



**TERM 2 LIFE
GROUP MATERIAL**

Bracken Ridge
BAPTIST CHURCH

STUDY 1

Life Shared

Life Shared Small Group Series brought to you by Alpha is a three-week small group series to encourage and equip everyone in the church to share their faith. Through Biblical teaching from leading Christian voices and real stories of invitation, each session explores what it means to live out God's call to share our lives and faith with friends, colleagues, and neighbors. Each week is a 15-minute video with built-in discussion breaks, a discussion guide for participants, and leader guide for the small group host.

ACCESSING THE MATERIAL

On the following pages you will find all of the information needed to go through the Life Group Material. There are corresponding videos that can be accessed through our "RightNow Media" account with the church. If you don't have an account, go to rightnowmedia.org/Account/Invite/BrackenRidgeBaptistChurch. After creating an account search the title of the series to access the videos.

If you are unable for some reason to access the material through these different means, please simply email office@brbc.org.au or call 07 3261 5045.



Life Shared

Small Group Series

Leader's Guide

We're so excited that you're planning to run the Life Shared Small Group Series!

This short guide will give you all the information you need to run the sessions in your community or small group.

Who is Life Shared for?

The series is designed for church small groups who want to take time to think about how they could share their faith with friends, colleagues and neighbours.

What do I need to get started?

Print

Simply download the discussion guides and print one for each person (including yourself).

Pray

Consider praying for the members of your small group ahead of the sessions.

Play

Either stream the videos or download them (if the internet isn't available during your small group).

What does a typical session look like?

1. Ice Breaker

Before you start the video, ask a fun question that everyone feels comfortable answering.

2. Video

The videos are approximately 15 minutes long, with moments to pause and discuss certain topics. Simply pause the video at the indicated moments and discuss the questions in the discussion guides.

3. Discussion

The discussion guides contain questions that directly relate to the content of the video. Don't worry if you don't get through all of the questions; the aim is to foster good group discussion rather than covering all of the topics.

4. Scripture

Read the Bible verse(s) in the discussion guides at the end of the videos to ground the conversations.

5. Prayer

Once you have wrapped up the discussions, make sure you leave time for prayer. Each session has a specific prayer topic related to the video.



Tips for Leaders

Welcome

Set the stage for everyone's opinion to be welcomed and remind the group about good listening practices (e.g. no cross talk, waiting your turn to speak, etc.).

Listen

Resist the urge to turn the discussion into a teaching time or an opportunity to correct what other people share, even if you disagree. We want to create a safe environment and invite people to share what they are actually thinking.

Wait

Don't shy away from the occasional moment of silence. We even encourage asking a question and stating out loud that you are giving everyone a minute or so to think about their answer in silence before sharing.

Time

Keep an eye on the time so that you are able to finish the video while leaving enough space for discussion, prayer and application at the end. Don't feel like you have to cover all of the questions; they are just there to facilitate the discussion.

Pairs

Occasionally break the group into pairs and have them answer the questions that way. Then you can come back together as a larger group and share what you discussed with everyone else. A practice like this is less intimidating than speaking in front of a whole group.

Trust

Trust the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of those attending the group.

A Message from Alpha

The aim of this series is to provoke thoughts and ideas around sharing your faith. You'll notice that we haven't been prescriptive about how to do so. That was intentional. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to evangelism and, as soon as you offer one, people tend to immediately count themselves out.

We believe that God invites all of us to participate in His work of redeeming and healing the world.

No one is disqualified.

Everyone is invited.

Rather than give people a formula for sharing faith, we hope to spark imagination around this topic, and invite each person to take a step in the direction of reaching out to others. Whether the step feels big or small, it is exciting to join together with what God is already doing all around us.

And we were never meant to do this alone!

Life Shared also means doing evangelism together! Consider what God is calling you to do as a way of reaching outwards — individually and as a group. Once you've taken that first step together, why not take another? Who knows how God will use your small steps of obedience to draw people to Himself?

In Christ, The Alpha Team





Discussion Guide

Brought to you by Alpha





Join His Heart

Discussion Time

10 MINS **01**

What feelings or thoughts come up for you around this idea of sharing your faith?

Discussion Time

10 MINS **02**

What stood out to you from what Jon shared? What inspired and challenged you?

Discussion Time

25 MINS **03**

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

What do these verses tell us about evangelism?

Have you ever had a moment in conversation where you felt like you stepped into what God was already up to?

What prevents you from slowing down and noticing God and people more?

