



DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

# The Basics of the Christian Faith

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

With teaching from

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Leader's Guide

# Welcome, Leader

We're so glad you've chosen to share, study, and discuss *The Basics of the Christian Faith* with a friend who is a new believer or is interested in learning more about Christianity. While most people are familiar with the word *disciple*, they may not fully understand what it means to *be* a disciple or to *make* disciples, as Jesus commanded His followers in Matthew 28:19. And so we hope you find that this study helps you explain and teach how being a disciple of Jesus leads to eternal life.

As you and your friend listen to the thirteen messages that form the basis of this study then meet to discuss answers to the questions associated with each lesson, you'll have the amazing privilege of demonstrating what it looks like to be a committed follower—a *disciple*—of Jesus Christ.

Prayer will be helpful throughout the process. Alistair often reminds us that people are brought to saving faith only when *God's Spirit does God's work through God's Word*. So pray for God to use all that will be learned to reveal His truth to your friend.

USING THIS GUIDE TO

## Share Your Faith with a Friend

These lessons will help you and your friend grow in your knowledge of Christ and encourage one another's faith (Rom. 1:12). Each session includes three learning phases to complete independently before meeting in person. The purpose of this study guide is to provide you with an opportunity to share your faith not just through personal testimony but also by considering the essential truths that God has revealed in His Word. Your role as the leader is to grasp the content, facilitate discussion, provide biblical answers and explanations, and—most importantly—exemplify God's love.

# Leader Tips and Answer Key

Note: Quotation marks around the answer indicate that it is a direct quote from Alistair's message. All other answers are summaries of Alistair's teaching.

## Session 01

### Note to Leader

If you haven't heard your friend profess faith or you have questions and concerns about his or her standing with God, pray that the Spirit will give you love, boldness, and the right words to share His truth.

### Fill in the Blank

01. "Salvation is not by works, but it is for works."
02. "There is only one way to be saved, and that is by doing two things: by turning from my sin and turning to Christ."
03. "There are two places that sin is punished: sin is punished in hell, and sin is punished at Calvary. And the message of the Gospel is 'Believe in Jesus Christ today as your Lord and Savior, or face Him then as your rightful Judge.'"

### Short Answer

01. "The word in Greek is *metanoéō*, which simply means 'to do an about turn.'" (According to the Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 87, "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, does, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.")
02. "No. If that'd been the case, then Jesus Christ never need to have died upon the cross." Reread Ephesians 2:8-10.

## Session 02

### Note to Leader

This session serves as a reminder that *all* of us need to be washed clean. Pray that you will demonstrate humility by acknowledging your own constant need of God's grace.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “Jesus makes it clear by the time He steps on the stage of history, referencing the historicity of Adam and Eve, that the death that entered into the world was the spiritual death, closing down the communion between a holy God and His creation, bringing alienation into that picture, bringing bondage into people's lives, bringing conflict into their circumstances.”

**02.** “Every one of us is born with an inherent bias to sin, every one of us a sinner in the same sinking ship with everybody else. And every day we are confronted by the ravaging nature of our condition.”

**03.** “Sin is not an intellectual problem; it is a moral problem.”

### Short Answer

**01.** “Not only in the New Testament but also in the Old, we discover that leprosy is one of the clearest pictures ... that the Bible contains of the predicament of men and women as sinners. Like the leper, our lives are spoiled. We suffer not from this physical ailment, but we suffer by our natures from the leprosy of sin, the leprosy that has spoiled our souls.”

**02.** “To become a Christian, trusting in what Jesus has done on the cross as our only basis for acceptance with God, will involve at least these three elements: One, acknowledging that I am absolutely helpless and cannot rely on any righteousness of my own ... secondly, believing that Jesus has died and has provided the very gift of righteousness that I've just admitted that I need; and thirdly, that on the strength of that I must then cast myself upon His mercy.”

## Session 03

### Note to Leader

Doctrinal commitment should never be so intense that we become rigid and demand too much from others or ourselves. As Alistair so often teaches, the main things are the plain things. God has made clear all that is necessary for salvation and joyful obedience.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “It is impossible to go through the Letters without finding that again and again the apostles are urging upon their readers the absolute necessity of knowing what and why they believe.”



