THE REFINERY LIFE EQUIPPING JOURNEY

STAGE 2: FOUNDATIONS

BOOK 7

# BEGINNING YOUR NEW LIFE WITH GOD

GROWING IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

LIVING THE ABUNDANT LIFE IN CHRIST

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



1. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION
   Your New Relationship with God and Your New Life in Christ
2. DEVELOPING YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
   Your Personal Bible Study and Quiet Time
3. DEVELOPING YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
   Your Worship and Prayer Life
4. DEVELOPING YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
   Your Life as a Witness for Christ and Your Church Life
5. THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOUR HELPER
   Empowered for a Victorious Life and Ministry

KNOW HIM • LOVE HIM • WALK WITH HIM • MAKE HIM KNOWN


REFINERY LIFE AUSTRALIA LIMITED

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS • BUILDING DISCIPLES

RAISING LEADERS • REACHING NATIONS

FOR AUSTRALIA AND THE NATIONS



WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED BY

REVEREND GARY HOBAN


2 TIMOTHY 1:7 (NKJV)

FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT OF FEAR,
BUT OF POWER AND OF LOVE AND OF A SOUND MIND.

# Beginning Your New Life With God

*New Believers Course*

Participant Manual

Reverend Gary Hoban

Refinery Life Australia Limited

Five sessions for personal discipleship or a small group. Australian edition, October 2026.

Free self-study course and participant manual. Optional personal or group facilitation is available with Reverend Gary Hoban.

This course helps you begin following Jesus with understanding and practical support. You will explore assurance of salvation, a relationship with God, Bible reading, prayer and worship, church life, witness and the help of the Holy Spirit. You can work through it with a mature Christian or in a small group. No previous Bible knowledge is expected.

Bring a Bible, this manual and a way to record your own questions. Scripture references are provided so that you can read complete passages in context. Short quotations retained from the earlier manuscript are NKJV extracts; an ellipsis marks omitted words. The passages in the reading lists should be read in full from your Bible.

All sessions include practical teaching, questions, an activity and a response for the following week. You may ask for clarification, decline to share a private matter or request a separate pastoral conversation. Nobody needs to disclose personal experiences to demonstrate spiritual progress.

The aim is to begin a sustained life of discipleship. Course completion is not a qualification for salvation or a substitute for belonging to a local church. Foundations for Christian Living follows this introductory course as the next foundations stage.

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## The five sessions

1. New life and assurance in Christ
2. Reading the Bible and meeting with God
3. Prayer worship and daily obedience
4. Belonging to the Church and sharing your faith
5. Living with the help and power of the Holy Spirit

## Getting started

My main question about following Jesus is

# Session 1 New life and assurance in Christ

By the end of this session, you should be able to explain the Gospel, identify the biblical basis of assurance and describe what it means to begin following Jesus as Lord.

Read together: Ephesians 2:1-10; John 1:9-13; 1 John 5:11-13; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; 1 John 1:5-2:2.

Every Christian can have assurance that salvation has been received and that a restored relationship with God exists through Jesus Christ. Assurance gives stability, peace and confidence for the new believer.

## What Is Salvation

Salvation is not achieved by our own efforts, religious performance or good works.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV) - For by grace you have been saved through faith... it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

- Salvation is by the grace of God - His unmerited favour.
- Salvation flows from the love of God demonstrated in Jesus Christ.
- Salvation is received through faith in Jesus and the Gospel.
- Salvation is God's gift, not a reward earned by human effort.

Salvation is God's gracious gift received through faith in Jesus Christ, bringing forgiveness of sin and restored relationship with God.

## The Basis of Assurance

Our assurance is grounded first in God's Word, not in emotions, circumstances or the strength of today's feelings. The Holy Spirit also bears witness that we belong to God.

1 John 5:11-13 (NKJV) - God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son... that you may know that you have eternal life.

Romans 8:16 (NKJV) - The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

## What Happened When You Received Christ

### You received eternal life

Eternal life begins now in knowing the Father and Jesus Christ, and continues forever.

### You received forgiveness

In Christ we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

### You were reconciled to God

The separation caused by sin has been answered through the death of Christ.

### You became a child of God

Those who receive Christ are given the right to become children of God.

