



LIFE STUDIES

Identity for Life Workbook



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L.I.F.E STARTER JOURNALING

The Bible journaling method called LIFE Starter was developed to create an easy, yet effective way for people to study the Bible, remember what they read and allow their hearts to get ignited for Jesus Christ.

L.I.F.E. stands for Listen, Investigate, Focus and Engage.

L=Listen

In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses.

I = Investigate

Next, you investigate the context around the Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus

The next step is focusing on the text to make it applicable for your own life. What does the text mean today? What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read? Write out a couple sentences detailing what God is saying to you through the text.

E = Engage

The final step in the journaling process is engaging God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

The beautiful thing about this journaling method is that it is short and only takes a few minutes, and it can be done every time you read or study a passage.

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes

Session #1 Teaching: Who are you and what defines you? 10 minutes

Who are you and what defines you? What is your identity? That's a question many people struggle to answer.

Too often, people base their identities on what they do (from their jobs to their roles in relationships), defining themselves by those pursuits. But by doing so, they significantly limit their lives. The truth is that God intends for all people to find their identity in Christ. If you're a Christian, your identity encompasses all the abundance of being a beloved child of God. Here's how you can start living your life fully in Christ, keeping in mind that your identity is found in Christ. Use this list of things God calls you and how He identifies you to remind yourself who you are in Christ. As a Christian, you've been adopted into God's family. The work of your big brother – Jesus – on the cross has made it possible for you to become one of the sons or daughters of God the Father. So make your main goal of life learning how to know, love, and trust God as your Father. While the people who love you can't do so completely unselfishly, continually, or perfectly, God does. As a Christian, nothing can ever separate you from God's great love for you. Jesus has given you the power to ultimately overcome evil, sin, and death. Use the spiritual weapons at your disposal as a Christian (truth, righteousness, the Gospel, faith, salvation, scripture, prayer, and the strength to stand) in spiritual battles, trusting that you can always emerge victorious

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

As you spent some time considering your life over the week and thought about your spiritual experiences, discuss the following questions with your group.

- *In an average day, what percentage of your energy and time and worry is devoted to non spiritual things?*
- *What keeps you busy and commands your attention?*
- *When you consider experiencing more of the spiritual realm, are you eager, excited, optimistic? OR... Are you anxious, confused, overwhelmed, unsettled and skeptical?*
- *Discuss how skeptical you are right now about the spiritual realm and your ability to come into contact with it. If you're skeptical, what is the source of doubt? Dig deep and spend some time discussing this as a group. Can you identify a particular experience of influence in your life that may hold you back from getting all God wants you to get out of this class?*

Finish this session by writing in your journal about your feelings and your expectations of this next study, and PLEASE be honest!

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

- *What did you cover in your small group time?*
- *What were the biggest take-aways and action items*

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minute

Discuss “Listening Prayer” & Review Session 1 Homework: 15 minutes

Read **John 1:43–51**. Nathanael, one of the disciples, recognized his daily need to seek out God in quiet and reflection. Because he was diligent, Jesus met him in a very personal way. Now, read **Psalms 139**, and view God as a father who wants to spend time to get to know you as His child! This week, commit to 60-minutes each morning to kick-start this study! Get up earlier than normal, so you can experiment with “**listening prayer**” and **journalling EVERY DAY!**

First, find a quiet place that brings you peace, perhaps outside, where you can sit still for fifteen minutes. Pray against distraction and confusion and invite the Holy Spirit to direct your thoughts. After 15 minutes, hopefully, you are fully relaxed. Then, look around and consider what is in front of you right now. Yes, physically in front of you. What do you see? Take it in. Take out your journal and describe what you see in one or two sentences. When you’re done, do it again. Take another five minutes and look harder. Consider what’s underneath whatever you see. What is going on beneath? Above? Beyond? What is the deeper truth? And again, in one or two sentences, describe what comes to mind. Now, if you’re not already uncomfortable, **let’s do it AGAIN!** Spend another five minutes looking again. Look even harder. Deeper. Further. It’ll surely be uncomfortable and you may be saying to yourself. “I’ve done this already!” **Push through anyway.** Stay with it and ask what God is trying to show you here. What is He trying to give you here? What does He want to teach you today? How is He trying to guide you? To love you? When you’re done, journal some more.

