



5 STEPS

Becoming a Disciple of Jesus

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INTRODUCTION

*Group Discussion:

1. If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be?
2. What is the most outstanding characteristic of Jesus?

The word “disciple” comes from the Latin word ‘discipulus’, which means “student, learner, or follower.” It can describe a **serious, dedicated follower** or **student of a teacher or leader**.¹

The dictionary defines the word “disciple” as: “a person who believes in the ideas and principles of someone [famous] and tries to **live the way that person does or did**”.²

Ultimately, this is the goal for those who believe in Jesus - to be transformed into His likeness here on earth more and

more until their life on earth ends and eternity begins. Over centuries, many have mistakenly thought that the purpose of conversion to Christianity is simply to receive forgiveness for the guilt of sin, and the consequences thereof, namely an eternity in the lake of fire, or hell. Although the forgiveness of sins and the assurance of eternal life are amazing blessings, there is more to being a disciple than merely “escaping” from hell. Christianity is not simply a “get out of jail free” card. As many have said, it is not only about getting people into heaven but about getting more of heaven into people while they’re on earth.

***Group Discussion:**

3. Have you ever been driven towards religion by fear of hell?

Obviously, no one who has ever lived, except for Jesus, has been without sin - completely perfect. After all, that is the very reason why Jesus came to earth, to succeed at that which neither the first man Adam, nor you and I today could: to live a perfect life. The goal of becoming a disciple is not that you and I would be perfect and never sin, but rather that every day would be another step of transformation. This change happens as we realize the truth written in God’s word regarding our new and true identity, no longer as sinners, but as saints who have put to death our sinful nature with Christ

on the cross. Every day is another step toward realizing who we truly are! The apostle Paul, in **II Corinthians 5:21** says:
“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

According to this scripture, our identity as believers in Christ is “righteous”! That is amazingly good news! But how does one realize and grow in that identity?

***Group Discussion:**

4. If we are called “righteous” by God, why do our lives look so different to the life of Christ?

Discipleship is the only way to realize our new identity. Discipleship happens step by step, and these steps are all regulated and supernaturally worked in us by God Himself, through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit. No one can fake this process of transformation.

In this course, we have highlighted 5 realities, or steps, from the New Testament. These are steps to which a new believer

is introduced in his/her discipleship journey. These 5 steps are a good start in our walk towards maturity in Christ.

In short, we can summarize these five steps in the following way:

1. **Regeneration** - This is new birth. It takes place when we believe and confess/ become born again (**John 3:3-5; Titus 3:5; Ez. 36:26; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 Pet. 1:23**)
2. **Baptism into water** – An outward, physical symbol of the inward, spiritual regeneration {step 1}. To be buried and raised with Christ to a new life. Immersion in water (**Acts 2:38-41; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3-4**)
3. **Baptism in the Holy Spirit** – This causes us to enter a new dimension spiritually (**Acts 1:5; Acts 8:14-17; Matt. 3:11**)
4. **Assimilation into the body of Christ** – This is essential for health and growth into maturity as a disciple of Christ (**1 Cor. 12:13,27; Eph. 5:30; Rom. 12:4-5**)
5. **Persecution** - If you are faithful to all that Christ requires, you will be persecuted (**Matt. 20:22-23; Mark 10:38; Matt. 5:10-12**)

Every believer needs to pass through each of these five steps in order to become a mature disciple of Jesus Christ. They are not grades or levels that one graduates from, never to return again. They are more like five new ways of life that will completely upend your old life and transform you into someone unrecognizable. As you journey through these five

steps, one step at a time, allow each step to change the way that you think and live from old to new!

Matthew 4:18-22

¹⁸ While walking by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." ²⁰ Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹ And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. ²² Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

***Group Discussion:**

5. If you have had a moment where Jesus called you to "Follow Me", share some details with the group.

1. Regeneration

*Group Discussion:

6. If you have children, what attributes, positive or negative, do you see in them that you are confident they got from you? If you do not have children, what attributes do you see in yourself that you got from your parents?

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

God created man because He desired to have someone in His image, or like Him, with whom He could have a loving relationship. That is also the purpose for which you have been made. God created you because He wants to have a relationship with you. He loves you more than anybody in this world could ever love you.

God was driven by love when He made man!

God also created man (and the rest of creation) to bring glory to Him (Rev 4:11)! The greatest way you can bring glory to God is by enjoying Him in the context of a personal relationship.

Mankind has wandered very far away from the life that Adam and Eve had in the Garden of Eden before they fell into sin. Unfortunately, there is nothing you can do about that. The truth is that every human being ever born was born into sin, possessing a sinful nature. Why? In the beginning, Adam and Eve did not have a sinful nature. They were perfectly innocent and unaware of evil. This is proven by the fact that although they were completely naked, neither of them thought anything of it and only really noticed the fact, with shame, after sin had entered the world through their disobedience.

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. How would you feel if people were to see you with no clothes on? Or have you perhaps ever had a dream in which you were walking in public with no clothes on?**
- 2. How did it make you feel?**

Many have wondered why God put the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden in the first place since it proved to be an irresistible temptation for Adam and Eve (although it was not irresistible, God knew beforehand that they would fall for it). Yes, God did put the tree there! In other words, God made sin a possibility! The reason He did that was to keep man's free will intact. What good would it be for God if He created man in His image, with the capacity to love and worship Him in intimate fellowship, but without the ability to choose? Love is a choice. Love is only proven when, despite alternatives, you choose to love a particular person and be faithful to him/her.

God could have made a world in which sin and evil did not exist. This is conceivable. But this would have been at the

expense of free will. God created every man and woman with the freedom to choose and therefore, every human being born needs to choose Him!

God does not only give us a choice, but He reveals Himself and His unconditional love to us in order to woo us and draw us closer, but the choice remains ours.

Jeremiah 31:3

*“Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love;
Therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you.”*

When you respond to this drawing of God, you enter into a process of discipleship. The first step that God calls you to is regeneration. This is also known as “being born again.”

Regeneration is a new beginning. A glorious beginning of new life! As much as it is a beginning, it is also an ending. The old life of sin, slavery, and darkness ends, and a new life is born.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

In the moment of regeneration, we are joined to Christ in His death on the cross, completely ending our old life.

2 Corinthians 5:14

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died.

This scripture shows us that Christ did not just die for us, but also AS us. When He died for us, it was as good as us also dying. But every individual needs to enter into and accept that gracious gift.

Of course, this does not mean that you need to die physically, but that your life of slavery to sin and shame is counted as dead with Christ on the cross.

This choice, to choose Jesus Christ, is often referred to as being “born again”. What does this mean?