### You became part of God's family

Other believers are now brothers and sisters in Christ; Christian life was never intended to be lived in isolation.

### Christ will not abandon you

God has promised, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.'

How sure are you that you have eternal life? What is the biblical basis for your answer?

Write three truths about your salvation that you will deliberately remember this week.

## Prayer Ministry Response

Father, thank You for saving me by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. I choose to build my assurance on Your Word. Thank You that I am forgiven, reconciled, received into Your family and given eternal life. Amen.

## Your new relationship with God

Christianity is not merely knowing facts about God. Through Jesus Christ we enter a personal covenant relationship with the living God. The new believer begins a lifelong journey of knowing Him.

## A Father and Child Relationship

John 1:12 (NKJV) - As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

God is not a remote, impersonal being waiting for you to fail. Scripture reveals the Father who knows, loves, leads, corrects and cares for His children.

## God Knows You

John 10:3 (NKJV) - He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.

God's knowledge of you is personal. Jesus taught that even the hairs of your head are numbered. You are seen and known.

## God Loves You

1 John 4:9-10 (NKJV) - In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world...

The Cross is the great demonstration of God's love. His love is steadfast, patient, merciful, faithful and directed toward our true good.

## Love God With All Your Heart

Mark 12:30 (NKJV) - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

- Worship Him for who He is.
- Commune with Him regularly through prayer and His Word.
- Make Jesus the centre and Lord of your life.
- Express love through obedience.
- Love others because His love has been poured into your heart.

How does knowing God as Father affect the way you approach Him?

What practical change would make Jesus more clearly central in your daily life?

## Prayer Ministry Response

Father, thank You that through Christ I belong to You. Teach me to know Your love, trust Your heart and love You with all that I am. Let that love overflow toward the people around me. Amen.

## Your new life in Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) - If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

Salvation brings a new source of life: Christ in us. We receive a new direction, new destiny, new priorities and new purpose.

## A New Master

The Christian life begins by confessing Jesus as Lord and continues under His Lordship. We belong to the One who redeemed us.

1 Corinthians 6:20 (NKJV) - For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Lordship is not merely outward rule-keeping. It is inward surrender that becomes visible in our choices, relationships, work, time, money and priorities.

## A New Purpose

Colossians 3:1-2 (NKJV) - Seek those things which are above... Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

The believer learns to live for eternal purposes and to be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. In an Australian culture often centred on comfort, possessions and personal autonomy, discipleship calls us to place the Kingdom of God first.

## New Standards

1 Peter 1:15-16 (NKJV) - As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, 'Be holy, for I am holy.'

Old patterns are not our master. By the Holy Spirit we learn to walk in love rather than hatred, truth rather than deception, humility rather than pride, purity rather than immorality, generosity rather than selfishness.

## New Blessings

- God's provision for our needs.
- God's protection and faithful presence.
- God's healing grace and compassion.
- God's guidance as we follow Him.
- Grace and help in times of trouble.
- Security and peace in His unfailing presence.

These blessings are not a promise of a trouble-free life. They are the covenant realities of belonging to God in the midst of every circumstance.

Where is the Lordship of Jesus most challenging your old way of living?

What new purpose is God calling you to prioritise?

## Prayer Ministry Response

Lord Jesus, You are my Saviour and my Lord. Let my new life demonstrate that I belong to You. Renew my priorities, transform my character and teach me to live for Your glory. Amen.

## Understanding and applying the lesson

### Grace and a real response

The Gospel begins with what God has done through Jesus Christ. Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead. We cannot earn reconciliation with God through a period of good behaviour. We turn from sin and place our trust in Christ, receiving the grace He gives. Repentance means a changed direction towards God; faith means

trusting Jesus rather than relying on our own record. Neither requires us to pretend that we already understand every part of Christian life.

A prayer can express repentance and faith, but repeating particular words is not a magic formula. Ask what you believe about Jesus and whether you are entrusting your life to Him. Questions are welcome. If you are unsure what you have responded to, speak with the person helping you through this course and read the Gospel passages together.

### When feelings change

Some people feel immediate joy after coming to faith; others experience a quieter beginning. Strong feelings cannot carry assurance on their own. In 1 John 5, the assurance of eternal life is connected with God's testimony concerning His Son. Return to that promise when emotions fluctuate. The Holy Spirit also bears witness that we are God's children, and His work increasingly becomes visible in our lives.

