

# The Emmanuel Project



***Emmanuel;  
God with Us***

**Learning to experience and walk with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit every day of our lives.**

*This 6-week scripture-based curriculum helps people understand how God works with us in our daily lives. Teaching on the Holy Spirit, Jesus as Savior and Lord, and Father God's heart and plans lay the foundation for changed lives.*

**Curriculum by Mark Schaufler**

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By Mark Schaufler

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MST Ministries

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Bolded text in Scripture references is my emphasis

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## Introduction

The goal is learning to experience and walk with the “God with us” from scripture.

*Galatians 6:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us **keep in step** with the Spirit.*

Beginning to follow Jesus in 1977 has been one major surprise and challenge after another. From my beginnings in a small town of 350 to the six continents I have ministered on, the Emmanuel Experience has been a constant factor in meeting the surprises and challenges along the way.

It has been a growing process to realize just how true and comprehensive scripture is when Jesus (Matthew 28:20) said *“and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am **with you always**, to the very end of the age.”*

Too often we only feel that he is with us at church or in an intense time of prayer but if we learn to embrace the experience that scripture describes, it can become what is described as the abundant life (John 10).

Where we learn this best is not in a physical classroom but in the classroom of everyday life. Jesus used this pattern with his disciples; Peter was a fisherman so his context and the language he knew was based in that world. Jesus entered that world to show Peter and the others just who he was.

Peter took Faith 101 while walking on the water (Matthew 14). His first class on hearing God’s voice happened while Jesus was talking to them along the way (Matthew 16). His graduate level studies in forgiveness were framed in Mark 14 and John 21.

He will use our existing world to teach us what we need to know for the Emmanuel Experience. My journey began as I completed my last year of college. I was involved in sports, finishing my degree, and engaged to my now wife of 40 plus years.

In each of these venues he began to teach and show the Emmanuel experience. Water polo was my sport and things happened in it that showed me *“do not be afraid”* was not just a verse but a reality. Academically I got my first level of persecution as a professor would not grade one of my papers due to its scriptural references. While dating, with marriage as a goal, I realized I did not know how to be married but that scripture did have a road map for that journey.

Right out of college my first summer job (fighting fires) and then my first full time job (working for an engineer) all had experiences where I knew he made me smarter than I really was, and

his presence was unmistakable. At that point I did not know my Bible well enough to know that these “experiences” all had a scriptural foundation.

As we go through The Emmanuel Project, we will be able to connect the experiences we have already had to scripture. It will also help safeguard us from spiritual strangeness and extra nonbiblical ideas and experiences. Ultimately and most importantly, we will begin to understand the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit’s interaction in our lives.

We can “*never be alone;*” because “Emmanuel” God is with us. We can immediately enter his presence because he is indeed with us. If we perceive a distance between us, it is erased as soon as we turn to “*fix our eyes*” on him. This makes the abundant life possible as we partner with him in everything we do. Touched by him, daily we have the capacity to touch others for him.

With that in front of us, let us dive into The Emmanuel Project so it can become our Emmanuel Experience too.

## Background Understanding

As the teacher, coach, mentor you need to be a step ahead of those you are leading or guiding. Take the time to see where you are starting and where you are heading so that this can be a journey you take with them not just information you are passing on to them.

### Holy Spirit, the instigator

We could all write a chapter in a book on guilt. All of us have experienced it, the squirming, uncomfortable feeling of “I shouldn’t have done that.” As uncomfortable as that is, recognize this; the Holy Spirit knows what you did and does not want you to do it again; so, you feel guilty. He knows that sin has a higher price than we understand and doesn’t want you to experience those consequences.

*John 16:8 When he (Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world about sin and righteousness and a judgment to come:*

You could call that tough love. Also realize there are over eight billion people on the planet, but he takes the time to individually talk to you about what you just did or did not do.

*Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even **the very hairs of your head** are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

We have all had these experiences, let that sink in; 1 in 8,000,000,000. He really is with us! Not only does he convict, but he also reminds.

*John 14:26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and **will remind you** of everything I have said to you.*

We all have those thoughts, “oh yeah I need to do.....” just fill in the blank. If we follow through and do it then life goes on without as many bumps and dead ends. If we choose to ignore it, eventually, there are consequences. Where do those reminders come from? The same Holy Spirit who convicts us. They are a reminder that he is personally with us, knows, and understands our daily business.