End the week by watching this video on identity and then journal: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsDQEbqlyM> - **What does it mean to you that God thinks of you as a masterpiece?**

SESSION 2: IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Discuss Your Experience with “Listening Prayer”: 10 minutes Session #2 Teaching: Identity in Christ: 10 minutes

One of the richest passages about identity in the Bible is found in **Ephesians 1:3-14**. In this passage, Paul addresses the church in Ephesus, explaining the new identity given to a person when they are in Christ. According to Ephesians 1, we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing; we have been chosen, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, and unconditionally loved and accepted. We are pure, blameless and forgiven. We have received the hope of spending eternity with God. When we are in Christ, these aspects of our identity can never be altered by what we do.

Often, however, a gap exists between intellectually knowing these truths about who God says we are and living them out. This can be affected by how we see ourselves, life experiences and the ways we allow the world to define us. In order to live out of the fullness of our new identity in Christ, we must determine what hinders us from doing so. That varies from person to person. Over the next several weeks, we will be doing a deep dive into some practical obstacles that hold us back from fully living out our inheritance as children of God. The goal is to live out what Ephesians 1 says and see ourselves as:

- **Rejected instead of accepted.**
- **In chains instead of set free.**
- **Under the law instead of covered by grace.**
- **Orphaned instead of adopted**

I pray that this study allows you to see yourself as God sees you. If we live out of an identity based on how God sees us, we no longer feel the need to find our worth in our external circumstances. It frees us up to live confidently and stably instead of changing who we are based on the opinions of others, our professional success, how we see ourselves, and all the other ways we define our significance. It gives us the opportunity to experience God’s unconditional love in new and fresh ways. And it allows us to confidently and boldly share His love with others.

It is certainly a battle as we live in a world that seeks to define us by its own standards. But the battle is worth it because as we fight it, the world around us changes.

Small Group Discussion: 30 minutes

Each participant share your thoughts and experiences from your “listening prayer” time from the last week.

- **Discuss how you really see yourself and if it’s different than the teaching from today’s session.**
- **How would believing the truth about your new identity in Christ change the way you live?**
- **Do you want to change? Are you curious? What is stopping you?**
- **Read 1 Peter 2:9**

Talk about what it really means to have an Identity in Christ...When we accept Christ into our hearts, the person we were before dies, and we are reborn as a “new creation.” We lose our old identity and receive our new one. We no longer identify with the world and all its lies. We identify with Christ, and we become set apart. Our faith in Him distinguishes us from others (or at least it should).

Your identity is in Christ ... Even when you fall back into sin.

Discuss “LIFE Starter Journalling Method”: 10 minutes

SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional Day 1

WHO AM I IN CHRIST?

Take a look at the “*Who I Am In Christ*” Scriptures below. It lists the truths we NEED to believe to have victory in Christ. Pick ONE Scripture that touches you the most and use the **LIFE Starter Method** to journal about them.

In Christ I am accepted...

- John 1:12 — I am God’s child.
- John 15:15 — As a disciple, I am a friend of Jesus Christ.
- Romans 5:1 — I have been justified.
- 1 Corinthians 6:17 — I am united with the Lord.
- 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 — I belong to God

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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I = Investigate: the context around today’s Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

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E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional Day 2

WHO AM I IN CHRIST?

Take a look at the “*Who I Am In Christ*” Scriptures below. It lists the truths we NEED to believe to have victory in Christ. Pick ONE Scripture that touches you the most and use the **LIFE Starter Method** to journal about them.

In Christ I am secure...

- Romans 8:1-2 – I am free from condemnation.
- Romans 8:28 – God works for my good in all things.
- Romans 8:31-39 – I am free from any condemnation.
- 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 – I have been anointed by God.
- 1 John 5:18 – The evil one cannot touch me.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional Day 3

WHO AM I IN CHRIST?

Take a look at the “*Who I Am In Christ*” Scriptures below. It lists the truths we NEED to believe to have victory in Christ. Pick ONE Scripture that touches you the most and use the **LIFE Starter Method** to journal about them.

In Christ I am significant...

John 15:5 – I am a branch of Jesus Christ, the true vine.

John 15:16 – I have been chosen to bear fruit.

1 Corinthians 3:16 – I am God’s temple.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21 – I am a minister of reconciliation.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional Day 4

WHO AM I IN CHRIST?

Take a look at the **“Who I Am In Christ”** Scriptures below. It lists the truths we NEED to believe to have victory in Christ. Pick ONE Scripture that touches you the most and use the **LIFE Starter Method** to journal about them.