Growth takes time. A struggle with temptation does not mean we should hide from God or conclude that His grace is absent. Confess sin honestly and return to Christ. Receiving forgiveness should lead us to address the behaviour, seek help where needed and make appropriate repair. Assurance is not permission to persist in deliberate sin without repentance.

### A practical beginning

Imagine a new believer loses their temper at home and then thinks, 'I have failed, so perhaps God has rejected me.' Help them distinguish conviction from despair. Conviction brings a particular sin into the light and calls for repentance. Despair tells the person to stop seeking God altogether. Read 1 John 1:9 in its context, pray honestly and identify a practical change: an apology, a truthful conversation or help with a repeated pattern. God's grace calls us into a restored walk with Him.

Christian maturity is never measured by how quickly someone learns religious language. Begin with truthfulness, willingness to learn and concrete obedience. The local church and a mature believer can help you take the next step without expecting you to manage every question alone.

## Discuss together

What does Ephesians 2:8-10 say about how we are saved and the place of good works afterwards?

What would you say to someone who believes their salvation depends on having a strong emotion every day?

What difference should belonging to God's family make to the way we respond when we sin?

## Practise together

Write the Gospel in three or four sentences using ordinary language. Read your explanation to your facilitator or another believer, then identify anything that needs clarification. You are practising understanding, not performing for a mark.

## During the week

Read John 1-3 during the coming week. Write down one truth about Jesus, one question and one response. Speak with your facilitator about your assurance of salvation and any immediate question about following Christ.

Passage to learn and reflect on: 1 John 5:12-13. Read it in your Bible and consider its context.

One action I will take before our next meeting is

# Session 2 Reading the Bible and meeting with God

By the end of this session, you should be able to find a Bible passage, explain its main point in context and build a manageable personal pattern of Scripture reading and prayer.

Read together: 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Psalm 119:9-16; John 15:1-8; Acts 17:10-12; James 1:22-25.

Physical life requires nourishment. Spiritual life also needs nourishment. God's Word is spiritual food, and regular fellowship with God strengthens the believer.

1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV) - As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.

## Why Study the Bible

### For truth, correction and training

Scripture teaches doctrine, exposes error, corrects us and trains us in righteous living.

### For faith

Faith grows as we hear and receive the Word of God.

### For spiritual growth

Meditation on God's Word establishes the believer like a tree planted by streams of water.

### For guidance

Scripture reveals God's character, ways, commands, promises and wisdom.

### For discernment

Like the Bereans, believers test teaching against the Word rather than being carried by every spiritual claim.

## Your Quiet Time With God

A daily personal meeting with God is not a legalistic duty; it is a relationship-building discipline. Three helpful elements are worship, prayer and meditation on Scripture.

- Worship - begin by turning your attention toward God and honouring Him.
- Prayer - speak honestly with God and listen attentively.
- Meditation on Scripture - read prayerfully, understand what the passage says, and respond in obedience.

## Questions to Ask While Reading

What does this passage reveal about the Father, Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit?

What does it teach about Christian living?

What do I not yet understand?

Is there a command to obey?

Is there a promise to receive?

Is there a sin to confess?

Is there an attitude to change?

Is there an example to follow?

What will I actually do because of what I have read?

## Prepare for Consistency

Choose a regular time when you can give God focused attention. Morning is valuable for many people, but shift work, family responsibilities and changing schedules mean the best time may differ. The key is consistency and giving God unhurried attention.

Choose a place with minimal distraction and follow a consistent reading plan rather than randomly opening the Bible. Begin with a Gospel or another New Testament book and read consecutively.

What time and place will you set aside for regular Bible reading and prayer?

Read John 15:1-8. What does God reveal, command or invite you to apply?

## Prayer Ministry Response

Lord, give me a hunger for Your Word and a desire for Your presence. Teach me to read carefully, listen humbly and obey faithfully. Establish a strong devotional life in me. Amen.