**02.** “Intellect is not the key in learning Christian doctrine. Obedience is the key in learning Christian doctrine.”

### Short Answer

**01.** “The Spirit of God confirms for us the veracity of the Bible.”

**02.** (1) the Trinity; (2) God’s sovereignty; (3) Scripture’s divine inspiration, infallibility, authority, and sufficiency; (4) humanity’s universal sinfulness and guilt since the fall; (5) Christ’s substitutionary atonement; (6) Christ’s literal, physical resurrection from the dead; (7) the Holy Spirit’s work in granting the believer repentance and faith; (8) the one holy, universal church to which all true believers belong; (9) the expectation of Christ’s personal return in power and glory

## Session 04

### Note to Leader

Use this opportunity to make sure your friend is aware of free, helpful Bible tools such as [truthforlife.org/bible](http://truthforlife.org/bible), [esv.org](http://esv.org), [biblehub.com](http://biblehub.com), and more.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “There is a part which in the table of contents is called the Old Testament, which goes from Genesis to Malachi, and then there is the New Testament, which goes from Matthew through to Revelation.”

**02.** The Bible is “sixty-six books written in a variety of languages, mainly in Hebrew and Greek, over a period of more than a thousand years, originating in places as far apart as Babylon and Rome, and penned by as many as forty different individuals.”

**03.** In the Old Testament, Jesus is predicted; in the Gospels, He is revealed; in the Acts of the Apostles, He is preached; in the Epistles, He is explained; and in the book of Revelation, He is expected.

### Short Answer

**01.** “It is to make men and women wise unto salvation.”

**02.** Scripture needs to be interpreted on the basis of the straightforward sense of the passage. Scripture needs to be interpreted by Scripture. The Bible can only be interpreted for us by the Holy Spirit, because true understanding is not natural to us. Scripture needs to be interpreted dynamically, being considered in its own time and context, placed in the framework of the whole purpose of Scripture, and then applied to our own lives.

## Session 05

### Note to Leader

It might be helpful to begin your meeting for this session by discussing Genesis 3's account of mankind's fall and its implications for all of life. (E.g., see 1 Cor. 15:21–22.)

### Fill in the Blank

01. "If we ask the question 'Who, then, is this God?' the first answer is that He is Lord."
02. "The story of Christianity is that the creator of the universe has stepped down into time. And indeed, He has done so because He cares."

### Short Answer

01. "We have been made in the image of God ... He has made us in such a way that we might know Him; He has made us for a relationship with Himself."
02. "Man is both marked by a dignity as made in God's image, and he is also dealing with depravity as being a sinner before God's sight."
03. "We are unfit for His presence, we are actually insensitive to His Word, we're unrighteous before His law, and what we like to do is set our own rules, create our own examination papers, and then grade them ourselves."
04. "We will, in Christ, be awakened to a new day, to a new heaven and to a new earth, in which dwells righteousness."

## Session 06

### Note to Leader

While it's difficult to comprehend how Jesus is fully human and fully God, Scripture is filled with support for both. Be prepared to point to relevant, helpful passages.

### Fill in the Blank

01. "Jesus, while true man, is also true God."
02. "In Christ, two natures exist 'without confusion, without change, without division' and 'without separation.'"

### Short Answer

01. It was remarkably normal.
02. "Any attempt to show that Jesus is God by diminishing His humanity is to introduce us to an unauthentic Jesus."

## Session 07

### Note to Leader

Before you meet with your friend, write down and prepare to share ways that you have seen the Holy Spirit at work in your own life.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “It is impossible to explain the life of Christ apart from His communion with the other members of the Trinity.”

**02.** “What the Father plans the Son comes to procure and to provide by way of salvation; and what the Son provides by way of salvation the Holy Spirit then comes to apply to the lives of those who believe.”

### Short Answer

**01.** “The giving of the Spirit—the pouring out of the Spirit in the unique and unrepeatable event of Pentecost—is the very promise that is alluded to here in John 16.”

**02.** “The Holy Spirit was the agent of creation,” and He “is the agent of God’s new creation.”

## Session 08

### Note to Leader

Consider asking your friend to open or close your meeting time in prayer if this is something you haven’t done up to this point.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “This call to ‘all prayer’ is an expression of our dependence upon God. It’s not optional; it is essential, because actually, it is impossible for us to enjoy an intimate relationship with God without it.”