In Christ I am significant...

- Ephesians 2:6 – I am with Christ in the heavenly realm.
- Ephesians 2:10 – I am God’s workmanship.
- Ephesians 3:12 – I may approach God with confidence.
- Philippians 4:13 – I can do all things through Christ.

Take today and spend time in Listening Prayer to reflect on your HEAR Journalling time this week and to receive all that God wants you to receive about identity in Christ. Make notes to share with your group!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 3: OUT OF EGYPT

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes Session #3 Teaching: Out of Your OWN Egypt 10 minutes

God chose Moses to lead his people out of Egyptian bondage and he patiently worked His plan through Moses' birth and adoption into Pharaoh's own household. **God has the same plan for YOU.** The Israelites found comfort in their slavery and even though it was NOT easy, it was all that they knew. The same concept works for us today. Sometimes we are steeped in sinful behavior and need to choose to "run" the other way, but we also get consumed with good things of this world as well! We get so comfortable in our worldly routine's that we sometime forget there is a better way. **God's way!**

Our "Egypt" can even be bad things or even good things. Things that make us busy and take us away from God's purpose for our life. At the end of the day, we all need to believe that God has a bigger calling on our life and often, we need to be willing to get out of our comfort to step into our very OWN promised land.

Deuteronomy 17: 16-17 is a great reminder, as it says, "The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the Lord has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold." So, instead of accumulating worldly possessions and focusing on and identity that this world will bring, it's time to focus more on God and your identity as his chosen children and actually believe that He has a PROMISED LAND for YOU...**Personally!**

Today, in our break out groups, we are going to look back at YOUR LIFE and discuss what might be holding YOU back from your very own PROMISED LAND.

Yes, What is YOUR "Egypt?"

It's time to trust God, so stop running. Stop trying. Stop pushing. Start resting and trusting in Him...Your Egypt is not too hard for God

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

Each participant share your thoughts and experiences from 4-Day Study Plan from the last week.

•Re-Read: Deuteronomy 17: 16-17

Look back at YOUR LIFE and discuss what might be holding YOU back from your very own PROMISED LAND.

•What is YOUR "Egypt?"

Do you trust God to do the job? Paul reminds us of this in Ephesians 3:20 (Read aloud) so stop running. Stop trying. Stop pushing. Start resting and trusting in Him...Your Egypt is not too hard for God!

•Discuss the passage and what it means to trust God in your life.

Pray together for God to help you identify and remove the "EGYPT" in YOUR life. Each person should take the time to NAME THEIR EGYPT in prayer and command it to be gone in the name of Jesus. Pray for God's protection this week as the enemy will want to make "EGYPT" look so inviting. Hold each other up in prayer ALL week!

Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes:

What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read Deuteronomy 17: 16-17; Deuteronomy 20

Look back at YOUR LIFE and decide what past hurts might keep you from finding the freedom you need to step into YOUR Promised Land. If nothing comes to mind, calm your mind and pray (using Listening Prayer) for God to reveal the answers to you. When He does, write those things down below. **What is YOUR "Egypt?"**

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

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SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional Day 2

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-22

The apostle Paul outlined the Israelites' miraculous journey out of slavery into the Promised Land. Their journey provides a physical analogy that types the spiritual conversion process.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read Isaiah 43:14-21; Proverbs 3:5-6

What is God telling you through these passages?

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-22

As you think through this study so far, how are you receiving your blessings and how might you be evoking curses? How are YOU going to press ahead? Take today and spend time in Listening Prayer to reflect on your **LIFE Starter Journalling** time this week and to receive all that God wants you to receive about what may hold you back. **Make notes to share with your group!**

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 4: NEGATIVE THINKING

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes Session #4 Teaching: Negative Thoughts 10 minutes

Do YOU struggle with negative thinking? We ALL do at times! Chronic negative thinking, depression, anxiety, and similar disorders are on the rise all over the world and keep us from living out our identity in Christ. According to the Anxiety and Depression Association of America, 40 million adults in the U.S. are affected, which is nearly 20 percent of the population. Of that number, many are professing Christians.

Fear is a root cause of many of these problems. It's no wonder people are fearful in a world where it appears nothing is reliable. It can be quite disturbing for a person to realize almost everything in life is ultimately out of his control—from the weather to his bank account balance. All the things people rely on for their security will sooner or later fail them. But the Christian who confesses the sovereignty of our Father God who works all things for his good (**Romans 8:28**) has the antidote to negative thinking.