*John 14:16-18 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and **be with you forever** the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***

Cooperating and appreciating the work of the Holy Spirit will also lead us to Jesus. If we are guilty of something there is only one way to deal with it that works.

## **Jesus Forgives and Opens the Door**

*1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful things in the human experience. We struggle to receive it and we struggle to give it. Receiving it frees us from the past and giving it paves the way for our future.

Sin is a big deal and that is one reason why the cross was so horrific. Blood, gore, agony, and pain all describe the cross. The cost of something huge is, of course, very expensive. The payment for sin was fully paid by the cross and all Jesus went through because of it. When Jesus said, *"It is finished. John 19:30."* He was 100% correct.

Receiving forgiveness is not only "purifying" but it opens the door to time with God the Father. The Holy Spirit who convicts and Jesus the Savior make that possible.

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Unfortunately, we do not take advantage of this as often as we could or should. Taking the time to go to the Father changes our lives. There are two key things that come from time in his word and presence: the Father's heart and mind.

## **Father's Heart**

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

The word comfort covers a lot of territory. He heals pain from the past and that can include some of the most horrific experiences people can endure. I have been amazed more than once what people have survived and how they can still smile after all of it. Almost inevitably, it is because the comfort of Father God has been received with such abundance that indeed we have leftover comfort for others.

That is one reason why the scripture describes the two greatest commandments in the order they do.

*Matthew 22:35-40 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”*

*Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

With the comfort of God, which comes when you actually love him with all your heart, soul and mind, you can “love your neighbor as yourself.” Without it, loving people is almost an impossible task.

I clearly remember the first time I was able to say the Lords’ prayer when the first two words were real for me: “our Father”. I wept for half an hour as the comfort of Father God dealt with a lifetime of the pain and suffering I had endured to that point. All that comfort renews our heart with the abundance we need for the rest of the day!

But we are not just a heart we have a mind that is sometimes in conflict with the heart.

*Proverbs 23:7 for as he thinks within himself, so he is; (NASB)*

*2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we **take captive** every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*

To be able to win that battle or even know how to fight it we need something described as a “renewing of your mind.” It is much like downloading a new program or getting an app that we can use.

## **Father’s Mind**

*Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Our worldview, the way we see life, is based on many things. If you eliminate Father God from your view, then explaining evil behavior doesn’t involve the devil’s influence and you will be hard pressed to come up with good answers. If you embrace a scriptural worldview, you know evil has a distinct source and that it is a battle we will always face to overcome.

If we embrace a scriptural worldview, knowing God’s word and putting it into practice in our lives, we will indeed be able to see God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will in action. Without it,



we can struggle trying to understand what is happening all around us. Scripture tells us that evil persists, even though he is a God of love.

*Jeremiah 19:4-6 For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned incense in it to gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. They have built the high places of Baal to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal—something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.*

The full story of scripture paints a picture where life comes into focus and makes sense. If you only have seven pet Bible verses that you quote for everything, you will be challenged to make life work. History takes the full meaning of scripture to come into clear focus.

Fortunately for us Jesus can accelerate understanding about God the Father.

*John 14:6-11 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."*

*Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.*

*Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

You cannot understand the Father if you don't take the time to get to know Jesus. As the "exact representation", you start to see just how personal he is as Jesus lived with his disciples for three plus years here on earth. He truly was "Emmanuel, God with us."

In those three plus years you see Jesus acting as, and accomplishing, the role of a "life coach," for the twelve disciples. This current term and its popularity tell us we do need someone to

come alongside and help us get to where we need to go. Jesus did that with the twelve and he will do it with us.

## **Jesus as Lord; the ultimate coach**

*Mark 1:17 "Come follow me," Jesus said, "And I will make you into fishers of men."*

*John 15:3-8 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.*

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

*John 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command.*

A good coach does just that, they make you into \_\_\_\_\_. I had some very good coaches in some of my athletic endeavors. They stretched me, understood me, and helped me achieve things I would never have thought possible with the limited resources I had mentally and physically.

Jesus will do the same if we respond to his plan for our lives and submit to his coaching. Like all coaching, sometimes it will be painful, but always in the long run profitable.

*Hebrews 12:9-11 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

Coaches coach towards your specific and individual outcomes. In our walk with Christ, it is no different. We are all uniquely created for specific works for, and with, him.

*Ephesians 2:1-10 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one*

*time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

This scripture aptly describes the progression that Jesus the coach will take us through. We start out doing our own thing our own way. Then through his coaching we end up as God’s workmanship doing the good works, he prepared in advance for us to do.

