

## Christian Basics

### CHAPTER TEN

### Review

Why a chapter for review? Review means to take another look. That's what we'll be doing. However, we will be taking another look with a goal in mind. The goal is to not only know the material a little better, but to know it well enough so that you will be able to help someone else grow in their Christian faith. This is one of the keys to discipleship. This is the heart of the ministry of **Christian Life Tools** and *Christian Basics*. Paul said to Timothy:

*The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others. 2 Timothy 2:2 (NIV)*

We will review a little bit from each of the last nine chapters in *Christian Basics*. In each review there will be challenges to see the various topics in new ways. Along with this challenge there will be the goal of becoming someone that God can use in the life of another. To help someone else in the faith is a major goal of discipleship. You will be a teacher/helper to bring someone else along in the faith.

#### ■ Chapter One – The Truth Shall Set You Free

It is important as we work through biblical truth to be able to understand what it means to believe. Jesus said that truth exists and that we can know truth from him. Knowledge of truth and belief work together. We are called believers. We believe in Jesus Christ and we believe in his teachings as being truthful. It is important to test truth because ideas have consequences that go far beyond mere words. What starts as an idea may soon develop into an ideology. An ideology can then become a way of life. It doesn't take much to notice that not all ways of life lead to a life that would please Jesus.

There is a very basic test for truth claims. I call it the "The Two L Test" – **L**ogical and **L**ivable. We can apply this test to any idea or philosophy of life by asking two questions: is it logical and is it livable? First, does the idea make sense? Secondly, can I live the idea in the real world? Both of these tests comprise the truth that Jesus promised we would know.

For example: "All roads lead to God" is a truth statement. Is this statement logical? Does it make sense? Do all roads lead to the town where you live? The statement makes no sense. The statement flunks the test of the first **L** – logic. Let's try the second **L**. Is the statement livable? Can you apply this belief in the real world? Imagine if you were a few hundred miles from your home town. You open a map book to find the way to your town and you see only one road in the book which leads there. All the other roads lead right off the map. The instructions tell you, "All roads lead to your home town." Not only does it not make sense (not logical), but you could not live it (not livable). Truth must conform to reality.

The main goal of chapter one – *The Truth Shall Set You Free* – is to develop an understanding of our world view. We should be able to explain what we believe and why we believe. Our world view should be both logical and livable. As we develop a clear understanding of our world view, the Bible and the gospel will become a very sensible friend in this crazy, mixed-up world. We will be more able to help others come to a living faith in the one who said, “I Am the truth.”

Below is a list of books geared to helping people develop a biblical world view. This is a partial list of suggested books and authors. You may develop your own favorites, but here are a few:

*I Don't have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, by Norman Geisler and Frank Turek

*Mere Christianity*, by C. S. Lewis

*A Shattered Visage, the Real Face of Atheism*, by Ravi Zacharias

*Life's Ultimate Questions*, by Ronald Nash

## ■ Chapter Two – The Bible

When you hold a Bible in your hand you are holding a miracle. Do miracles happen? If you are reading a Bible you are participating in a miracle. You can have a miracle in your life every day. We have a book that has stood the test of time and experience for thousands of years. This fact speaks well of God's providence. He has provided a useful tool for his people.

Psalm 119 is a hymn to the power and majesty of the Word of God. Read this psalm and let the majesty and mystery of God's Word sink into your heart. You will find that God's Word is called by many names: laws, statutes, precepts, decrees, commands and God's Word. One of the prayers in verse 18 asks of God, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.” This is a prayer God will answer.

Just as God saw to it that his people had manna in the wilderness, he will see to it that we will have the manna of his Word in our wilderness journey on this earth. The children of Israel had to make the effort to retrieve the manna for themselves. Receiving God's manna required effort. Learning the Word of God will take time and effort as well. God will not do the work for us, but he has promised to help us. Our reward will be well-fed hearts and minds. We then will be strengthened and enabled to be used to help others.

Below is a partial list of books and that may be of help. Add your own favorites to this list as you study and grow in your faith and in your ability to be used of God in the lives of others.

*A General Introduction to the Bible*, by Norman Geisler and William Nix

*The Canon of Scripture*, by F.F. Bruce

*How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth*, by Gordon Fee and Douglas Stewart

*Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, by William Klein, Graig Blomberg and Robert Hubbard

*Scripture Twisting*, by James Sire

*Playing by the Rules*, by Robert Stein

### ■ Chapter Three – Jesus

The Identity of Jesus is a crucial part of Christianity. Without Jesus we have no Christianity. If Jesus is not who he said he was and who the Bible declares him to be, we have no faith. This is why it is of utmost importance that we study Jesus.

Time as we know it will end when Jesus returns. All of humanity will then know who Jesus is. For many it will be too late. This is the sad reality of the nature of this life. This is also the reason why learning and growing in the faith is so important. We must be able to get to the point where we can go confidently out into God's harvest field.

Here are few books that will help in obtaining a better view of the nature of Jesus Christ. As you pursue your love for Jesus Christ you will develop your own library. Try one of these books as you move forward in your faith. As you gradually build your faith stronghold God will use you to help others.

*The Case for Christ*, by Lee Strobel

*Christ Among Other gods*, by Erwin Lutzer

*Jesus Under Fire*, by Michael Wilkins and J. P. Moreland

### ■ Chapter Four – Salvation

SOS is a well-known distress signal for life-threatening situations. Our world needs to send out an SOS. Our problem is there is no one in this world that can help us. We are all lost. This is where the gospel comes in. The gospel is THE answer sent from beyond this realm. The gospel is the only remedy in the universe. The gospel is the only answer known to humanity that can look the problem of sin and death square in the face and provide the remedy. The gospel not only tells the gospel-truth about our predicament, but also provides the healing. There is no other gospel than the good news of Jesus Christ.