When a Christian's thinking is primarily negative, anxious, or doubtful, it's a sign of a serious lack of faith. According to **Proverbs 29:25**, fear is a trap but trust in the Lord keeps a man safe. Those who struggle with negative thinking should do the same thing they would do with any other sin—**confess it** (agree with God that negative thinking is wrong because it reveals a lack of trust) and make every effort to replace your thinking with God's Truth and how He sees you as HIS precious child!

How do we do this? Prayer is a key part of overcoming negativity. As we pray "with thanksgiving" (**Philippians 4:6**), we focus on the blessings we have received and leave no room for negative thoughts. The Holy Spirit will be faithful to help the repentant believer overcome negative thinking (this will be discussed in session #6) (see **Matthew 7:7-11**). Your LIFE Starter Bible reading is also a great help in overcoming negative thinking. It's helpful to remember that, no matter how dismal the present circumstances, Christians have been promised God's love and victory in Christ (**Romans 8:37-39; 2 Corinthians 2:14**).

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

The struggle against negative thinking is a battle for the mind. In Philippians 4:8, the apostle Paul tells believers what to think about: **things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy!** So, Christians must think about what they're thinking about and not allow their minds to have free rein.

• Do you allow negative thinking and speaking to control you? Discuss taking control of who and what you listen to.

As long as Christians live in a fearful, stressful world, negative thoughts will come. We have the option of either stamping out those thoughts or nurturing them. The good news is, negative thoughts can be replaced with positive ones, and the more that Godly substitution takes place, the more peace and joy we can experience.

• Discuss any lies that may have been spoken over you in the past. Where did you receive negative input about your identity? What can YOU choose to do to think differently?

Pray with your group about arresting your negative thoughts, to make sure what comes out of your mouth will be positive in the future. Also ask for God to reveal to you who else in your life you need to discuss this with. Now commit to the group about having discussions over the next week with those people.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 15 minutes:

What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read Romans 12

Are you willing to be transformed by the renewing of your mind? Will you allow God to search your heart over the course of this class to invade your thought life and make you aware of any negative thinking? The same way that what we eat will affect how we feel, what we consume spiritually affects how we see ourselves and our world. To renew something involves refilling what's empty or restarting what's stopped. We don't just check out and stop consuming information.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional Day 2

Read James 3

Journal about any curses others have spoken over you. Keep adding to the list as you go through this week to discuss with your group at the next class. It's time to TAME your TONGUE!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read Ephesians 1; Romans 8:31-34

God believes in you and nothing can stand against you. Do you believe that. Journal about that and if there is anything standing in the way, be ready to discuss in your next group.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read Ephesians 4:31-32; Matthew 6:14-15; Matthew 18:21-22

Over the next two sessions, we will be discussing forgiveness. Pray about the people in your life that you need to forgive, starting with YOU!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 5: FORGIVENESS

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes

Session #5 Teaching: Eight Forgiveness Steps 10 minutes

1. Forgiveness should not be confused with forgetting. Not even God forgets your sin, He simply chooses to “remember it no more.” If you wait for the pain to vanish before forgiving, you will never get anywhere.
2. Forgiveness is your choice. Sometimes people say that they simply CAN'T forgive, but in reality, they WON'T forgive. God requires you to forgive; it is something you can do, because God wouldn't ask if you couldn't. Forgiveness seems to go against your sense of what is right and fair, so you hold on to your anger, punishing people over and over in your mind for the pain they've caused you, but you are told by God never to take your own revenge!
3. You forgive others so YOU can be FREE.
4. Don't wait for others to ask for forgiveness before forgiving them. They may never do so.
5. Forgiveness must come from your heart. Allow God to bring to the surface the painful emotions you feel toward those who have hurt you. Too often we're afraid of the pain associated with this process so we bury them deep down inside us. Let God bring them up so He can heal the hurts.
6. Forgiveness is choosing not to hold sin against the offender. It is common for bitter people to bring up past issues with those who have hurt them. They want the offender to feel bad, but you must free them as you free yourself and let go of the past.
7. Forgiveness requires you to have mercy on others. Just as God shows YOU mercy and cancels YOUR debts, He commands YOU to do the same.
8. Focus on forgiving people for what they did and resist judging their character. Remember, how you forgive others is how God will forgive you.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

Each participant share your thoughts and experiences from 4-Day Study Plan from the last week.