Why do you think our culture has such a negative perception of the word “evangelism?”

What excites you about sharing your faith?
What makes you nervous about sharing your faith?

Can you share a time when you were inspired by radical hospitality?

How can we practice the art of hospitality more frequently and effectively in our context?

Application

Take a moment to write down the names of three people in your life who don't yet know Jesus and spend some time praying for them in groups.

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Name 3 _____



You're Invited

Discussion Time

10 MINS **01**

How do you feel about the idea that God wants to partner with you?

Discussion Time

10 MINS **02**

What stood out to you from what Danielle shared? What inspired and challenged you?

Discussion Time

25 MINS **03**

Read Acts 1:8

What fears come up when you think about God wanting to use you to reach others?

In what way(s) does the Holy Spirit empower us to share our faith?

What do you think about the idea that God can use unlikely people?

Have there been times when you have viewed people as projects? What do you think Danielle meant by that statement? Have you seen evangelism practiced like this?

When it comes to the idea of God using us to reach others, what kind of unnecessary pressure do we put on ourselves?

Think back to the person that God used in your life to invite you into a relationship with Him. What made their witness so compelling and attractive to you?

What would it look like for you to change your posture by asking the questions that Danielle suggested like, "How can I serve? How can I love? How can I connect?" in your local context?

Application

Spend some time as a group or in smaller groups of two or three, praying that the Holy Spirit would give you:

Love (Romans 5:5)

Boldness (Acts 4:29)

Fearlessness (Romans 8:15-17)

Power (Ephesians 3:14-21)

Wisdom and Opportunity (Colossians 4:2-6)



Take a Step

Discussion Time

10 MINS 01

What comes to mind when you think about practical steps to sharing your faith?

Discussion Time

10 MINS 02

What stood out to you from what Jay shared? What inspired and challenged you?

Discussion Time

25 MINS 03

Read Luke 10:25-37

How does the story of the Good Samaritan connect with what Jay shared in the session?

Do we define neighbour in our culture differently than Jesus defines neighbour?

Praying for people by name, getting to know your neighbours, extending an invitation etc. These are all things that you can do. What would it look like to take the next step in any one of these areas as a group or individually?

Jay made the statement that, "Evangelism moving forward will be mostly worked out and lived out through hospitality." What do think about that statement?

Why do you think meals were such a significant part of Jesus' ministry?

Given your own context, what are some practical ways you can get to know your neighbours?

Are there needs in your group that you can start to meet in a practical way, together?

Application

As a group, commit to take a step towards sharing your faith. You might find it helpful to write it down.

I commit to:

Examples:

- Invite a friend to Alpha
- Learn the name of a neighbour
- Host a meal at your house with your neighbourhood
- Take a co-worker to lunch
- Write a note of encouragement to a friend who doesn't know Jesus

Before closing, spend some time praying for one another for courage and boldness to share your lives and your faith with others.

STUDY 2

The Alpha Course

We believe that everyone should have the chance to explore faith, ask questions and share their point of view.

Alpha is a series of sessions exploring the Christian faith. Each talk looks at a different question around faith and is designed to create conversation. Alpha is run all around the globe and everyone is welcome. It runs online, in cafés, churches, universities, homes –you name it! No two Alphas look the same, but they generally have three key things in common: hospitality, a talk and good conversation.

ACCESSING THE MATERIAL

On the following pages you will find all of the information needed to go through the Life Group Material. There are corresponding videos that can be accessed through the Alpha Dashboard. Just go to run.alpha.org.au & create an account, or alternatively please contact dave@brbc.org.au to be sent all of the videos.

If you are unable for some reason to access the material through these different means, please simply email office@brbc.org.au or call 07 3261 5045.

Session 1

Is there
more to
life
than this



What, if any, has been your experience of Christianity?

- **Boring?**
- **Untrue?**
- **Irrelevant?**

At the heart of the Christian faith is a person: Jesus Christ.
Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life.' (John 6:35)

1. JESUS SAID, 'I AM THE WAY.'

The first-order questions of life:

- Is there more to life than this?
- What am I doing on earth?
- What is the point of life?
- What is the purpose of my life?
- Where am I heading?

C. S. Lewis: 'I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.'¹

Jesus is the lens through which we see God. He is the way to God.

Jesus is also the lens by which we see the world in a totally different dimension and clarity.

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2. JESUS SAID, 'I AM THE TRUTH.'