John 3:3-9

“Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

⁴ Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

⁵ Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶ That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

In this scripture Jesus alludes to two births:

1. Water
2. Spirit

In the next verse, Jesus mentions these two births once more, but with a different word for the first birth:

1. Flesh
2. Spirit

Therefore, the so-called “water” birth is the same as the “flesh” birth. It is a reference to the natural birth, from the water of the womb. Every human being who has ever lived has had to pass through the first birth, through the water of the womb. This is the flesh birth, which automatically inducts us into a sinful nature. As perfectly innocent as a newborn baby may look, it is only a matter of time before he/she starts to exhibit this sinful nature that is innately present. Every parent will tell you the same. Children do not need to learn how to do what is wrong. It comes naturally.

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. Every human being ever born has had a sinful nature. In what way do you recognize the sinful nature at work in your own life?**

This is the crisis of humanity. It is the greatest crisis of humanity because it is a crisis with eternal ramifications since the punishment for sin is not just a temporary punishment, but eternal damnation. **Matthew 25:41** says: “Then he will

say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'

The truth is that after we die on earth, it is not the end, but only the beginning of an eternal existence. There are only two destinations for this eternal existence. The presence of God in His glory and splendor, often referred to as "heaven", and what is often referred to in the Bible as "hell", "the lake of fire," "eternal punishment," "everlasting destruction," the "fiery furnace," or the "eternal fire" (**Rev 21:8, Matt 25:46, I Thess 1:6-9, Matt 13:40-43, Matt 13:47-50, Matt 10:28**).

Every human being is affected and infected by the disease of sin. Even the most morally upright person in the world is tainted by the internal nature of sinfulness. There is no one who has been able to live perfectly, except One - Jesus Christ. He came to earth, born of a woman and born under the same moral laws that govern all men (**Gal 4:4**). Jesus had to come to the world, to be born from the water of the womb, to live a natural life with all of its hardships and temptations.

Hebrews 4:15

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Despite facing every conceivable temptation, Jesus did not succumb to a single one! He lived a perfect, sinless life for 33 years on earth before being handed over to be crucified.

In the Old Testament, when a person brought a lamb as a sin offering to pay for his sins, the priest would inspect the lamb to see whether there were any blemishes. If so, the sacrifice would not be accepted. It needed to be a perfect lamb (**Ex 12:5**).

In the same way, when Jesus the Lamb of God stood before Pontius Pilate, the mob of Jews and Pharisees could not bring a single, credible charge against Him. Pilate even washed his hands in front of the crowd as a gesture that he was free from the shedding of Jesus' innocent blood. (**Matt 27:22-24**)!

Jesus became the perfect Lamb of God, shedding His innocent blood on the cross to pay for the sins of all mankind. This was the only way that God could restore that which was broken by the sin of Adam and Eve. God's standard is so high, that no matter how hard you and I may try, or how good we are, we will not measure up. His standard is perfection and therefore Someone perfect needed to come and pay the price of sin, namely death, on behalf of all humanity. Jesus died vicariously for our sins, settling the debt that was owed by virtue of every man and woman's sinful nature.

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

Again we see that God is motivated by His love for us!

Jesus created the opportunity for man to be born a second time, not physically, but spiritually. Through the first birth (natural), we inherit the nature and sinfulness of our father, Adam. Through the second birth (spiritual), we inherit the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. This is called Federal Headship.

Romans 5:18-19

¹⁸ Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. ¹⁹ For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

I Corinthians 15:45-49

“And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the

heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. ⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.”

In these two scriptures, we see how Adam was the first father of all mankind. The first birth leaves us stranded in sin and without a solution. Thankfully, we also see the second Man Adam, Who is Jesus. The second birth, that of the spirit, is what saves us from eternal punishment. Jesus Christ came to repair that which was broken by Adam through his disobedience.

When we come to Christ we should not be in denial about our sinful condition. No matter how good of a person you may be, you are still a sinner and you cannot save yourself. All of the good works and efforts of man still fall short of perfection and therefore we need another to save us.

I John 1:8-10

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

Romans 3:23

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

If you have ever told a lie, it means you are a liar. If you have ever taken something that doesn't belong to you it means you are a thief. Even if it is in the realm of tax evasion or something seemingly innocuous such as piracy or plagiarism.

If you have ever been angry with a brother, or called someone a fool, you may be liable to judgment (**Matt 5:22**). If you have ever looked at a man or a woman who is not yours and desired him/her, you are an adulterer (**Matt 5:28**). Each person is guilty of something, whether it is arrogance (**2 Tim 3:2**), bitterness (**Eph 4:31**), murder (**Rom 1:29**), greed (**2 Peter 2:14**), unbelief (**Heb 3:12**), unforgiveness (**Matt 6:14-15**) or jealousy (**Gal 5:20**). There are many other sinful deeds that could be mentioned here, but the point is, there is not a single person who has ever lived who has been without sin.

If we think that we are not sinners and therefore are not in need of a Savior, we are making the gravest mistake of all, which will cost us an eternity of suffering. If, however, we acknowledge that we are by nature sinners, who cannot save ourselves, and cry out to the Savior for mercy, He is faithful to forgive us and make us righteous! The good news is that there is no sin that is stronger than the power in the blood of Jesus.

Isaiah 1:18

“Come now, and let us reason together,”

Says the Lord,

“Though your sins are like scarlet,

They shall be as white as snow;

Though they are red like crimson,

They shall be as wool.”

Romans 6:23

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

It is essential that every sinner who wishes to respond to the drawing of God to salvation, should experience and fully understand repentance in its fullness.

Repentance is the starting point! It is where discipleship starts – ALWAYS! This

Is clear to see in the message of John the Baptist (**Matt 3:1 – 12**), Jesus (**Matt 4:17**), Peter (**Acts 2:38 – 47**), and Paul (**Acts 17:30**).

Repentance is about feeling a personal conviction about what you've done to God, by directly or indirectly violating His Word.

True repentance takes place in our: (a) thinking, (b) words and (c) deeds.

- (a) Repentance in our thinking is when we begin to feel convicted for our sin and realize the need to change. This is a work of the Holy Spirit (Jn. 16:8).
- (b) Repentance in our words is when we admit and acknowledge that we are sinners and need forgiveness (Rom. 10:9).
- (c) Repentance in deeds is when we actively start to correct the sin in our lives (Lk. 3:8).

As we go through this process in our lives, we begin to produce fruit that reflects our repentance. This process of conviction and repentance is a life-changing force that changes us gradually, so that every day we can be more like Jesus. Repentance is not a once-off event but rather a lifestyle. We will continually learn more and more what Jesus looks like and where we need to change to conform. Repentance takes place initially, during regeneration, and then routinely as a part of ongoing sanctification (explained later in this section).