- *Do you hold on to the anger, bitterness & resentment from YOUR past? Discuss in your group.*
- *How do your offenses keep you from deeper relationships with Christ and others? Discuss in your group.*
- *Are YOU willing to forgive YOU? What does that even look like? Discuss in your group*

Group Prayer Time: 15 minutes

Pray with your group about forgiveness. Let God bring people and any frustrations, bitterness or offenses to your mind that you need to get beyond. Write them down in your journal. We also often we hold things against ourselves, punishing ourselves for wrong choices we've made in the past. Write "myself" at the bottom of your list so you can forgive yourself

For each thing on your list above, pray the following prayer:

Lord, I choose to forgive (name of person) for (say what they did to hurt you) even though it made me feel (share the painful feelings).

When you are finished forgiving that person for all the offenses that come to your mind, and after you have honestly expressed how you felt, conclude with the following:

Lord, I choose not to hold any of these things against (name) any longer. I choose to cancel all debts owed me. I thank You for setting me free from the bondage of my bitterness toward (name). I now ask You to bless (name), in the name of Jesus, Amen.

At home, review these steps toward forgiveness...

Forgiveness is NOT easy and I'm sure the last week has been a difficult one as you attempt to forgive those who have hurt you. This is not a simple process and entails a lot more work. Today, we will cover the continuous 8-step process of forgiving, as we need to allow it to grow in us to have victory in Christ in the long run!

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read Matthew 18:21-35

In The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, who do YOU relate to in the passage? What passage jumps out at you and why?

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 5: **Weekly Devotional Day 2**

Read Isaiah 43:14-28

God has big plans for you, as you get past the hurts that have held you back. Look at verses 19 and then 25 and journal about the “new thing” God is revealing in your heart and how blessed you are that He forgave YOU and allows you to forgive others.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read Psalm 147

Forgiveness must come from your heart. Too often we're afraid of the pain associated with this process so we bury them deep down inside us. Let God bring them up so He can heal the hurts.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read Romans 12:9-21

Review the **8-steps of forgiveness** in the next session. Take today and spend time in Listening Prayer to reflect on your LIFE Starter time this week and to receive all that God wants you to receive about forgiveness. **Make notes to share with your group**

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 6: REPENTANCE

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes Session #6 Teaching: Time to Repent 10 minutes

We have covered a lot of information in this study so far concerning making a conscious decision to walk away from things that may hold you back (Egypt), not allowing negative thoughts to control you and learning to forgive. All of those topics will help you to find freedom in Christ as you accept your position as a member of the royal family. Today, we will cover the Biblical term for practically turning from ALL of these behaviors... **REPENTANCE!**

From Wikipedia: Repentance is the activity of reviewing one's actions and feeling contrition or regret for past wrongs, which is accompanied by commitment to and actual actions that show and prove a change for the better. In Christianity it is often defined as an action, **turning away** from self-serving activities and **turning to God**, to walk in His ways.

You may be surprised to learn the word repent in the Greek New Testament simply means to turn around. It was a military term that described a soldier marching in one direction and then doing an about-face. And when it's used in a spiritual sense, it means to change your mind.

So really, repent is a perfect description of what happens when you come to Christ, believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of the God; You do a spiritual about-face, which in turn changes everything. Not only should you change your mind about Christ, but you should change your mind about sin as well as you discover what it really means to honor God. You realize that it's no longer about performance. It's about a heart attitude that seeks to honor Christ in every aspect of life, so don't be afraid of the word repent, instead, embrace the idea of doing a spiritual about-face, turning to Christ and away from sin in your life!

Acts 3:19-21 challenges us to "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, **that times of refreshing may come from the Lord**, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

In today's group, you will review what it means to Repent...So many people today are scared of the word REPENT and avoid using it altogether! In reality, very few actually understand what the word means.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

Re-read out loud: Acts 3:19-21

Think about what you've learned so far in this class. Express what a "**time of refreshing**" might look like for you as you make the spiritual about-face. God wants you to picture a healthy future with Him and sometimes, we need to define what that looks like to have the motivation to stick with the repentance process and keep moving in God's direction.

- What areas in your life do you need to make spiritual about-face?
- Talk about how you view "repentance" after this conversation verses before.
- Make some commitments to the group on what you need to repent of and how you will do it.