**02.** “Learning to pray enabled by the Holy Spirit and guided by the Scriptures will inevitably focus our eyes on the Gospel and the glory of God and the purpose of the church.”

### Short Answer

**01.** Adoration is approaching God in prayer by praising Him for who He is.

**02.** Confession is admitting to God the ways that we have sinned against Him.

**03.** Thanksgiving is expressing gratitude to God for what He has done, remembering the grace and mercy that He has shown to us regardless of our present circumstances.

**04.** Supplication is a petition or expression of needs, bringing our requests—for others and ourselves—to God.

## Session 09

### Note to Leader

Some of the questions in this session intentionally assume involvement with other believers in a local church body. If your friend is not involved, you may want to consult this session's additional resources to be better prepared for your meeting.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “The church is not a human invention; it is a divine institution.”

**02.** “Membership in the church is not a matter of external attachment but of spiritual union.”

**03.** “The real church is clearly invisible, comprising all of every age who have been included in Christ, scattered throughout all of the world in all kinds of places.”

### Short Answer

**01.** “The Bible says that the church owes its origin not to man but to God. There is no such thing as ‘the church’ were it not for the fact that God from all of eternity planned to have a people that are His very own. And the solidarity and the corporate distinctiveness of the people of God, as distinct from all other communities, can be tied to only one thing—namely, to the call of God.”

## Session 10

### Note to Leader

As you will see, Alistair's teaching on baptism does not go into much depth in this message. He more clearly articulates his views on baptism in two of the sermons in this session's **Additional Resources**.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “The reality to which [the sacraments] point is displayed, not dispensed.”

**02.** (a) It is an instruction in which we obey Christ.

(b) It is a commemoration in which we remember Christ.

(c) It is a proclamation in which we preach Christ.

(d) It is a participation in which we feed on Christ.

(e) It is an anticipation in which we wait for Christ.



## Short Answer

01. two: baptism and the Lord's Supper

02. Catholics believe in transubstantiation, which argues that in Communion, the bread and wine are mysteriously transformed into the literal, physical body and blood of Jesus when they are consumed.

## Session 11

### Note to Leader

Nearly every believer has a natural inclination toward either legalism or antinomianism. As you complete this session, consider your disposition and how you guard against it. Help your friend work through that as well.

### Fill in the Blank

01. "Verbal profession minus moral persistence is self-delusion."

02. "Love sees straight. Love thinks clearly. Love frees us from stumbling into unbalanced judgments and conduct."

### Short Answer

01. the moral test (obedience) and the social test (love)

02. our growing obedience to God's commands

## Session 12

### Note to Leader

Be careful to avoid getting lost in tangential discussions about spiritual gifts. Focus on what Scripture says about their purpose.

### Fill in the Blank

01. "Hospitality is simply opening our doors and allowing people to experience our lives the way they are."

02. "There is nobody in the body of Christ who has not been gifted spiritually under God."

### Short Answer

01. prayer, love, hospitality, service, and worship/praise

02. (1) "We have all received spiritual gifts." (2) God "has gifted us in order that we might serve others, not ourselves."

03. "On the basis of the strength which He provides to fulfill the purpose which He intends to engender the praise which He deserves."

## Session 13

### Note to Leader

Evangelism is challenging for every believer but perhaps especially for new believers. It might be helpful for you to share examples of both successful and failed attempts at evangelism.

### Fill in the Blank

**01.** “It is not evangelism—it is not the Gospel—to tell people that there are benefits that attach if they will believe the Gospel. It is not the Gospel to tell people that there are great tragedies that await them if they reject the Gospel.”

**02.** “The Gospel is to tell people who Jesus is, why He came, what He did, why it matters, and that He is the self-proclaimed Savior of the world.”

**03.** Jesus is the only Savior because Jesus is the only one qualified to save.

### Short Answer

**01.** “Passion for reaching people with the Gospel is quenched .... We will find that our zeal for evangelism is diminished.”

**02.** “The unconverted are unaware of the fact of their blindness until God by His grace shows them that they’re blind.”