## Understanding and applying the lesson

### Find your way around the Bible

The Bible is a collection of books within one unfolding account of God's dealings with His creation and His saving work. The Old Testament prepares us to understand God's promises and the coming of Christ. The New Testament records Jesus' life and ministry, the witness of the apostles and teaching for His people. Use the contents page without embarrassment. A reference such as John 15:5 means the Gospel of John, chapter 15, verse 5. First John is a different book.

Begin by reading a Gospel in sequence. Notice who is speaking, who is being addressed and what happens before and after a verse. A sentence should not be given a meaning that contradicts the passage containing it. The chapter and verse numbers help us find our place, but they do not replace reading the surrounding text.

### Read understand and respond

Start with a short passage and ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand. Read it slowly, perhaps twice. Describe what it actually says before deciding what it means for your situation. Note repeated words, instructions, promises and questions. Ask what the passage reveals about God and how it relates to Jesus and the Gospel. Then identify an appropriate response.

For example, John 15:1-8 uses the picture of a vine and branches. Jesus is teaching His disciples about remaining in Him and bearing fruit. The passage should lead us to dependence and obedience; it is not a promise that every business project will succeed. Careful reading protects us from turning Scripture into a collection of slogans.

### Build a habit that can last

Choose a realistic time and a quiet place. Ten focused minutes can be a useful beginning. Read, pray and write one response. A shift worker, parent or carer may need a different routine from someone with an uninterrupted morning. The goal is a growing relationship with God through habits that can be sustained.

If you miss a day, return the next day. Do not turn a missed reading into a reason to abandon the practice. Keep a question list and bring it to a mature believer. Bible apps, study notes and teaching can help, but distinguish the biblical text from commentary. A teacher's confidence does not make an interpretation correct. Test teaching against Scripture and seek help with difficult passages.

## Discuss together

How does 2 Timothy 3:16-17 describe the purpose of Scripture?

What is the difference between describing what a passage says and applying it to your life?

What can you do when you do not understand a verse?

## Practise together

Read John 15:1-8 together. Write three observations, a sentence explaining the main point and one appropriate action. Compare your answer with the whole passage. Look up one other reference using the contents page and chapter numbers.

## During the week

Set a time for Bible reading on at least five days. Continue through the Gospel of John at a manageable pace. Record the passage, its main point, a question and one prayer or action. Bring one question to the next meeting.

Passage to learn and reflect on: Psalm 119:105. Read it in your Bible and consider its context.

One action I will take before our next meeting is

# Session 3 Prayer worship and daily obedience

By the end of this session, you should be able to pray in ordinary language, practise different aspects of prayer and connect worship with everyday obedience.

Read together: Matthew 6:5-15; Philippians 4:4-9; John 4:19-24; Acts 16:22-34; 1 John 1:9.

Communication is essential in every growing relationship. Prayer is fellowship with God: speaking, listening, worshipping, thanking, confessing and asking.

## Worship - Our Highest Calling

Matthew 22:37 (NKJV) - You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

Worship responds to God's worth. All Christian ministry should flow from ministry to the Lord. The New Testament describes believers as a royal priesthood called to declare His praises.

## Biblical Expressions of Praise

- Clapping - Psalm 47:1.
- Shouting triumphantly - Psalm 47:1.
- Singing - Psalm 95:1.
- Bowing - Psalm 95:6.
- Kneeling - Psalm 95:6.
- Lifting hands - Psalm 134:2.
- Dancing - Psalm 149:3.
- Musical instruments - Psalm 150:3-5.
- Joyful physical expression - Acts 3:8.

Pentecostal worship should be expressive without becoming performative. The purpose is not noise for its own sake, but wholehearted response to God.

## Praise in Difficult Seasons

Acts 16 records Paul and Silas praying and singing hymns after being beaten and imprisoned. Praise did not deny their pain; it declared God's worth in the middle of it. Worship can anchor faith when circumstances are dark.

## Prayer - Our Lifeline to the Father

Jesus modelled a life of prayer. Prayer expresses dependence upon God and keeps the believer consciously connected with the source of strength, wisdom and grace.

## The A.C.T.S. Pattern

### A - Adoration

Praise and worship God for who He is.

### C - Confession

Agree with God about sin, receive forgiveness through Christ and repent.

### T - Thanksgiving

Give thanks in every circumstance, trusting God's character without calling evil good.