***Group Discussion:**

1. In which areas of your life do you need to repent?

So how exactly does one become born again?

Romans 10:9-13

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. ¹¹ For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.” ¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. ¹³ For “whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

There are two important steps that are highlighted in this scripture:

1. Believe in your heart

2. Confess with your mouth

It is not enough to simply believe in your heart.

James 2:19-20

“You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! 20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?”

The belief in God must be accompanied by action. The first action that one needs to take is the confession of faith with the mouth.

This is often called the “sinner’s prayer” or a “confession of faith”. Although there is not a standard template that needs to be followed exactly, there are some fundamental principles that need to be touched on.

ACTIVATION

If you are not yet born again (baptized in Christ), this is your time! Pray together with your guide, surrendering your life to Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

Here are a few example phrases that could be used when making a confession of faith.

(If you have never taken this step before and you want to experience the new birth of the spirit, pray this prayer out loud):

1. "Father I come to You in the name of Jesus Christ. I know that I am a sinner by nature

and that I have committed sins that need to be paid for. Because of my sins, I deserve eternal damnation. I know that I cannot pay for my sins, and I need You to save me.

2. Jesus, I believe that You were born, lived a sinless life, died on the cross for all sin

including mine and were raised back to life after three days in the tomb. I believe that

you ascended to heaven and are now seated at the right hand of the Father

and that one day You will return again.

3. I believe that Your blood, which You shed on the cross is sufficient to pay for my sins and

right now, I accept Your offer of forgiveness and eternal life by surrendering to You. I exchange my sinful life and nature for new life and a new nature in You. I accept new birth as a new creation by the power of Holy Spirit. I believe in my heart and confess with my mouth that You

are my God. I belong to You and according to Your word,
right now, I have the right to be called a child of God.
Come and reign in my life and take control of every area.
Change my life and help me to manifest my true identity
as righteous in Christ Jesus! Fill me, a temple, with Your
Holy Spirit!

In Jesus name, Amen.”

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. How do you feel after that prayer? Did you experience something while praying? Some people have an experience while others feel no different after praying this prayer. The guarantee that you have, however, whether you feel different or not, is that your life and the fruit that you bear will change from this moment as you start moving in a completely different direction. The Holy Spirit brings supernatural regeneration, which is something that we cannot produce in on our own.**

If you just prayed this prayer for the first time,
congratulations! You are now a child of God!

John 1:12

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

How do you think God feels about what you have just done?

Luke 15:10

“Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Your life will never be the same again. To use an illustration, it is like an orange tree that does what every other orange tree does, what every orange tree is meant to do – bear oranges! It cannot do otherwise. Suppose that the oranges are bad fruit – the kind of fruit in our lives that prove our sinful nature. Even if the orange tree tries very hard to stop bearing oranges it will not work. Suppose that apples are fruit of righteousness. Perhaps one could pick off all the oranges and use string to tie apples to the branches. It may fool some people for a while, but eventually all the apples will die and lo and behold, new oranges will start to appear on the branches. Sometimes this is what we do in life. We recognize that the fruit which we are bearing is not good, and so we try very hard in our own strength to remove all the bad fruit from our lives. Unfortunately, it is just a matter of time before the original fruit reappears and all the good fruit is gone. What we really need is for the entire root system to be removed and replaced with another. The moment one is

born again the very root system of your life, including your character, beliefs, and morals is replaced altogether. You will soon find your old self unrecognizable, with great thankfulness over the new life you have, full of joy and peace.

Of course, this does not mean that you are now perfect and lacking nothing. The journey of discipleship is only beginning now! There are many more milestones to reach and we will discover many of them in the coming chapters!

Before we proceed, let us look at the extremely important difference between justification and sanctification. While need both in our lives, it is crucial to understand that justification happens once-off in the broken body of Christ and His supernatural exchanging of our sin with His righteousness. It is imputed to us without any effort on our part. Sanctification, on the other hand, is a daily, lifelong process until our lives on earth end.

Justification

Sanctification

Romans 6:22

- Already
- Positional
- A once-off event at new birth/regeneration

- Not Yet
- Process
- Continual until death

- 2 Cor. 5:21
- Eph. 4:24
- Rom. 1:17

- Phil. 2:12
- Heb. 12:10
- 2 Cor. 7:1

2. Baptism in water

***Group Discussion:**

Have you ever heard the saying: “You can take the monkey out of the jungle but you cannot take the jungle out of the monkey.” This saying has often been used to discriminate against different races. We reject that. We are using it in relation to all humankind. Let’s put it this way – “You can take the Israelite out of Egypt but you cannot take Egypt out of the Israelite.”

What do you think this means?

Did Jesus ever speak about water baptism? Let's see what He said.

Mark 16:16

“He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.”

It is necessary to say that it is not the belief and the baptism that gives us eternal life. The sentence structure has caused confusion for some. The second half of the phrase should clarify it for us when it says, *“he who does not believe will be condemned.”* This proves that it is the “belief (step 1 - regeneration) that saves us and not belief plus baptism in water. Water baptism is, however, a very crucial step of obedience that every believer needs to take. In fact, it is a command of Jesus and therefore it is not optional. Although the only step that constitutes our salvation in terms of eternal life is the first step – regeneration, Jesus in no uncertain terms commands every believer to be baptized in water and therefore, if you are not yet baptized in water, you have not yet obeyed that command.

Matthew 28:19-20

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have

commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Again, Jesus gives an unambiguous command that disciples are to be baptized in water. It is also significant to note that we shouldn't just go around baptizing everyone in water, but those who are 'disciples'. There needs to be a testimony that the candidate has abandoned his old life and is following Jesus (like the Israelites had left Egypt and were following Moses). This is not to say that water baptism can't happen immediately after being born again, but there must be a genuine testimony that the person has been truly born again and therefore started his/her journey of discipleship.

Peter also, in no uncertain terms, gave the commandment to be baptized in water immediately after new believers had become born again through repentance.

Acts 2:38-41

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”³⁹ For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”

⁴⁰ *And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.”⁴¹ Then*

those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them”.

It was not the baptism in water that brought these people the remission of sins, it was their repentance and regeneration. Water cannot wash away our sins, only blood (the perfect blood of Jesus) can (**Lev 17:11**). However, here we see again that water baptism is a non-negotiable part of becoming a believer.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea, ² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. What do you think Paul means with these 3 symbols – baptism into Moses, baptism into the cloud and baptism in the sea?**

In this passage, Paul draws a parallel between baptism into Moses, the cloud and the Red Sea, and New Testament baptism into Christ (regeneration), water and the Holy Spirit.