C. S. Lewis: 'Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.'²

- Truth – understood intellectually (head knowledge)
- Truth – experienced as a relationship (heart knowledge)

3. JESUS SAID, 'I AM THE LIFE.'

'I have come that [you] may have life, and have it to the full' (John 10:10).

Jesus came to deal with:

- The things that spoil our lives
- Our guilt

God loves you and he came, in the person of his Son, Jesus, to set you free to enjoy life to the full.

**Jesus said,
'I am the way and
the truth and the life'**

(JOHN 14:6)

RECOMMENDED READING

What's So Amazing About Grace?

Philip Yancey

Why Jesus?

Nicky Gumbel

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Session 2

Who is
Jesus



Did Jesus exist?

- Evidence outside the New Testament about Jesus includes:
 - Tacitus and Suetonius, Roman historians
 - Josephus, Jewish historian
- Evidence within the New Testament

How do we know that what was written down in the New Testament has not been changed over the years?

ANCIENT WRITINGS

Key

Time lapse  = 200 years



Number of copies found

Original work first written



30–310 years

NEW TESTAMENT

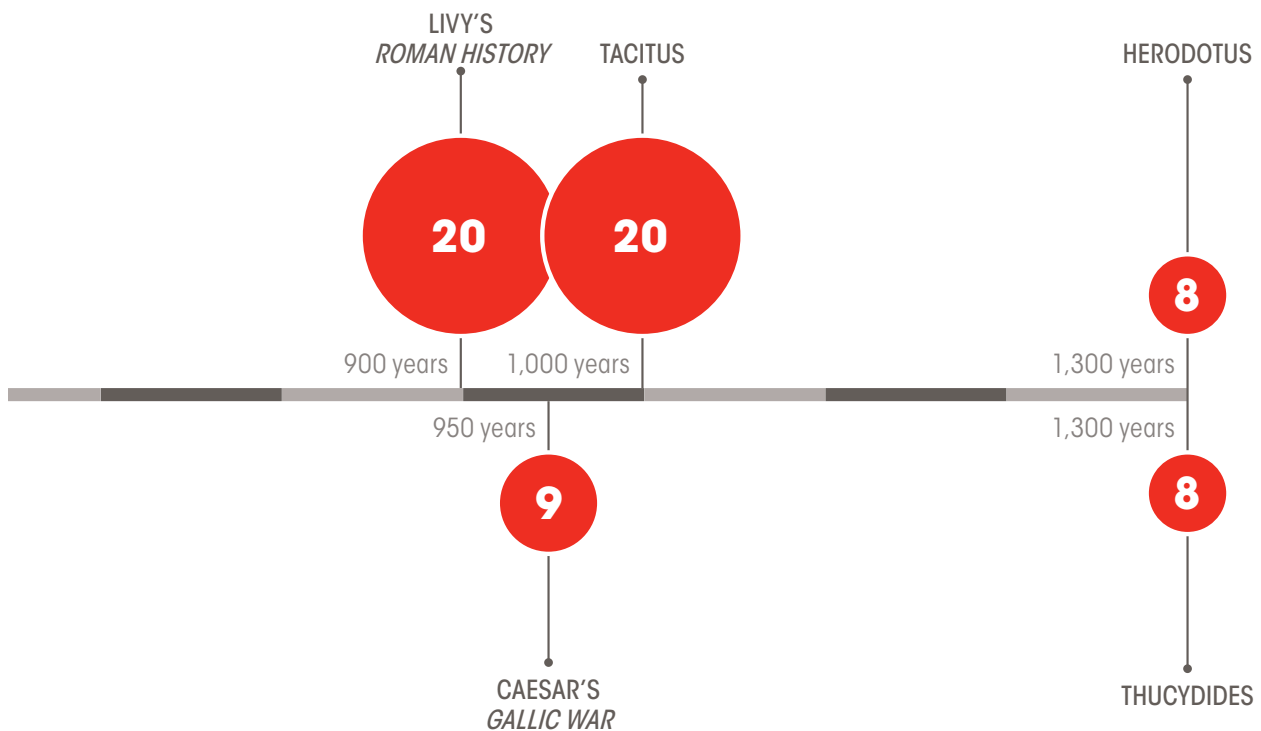
Copies found:

5,000+ Greek

10,000 Latin

9,300 Other languages

WORK	WHEN WRITTEN	EARLIEST COPY	TIME LAPSE	COPIES
HERODOTUS	488–428 BC	AD 900	1,300 years	8
THUCYDIDES	c. 460–400 BC	c. AD 900	1,300 years	8
TACITUS	AD 100	AD 1100	1,000 years	20
CAESAR'S <i>GALLIC WAR</i>	58–50 BC	AD 900	950 years	9–10
LIVY'S <i>ROMAN HISTORY</i>	59 BC – AD 17	AD 900	900 years	20
NEW TESTAMENT	AD 40–100	AD 130 (full manuscripts AD 350)	30–310 years	5,000+ Greek 10,000 Latin 9,300 others



Was Jesus fully human?