### S - Supplication

Bring your needs and the needs of others to the Father with confidence.

## How God Answers

God hears prayer, yet He does not promise to grant every request exactly as we imagine. We can trust His wisdom when the answer is yes, no, wait, or when His answer takes a form we did not expect.

Which part of A.C.T.S. needs the most growth in your prayer life?

Write three people or situations you will begin praying for consistently.

## Prayer Ministry Response

Father, teach me to worship You in spirit and truth and to pray with faith, humility and perseverance. Let prayer become a living relationship rather than a religious routine. Amen.

## Understanding and applying the lesson

### You can speak honestly with the Father

Jesus teaches His disciples to approach God as Father. Prayer does not require an impressive vocabulary, public confidence or a particular accent. Begin with what you understand and speak truthfully. Thank God, confess sin, ask for help and pray for others. The Lord's Prayer provides a pattern that places God's name and kingdom alongside daily provision, forgiveness and dependence.

Listening in prayer includes attending to Scripture, allowing time for reflection and remaining responsive to the Holy Spirit. An inner thought must be tested; it does not carry authority merely because it arrived while we were praying. God does not lead us to contradict His Word, mistreat someone or ignore sound counsel.

### Worship belongs to the whole life

Singing, praise and gathered worship help us honour God and respond to Him together. Scripture describes many expressions, including lifted hands, kneeling and joyful singing. People differ in confidence, ability and background. Participate sincerely as you learn. Physical movement or volume is not a reliable measure of a person's devotion.

Worship continues in ordinary decisions. Honest work, repentance, kindness and obedience express honour towards God. It is inconsistent to sing about loving Him while refusing to address harm we are causing. Romans 12:1-2 connects the offering of our lives with a renewed mind and a transformed way of living.

### Pray with faith while entrusting the outcome

We ask God to act because we believe He hears and has power. We also entrust the answer to His wisdom. Prayer is not a technique for controlling Him. Keep praying through delay without assuming that difficulty proves a lack of faith. The New Testament includes answered prayer, endurance, suffering and help given in weakness.

When someone is ill, we can pray for healing with compassion and faith while supporting appropriate medical care. Do not blame an unwell person for an outcome you cannot explain. When someone is grieving, patient presence may serve them better than a quick explanation. Prayer should draw us into love and practical care as well as words.

### Receive forgiveness and act on it

Confession means agreeing with God about sin. Repentance turns us towards obedience. Where a truthful apology or restitution is appropriate, prayer does not replace it. Forgiving another person does not require pretending that harm was acceptable or immediately restoring unsafe access. Seek wise pastoral support when a relationship includes intimidation, abuse or persistent manipulation.

## Discuss together

What does Jesus' teaching in Matthew 6 correct about praying to impress other people?

How can worship become visible in a decision at home or at work?

How can we support someone whose prayer has not been answered in the way they hoped?

## Practise together

Pray using adoration, confession, thanksgiving and requests. Each person may contribute a short prayer or remain quiet. Nobody is required to disclose personal sin or private matters to the group. Finish by identifying one practical act of obedience.

## During the week

Keep a simple prayer journal for one week. Include thanksgiving, requests and what you are learning. Pray for three people and take one practical opportunity to serve someone. Do not record another person's confidential details without their consent.

Passage to learn and reflect on: Philippians 4:6-7. Read it in your Bible and consider its context.

One action I will take before our next meeting is

# Session 4 Belonging to the Church and sharing your faith

By the end of this session, you should be able to explain why Christian community matters, understand the purpose of water baptism and Communion, and share a simple account of the Gospel and personal faith.

Read together: Acts 2:37-47; Matthew 28:18-20; Romans 6:1-11; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29; 1 Peter 3:15-16.

Mark 16:15 (NKJV) - Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

Jesus commissions His followers to carry the Gospel into the world. Evangelism is not reserved for specialists. Every believer can be a witness to what Christ has done.

## Why the Gospel Is Urgent

Scripture teaches that salvation is found in Jesus Christ. God desires people to be saved and calls His Church to make disciples of the nations.

Acts 4:12 (NKJV) - Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

## What Is the Gospel

The Gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ: humanity has sinned and cannot restore itself to God; the Father sent His Son; Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead; forgiveness and eternal life are offered through repentance and faith in Him.