Very often in the Bible, Egypt (and Babylon) is symbolic of the world. The world, not in the cosmic sense of the word, but meaning that which is worldly and against God or the faith. (Our old life is a worldly life where we used to embrace the values and standards of the world in opposition to the values and standard of God's kingdom.) This is because Egypt was the nation that was enslaving the monotheistic people of God in Old Testament times (It is not a reference to the Egypt or Babylon of today, but rather to what they represented in Old Testament times). In **John 17:16** for example, Jesus says that His followers are not of this world. That does not mean that they are non-humans from other planets, it means they are born from above (of the Spirit – John 3:3), and they do not hold the same values as those who are not yet born again.

In **1 Corinthians 10:1-2**, Paul uses Moses as a type of Christ in the Old Testament to teach us something very valuable regarding the baptisms. Firstly, the Israelites were baptized into Moses. This is the first step that is needed. It is a picture of our regeneration, or new birth. When we are born again, Christ leads us out of slavery (Egypt) and into freedom. As soon as the Israelites left Egypt, they were no longer slaves, working under the whip of an evil tyrant. They were free and

walking towards the promised land. The moment we are born again, everything that enslaved us in the past loses authority and we are free.

I Peter 2:9

“But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”

There was a problem, however. The moment the Israelites left Egypt, Pharaoh regretted letting them go and left with his soldiers in pursuit to bring them back into slavery. The Israelites were pressed between the approaching Egyptian soldiers behind them and the Red Sea in front of them. As a solution to this problem, God opened the Red Sea and lead, (through Moses), the Israelites through on dry ground. When the Egyptian soldiers followed them, the Red Sea closed onto them, drowning all of them. Paul says that the Israelites were ‘baptized’ into the Red Sea. This is an Old Testament type of the water baptism. Very often, believers have this same struggle in their walk with God. Perhaps you are already born again, you love Jesus, attend church, read your Bible and pray, but somehow you feel that there is something that is still binding you. Like some part of your old life that is still following you. You may have left Egypt but Egypt does not want to let go of you. Many believers feel this way – as if their past life or sins are haunting them. Until you pass

through the waters of baptism, Satan will not relent from following you with all of his soldiers in order to bring you back into slavery. This is not to say that after water baptism everything will be easy and peaceful, but in our lifelong war with the enemy, there is a significant battle that will be won the moment we are baptized in water. Satan loses a very important foothold because of our step of obedience.

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. What 'soldiers' from your old life are still following you and trying to catch you to bring you again into slavery? (This could be past sins that are haunting you, temptations, guilt, shame, memories, fear, oppression etc.)**

So, practically, how does God 'drown' the soldiers who are chasing after us through the water baptism?

Here are three ways in which baptism saves us from these soldiers in our lives:

1. It saves and protects us from the moral decay and corruption of society around us in this world that we are living in.

I Peter 3:20-21

“Who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water. ²¹ There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.”

It says that Noah and his family were saved “through” water, not “from” water. One could have easily assumed that Noah and his family were saved “from” the water, by the ark. This is also true, but since Peter in the next verse declares that the ark is an antitype that speaks of baptism, we understand that the water of the flood is a type of the water of baptism.

Therefore, it is not only the ark that saved them from the waters of the flood, but it is also the waters of the flood that saved them. From what? From the absolute moral decay and

debauchery of the society around them. This is one of the powerful blessings of water baptism. You can be anywhere, among any people group, regardless of how reprobate society is, and you will be protected from the disease of immorality that has infected the world around you. Considering the degenerate state of the world we are living in; water baptism is something that we desperately need if we are to remain free from defilement.

2. It gives us a clear conscience before the Lord. Clear from all that has tried to drag us back into or remind us of our old life.

3. Another very important aspect of water baptism is that it enables us to live a resurrection life in this world. Very often, believers stop short of the resurrection of Christ from the grave, only emphasizing and focusing on the cross of Christ.

As marvelous as the cross is and all that it accomplished, there is more for us as believers after the cross. In the first step - regeneration, our sins are paid for and sin as a whole is dealt with and removed as a stumbling block. As we have said, we have been crucified with Christ in the first step and we reckon ourselves as dead to sin and the sinful nature. But God's desire is not that we just remain "dead" to sin, like corpses waiting for the second coming of Christ before we can live again. Jesus did not stay in the grave. After three days He rose from the grave in power. God does not want us to stay dead, but to rise with Christ into a new, victorious, resurrection life. This is the power of the gesture of going

down into the water (the grave) and coming up out of the water. Alive! Resurrection life in Christ, with victory and power will never be fully possible without the baptism in water.

Romans 6:1-14

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,⁶ knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.⁷ For he who has died has been freed from sin.⁸ Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,⁹ knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.¹⁰ For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.¹¹ Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

¹² Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. ¹³ And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. ¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

Here we can see that the first step takes care of our old sinful life and renders us "dead" to it. Paul strongly exhorts us, however, that we do not merely remain there, but move on to resurrection life in Christ. Water baptism is crucial in this regard. Many have mistakenly taught that water baptism is only a symbol of our first step – regeneration. Although it is true that water baptism is a testimony that confirms and bears witness to our death with Christ in the first baptism, it is not only a symbol. During water baptism something profound happens in the spiritual realm. The Egyptian soldiers that had been following the believer ever since he/she left Egypt are drowned in a single moment, affording the believer a new measure of freedom in the resurrection life of Christ Who conquered the grave. The going down into the water represents the first step – death with Christ. But the coming up out of the water represents the resurrection life of Christ!

Colossians 3:3-10

*“For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴
When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear
with Him in glory.*

*⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the
earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and
covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the
wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in
which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.*

*⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger,
wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.
⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man
with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is
renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who
created him.”*

Let's look at some Biblical examples of water baptism.

Acts 8:36-39

*“Now as they went down the road, they came to some water.
And the eunuch said, “See, here is water. What hinders me
from being baptized?”*

*³⁷ Then Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you
may.”*

*And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the
Son of God.”*

³⁸ So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. ³⁹ Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.”

Acts 10:44-48

“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”

Acts 16:31-34

“So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. ³³ And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were

baptized. ³⁴ Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household.”

Something that is strikingly clear from these New Testament examples is that we do not need to wait very long before being baptized in water. As soon as new believers have received with understanding the Biblical instruction to be baptized, they need to follow through with obedience. For various reasons it has become quite common for new believers to wait very long before being baptized in water – if at all. This is delayed obedience.

From the Biblical evidence, it is also abundantly evident that baptism by complete immersion is the correct mode of baptism.

Water baptism by immersion should be done for these reasons:

1. A Public Testimony of Salvation

2. A Pledge for a Clear Conscience

3. Obedience to God

**4. Preservation from moral decay in
the world**

ACTIVATION

If you are not yet baptized in water, this is your time! Pray together with your guide, making sure that you understand this chapter and are ready to take the step of obedience.