Group Prayer Time: 15 minutes

Wrap up by praying for the courage to step out in faith and repent. As you think about repentance and what you learned in this week's session, THIS COMING WEEK, use the LIFE Starter Method to make a personal decision on what YOU need to repent of!

SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read Acts 3:19-21 again

Journal about repentance and a “time of refreshing” because of your willingness to repent.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional Day 2

Read Acts 3:17-26

What does repentance mean to you? What sin do you need to turn from? Without naming it, you can't have victory over it!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read Acts 2:14-40

Review verse 38 and journal about what it means to you.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read Luke 13:1-5

Reflect on confession, repentance and obedience and spend time in Listening Prayer and reviewing your LIFE Starter time for the week. Make notes to share with your group!

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 7-8: WRITE & TELL YOUR STORY

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes Session #7-8 Teaching: YOUR Story 10 minutes

Your story — regardless of how “spectacular” or “ordinary” you think it is — IS a story about God’s character. It is your eyewitness account of how God rescued you from sin and death through Christ, and changed your life as a result. When we share our story with others we help them get to know what God is like and what He can do. **There are five basic parts to your story:** the opening, your life before Christ, how you came to Christ, your life after Christ, and the closing

- 1. The Opening.** Identify a theme you can use to frame your story. What did your life revolve around (e.g. relationships, your reputation, money) that God used to help bring you to Him? Briefly illustrate how that influenced your life.
- 2. Your Life Before Christ.** Paint a picture of what your life was like before you came to Christ. Don’t dwell too much on, or brag about, past sin struggles. Share only the details that relate to your theme -- just enough to show your need for Christ.
- 3. How You Came to Christ.** Give the details about why and how you became a Christian. Communicate in such a way that the person you are talking with, and anyone who overhears you, can understand how they can become a Christian, too. Even if your listeners are not ready for that, God could use your story and explanation of the gospel to draw them to Himself in the future.
- 4. Your Life After Coming to Christ.** Share some of the changes that Christ has made in your life as they relate to your theme. Emphasize the changes in your character, attitude or perspective, not just mere changes in behavior. Be realistic. We still struggle as Christians. Life is far from perfect, but what’s different about your life now?
- 5. The Closing.** End with a statement that summarizes your story and connects everything back to your theme. If you want, close with a Bible verse that relates to your experience.

This is such an important part of this study, that we are going to give TWO weeks to this process. This week, you will spend some time discussing the element above of your story and then begin to write out your testimony in each category. At the end of the day, every believer should be able to explain how they got saved. YOUR story is for God’s glory, and the evidence of God’s transforming power!

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

After discussing your stories, also discuss baptism with your group.

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and would like to make a public declaration of that decision, we encourage you to participate in a water baptism celebration. **See more info by reading this link** (<https://www.christianity.com/jesus/following-jesus/baptism/what-does-baptism-mean.html>) .

Pray with each other about being baptized as well as to find the time to finish this exercise and be ready to share your story next week.

(Next Week) Session #8: Share Your Written Testimonies

SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Describe Why You Decided To Follow Jesus

Jesus can mean many things to different people. To some Jesus is Lord, to some He is a liar and to others He is a lunatic. Sharing who Jesus is to you and why you decided to follow Him is powerful.

"I decided to follow Jesus..."

• **Statement:** Define a statement which summarizes WHY you decided to follow Jesus.

• **Story:** Think of a story to support your statement. Detail your thoughts and emotions in the story. It may include the moment your attitude towards Jesus changed, how His love and mercy began to soften your heart, or the moment you realized who He truly is.

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing.

SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Jesus changes us. He restores us into right relationship with God. He takes us from death to life, from lost to found and He gives us true identity and purpose. He fulfills our unsatisfied inner desires allowing us to live full lives. How has He impacted the way you live, feel and think?

“Since following Jesus...”

- **Statement:** Define a statement which summarizes HOW your life has changed since following Jesus. Be sure to include the fulfillment of your unsatisfied inner desires.