## Witness by Love

People should encounter the love of God through the way Christians treat them. Compassion, practical help, prayer, generosity and genuine friendship can open doors for the Gospel.

## Witness by Life

Matthew 5:16 (NKJV) - Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Your conduct either supports or contradicts your message. Integrity, kindness, holiness and humility make the Gospel visible.

## Witness by Word

Be ready to explain the hope that is in you. Learn to share your testimony simply: what life was like before Christ, how you came to trust Him, and what He has done since. Learn to explain the Gospel clearly and lovingly.

## Evangelism as a Lifestyle

Identify people in your circle of influence - family, friends, neighbours, workmates, classmates and community contacts. Pray for them. Spend time with them. Serve them. Look for natural opportunities to speak about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit is the One who convicts and brings new birth. We witness faithfully, but we do not manipulate people or attempt to manufacture conversion.

Write the names of three people you will pray for and intentionally love toward Christ.

In a few sentences, write your personal testimony.

## Prayer Ministry Response

Lord Jesus, give me Your heart for people who do not yet know You. Fill me with compassion and courage. Open doors for me to demonstrate Your love and speak the Gospel clearly. Amen.

## Your church life

Hebrews 10:24-25 (NKJV) - Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...

When we become Christians, we enter a new relationship with God and with God's family. Scripture does not present healthy Christianity as an isolated life.

## Why the Church Is Necessary

### To worship God together

The gathered Church declares the worth and glory of God.

### To be equipped in the Word

Christ gives leaders to equip the saints for ministry and maturity.

### For fellowship and mutual strengthening

Believers help, encourage, teach, pray for and strengthen one another.

### For service and mission

The Church serves its community and carries the Gospel beyond itself.

### For accountability and growth

Mature Christian relationships help us persevere, receive correction and develop our gifts.

## H.E.L.P.S.

- H - Help one another.
- E - Encourage one another.
- L - Learn from one another.
- P - Pray for one another.
- S - Strengthen one another.

## Choosing a Healthy Local Church

Look for a church where Jesus Christ is clearly proclaimed as Lord and Saviour, Scripture is faithfully preached and taught, the love and power of God are demonstrated biblically, the Gospel is proclaimed, and people are being equipped to follow Jesus.

Become more than an attendee. Be planted. Worship, learn, build relationships, serve, give, pray and participate in the mission of the body.

What does meaningful commitment to a local church look like for you?

How can you strengthen another believer this week?

## Prayer Ministry Response

Lord, thank You for placing me in Your family. Lead me into healthy Christian community. Teach me to receive from others and to use what You have given me to strengthen Your Church. Amen.

## Understanding and applying the lesson

### Become part of a living community

The Church is the people Jesus calls together, not merely a building or a weekly event. In Acts 2, believers devoted themselves to apostolic teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread and prayer. They learned together and cared for one another. A local church gives practical expression to that shared life through worship, relationships, service and accountable leadership.

Look for faithful biblical teaching, a clear Gospel, prayer, love and responsible care. Healthy leaders can answer questions and receive accountability. Commitment to a church does not require surrendering conscience, hiding abuse or granting someone control of every personal decision. If something is unsafe, seek appropriate support outside the situation as well as within it.

### Water baptism

Jesus commands His disciples to baptise and teach those who follow Him. Christian water baptism identifies the believer with Jesus Christ and with His people. Romans 6 uses the language of burial and resurrection to explain our union with Christ and new life. Refinery Life teaches baptism following repentance and faith, by immersion in water.

Baptism does not mean we have become perfect or have earned salvation. It is a serious response of obedience and public identification with Christ. Speak with a pastor about preparation, the meaning of the confession being made and any practical needs. If disability, illness or another circumstance affects participation, discuss this with the minister rather than trying to manage it alone.

### Communion

At the Lord's Supper, the Church remembers and proclaims Jesus' death until He comes. The bread and cup direct our attention to His body given and His blood shed. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-29 with the surrounding discussion of how the congregation was treating one another. Communion calls for reverence, self-examination and care for the body of Christ.

Ask the person leading your church to explain how Communion is shared in that congregation. Self-examination should lead us to honest repentance and trust in Christ. It should not become a demand that we claim to be sinless before remembering the Saviour who gave Himself for us.