Then, make all the preparations and be baptized by full immersion in water in front of witnesses (if possible). This can be done in a bathtub, swimming pool, lake, sea etc.

3. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

***Group Discussion:**

7. Have you ever been lost in a foreign city without a map or a GPS? Tell the story!

Acts 8:14-17

Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵ who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.

You may remember from Paul's illustration in I Corinthians 10 that he spoke of three baptisms. We have already discussed two (regeneration and water) and now it is time to investigate the third.

Let's read that passage again.

I Corinthians 10:1-2

“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,² all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”

We already understand that Moses represents Christ and the sea represents water baptism, but what does the cloud represent? Let's go back to the source scripture to see what the cloud meant for Israel in the wilderness.

Exodus 13:21-22

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so as to go by day and night.²² He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day or the pillar of fire by night from before the people.”

***Group Discussion:**

1. What do you think the cloud meant for the Israelites and how does it translate to believers today?

Take a moment and imagine being an Israelite in the +- 3 million group who had just left Egypt and were now marching through the wilderness. I am not sure whether they had archaic maps that helped guide them. I am also not sure that they knew exactly where they were headed, except to the broader Canaan/Palestine area, which God had promised to their ancestor Abraham. Whatever the case, the Israelites needed Someone to help them along this perilous journey from Egypt to the promised land. Someone to guide them and show them the way to go. Whenever the Israelites would set up camp, the cloud would come down and cover the Tabernacle. When it ascended, they would know that it was time to move on and the cloud would lead them on. At times the cloud would come down over the Tabernacle for extended periods. For as long as it remained, the Israelites would not move an inch until the cloud rose and led the way.

This is very comparable to our Christian walk in this world. We may already be born again and even baptized in water, but this world can sometimes be a wilderness. We can lose our way in our spiritual walk, and we need the guidance of the Holy Spirit day and night. We should not make a move in

our lives without the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This is our new life as sons of God.

Romans 8:14

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.”

***Question to Ponder:**

- 1. Have you felt as if you were in a wilderness in some seasons of your life, where you did not know which way to go?**

The Holy Spirit is a tremendous blessing and gift to us in our daily walk in this ‘wilderness’ and He will guide us to the promised land. We may not have the blessing of living in the time where Jesus physically walked on the earth, but believe it or not, the time we are living in is actually better. How can it be better? Jesus said so Himself.

John 17:6

“Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.”

John 14:16-17

“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

Can you see why Jesus said it is an advantage for us that He leaves and that the Father gives us “another Helper?” Jesus remained with His disciples for three-and-a-half years before He ascended, but the Holy Spirit will dwell with us and be in us for the duration of our lives, until we are promoted to heavenly glory.

Ephesians 4:30

“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

He is our seal for the day of redemption. He will be with us, leading us ever closer to the promised land, just as the cloud and the pillar of fire led the Israelites faithfully through the

wilderness. He is our constant Companion, Helper and Guide. How does one grieve Him? Essentially, living in a way where you are not conscious of Him, conscious of the truth that He is with you and lives inside of you. This leads to a sub-standard way of living and grieves the One living inside of us. Sometimes we forget and need to remind ourselves Who lives within us. Paul asked the Corinthian believers, as if to prompt them about something they had forgotten.

I Corinthians 6:19-20

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”

What is the Holy Spirit’s role and function in our lives?

John 14:26

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

We may not have experienced the blessing of walking with Jesus physically, but the Holy Spirit will reveal to us all that

Jesus said as we have a relationship with Him. He will even reveal to us the things that Jesus had not yet said on earth.

John 16:12-15

"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

In **John 14:16**, Jesus says that He will send the disciples (and us) another Helper. The word "helper" that is used there is "paracletos" in Greek. "Paracletos" has two nuanced meanings. Firstly, the "paracletos" is our friend. Secondly, the "paracletos" is One Who comes to our defense and fights for us in a court of law.

He is the defense attorney for us in our struggles in the human experience. He is also the One Who brings conviction. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit in **John 16:8** that He would convict the world of sin. Bear in mind that conviction is not the same as condemnation. Conviction is actually an act of grace. There will be a day of judgment (**2 Cor 5:10**), but the Holy Spirit is here and now, bringing conviction so that we

may, by the grace of God respond to the love of the Father and receive the free gift of grace provided in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

Acts 1:4-9

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; ⁵for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. ⁸But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

⁹ Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Jesus instructed His disciples to wait in Jerusalem and not to do anything because shortly, the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon them and empower them from on high, enabling them to be effective witnesses (**Luke 24:49**).

The reason why Jesus told the disciples to wait, was because the day of Pentecost was coming soon. This was an amazing day in church history that ushered in a new era. Let's read about it in Acts 2.

Acts 2:1-21

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them telling in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." ¹² So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "Whatever

could this mean?”¹³ Others mocking said, “They are full of new wine.”

Peter’s Sermon

“¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. ¹⁵ For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only [e]the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ ‘And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God,

That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh;

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

Your young men shall see visions,

Your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ And on My menservants and on My maidservants

I will pour out My Spirit in those days;

And they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in heaven above

And signs in the earth beneath:

Blood and fire and vapor of smoke.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned into darkness,

And the moon into blood,

Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord.

²¹ And it shall come to pass

That whoever calls on the name of the Lord

Shall be saved.”

From that day on, believers have the opportunity, just like the 120 in the upper room had, to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Although there were believers in the Old Testament upon whom the Holy Spirit descended, empowering them for the work of ministry, and even some who were seemingly filled with the Spirit, it was not common and was mainly to bring enablement for the completion of an assignment. Now, however, after the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, you and I have the blessing of Holy Spirit baptism available to us.

So how does one receive baptism in the Holy Spirit?

When reading **Acts 8** and **Acts 19:1-7**, we can see that there were believers, devout followers of Jesus, who were not yet baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, it is evident that one can be a believer in Christ, a disciple, but not yet be BAPTIZED in the Holy Spirit.

Does this mean that when one becomes a believer in Christ, also called the baptism into Christ, that you do not yet HAVE the Holy Spirit? No!

There is a difference between having received the Holy Spirit when you were born again and being baptized IN the Holy Spirit. In the original text, every time the word baptism is used it speaks of a complete immersion.

When you are baptized into Christ/born again, you also have the Father and Holy Spirit in your life. Essentially, the action of rebirth is not even possible without the active work of the Holy Spirit. The Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit cannot be separated to the degree where you have the Father but not the Son, or not the Holy Spirit.

A simple illustration can be used to explain the difference.