- He had a human body
 - Tired (John 4:6)
 - Hungry (Matthew 4:2)

- He had human emotions
 - Anger (Mark 11:15–17)
 - Love (Mark 10:21)
 - Sadness (John 11:32–36)

- He had human experiences
 - Temptation (Mark 1:13)
 - Learning (Luke 2:46–52)
 - Work (Mark 6:3)
 - Obedience (Luke 2:51)

Was he more than a man, a great human, a religious teacher?
(Matthew 16:13–16)

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1. WHAT DID HE SAY ABOUT HIMSELF?

- Teaching centred on himself
 - 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:35)
 - 'If the Son sets you free, you really will be free.'
(John 8:36, NLT)
 - 'I am the light of the world' (John 8:12)
 - 'I am the way and the truth and the life' (John 14:6)
 - 'Come to me...' (Matthew 11:28–29)
 - Receive me – receive God (Matthew 10:40)
 - Welcome me – welcome God (Mark 9:37)
 - If you have seen me you have seen God (John 14:9)

- His indirect claims
 - To forgive sins (Mark 2:5)
 - To judge the world (Matthew 25:31,32,40,45)

- His direct claims
 - Messiah (Mark 14:61–62)
 - Son of God (Mark 14:61)
 - God the Son (John 20:26–29)
 - 'I and the Father are one.' (John 10:30)

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Author of *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Oxford historian C. S. Lewis wrote:

‘A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be (insane)... or else he would be “the Devil of Hell”. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else (insane) or something worse... but let us not come up with any patronising nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.’³

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2. WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE TO SUPPORT HIS CLAIMS?

- His teaching (Mark 12:31; Luke 6:31; Matthew 5:44)
- His life/works (John 2:1–11; 10:37–38)
- His character (Luke 23:34)
- His fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy
- His conquest of death

Evidence for the resurrection:

- **His absence from the tomb**
 - Theories:
 - Jesus did not die (John 19:33–34)
 - disciples stole the body
 - authorities stole the body
 - robbers stole the body (John 20:1–9)
- **His presence with the disciples**
 - Did they hallucinate?
 - Number of appearances over a six-week period
 - 11+ appearances
 - 500+ people
 - Nature of appearances (Luke 24:36–43)
- **Immediate effect**
 - Birth and growth of Christian church
- **Effect down the ages**
 - Experience of Christians down the ages
 - Over 2,300 million Christians in the world today

RECOMMENDED READING

Mere Christianity

C. S. Lewis

Jesus is

Judah Smith

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Session 3

Why did Jesus die



Why is the cross the symbol of Christianity?

**'... the Son of God...
loved me and gave
himself for me'**

(GALATIANS 2:20)

1. THE PROBLEM

'All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' (Romans 3:23).

- **Pollution** of sin (Mark 7:20–23)
- **Power** of sin (John 8:34)
- **Penalty** for sin (Romans 6:23)
- **Partition** of sin (Isaiah 59:2)

2. THE SOLUTION

- 'The self-substitution of God' (1 Peter 2:24)
- Agony of the cross (Isaiah 53:6)

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3. THE RESULT

The cross shows:

- You are infinitely valuable to God
 - Jesus is the supreme example of love (John 15:13)
 - God is not aloof from suffering
 - The powers of evil have been defeated: the resurrection wasn't the reversal of a defeat; it was the manifestation of a victory
- The **partition** has been removed (2 Corinthians 5:19)
 - Reconciliation with God and in other relationships
 - The **penalty** has been paid
 - Justified ('Just-as-if-I'd never sinned')
 - The **power** of sin has been broken
 - If the Son sets you free, you really will be free' (John 8:36, NLT)
 - The **pollution** has been removed
 - '... the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.' (1 John 1:7)
 - When you are forgiven, you want to forgive

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RECOMMENDED READING

The Cross of Christ

John Stott

Searching Issues

Nicky Gumbel

Mud, Sweat and Tears

Bear Grylls

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Session 4

How
can
I
have
faith



‘Those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!’ (2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT)

A Christian is a *Christ-ian*: someone who follows and puts their faith in Jesus Christ.