### Speak about Jesus with respect

Your testimony tells what brought you to trust Jesus and what following Him now means. It need not be dramatic, and you do not need to describe someone else's private failures. Keep Jesus central. The Gospel concerns His death and resurrection and our response of repentance and faith; your experience illustrates your response without replacing that message.

Listen to the other person. Ask permission before a longer conversation or prayer, and accept a refusal respectfully. Do not pressure someone with a threat, a promised benefit or a claim that agreeing with you will solve every problem. The Holy Spirit convicts and gives new birth. Our responsibility is truthful, loving witness.

## Discuss together

Which shared practices in Acts 2 could become part of your own church life?

How does Romans 6 connect baptism with Jesus' death and resurrection?

What is the difference between explaining the Gospel and telling your personal story?

## Practise together

Practise a two-minute testimony with a partner who listens without interruption. Include what you came to understand about Jesus, how you responded and one way you are learning to follow Him. Then explain the Gospel in ordinary language. Finish by identifying a church connection and a person to ask about baptism.

## During the week

Attend a local church gathering, introduce yourself and ask about a group or discipleship connection. Arrange a conversation about baptism if you have not yet been baptised as a believer. Pray for a friend and look for a respectful opportunity to listen and speak about Jesus.

Passage to learn and reflect on: Matthew 5:16. Read it in your Bible and consider its context.

One action I will take before our next meeting is

# Session 5 Living with the help and power of the Holy Spirit

By the end of this session, you should be able to recognise the Holy Spirit as God and a Person, distinguish His work in new birth from empowerment for witness, and begin practising Spirit-led obedience and discernment.

Read together: John 14:15-26; Romans 8:9-16; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4; Galatians 5:16-25; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22.

The Christian life cannot be lived in human strength alone. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit as our Helper, and the New Testament presents Him as essential to the believer's life, holiness, guidance, prayer and witness.

## Who Is the Holy Spirit

John 14:16-17 (NKJV) - He will give you another Helper... the Spirit of truth... He dwells with you and will be in you.

### The Holy Spirit Is God

Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit in divine terms. Christians worship one God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The mystery of the Trinity exceeds our full comprehension, yet it is central to biblical faith.

### The Holy Spirit Is a Person

He is not merely an impersonal force. Scripture describes Him as knowing, willing, speaking, teaching, leading and being grieved. We can have fellowship with Him.

## The Holy Spirit Dwells in Believers

1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV) - Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?

The believer is not abandoned. The Spirit of God is present to help us follow Christ.

## How the Holy Spirit Helps

### He guides us into truth

He illuminates Scripture and glorifies Jesus Christ.

### He leads us

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

### He assures us of sonship

He bears witness that we are God's children and enables us to cry, 'Abba, Father.'

### He empowers holy living

By the Spirit we put to death the deeds of the flesh and grow in the fruit of the Spirit.

### He transforms our character

He changes us increasingly into the likeness of Christ.

### He helps us pray

When we do not know how to pray as we ought, the Spirit helps our weakness.

### He empowers witness and ministry

The Spirit gives power to testify about Jesus and distributes gifts for the work of God.

## Walking With the Holy Spirit

Learn to depend upon the Holy Spirit rather than self-effort. His leading will never contradict Scripture or the character of Jesus. Test impressions carefully, remain teachable, and grow in sensitivity through prayer, Scripture and mature Christian community.

Which ministry of the Holy Spirit do you most need to understand or experience more deeply?

What does it mean for you to walk in the Spirit rather than in the flesh?

## Prayer Ministry Response

Holy Spirit, thank You for dwelling in me. Teach me truth, lead me, strengthen me in holiness, help me pray and empower me to witness for Jesus. I yield my life afresh to Your work. Amen.

## Understanding and applying the lesson

### The Spirit brings us into life with God

The Holy Spirit is not an impersonal energy or a feeling created by music. He is God, personally present and active. He draws our attention to Jesus, applies the truth of the Gospel and works in our new birth. Romans 8 connects belonging to Christ with the Spirit's presence. A Christian should not be told that they are abandoned by God while they wait for a particular experience.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not three competing gods or three temporary disguises. Christian faith confesses one God, with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit personally distinct. Jesus speaks of the Father sending the Helper, who teaches and reminds the disciples of His words. Learn that relationship from Scripture rather than trying to reduce God to a simple physical comparison.