As he is coaching us, he will partner with the Holy Spirit (his representation here on earth) to individually take us where he designed us to go. Because of that there will be similarities that all Christians share but also some huge differences. We cannot compare ourselves to others. We are each coached towards a unique and specific end.

*John 21:20-22 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”*

*Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”*

I have often heard people say I wish Jesus was still here, so I could see him personally. Realistically that idea wouldn’t be that great. Remember the eight billion of us down here? Would we really get enough personal time with him to impact our lives? Jesus himself did not think so.

*John 16:6-7 Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

It’s important to learn how the Holy spirit will work with us as Jesus’ assistant coach.

## Holy Spirit Power

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

*Colossians 3:15-16 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

*Ephesians 5:18-20 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

One way to look at the scriptures we just read is to see the daily ongoing work of the Spirit like a radio station. If we are tuned in, we clearly hear the song/message on the channel. As noted, it can be through a song, wisdom, or thankfulness that flows through our lives. It can also be direction for the decisions we must make every day.

*Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."*

As glorious as this can be (and it can be intensely personal and immediate) it can also be lost like the clarity of the radio station by a variety of issues we face in life.

*Matthew 13:22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.*

*John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be **troubled** and do not be afraid.*

Worry, fear, and the pursuit of our goals (wealth) can choke out and eliminate the opportunity to have a daily assistant coach working in our lives. A coach who not only is moving us towards specific goals but who also will provide us with the power to accomplish those goals.

As a new Christian, I remember having the distinct "feeling" that I was supposed to share Christ with one of the businesses my employer regularly visited. I resisted the "thought" for a while, but it would not go away. I finally resolved to go do it and was shocked to see that as terrified as I was prior to making the decision, I had perfect peace as I began the process of obeying. Much like the fearlessness I had experienced in sports I was now experiencing it in the current

part of my journey. It resulted in my obedience and a growing realization that this scripture (an Emmanuel Experience) was true.

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*

I haven't been to Antarctica yet, but I know that in the six continents I have worked on the Holy Spirit does indeed grant you the power to be his witness.

Hopefully, this narrative has helped connect some dots for you as to why the Emmanuel Project exists. We can all have the Emmanuel Experience if we learn to embrace what scripture offers us. The following studies are designed to take us down that path. Enjoy the journey and those whom you take with you.

## **The Plan**

We will follow a format that helps facilitate learning and applying what has been learned. Just having information doesn't change anything. It's when principles become a daily part of life that the trajectory of our life changes.

## **Connection Point**

This is what helps focus the group or individual on the topic to be explored. By starting with what people already know it makes it easy for them to move into the new or unknown. There are a variety of ways to do this, but it is essential to engage with your group.

## **Scripture**

This is the foundation for the focus we have just attained. To prevent misunderstandings, it is essential to have a scriptural foundation. People have too many ideas about the church and in their views of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit that aren't based on scripture. These only confuse people and distort the truth.

## **Activity**

People remember things best if there is some way for them to participate actively in the learning. That is the point of these activities, to help them remember so that the Holy Spirit can use the new information to guide their lives long after the gathering is over; John 16:13.

## **Challenges**

Change, by definition, means failure. If we don't address the real challenges ahead, we are dooming people to fail. What are the challenges that will be faced as we try to put this new truth into practice? If it is only head knowledge it doesn't help anyone in the world we face today; Matthew 7:24-28.

## **Now What**

When we leave the gathering how do we apply the new truth? Action steps are needed so the new truth doesn't just sit there until the next gathering.

## **Recall**

This is how you will start each lesson after the first one to help reinforce and clarify what was learned in the previous session. Some questions and interaction will help tie it all together for the students.

### **Six Lessons BUT.....**

Don't promise six lessons and then finished. You may hit a bump in the road where people need to spend more time, so it turns into seven gatherings. At some point, the recall reinforcement may take a good part of the lesson time so don't try to squeeze in the scheduled lesson. In other words, this is a curriculum with six key learning points; take the time to learn the point and enjoy how much time it takes to learn it. It would also be good to plan on a final lesson, if indeed you want to stop meeting together, that is a celebration of what you have discovered; Emmanuel God with Us!