How that happens varies enormously. For some there is a definite moment; for others it is a more gradual process.

- When you receive Christ, you become a child of God (John 1:12)
- God wants you to be sure of your faith

**‘I write these things
to you who believe in
the name of the Son
of God so that you
may know that you
have eternal life’**

(1 JOHN 5:13)

Faith is not a blind leap, but a step based on evidence.

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1. THE WORD OF GOD

We must not only trust our feelings, which can be changeable and may even be deceptive at times, but instead rely on God's promises.

- '... faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of God.' (Romans 10:17)
- 'I will come in' (Revelation 3:20)
- 'I am with you always' (Matthew 28:20)
- 'I give them eternal life' (John 10:28)

2. THE WORK OF JESUS

You come exactly as you are. It's not about what you do or what you can achieve; it's about what has been done for you by Jesus on the cross.

- Free gift of God (Romans 6:23)
- It's free but not cheap: it cost Jesus his life
- We receive it through repentance (turning away from sin) and faith (trust)

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3. THE WITNESS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When someone becomes a Christian, God comes to live inside them by his Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9).

- He transforms us from within
 - Our characters (Galatians 5:22–23)
 - Our relationships
- He brings a deep personal conviction that we are God's children
 - Faith to knowledge (Romans 8:15–16)

Here is a very simple prayer that you can pray to open the door of your heart to Jesus Christ and invite him to come into your life by his Spirit:

Lord Jesus Christ,
I am sorry for the things I have done wrong in my life (take a few moments to ask his forgiveness for anything particular that is on your conscience). Please forgive me. I now turn from everything that I know is wrong. Thank you that you died on the cross for me so that I could be forgiven and set free. Thank you that you offer me forgiveness and the gift of your Spirit. I now receive that gift. Please come into my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever. Thank you, Lord Jesus. Amen.

SESSION 4 HOW CAN I HAVE FAITH?

A series of 25 horizontal dotted lines for writing.

RECOMMENDED READING

The Reason for God

Tim Keller

Life Change

Mark Elsdon-Dew

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Session 5

**Why and
how do I**

pray



1. WHAT IS CHRISTIAN PRAYER?

Prayer is the most important activity of our lives.

‘For through [Jesus] we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.’ (Ephesians 2:18)

- **To the Father**
 - ‘... to your father’ (Matthew 6:6)
 - ‘... in heaven’ (v.9)
- **Through the Son**
 - ‘I have called you friends’ (John 15:15)
- **By the Spirit**
 - ‘... the Spirit helps us’ (Romans 8:26)

2. WHY PRAY?

- Develops a relationship with God
- Rewards of prayer (Matthew 6:6)
 - Presence of God
 - Peace (Philippians 4:6–7)
 - Perspective
 - Power
- Results of prayer (Matthew 7:7–11)

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**‘When I pray,
coincidences happen,
and when I don’t,
they don’t’**

**WILLIAM TEMPLE,
THE FORMER ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**

3. DOES GOD ALWAYS ANSWER PRAYER?

- **Yes** – you receive what you prayed for, sometimes immediately
- **No** – sometimes an obvious reason why not; other times we may not understand straight away why the answer is no
- **Wait** – for the right timing

4. HOW DO WE PRAY?

- **Thank you** – count your blessings, not your problems
- **Sorry** – confess your sins (John 13:6–10)
- **Please** – ‘Give us today our daily bread’ (Matthew 6:11): ask for anything you need

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5. WHEN SHOULD WE PRAY?

- **Anywhere, anytime**
 - (Ephesians 6:18)
- **Alone (Matthew 6:6)**
 - Regular pattern
 - Best part of the day (Mark 1:35)
- **With others**
 - There's power in praying together
 - 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst.' (Matthew 18:20)

Three simple tips:

- Keep it real
- Keep it simple
- Keep it going

RECOMMENDED READING

God on Mute, Pete Greig

How to Pray, Pete Greig

Prayer, Philip Yancey

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Session 6

**Why and
how should
I read
the Bible**



The Bible is the most...

- Popular
- Powerful
- Precious (Psalm 19:10)

... book in the world.

‘People do not live on bread alone, but on every **word** that comes from the mouth of God’ (Matthew 4:4).