- **Story:** Think of a story to support your statement. Detail your thoughts and emotions in the story. It may include how your life has changed (identity, purpose, meaning), how His love and mercy has shaped your your emotions (no longer angry, anxious, etc), or changed your actions for the better (Love helping people, Don't react, Forgive quickly

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read John 17:6-19

As you read his passage of Jesus praying for his disciples, can you put yourself in their place and receive this prayer for yourself? Journal about whether or not you are more focused on being part of this world, or God's Kingdom.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional Day 2

Read Psalm 51

This Psalm is about “**becoming a NEW man**,” as David wrote this Psalm after his indiscretion with Bathsheba. No matter what we’ve done, God allows us to have a clean heart if we trust Him to cleanse us. Can you honestly say you have a clean heart? Continue to journal about areas that need to be restored in your life.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read Romans 5

God wants you to live a transformed and peaceful life. Journal about what a “peaceful life” looks like to you. Are you peaceful, or stressed. **What needs to change?**

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read Romans 15:1-13

Reflect on these verses and spend time in *Listening Prayer* to reflect on what “**overflowing with hope**” will look like in your life and also review your *LIFE Starter Journal* for the week. **Make notes to share with your group!**

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 9: WRAP UP

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes Session #9 Teaching: Wrap Up 10 minutes

The focus of this program was to help you live out YOUR freedom as a chosen child of God. It is our hope that you have a better understanding of your identity in Jesus Christ and that you have experienced that freedom by stepping away from the things that hold you back (Egypt), removing your negative thinking, forgiving others and repenting from the sins that kept you in bondage. By writing out and sharing your stories, I hope you feel equipped to share with others about how Jesus has granted you NEW life. If you haven't been baptized, I hope you also consider this very important step! By joining in baptism, we're identifying ourselves with Him. **Romans 6:4** says we have been buried with Him through baptism into death. We're now dead to the power of sin. Being raised up out of the water expresses our new life in **Christ** and our union with Him. This entire study can be summed up by the meaning of baptism, which is centered on the word, "**identification.**" In **Romans 6:3-4** the Apostle Paul puts the matter this way: "Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." Today, in your small groups, you will discuss how life has changed for you and what radical changes might still need to happen for you to find freedom as a child of God. Please end strong and be open and honest about your continued journey and how the group can come along side you, hold you accountable and continue to pray for each other's growth! Lastly, PLEASE give us feedback on this study and how it can be improved to reach more people with the message of FREEDOM that it was intended to bring!

Thank you for your participation and we hope you will continue your journey in another LIFE Study!

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

Also, reflect back on this program and talk about how your perspective is different:

- What is MORE important to now?
- How have your beliefs shifted?
- Is your heart different for Jesus? Do you FEEL Him? Why or why not?
- How will you interact with God differently?
- What are the radical changes you need and how will you execute these changes

Final Group Discussion: How can this study be improved?: 15 minutes

- What are the top THREE takeaways from this study?
- What about this study could be improved to have MORE IMPACT?
- Was the LIFE Method of Journaling helpful and did you actually do it? Why or why not?
- Would you refer others for this class? Why or why not?
- Are you ready to participate in the NEXT PBC LIFE program?

Continue the LIFE Starters Journey

The Apostle Paul encourages us to continue to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in us that causes us to act according to His good purpose. Use the **LIFE Starter journaling method** that this study ignited, to continue to move ahead in Christ!

SESSION 9: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read Philippians 2:12-18

God has placed His Holy Spirit in you to accompany you on a life-long journey to spiritual maturity. Working through this study should have given you a measure of personal and spiritual freedom. In addition, your spiritual ears should be better tuned to listen; but it is still **up to you to listen and obey**—one step at a time, one day at a time. Your freedom in Christ must now be maintained AND you must continue to mature in Christ.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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SESSION 9: Weekly Devotional Day 2

Read Hebrews 10:19-39

Continue the habit of having “quiet time” with God EVERY day. Expand your quiet time and make more room in your schedule for Jesus.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you’ve read?

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E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?

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SESSION 9: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read 2 Corinthians 10:5

Commit yourself to regular conversation with God. Prayer is simply a two-way conversation—you talk to God and then you listen for Him to talk to you, using Listening Prayer! **Don't tolerate negative thinking**— take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. **Battle for your family in prayer!**

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

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F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION 9: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read Ephesians 6:10-20

Establish new patterns of thinking that are based on God’s Truth; don’t drift back to the old ways. Understand that there is a BATTLE for you and your family and the enemy wants to bring you down. Don’t expect other people to fight your battles for you. Dream with God about YOUR future destiny each day. Continue to pray a prayer of thanksgiving for your blessings and Godly beliefs each day

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

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