## The Target Groups

In every audience you have a variety of people in a variety of spiritual conditions. I start with the basics of Disciples, Deciders and Distracters. Disciples want to move forward into all that the Lord has for them. That doesn't mean they won't doubt or be hesitant, but the basic desire is there.

Deciders are doing exactly that. They are weighing out the reality of following Jesus versus just doing their own thing. They can be very faithful attenders but usually not full participants. When they do decide it's like a switch that gets flipped and they want to go forward with Jesus or they disappear.

Distracters in the youth world fit that word meaning quite well. Often, they are only there because they must be. Someone makes church attendance a part of their life, like it or not. Each of these present challenges and opportunities for the Emmanuel Project.

Disciples are the easiest target group, as you give them the tools to walk with the God they have committed their lives to. Deciders can also be a great target group because then they would more fully understand what "following Jesus" would be like. For some that would be the "ok I can do this" information they needed to decide. Distracters can be a great target too because the truths in the lessons can connect with their daily experience. That can move them towards the Decider and then Disciple status.

If you have all three groups together that is the challenge. Their participation levels and interaction will be quite different. If you are up to managing the bit of chaos that comes from that kind of interaction, then go for it. If that seems a bit overwhelming, then target the Disciples and Decider group. Make it an invite only group or explain it in a way that the Distracters won't be interested or forced to attend.



## Lesson One: Holy Spirit

### Background: Holy Spirit the instigator

We could all write a chapter in a book on guilt since we have all experienced it. The squirming, uncomfortable feeling of “I shouldn’t have done that.” As uncomfortable as that is, recognize this, the Holy Spirit knows what you did and does not want you to do it again, and as a result, you feel guilty. He knows that sin has a higher price than we understand and doesn’t want you to experience those consequences.

*John 16:8 When he (Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict the world about sin and righteousness and a judgment to come:*

Realize that with over eight billion people on the planet, he takes time to individually talk to you about what you just did or did not do. That is tough love.

*Matthew 10:29-31 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. And even **the very hairs of your head** are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.*

We have all had these experiences, let that sink in; 1 in 8,000,000,000. He really is with us! Not only does he convict, but he also reminds.

*John 14:26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and **will remind you** of everything I have said to you.*

We all have those thoughts, “oh yeah, I need to do .....” just fill in the blank. If we do it, then life goes on without as many bumps and dead ends. If we choose to ignore it, eventually there are consequences. Where do those reminders come from? It is the same Holy Spirit who convicts us, and they are another reminder that he is personally with us, knows and understands our daily business.

*John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

*John 14:16-18 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and **be with you forever**—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.***

Cooperating and appreciating the work of the Holy Spirit with us personally will lead us to Jesus.  
If we are guilty of something there is only one way to deal with it that works.

## Teaching Time

**Connection Point:** After a greeting, ask these questions and pay attention to what is said. If you respect people's answers, they are more likely to keep sharing even when the questions get a little more personal.

1. What does it feel like to be hungry?
2. How about tired?
3. How about feeling guilty?
4. Ever lost a night's sleep thinking about the mess you have made in a day?

There is a reason why we think about what we have done, and it's part of the Emmanuel Experience that isn't necessarily a lot of fun. He cares too much to let us go down the wrong path and the consequences that result.

**Scripture:** *John 16:8 When he comes, he will convict the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment:*

But he does more than just that!

*John 16:13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.*

So, what does that look like? I think you may have already experienced this too.

**Activity:** Have an obstacle course set up on the floor. It can be as simple as masking tape on the floor that is a challenge to navigate when blindfolded. If they step on the masking tape it explodes and everyone in the room dies. Have them practice making a "boom" sound just in case. Get a volunteer and have them pick their guide as they are blindfolded.

Let them navigate the obstacle course with the help of their guide. The guide cannot touch the person but can give them direction by using just one word, "no." This simulates the Holy Spirit guiding with guilt and that still small voice that guides us away from danger and towards the fruitful life he has for us.

Once they have successfully completed the course; interview the guide and the volunteer.

1. What was the biggest challenge as the guide?
2. Did it get easier as you worked together?
3. What was the biggest challenge with your guide?

4. Did it get easier as you worked together?

**Challenges:**

- Taking guilt the wrong way and running from Father God instead of running to him for forgiveness.
- Not paying attention to the guide and getting into trouble.
- Feeling pressure from others to do what the Holy Spirit is saying “no” to.
- Wanting the guidance but trying to push away the conviction.