Suppose that you have a glass full of water. It would be incorrect to say that the glass is 'without water' or 'dry'. It is in fact full of water. But suppose you take that glass, as is, full of water, and you put it into a pool of water or a bathtub. Suddenly, there is a whole new level or dimension of water, not only in, but above, under and around! Essentially, when

one is baptized in the Holy Spirit, he/she is submerged wholly and completely.

When speaking about baptism in the Holy Spirit, we must also speak about the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned in I

Corinthians 12:4-10:

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. ⁷ To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸ For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰ to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.”

There are nine gifts mentioned in this passage. It is helpful to divide them into three categories.

Revelation Gifts:

Word of wisdom

Word of knowledge

Discerning of spirits

Power Gifts:

Faith

Miracles

Healings

Vocal Gifts

Prophecy

Tongues

Interpretation of tongues

Without going into too much detail, we need to understand that the only precondition for operating in the gifts of the Spirit, is to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. Every believer, upon receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit, can operate in each of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit as the Holy Spirit causes them to manifest through them, based upon His will and the specific need. You may find that you are naturally stronger in one or several of the gifts, but that does not mean you only have that one.

Let's look at some Biblical examples of baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:4-17

"Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. ⁵ Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. ⁶ And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. ⁷ For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. ⁸ And there was great joy in that city.

The Sorcerer's Profession of Faith

⁹ But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." ¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. ¹³ Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.

The Sorcerer's Sin

¹⁴ Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

Although Holy Spirit baptism occasionally takes place without the laying on of hands, it is the primary model we see in the book of Acts.

Acts 10:44-48

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. ⁴⁵ And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.

Then Peter answered, ⁴⁷ “Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?” ⁴⁸ And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.”

Acts 19:1-6

“And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples ² he said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?”

So they said to him, “We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

³ And he said to them, “Into what then were you baptized?”

So they said, “Into John’s baptism.”

⁴ Then Paul said, “John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.”

⁵ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.”

In these passages we can see how the baptism in the Holy Spirit was accompanied by the gifts of the Spirit. When you

have received baptism in the Holy Spirit, you should start to see the manifestation of the gifts in your life. Perhaps not all at once, and not all on the same level of frequency, intensity, and accuracy, but there will be some evidence of the gifts.

Remember to desire the gifts.

In the occurrences of Holy Spirit baptism/infilling in the book of Acts, speaking in tongues is the gift which most frequently accompanied the infilling. This is likely because speaking in tongues is the only gift that is for self-edification (1 Cor. 14:4) and not for the edification of others (except when it is tongues as a sign to unbelievers – Acts 2; 1 Cor. 14:22, or tongues as a message to believers, with interpretation 1 Cor. 14:5).

ACTIVATION

If you are not yet baptized in the Holy Spirit, this is your time! Pray together with a fellow believer who is baptized in the Holy Spirit, allowing him/her to lay hands on you and ask Jesus to come and baptize you in the Holy Spirit.

4. Assimilation into the Body of Christ

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. In what negative way has your particular family shape you as a person?**
- 2. In what positive way has your particular family shape you as a person?**

When you become born again, just as the analogy suggests, you are a newborn baby, spiritually speaking. The Apostle Peter put it like this:

1 Peter 2:2

“Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation”.

This milk is the word of God. The more we eat the word of God, the more it causes us to grow. Prayer, worship, an accountable path of discipleship and fellowship with spiritual family are all crucial parts of our growth as newborn babies into maturity in the spirit. Some believers underestimate the importance of these steps, and the result is that they do not grow. A baby needs to drink and absorb milk in order to grow, before it can move on to solid foods. When believers do not walk a path of discipleship with someone, do not fellowship with other believers, do not read the Bible, do not pray and do not spend time in worship and the presence of God, growth will not take place. In fact, spiritual atrophy sets in, and they start to die spiritually. The writer of Hebrews as well as the apostle Paul addressed believers about this danger.

Hebrews 5:12-14

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food,¹³ for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

1 Corinthians 3:1-3

“But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ² I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, ³ for you are still of the flesh.”

When a baby is born, we celebrate the birth and new life given by God. Wouldn't it be absurd, however, if after celebrating the birth of this new baby with much joy, the parents left the baby on the street, returned to their home, and carried on with life as before? How long do you suppose it will be before the newborn baby dies? Unfortunately, very often in the church, we have cultivated a culture in which we celebrate the birth of new believers, but we do not nurture life and growth. The statistics on how many believers fall back within a short period of time after becoming born again are shockingly high and disheartening. If we want to reverse this trend, we need to focus on discipleship and spiritual growth. A baby can only survive within the context of a family. It needs someone who will feed it, clean it, change its diapers, protect it, give it warmth and so much more. The same is true of new spiritual babies. Someone needs to take care of them and nurture life and growth. For spiritual babies, just as for natural babies, survival, life, and growth are only possible in the context of family. Spiritual family is called the body of Christ! Let's look at some scriptures about the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.”

Regardless of your race, status, age, background, or past life, when you are born again, you are immediately baptized, or inducted into the body of Christ, and become part of a spiritual family.

1 Corinthians 12:25-27

“That there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. ²⁶ And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.”

Romans 12:4-5

“For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, ⁵ so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another.”

We should never compare ourselves with other people in the body of Christ. God, according to His wise design, intended that we will all be different and that there would be unity despite the diversity.

1 Corinthians 12:15-22

"If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? ¹⁸ But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. ¹⁹ If all were a single member, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

²¹ The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." ²² On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable."

As we have said, the moment that you are born again you automatically become part of the body of Christ, with millions of spiritual brothers and sisters. However, you need to embrace the family and partake in your function as a member of the household of God. This does not happen automatically. When we willfully decide not to be part of the

body of Christ, isolating ourselves under the false notion that “just God and I are enough,” we will start to die spiritually. When one loses a finger or even an arm in an accident, the body will be hurt, but in time, it will recover and heal. The body will go on. The finger or arm, however, will die, rot and decompose, because it is no longer connected to the body, which is the source of life. The Head of the body is Christ.

Colossians 1:18

“And he is the head of the body, the church.”

We need to be part of the body, actively involved in its movement and life as an organism.

One way of doing this is by simply being present and partaking. This practically means that you should be part of a congregation that fellowships together regularly.

Hebrews 10:25

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

Proverbs 27:17

“Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.”

When we are together, exhortation takes place. We are shaped and molded into the likeness of Jesus as we rub shoulders with our brothers and sisters and leaders in the body of Christ.

This includes occasionally receiving discipline. Part of raising a child is teaching them what is wrong and what is right. Often, a child will defiantly choose to do what is wrong. This behavior requires discipline and consequences so that the child can learn and make better choices. We don't want to take this analogy too far by insisting that leaders and brothers and sisters treat one another like children, but discipline is definitely a necessary part of spiritual growth.

