glimpse into the Messiah's own prayer life  
I Kings 19:1-18 --God prefers to speak in a still small voice, a gentle whisper  
Hebrews 4:14-16 --Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses—another reason to draw near to Him

### Heart-prodders

Q.: If Jesus died to eliminate the barrier between us and God, why do you imagine that so few people take advantage of that costly sacrifice—by spending time with God?

Q.: Jesus had no home, and therefore no prayer closet where He could “shut the door.” Yet He made it a priority to make the best of what He did have: a quiet place out in the desert. Examine your priorities, and ask which of them could give way a little, so that you could fit some time for God into your life. Is this easy or difficult?

### Assignment

Create some space in your living quarters where you can literally DO what Jesus says in Matthew 6:6. Then do it each day this week! Report to the group how this experiment went.

## THE BASICS Teaching #7: LETTING GOD SPEAK DAILY

### Food for the backpack

Romans 8:6-9 --Our challenge: getting out of the flesh and into the Spirit

Hebrews 5:7-10 --Jesus offered Himself to us as a model of prayer

Hebrews 10:19-22 --Jesus, as the new High Priest, invites us to draw near to God

Matthew 26:36-46 --For Jesus, prayer was serious business. Even at the point of death, it was top priority

Matthew 14:13-14, 22-24 --Jesus, the busiest man in history, had to plot and plan His quiet times

Acts 16:16-34 --Prayer can convert the most desperate circumstances into an opportunity

James 4:4-10 --Prayer allows God to give you a whole new set of priorities

### Heart-prodders

Q.: Finding consistent time for God is likely to be a challenge, because there is so much to discourage and distract us from it. What are your unique challenges, and what are you prepared to do, to make this a daily priority?

Q.: Are there any people you know, who have modelled out consistent prayer as a lifestyle? What have you learned from them?

Q.: Sometimes, a beginning effort to find time for God falls a little flat—like a child learning to swim or ride a bicycle. Are you willing to keep going after God, through the initial phases of learning something new?

### Assignment

Write down your honest thoughts and feelings about this journey so far, and share what you wrote with the others—your fellow travelers.

## THE BASICS Teaching #8: ENRICHING OUR QUIET TIME

### Food for the backpack

Psalms 119:105-112 --God's word is a lamp for our feet, a light for our path

John 7:16-19 --Jesus is the perfect conduit for everything the Father wants for us

John 8:23-31 --Jesus, the One from above, is the only one who can guide us into the truth that sets us free

John 10:1-18 --Jesus is the only Good Shepherd; we must listen to His voice

John 14:25-27 --Jesus speaks through The Advocate, The Counselor—the Holy Spirit. This is how we access Jesus, who is our access to the Father

John 15:1-8 --We must learn to “abide in Him” daily

2 Kings 3:11-20 --An example of music opening up our spirit to God's Spirit

### Heart-prodders

Q.: Do you believe that the anointing of the Holy Spirit is a real gift God is giving you just now? What evidence do you have that this is happening for you?

Q.: What does Jesus mean by telling us to “abide in Him” like branches on a vine? What practical implications does this have for you?

### Assignment

Evaluate your quiet time and your quiet place. Make a list of improvements that you could add to enrich your time with God. Then add them!

## THE BASICS Teaching #9: PRAYING WITH OTHERS

### Food for the backpack

Matthew 26:36-46 --Even at the end, Jesus insisted on solitary prayer

Matthew 6:9-15 --The pattern Jesus taught for “together prayer”

Matthew 18:19-20 --Special promises for those who agree in prayer

2 Timothy 1:13-14 --Discipleship incorporates faith and love into a *pattern* of life

Matthew 6:33 --“Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness”

James 4:1-6 --Asking with wrong motives

Acts 12:1-17 --The early church in prayer

### Heart-prodders

Q.: Do you have any experience of praying with others—for example, in church prayer meetings? Has your experience been positive or negative? What made it so?

Q.: Is the purpose of prayer to try to get God to do something for you? If not, what *is* the purpose of prayer?

Q.: Correspondingly, what is the purpose of churches praying, or of prayer meetings? What are we trying to accomplish when we do this?

### Assignment

Use the pattern Jesus taught to guide your prayer time, at the end of your meeting. Then talk about how it went. Evaluate. Whenever you pray to God in company with others, try to learn from each experience.

## THE BASICS Teaching #10: PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

### Food for the backpack

Hebrews 11:6 --God rewards those who eagerly seek Him

James 1:5 --God's heart is to give good gifts with a generous heart

1 Corinthians 12:4-11 --The "manifestational" gifts of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 14:1-19 --The gift of tongues explained

Romans 8:26-27 --Praying in the Spirit

Ephesians 6:13-18 --Praying in the Spirit takes its place along with other forms of spiritual warfare

Acts 10:9-48: --Tongues takes its place among many signs given to advance the Kingdom of God beyond the Jews

### Heart-prodders

Q.: How do you feel about trying "experimental Christianity?" Are you ready for this adventure?

Q.: The gift of tongues is connected to the broader issue of whether you want to rely on God's Spirit, or, by contrast, "power and might." (See Zechariah 4:6.)

Assuming you surrendered your life to King Jesus, and asked for the Holy Spirit earlier in this series—but now how do you feel about surrendering your tongue to speak things your mind does not comprehend?

### Assignment

If you are ready, take the three steps of faith—Ask, Believe, Confess (or give thanks)—in seeking the gift of tongues as a second prayer language, arising, not from your mind, but from your spirit.