**Now what?**

Have a journal card they can fit into their wallet or phone case. Have them keep track this week of the Holy Spirit as the guide and convictor. You could also have a Facebook page, tik-tok thread, text number, or other way to report the opportunities of the week ahead.

## Lesson Two: Jesus as Savior

### Background: Jesus Forgives and Opens the Door

*1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Forgiveness is one of the most powerful factors in the human experience. We struggle to receive it and we struggle to give it. Receiving it frees us from the past and giving it paves the way for our future.

Sin is a big deal and that is one reason why the cross was so horrific. Blood, gore, agony, and pain all describe the cross. The cost of something huge is, of course, very expensive. The payment for sin was fully paid by the cross and all Jesus went through because of it. When Jesus said, "It is finished" he was 100% correct.

Receiving forgiveness is not only "purifying" but it opens the door to time with God the Father. The Holy Spirit the convictor, and Jesus the Savior make that possible.

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

Unfortunately, we do not take advantage of this as often as we could or should. Taking the time to go to the Father changes our lives. There are two key things that come from him and time in his word. What are those two key things???

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

*Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

## Teaching Time

### Recall: Holy Spirit as Guide and Convictor

1. What were some of the Holy Spirit moments we had last week, specifically as he guides and convicts?
2. How did that make you feel to know that out of 8 billion plus people, the Holy Spirit specifically talked to you?
3. Can you see why we are calling this the Emmanuel Project; God with us?

### Connection Point:

1. What was the worst trouble you ever got in at school?
2. What was the punishment? Was there an option for forgiveness? How does forgiveness feel?
3. What was the worst trouble you ever got in at home?
4. What was the punishment? Was there a forgiveness option? How does forgiveness feel?
5. How does it feel when there is no forgiveness option?

**Scripture:** *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

*Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the Glory of God.*

*Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal in Christ Jesus.*

*Revelation 3:20 Behold I stand at the door and knock, anyone who will open the door I will come in and eat with them.*

**Activity:** Set your meeting place up like a courtroom. Randomly prosecute someone for lying or theft; almost everyone is guilty of these. Once it gets to the sentencing stage have the prosecutor offer to serve the sentence for the guilty person.

Discussion around Romans 3:23, we are all guilty of something we have done or things we didn't do that we should have.

Forgiveness is available IF we believe it's available and Jesus will eat with us if we open the door of our lives to him.

*Revelation 3:20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*

### **Challenges:**

- Too often when we have sinned, we want to run and hide like Adam and Eve did (Genesis 3:1-9) instead of opening the door to Jesus. It's a challenge to be honest and confess our sin before our Heavenly Father. How easy is that for any of us?
- We are ashamed that we have sinned so many times in the same way.
- We know we are going to do it again because we don't know what else to do. This is part of the reason for Romans 12:2 and your knowledge and application of scripture. *Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*
- We have decided that this behavior is just a part of us and we own it.
- It is behavior that we get accepted for or can brag about.

### **Now what?**

Jesus forgives but only when we ask. If we aren't praying regularly, it means we can go days until we face our issues. Praying at each meal means you can keep the list very short and deal with things as they are happening.

Being forgiven is more peaceful and profitable than the running, hiding, and avoiding strategies. He really is "with us" even at our worst.

## Lesson Three: Father God's Heart

### Background: Father's Heart

*2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

The word comfort covers a lot of territory. He heals pain from the past and that can include some of the most horrific experiences people have endured. I have been amazed more than once what people have survived and how they can still smile after all of it. Almost inevitably, it is because the comfort of Father God has been received with such abundance that indeed we have more for others.

That is one reason why the scripture describes the two greatest commandments in the order they do.

*Matthew 22:35-40 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

With the comfort of God, which comes when you love him with all your heart, soul and mind, you can "love your neighbor as yourself." Without it, loving people is almost an impossible task.

I clearly remember the first time I was able to say the Lords' prayer and the first two words were real for me: Our Father. I wept for half an hour as the comfort of Father God dealt with a lifetime of pain and suffering I had endured to that point. All that comfort renews our heart with the abundance we need for the rest of the day!

But we are not just a heart, we have a mind that is sometimes in conflict with the heart.

*Proverbs 23:7 Or for as he thinks within himself, so he is;*

*2 Corinthians 10:5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we **take captive** every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*



To be able to win that battle or even know how to fight it we need something described as a “*renewing of the mind.*” It is much like downloading a new program or getting an app that we can use.