Look at what Hebrews **12:5-13** says:

"And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?"

*"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
nor be weary when reproved by him.*

*⁶ For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives."*

⁷ It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not

sons. ⁹ Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹ For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

¹² Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, ¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.”

Although, (as we can see in this passage), discipline is primarily given to us by God, our Father, brothers and sisters are often used by the Lord to bring discipline to His children.

We also need to be accountable to brothers and sisters with our lives, so that we may continue to grow from glory to glory and live a healthy spiritual life.

James 5:16

“Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.”

This passage does not mean that when we confess sins to a brother or sister we are forgiven or given absolution. Only God can do that, by virtue of the precious and powerful blood of Jesus. It does, however, mean, that brothers and sisters can help each other in areas of weakness, or areas that need healing. When we are stuck in sin or need help to get free from some bondage or struggle, we need to speak to a brother or sister about that. This passage also speaks to conflict situations, where perhaps you have offended or trespassed against a brother or sister. In such a case, receiving God's forgiveness is one thing, but confessing to the person you have offended is also required!

***Group Discussion:**

- 1. Do you have someone in your life who sharpens you like iron?**
- 2. Do you have someone in your life to whom you can confess areas where you need healing?**

In the body of Christ, there are also those who will serve as leaders. They lead us spiritually and serve us in any needs we may have in our walk with God. We need to look at those who are further along than us in their walk with God, and imitate their faith, following in their footsteps.

Hebrews 13:7

“Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.”

Hebrews 13:17

“Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.”

The exciting news is that God has made you with unique giftings and characteristics that are intended to contribute and be a blessing to the body of Christ around you. You do not have to be a pastor or a leader to be a blessing to the body of Christ. Some will be called by the Lord to fulfill those functions, but not everyone needs to. You need to find out what the unique gifts are that God has put inside of you that will be a blessing to the church.

Romans 12:4-8

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,⁵ so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.⁶ Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith;⁷ if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching;⁸ the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.”

Gifts that are mentioned here (apart from the gifts also mentioned in I Corinthians 12) are:

- ☐ **Prophecy**
- ☐ **Serving**
- ☐ **Teaching?**
- ☐ **Exhortation /Encouragement**
- ☐ **Giving**
- ☐ **Leadership**
- ☐ **Mercy**
- ☐ **Helps**
- ☐ **Administration**

***Group Discussion:**

1. Are there any of these gifts that come naturally to you or which you have noticed in your life? Remember that some of your gifts will become evident only later in your life or when you become more involved in the body of Christ (spiritual family).

Note that these gifts are not the same as the spiritual gifts mentioned in the previous chapter, although some of those are also mentioned here. These gifts are not related to or dependent on your baptism in the Holy Spirit but are gifts that God has put in believers from birth. As new believers start to partake in the household of God, some may realize that they have the gift of serving, for example. Some will realize that they have a gift of exhortation or contributing (giving), and these gifts will then begin to be a blessing to the congregation in which they are fellowshiping.

ACTIVATION

If you are not yet part of a congregation or a group that gathers intentionally and regularly, this is your time! Pray

together with your guide and begin to find out what congregations are in the area where you live. You may need to attend a few different gatherings to find the one that is right for you. It is important, however, to not merely choose according to your own preferences or convenience. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead your decision, even if it means choosing a group that was not your first choice naturally. Each congregation has a unique mandate from heaven which needs to be accomplished here on earth; a unique part to play in manifesting God's kingdom in the world. You may not immediately notice, but God knows which congregation you need, which also needs you to fulfill that mandate. There is more at stake than the nicest venue, the best music and every other preference you may have.

Persecution

At the timberline where the storms strike
with the most fury, the sturdiest trees are
found.

- Hudson Taylor

QUESTION

Apart from all the amazing rewards and blessings in the Christian life, have you ever thought about the difficulties that you might face precisely because you have chosen to follow Jesus and live for Him?

As new believers, it is important to realize that following Jesus Christ, although it is the most rewarding and amazing journey conceivable, is

not an easy life. Very often, the gospel is presented incorrectly, in a way that people may think it is an easy decision that will only yield a lifetime of benefits and rewards.

Our ultimate reward is an eternal reward. Yes, there are many blessings and pleasures that a child of God will experience in this life, as we experience glimpses of the glory that is to come in eternity, but the primary reward will be that we will spend eternity, uninterrupted, in the presence of the living God.

A Theology of Suffering

The idea is not to adopt a victim mentality, that says that we are always to be suffering and never to enjoy anything in life. But we need to understand that suffering in the form of persecution is part of the package when following Jesus. Our theology needs to be one

that includes suffering in the form of persecution, but also the ordinary suffering that humanity faces as a result of the fall of man.

Somehow some believers have thought that they are immune to the ordinary suffering that humanity faces because of their faith in God. This is a shallow understanding of suffering and needs to be deconstructed. Although we believe in healing for today and pursue it, we also make room in our theology for suffering beyond our understanding, with the promise of victory in the eternal state. These truths stand in tension and are to be held simultaneously. Although human suffering is a fundamental understanding to have in order to have a robust faith, it is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, for the rest of this chapter, the focus will be on suffering in the form of persecution.

Matthew 20:20-23

“Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking

*something from Him. ²¹ And He said to her,
“What do you wish?”*

She said to Him, “Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.”²² But Jesus answered and said, “You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” They said to Him, “We are able.” ²³ So He said to them, “You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father.”

When Jesus spoke about the cup in this passage, He was referring to the cup of suffering which He drank on the cross (**Luke 22:42**). He also calls this cup of suffering a baptism. Although you and I can never do what Jesus did in a soteriological (relating to salvation) sense, since He was the perfect Lamb and we are not, we

should still expect to be persecuted because He is our Master and we are His followers.

God had one son on earth without sin, but never one without suffering.

- Augustine

We want to avoid suffering, death, sin, ashes. But we live in a world crushed and broken and torn, a world God Himself visited to redeem. We receive his poured-out life, and being allowed the high privilege of suffering with Him, may then pour ourselves out for others.

- Elisabeth Elliot

(Elisabeth Elliot was a Christian author and speaker. Her first husband, Jim Elliot, was killed in 1956 while attempting to make

missionary contact with the Auca people of eastern Ecuador. She later spent two years as a missionary to the tribe members who killed her husband)

John 15:18-21

“If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. ²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. ²¹ But all these things they will do to you for My name’s sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.”

The sons of Zebedee, whose mother asked Jesus the question above did indeed experience persecution, as prophesied by Jesus. **James was**

beheaded in Jerusalem for preaching Christ. John, his brother, was put into a pot of boiling oil in order to kill him, but he miraculously survived. Nine of the remaining ten disciples, with the exception of Judas Iscariot who betrayed Jesus, were all killed for their faith. Some were **crucified, thrown off buildings, beaten to death, shot dead with arrows, flayed, beheaded, hanged and impaled**. This kind of experience was not unique to the first disciples. From then on, persecution of Christians only grew.