### Power to witness

Jesus tells the disciples in Acts 1 to wait for the Father's promise and says they will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon them. In Acts 2, the Spirit fills them and they speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. The resulting public witness points people to Jesus. Refinery Life's Pentecostal emphasis includes seeking baptism in the Holy Spirit and His empowering for witness and service.

Ask God with faith and openness. Learn from the accounts in Acts and seek prayer with mature, accountable believers. Tongues are a biblical expression of the Spirit's work; they should never be taught through imitation, manufactured syllables or pressure to produce a result. Spiritual gifts do not make someone superior to other Christians, and an outward experience does not remove the need for love, character and obedience.

### Fruit and gifts belong in the same life

Galatians 5 describes the fruit of the Spirit in the believer's character. Love, patience and self-control are relevant when nobody is watching. First Corinthians 12 describes different gifts given for the common good. A gift is for service; it is not a personal badge or permission to disregard correction. The following chapters place love and orderly edification at the centre of gathered ministry.

Ask both what the Spirit is helping you become and how He is enabling you to serve. A person who claims powerful ministry while remaining dishonest or cruel needs correction and accountability. New believers can begin with ordinary faithfulness: telling the truth, praying for another person, helping where there is a need and responding to Scripture.

### Test what you believe you have heard

An impression, dream or prophetic message must be weighed. Compare it with Scripture and the character of Jesus. Seek mature counsel and consider whether you have misunderstood. An impression does not authorise a

harmful action or cancel ordinary responsibilities. Do not use 'God told me' to prevent questions. We can remain open to the Spirit while admitting that our interpretation may be mistaken.

When you fail, return to Christ in repentance and depend on the Spirit's help. Continuing to walk with Him involves learning, correction and daily choices. Completing this course is a beginning. Arrange ongoing discipleship and continue into Foundations for Christian Living as the next stage of your foundations.

## Discuss together

What does John 14 teach about the Holy Spirit's relationship to the Father, Jesus and the disciples?

What is the purpose of the power promised in Acts 1:8?

How should the fruit of the Spirit shape the way spiritual gifts are exercised?

How would you test an impression that seems urgent but conflicts with Scripture or wise responsibilities?

## Practise together

Read Galatians 5:22-25 and identify one area of character in which you need the Spirit's help. Pray for one another with permission. Anyone seeking prayer for the baptism in the Holy Spirit may receive it without a requirement to display a particular response during the meeting. Agree on one practical act of service.

## During the week

Continue your Bible and prayer routine. Meet with your facilitator or pastor to review assurance, church connection, baptism and ongoing discipleship. Identify a manageable place to serve. Arrange the next learning step rather than ending contact when the course finishes.

Passage to learn and reflect on: Acts 1:8. Read it in your Bible and consider its context.

One action I will take before our next meeting is

# Continue walking with Jesus

You have begun to explore the foundations of life with God. Keep returning to Christ and His Word. Maintain a realistic pattern of Bible reading and prayer, participate in a healthy local church and seek the Holy Spirit's help in daily life. Ask for help when you need it.

Review the following matters with your facilitator or pastor. They are conversation prompts, not a test of your worth or a scorecard for salvation. An unresolved question is a reason to continue learning together.

- I can explain why I am trusting Jesus and where I find assurance.
- I have a manageable Bible-reading and prayer routine.
- I know a Christian leader or mature believer I can ask for help.
- I have connected with a local church and a group or discipleship relationship.
- I understand the purpose of water baptism and have discussed my next step.
- I understand why the Church shares Communion.
- I am learning to depend on the Holy Spirit and test guidance by Scripture.
- I have identified a way to serve and a person for whom I will pray.
- I have discussed continuing into Foundations for Christian Living.

My next discipleship step is

The person helping me take that step is

The date we will reconnect is

## Prayer

Father, thank You for receiving me through Jesus Christ. Establish me in Your Word and help me follow Jesus faithfully. Holy Spirit, strengthen me in truth, holiness and witness. Plant me among Your people, teach me to love and give me courage to obey. Amen.