## Teaching Time

### Recall:

1. How did you do on cleaning up your messes this past week?
2. Did you keep the doors open to Father God and get forgiveness when needed?
3. How does that feel to keep the guilt at a minimum?
4. Are you beginning to appreciate the guilt but also the reminders that the Holy Spirit brings up at very timely moments?

### Connection Point:

1. How many of you have some great relatives?
2. Do you have grandparents, aunts, or uncles you enjoy spending time with?
3. Why do you like being with them?
4. Do you feel safe with them?
5. How about your favorite comfort foods?
6. What would be your top three?

**Scripture:** *2 Corinthians 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*

**Activity:** Drop the temperature in your room so it gets uncomfortable and ask people how they feel about that. Then ask for a volunteer and give them a big blanket or even an electric blanket. Now interview the volunteer on how they feel. Give them a couple of extra blankets and ask them what they would like to do with them.

When the Holy Spirit convicts and Jesus forgives, our next option is to spend time with Father God. *John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

We can spend time with Father God because we paid attention to the Holy Spirit and accepted what Jesus did on the cross for our forgiveness.

*Hebrews 4:15-16 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

When we pray and enter Father God's presence, then we are comforted and changed the most.

**Challenges:**

- Not enough time.
- Don't trust him yet.
- Still dealing with feeling guilty.

**Now what?** Let's plan, right now. Calendar time daily and take advantage of times you already have. Recognize the things that you can change and the things you cannot. Be realistic, don't expect to stay up beyond your normal time or get up before your normal time.

## Lesson Four: Father God's Will

### Background: Father's Mind

*Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

Our worldview, the way we see life, is based on many things. If you eliminate Father God from your view, then explaining evil behavior that doesn't involve the devil's influence becomes difficult. You will be hard-pressed to come up with good answers. If you embrace a scriptural worldview, you know evil has a distinct source and that it is a battle we will always face to overcome.

If we embrace a scriptural worldview, knowing God's word, and putting it into practice in our lives, we will be able to see God's good, pleasing, and perfect will in action. Without it, we can struggle trying to understand what is happening all around us. Scripture tells us why evil persists even though God is love.

*Jeremiah 19:4-6 For they have forsaken me and made this a place of foreign gods; they have burned incense in it to gods that neither they nor their ancestors nor the kings of Judah ever knew, and they have filled this place with the blood of the innocent. They have built the high places of Baal to burn their children in the fire as offerings to Baal—something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. So beware, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.*

The full story of scripture paints a picture where life comes into focus and makes sense. If you only have seven favorite Bible verses that you quote for everything, you will be challenged to make life work. His story takes the full meaning of scripture to come into clear focus.

Fortunately for us Jesus can accelerate that understanding about God the Father.

*John 14:6-11 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."*

*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."*

*Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the*

*Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves.*

*Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

We cannot understand the Father if we don’t take the time to get to know Jesus. As the “*exact representation*” you start to see just how personal he is as Jesus lived with his disciples for three plus years here on earth. He truly was “*Emmanuel, God with us.*”

In those three plus years you see him acting as and accomplishing the role of a life-coach for the twelve disciples. This current term and its popularity tell us we need someone to come alongside and help us get to where we need to go. Jesus did that with the twelve and he will do it with us.

## Teaching Time

**Recall:** Give a few examples of the Holy Spirit either convicting or reminding you in the last week.

1. How quickly did you get forgiven?
2. Was anyone able to have some quality time in Father God's presence?

These areas will continue to shape and change us from the inside out if they become a normal part of our daily existence. Today's lesson helps it to make sense and put us on the same page as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Connection Point:** Pass out a menu from a local restaurant; you should be able to download one off the internet easily. Have them pick out their favorite item. See if people could find a healthy option or a menu item that they weren't familiar with.

1. What is the good thing about a menu?
2. What is the bad thing about a menu?
3. What's on the menu: the restaurant and in our heads?

How we are raised determines what the menu of our minds offers us. When we make decisions our only choices unfortunately, come from our menu.

1. How does our future look with that menu?
2. How does that menu put us at odds with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

**Scripture:** *Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

**Activity:** Have them go online and see what the weirdest menu item they can find. Make your list. Then ask why do you suppose those items are available? Poverty foods? Prosperity foods? Is it all-we-can-grow-foods?

**Challenges:** Habits, our responses to life's events, and how we deal with stress all come off our personal menu.

- What are some things that need to come off our menu?
- What are the challenges to change?
- List ten challenges to change.