Luke 9:23-26

“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? ²⁶ For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man

be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels”.

Mass Exodus Of Believers?

Part of the problem that causes the statistics of new believers walking away from the faith, as mentioned in the previous chapter, is that new believers are not presented with the gospel accurately. They are not aware that there will be difficulties, persecution and even suffering. When difficult times come, as they are bound to, the believers feel disillusioned and abandon the faith. Jesus spoke about this in **Luke 14:27-33:**

“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he

has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him,³⁰ saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.'³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand?³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

When we lead new believers to Christ, we need to prepare them for everything that they will encounter as a Jesus follower. So, what can a new believer expect?

2 Timothy 3:12

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution."

Geographical Distinctions

Of course, this “suffering of persecution” will not look the same for everyone. Believers in Europe or America will experience a different kind of persecution to believers in the Middle East, Asia, and parts of Africa for example. Some may suffer the loss of work because of their religious convictions or be ridiculed and ostracized by family or friends. Others will be hunted down and executed, burned alive or beheaded. Apart from the geographical differences, there are also differences according to the epoch in which we find ourselves.

Christians in Rome during the first three centuries suffered tremendous persecution, only to have Christianity become the official state religion in the fourth century, which has endured through the centuries until now in the form of Roman Catholicism. The bottom line is

that, as a believer who is not ashamed of the gospel, there must necessarily be some form of persecution because of my faith. As Paul said to Timothy, everyone who lives a Godly life will definitely be persecuted.

Matthew 10:16-22

“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. ¹⁷ But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. ¹⁸ You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. ¹⁹ But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; ²⁰ for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

²¹ “Now brother will deliver up brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up

against parents and cause them to be put to death. ²² And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved."

This may sound like quite a grim outlook on life as a believer. This does not mean that as believers we can only expect bad things, pain and suffering for the rest of our lives until we enter eternal life. God also wants us to see His goodness on this side of eternity. David says in

Psalms 27:13 – *"I believe that I shall look upon the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living!"*

We will have many joyous, fulfilling moments and memories on earth. As true believers, however, we must be prepared, before embarking on our journey of faith, understanding that we will most assuredly encounter persecution.

Stephen – Stoned – AD 34

James - Zebedee – Beheaded in Jerusalem
with his accuser AD 44

Philip– Crucified & stoned AD 54

Matthew – Alphaeus – Beheaded in
Ethiopia – AD 60

James – Alphaeus – Thrown from the top
of the temple and stoned – AD63

Mark – Dragged behind a horse with
hooks and ropes for 2 days and then
burnt to death. AD 64

Peter – Crucified upside down in Nero's
circus – AD 69

Paul – beheaded in Jerusalem – AD 69

Matthias – Crucified, stoned & beheaded
– AD 70

Andrew – X – cross– 3 days long he shared the gospel with everyone that passed by before he died – AD 70

Judas/Thaddaeus – shot with arrows – AD 70 (Armenia)

Nathaniel – Flayed & crucified upside down – AD 70 (Armenia)

Thomas – thrown into an oven and speared –India – AD 70

Simon – sawn in half – AD 74

Luke – Hanged – Greece – AD 93

John – Pot of oil & forced to drink poison – did not die until AD 98

Matthew – Speared - Egypt

This kind of experience was not unique to the first disciples. From then on, persecution of Christians only grew.

Persecution under the Caesars

Nero, Decius, Diocletian, Dometian

Christians were labeled as cannibals because of communion and so this became a justification to feed them to wild beasts because they were cannibals.

Christians were crucified, dipped in tar, burnt alive, and even set on fire to be used as garden lamps in Neros garden.

24 Aug 1572 – St Bartholomew's Day Massacre – 30,000 Protestants were murdered. Queen Catherine de' Medici, the mother of King Charles IX

The 20th century is known as “The Century of the Martyr”

Is it worth it?

Is following Jesus and living for Him worth the price? Is it worth being persecuted? Yes!

In the beatitudes in **Matthew 5:10**, Jesus says:

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

There is a blessing for those who are persecuted. Life in this world is a very short experience compared to eternity. Those who are persecuted in this world will inherit the

kingdom of heaven. An eternal perspective is needed in order for us to correctly value the reward of suffering.

The apostle Paul had this eternal perspective. Look at what he says in **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**:

“So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.”

The Apostle James, the brother of Jesus, also had this insight:

James 1:2-4

“Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the

testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”

As believers we can get to the place where persecution is not only something which we can endure, but something which we will count as joy, because of the outcome of persecution. There is also a sense in which, according to this scripture, persecution produces fruit in this life and not only an eternal reward. Being persecuted bolsters and purifies what I believe in – the very things for which I am being persecuted. It is undeniably clear that when a person is willing to suffer and even die for something, that they truly believe in that thing with enduring conviction. **Do you believe enough to die for your belief?**

Jesus promised the disciples three things -
that they would be completely fearless,
absurdly happy and in constant trouble.

- G.K. Chesterton

Paul also says:

2 Corinthians 12:10

“For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

We can be comforted and encouraged by the truth that, when we endure persecution, Jesus knows exactly what we are going through, because He went through it first. Not only does He know and understand, but He is also present with us in the very moment that we experience

persecution. We can partake in sweet fellowship with Christ in moments of suffering and persecution.

Luke 6:22-23

“Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! ²³ Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.”

Romans 8:35

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

How are we supposed to respond to persecution?

Matthew 5:44-47

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?”

Romans 12:14

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.”

Stephen was the first martyr for the Christian faith. Let us look at how he responded to his persecutors who stoned him to death in **Acts**

7:54-60:

“Now when they heard these things they were enraged, and they ground their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. ⁵⁶ And he said, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” ⁵⁷ But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together at him. ⁵⁸ Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. ⁵⁹ And as they were stoning Stephen, he called out, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” ⁶⁰ And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

Following his Master’s example, Stephen forgave the ones who killed him, asking the Father not to hold it against them.

Jesus prayed in **Luke 23:34**:

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

This is God's universal purpose for all Christian suffering: more contentment in God and less satisfaction in the world.

- John Piper

Revelation 12:11

“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.”

Are you living boldly as a witness who is not ashamed of the gospel?

Romans 1:16

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek."

Are you a secret believer or are you sharing your faith with others with boldness?

Acts 1:8

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Pray a prayer of commitment to follow Jesus wherever He leads, regardless of the persecution that comes as a result. Even unto death! 2. Pray for those who may already have persecuted you for your faith.