**1. BRINGING REVELATION
– GOD HAS SPOKEN**

- Bible – collection of books by 40+ authors over 1600 years
- Inspired: God-breathed

‘All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true; to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.’ (2 Timothy 3:16).

But what about difficulties in the Bible?

- Jesus is the interpretive key
- It’s authoritative (2 Timothy 3:16–17)
- Practical wisdom:
 - Guidelines for living
 - Guidance for good decisions

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2. BUILDING RELATIONSHIP – GOD SPEAKS

The Bible is like a love letter from God:

- To those exploring faith (Romans 10:17; John 20:31)
- To those who are Christians
 - Become like Jesus (2 Corinthians 3:18)
 - Joy and peace in the midst of a storm (Psalm 23:5)
 - Guidance (Psalm 119:105)
 - Health/healing (Proverbs 4:20–22)
 - Defence against spiritual attack (Matthew 4:1–11)
 - Power (Hebrews 4:12)
 - Cleansing (John 15:3)

**‘Reading the Bible
generates life. It produces
change. It heals hurts.
It builds character. It
transforms circumstances.
It imparts joy. It overcomes
adversity. It defeats
temptation. It infuses
hope. It releases power.
It cleanses the mind’**

RICK WARREN

3. HOW DO WE HEAR GOD SPEAK THROUGH THE BIBLE?

- Make a plan
 - Find a time
 - Find a place ('a solitary place', Mark 1:35)
- Find a pattern
 - Ask God to speak:
 - read a short passage
 - Bible reading notes
 - Bible in One Year app – bibleinoneyear.org
 - Ask yourself:
 - what does it say to me?
 - what does it mean to me?
 - how does it apply to me?
- Respond in prayer
- Put it into practice (Matthew 7:24)

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RECOMMENDED READING

Why Trust the Bible? Amy Orr-Ewing

30 Days, Nicky Gumbel

The Bible in One Year, Nicky Gumbel (Print and e-book)

Bible in One Year app with Nicky and Pippa Gumbel
[iPhone/Android]

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Session 7

How does **God** guide us



‘For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.’ (Ephesians 2:10, NLT)

Why involve God in the decisions we make?

- God promises to guide us
 - (Psalm 32:8)
 - (John 10:3–4,27)
- God has a good plan for our lives
 - (Jeremiah 29:11)
 - (Romans 12:2)
 - (John 10:10,15)

How does God guide us?

1. COMMANDING SCRIPTURE

- General will
 - General instruction for marriage, work, money, children, elderly relatives (2 Timothy 3:16; Psalm 119:105, 130–133)
- Primary calling
 - To love God
 - To love others
 - To become like Jesus

2. COMPELLING SPIRIT

- God speaks as you pray (Acts 13:1–3)
- Strong desire to do something
 - ‘God works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose’ (Philippians 2:13)
- Sometimes he guides in more unusual ways
 - Prophecy, eg Agabus (Acts 11:27–28; 21:10–11)
 - Dreams (Matthew 1:20)
 - Visions/pictures (Acts 16:10)
 - Angels (Genesis 18; Matthew 2:19; Acts 12:7)
 - Audible voice (1 Samuel 3:4–14)

3. COUNSEL OF THE SAINTS

- ‘... the wise listen to advice’ (Proverbs 12:15)
- ‘Make plans by seeking advice’ (Proverbs 20:18)
- Need for testing (1 John 4:1)
 - Is it in line with the Bible?
 - Is it loving? (1 John 4:16)
 - Is it strengthening, encouraging and comforting? (1 Corinthians 14:3)
 - Does it bring the peace of God? (Colossians 3:15)

Ultimately, we are responsible for our decisions, but it is a blessing to have others to talk to about the decisions we are making.

4. COMMON SENSE

- ‘Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this’ (2 Timothy 2:7)

**‘God’s promises
of guidance were not
given to save us the
problem of thinking’**

JOHN STOTT

5. CIRCUMSTANTIAL SIGNS

- ‘And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.’ (Romans 8:28)
- ‘In your heart you plan your course, but the Lord determines your steps’ (Proverbs 16:9; Psalm 37:5)
- Sometimes God closes doors (Acts 16:7)
- Sometimes God opens doors (1 Corinthians 16:9)
- Sometimes we need to persevere despite the circumstances and trust God
- Be patient
- We all make mistakes – God forgives (Joel 2:25)

SESSION 7 HOW DOES GOD GUIDE US?

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

RECOMMENDED READING

Chasing the Dragon
Jackie Pullinger

The Hiding Place
Corrie ten Boom

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