**Now what?** This week let's look at the challenge of honesty and how it appears on our menu. How many would agree with this scripture?

*Isaiah 59:14-15 So justice is driven back, and righteousness stands at a distance; **truth** has stumbled in the streets, honesty cannot enter. **Truth** is nowhere to be found, and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey. The LORD looked and was displeased that there was no justice.*

Make telling the truth be your goal this coming week. Remember the Holy Spirit will let us know even before we speak if what we are about to say isn't true. If we blurt it out anyway, he will convict us. Jesus will forgive and if we spend time with the Father, all the reasons why we lie will be seen for the sin that it is. Now the challenge is to agree with the three and even though truth and honesty are hard to find these days, it can be found with us.

Scripture reading and memorization list in appendix.

## Lesson Five: Jesus as Lord

### Background: Jesus as Lord; the ultimate coach

*Mark 1:17 "Come follow me," Jesus said, "And I will make you into fishers of men."*

*John 15:3-8 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.*

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.*

*John 15:14 You are my friends if you do what I command.*

A good coach does just that, they make you into \_\_\_\_\_. I had some very good coaches in some of my athletic endeavors. They stretched me, understood me, and helped me achieve things I would never have thought possible with the limited resources I personally had mentally and physically.

Jesus will do the same if we respond to his plan for our lives and submit to him coaching us. Like all coaching, sometimes it will be painful but always in the long run profitable.

*Hebrews 12:9-11 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.*

Coaches will coach towards specific outcomes. In our walk with Christ, it is no different. We are all uniquely created for specific works for and with him.

*Ephesians 2:1-10 As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we*



*were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

This scripture describes the progression that Jesus the coach will take us through. We start out doing our own thing, our own way. Then, through his coaching, we end up as God’s workmanship doing the good works he prepared in advance for us to do.

As he is coaching us, he will partner with the Holy Spirit, his representation here on earth, to individually take us where he designed us to go. Because of that there will be similarities that all Christians share but also some huge differences. We cannot compare ourselves to others since we are each coached towards a specific goal.

*John 21:20-22 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”*

*Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.”*

I have often heard people say I wish Jesus was still here, so I could see him personally. Realistically that idea wouldn’t be that great. Remember there are eight billion of us.

*John 16:6-7 Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.*

It’s important to learn how the Holy Spirit will work with us as Jesus’ assistant coach.

## Teaching Time

### Recall:

1. How did our honesty project go?
2. Could you see the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the Father trying to help in this area of change?
3. Did you put any new items on your menu through memorization or reading?
4. Did you respond differently because of the new menu item(s)?

### Connection Point:

1. How many of you have had coaches, teachers, tutors etc.?
2. Make a list of the characteristics of a good coach/teacher.
3. Make a list of the characteristics of a bad coach/teacher.
4. How many know a bad experience with one of these makes it harder to trust or submit to future coaches/teachers and why?

**Scripture:** *Mark 1:17(NLT) Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!"* Jesus' challenge to the first disciples is still his challenge and offer to us today, *"I will show you how."* He will be that "good coach" in the life he calls us to live.

**Activity:** Set up a golf putting area in your space. Get a volunteer with the least amount of golf experience and tell them you will teach them how to putt. Using masking tape, have lines six inches from the hole, twelve inches, and increasing distances back to about twenty feet, if possible.

First, you are going to show them a bad coach style. Give them the ball and the putter and tell them to make the putt from the longest distance. Failure is almost certain. Then from the same distance give them a rousing pep talk. Again, failure is almost certain.

Now switch to good coach mode. Bring them up to the six-inch line. Show them how to hold the putter, tell them that the ball only goes the way you point it with your putter. If the ball goes to the right, show how to correct it and then if it goes to the left, instruct them how to correct it.

Help them make a few putts up close and then as they understand the concept, slowly increase the distances. They will probably be able to make putts consistently.

Interview the group; how many have had bad coach experiences in church with the first two examples? Jesus isn't that coach, remember he spent 3.5 years with his guys 24/7 to get them ready for the mission we are still living out today.

## Challenges:

- Coach's goals versus your goals
- Coach's methods and timing
- More menu items to pick from

## Now what?

What does the coach keep bringing up for you to do or stop doing?

Those are the things that are probably next for you to do. Remember he is trying to be the good coach and move you in the direction he has for your life. It is a good direction even if it isn't what you are currently planning on. It could be one of these issues or a thousand others but let him coach you to its completion.