Every believer should learn ways of presenting the saving message of salvation to others. There are many resources available to help people learn any number of techniques and skills in presenting the gospel.

There are the 4 spiritual laws – (4laws.com) sponsored by Campus Crusade for Christ – (ccci.com). There is the ministry of Living Waters (livingwaters.com). Your own church or denomination may have materials for evangelism that you might want to check out. The main idea is to be able to share your faith in an effective way.

## ■ Chapter Five – The Church

Have you ever had people knocking at your door and proclaim to you that you must belong to their church? They could be a Jehovah's Witness or a Mormon elder, but their thinking about what it means to belong to a church is the same. You must belong to THEIR organization (church) or you are in error. The true error lies in having a concept of the church as something we join and, by following some set of rules, we now belong. This is not the concept of church in the orthodox Christian understanding. In the Christian and biblical sense, if you are born again, then you ARE the church.

That being understood, there are many denominations (names) of churches that are legitimate. God allows for freedom in many secondary issues. It would be a healthy thing to study many of the different denominations that exist to help give you a broader base from which to understand your own church fellowship. The more we understand how churches are organized today, the better we will be able to have a healthy and mature view of what a church is supposed to be. There are many churches that differ due to doctrines, moral codes and even personality types. However, if they hold to the essentials of the Christian faith, they are legitimate in the eyes of the Lord. We will see other members of other churches as brothers and sisters in the Lord. That is a good thing.

One way to develop a healthy view of what makes a church is to study church history. A good book to get started is *Church History in Plain Language*, by Bruce Shelley.

## ■ Chapter Six – The Trinity

The Trinity is a mystery. Many people like mystery novels, but in the end, they like the mystery solved. I am not sure we will ever solve the mystery of the Trinity. God is utterly beyond our grasp to fully know. However, he has revealed himself to us in a beautiful way in our Holy Scripture. He has revealed himself as three-in-one. As you have read the chapter on the Trinity you may have moved toward a deeper appreciation of the Godhead, three-in-one.

Perhaps it would be good to read and study the history of the doctrine. It would be good to dig a little deeper into the mystery of the Trinity of God. There are a number of good books that can be of great help. Any reliable and trustworthy book on the doctrines of the Christian faith would be helpful. You may slowly build your own library and become more and more comfortable embracing the majesty and the mystery of nature of the God whom we serve. Below are two books that are helpful.

*The Forgotten Trinity*, by James White

*God in Three Persons*, by Calvin Beisner

## ■ Chapter Seven – Discipleship

When people enter into a discipleship relationship with the Lord they are entering into God’s ultimate plan for all believers. You may recall the famous last words of Jesus in Matthew, chapter 28, that we are to go into all the world and make disciples of all people. Maybe you’ve also heard the saying, “Disciples are not born; they are made.” The book you hold in your hand, *Christian Basics*, was written to help fulfill the mandate set by Jesus. There are many other books and resources that will help as well.

We can read all the books and utilize all the resources that the Christian world has to offer, but they will do none of us any good if we are not willing to learn. There must be an attitude of humble submission before the Lord in order for true discipleship to become fruitful. You must ask yourself if you are truly able say to the Lord, “Not my will, but yours.”

The first place to learn how to obey may be your family: husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons and daughters. The circle expands out to our schools and work places. The ever-widening circle extends to the marketplace and our entertainment pleasures. In short, we learn how to obey in all we do. One great place to begin could be in your local church. There are many ways to serve and learn to serve in our local churches.

## ■ Chapter Eight – Prayer

The best way to grow in prayer is to begin praying. We learn by doing. Also, we will find that the more we pray, the more we will find prayer to be a blessed calling. We will have a prayer diary, a prayer list, a prayer time and a prayer life. Prayer is our way of fulfilling God’s call in our lives as being priests before him. We represent all of our needs and the needs of others and take them before the Sovereign Lord of the universe.

Prayer is a way of bringing encouragement to those around us. “I have you in my prayers.” Or, “How may I pray for you?” No one may even know about whom or what you are praying. Your faith will be built up and you will be fulfilling your duty and love as one who belongs to the Lord. You will notice if you go to a prayer meeting, with like-minded people, you will never go away discouraged. Prayer brings encouragement.

There many devotional books on prayer that will serve to encourage you in developing a rich prayer life:

*With Christ in the School of Prayer* by Andrew Murray

Any book on prayer by E.M. Bounds

*Praying the Scriptures* by Judson Cornwall

■ Chapter Nine – Worship

One way to develop worship is to realize that how we live is worship. The decisions we make and the attitudes we hold in our hearts are all part of how we worship. “You shall have no other gods before me” is at the heart of worship. You can keep your decisions and your attitudes between you and God. No one needs to know how you are yielding your life more and more to God’s will.

A powerful source of expression of worship is music. You can begin to collect worship recordings that move your heart to the Lord. Another challenge is to pick up a musical instrument and begin learning the art of music along with worship. You might be surprised that as the years go by you might be used to help others worship in song. I picked up the guitar many years ago just so I could help kids in a Sunday school class learn how to worship. I’ve been going strong ever since.

Here is a prayer for you as you begin to separate yourself out in service to the Lord.

The LORD bless you and keep you;  
The LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you;  
The LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.

Numbers 6:24-26