1. Telling someone about Jesus.
2. Apologizing to someone about a mess in your life.
3. Restitution for stealing or damage you did to someone else's stuff
4. Cleaning up some relationship messes.
5. Stopping a computer habit.
6. Get your schoolwork done asap.
7. Get physically active.
8. Memorize more scripture

## Lesson Six: Holy Spirit Power

### Background: Holy Spirit Power

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

*Colossians 3:15-16 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.*

*Ephesians 5:18-20 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

One way to look at the scriptures we just read is to see the daily, ongoing work of the spirit like a radio station. If we are tuned in, we can clearly hear the song/message on the channel. As noted, it can be through a song that wisdom or thankfulness flows through our lives. It can also be direction for the decisions we make every day.

*Isaiah 30:21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”*

As glorious as this can be, and it can be intensely personal and immediate, it can also be lost like the clarity of the radio station by a variety of issues we face in life.

*Matthew 13:22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful.*

*John 14:27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be **troubled** and do not be afraid.*

Worry, fear, and the pursuit of our goals (wealth) can choke out and eliminate the opportunity to have a daily coach working in our lives. A coach who not only is moving us towards some specific goals but also who will provide us with the power to accomplish those goals.

As a new Christian I remember having the distinct “feeling” that I was supposed to share Christ with one of the businesses my employer regularly visited. I resisted the “thought” for a while, but it would not go away. I finally resolved to go do it and was shocked to see that as terrified

as I was prior to making the decision I had a perfect peace as I began the process of obeying. Much like the fearlessness I had experienced in sports, I was now experiencing it in the current part of my journey. It resulted in my obedience and a growing realization that this scripture (an Emmanuel Experience) was true.

*Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

I have not been to Antarctica yet, but I know that in the six continents I have worked on the Holy Spirit does indeed grant you the power to be his witness.

Hopefully, this narrative has helped connect some dots for you as to why the Emmanuel Project exists. We all can have the Emmanuel Experience if we learn to embrace what scripture offers us. These studies are designed to take us down that path. Enjoy the journey and those whom you take with you.

## Teaching Time

**Recall:** We have been working on a lot of life changing truths.

1. How has the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and the Father become more real in the last week?
2. Are there any specific areas of change you have seen?
3. What have been some of the tension points that have developed as you are changing what's on the menu of your mind?

**Connection Point:** Have five electrical items set up on a table and ask a volunteer to see if they can turn all five of them on. If possible, have the on switch be a little challenging to find. Have them look like they are plugged in, but they aren't. How frustrating is it when you think something should work but it doesn't? In this case there is an easy fix. In our lives there are parallels.

**Scripture:** *Acts 1:8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."*

*1 Corinthians 15:10 But by the **grace of God** I am what I am, and his **grace** to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all **of** them—yet not I, but the **grace of God** that was with me.*

**Activity:** Have the two most mismatched people in physical ability come up as your volunteers. Set it up like they are going to arm wrestle, the winner should be obvious, and then when you give the go signal don't let go. By holding their hands and pushing you will make sure the unlikely winner does indeed win. Then ask "In real arm wrestling does the judge let go? Yes, but in our lives does the judge (pointing upward) ever let go? No. What you just saw was a physical demonstration of the grace and power that come from the Holy Spirit.

It's something that engages when you face life's challenges.

### Challenges:

- When we look in the mirror, we don't seem up for many of life's challenges. But if we understand the grace and power of the Holy Spirit then, like Paul, we will face them as they come.
- How many of us have made decisions based on our own current abilities instead of realizing that the Holy Spirit and God's grace can enable us to go the next level of the life the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have for us?
- What are some of those challenges we have ignored that he wants us to take up again?

**Now what?** We have put on the training wheels of life to get to know Emmanuel “God with us.” Now it’s a matter of making this our new normal as we learn to walk with them as we walk through the life they have for us.

Every day you make time to renew your mind (more scripture on the menu) and be comforted (time in his presence), you will change and grow. We will help each other do just that from this time forward.

**Ongoing:** Celebrate what we have discovered, Emmanuel, God with Us! Continue to encourage and learn from each other as we travel this journey together!

## **Appendix**

### **Creating a New Menu by Memorizing Scripture**

1 John 1:9

2 Peter 3:18

Matthew 6:5-15

Ephesians 2:8-10

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Hebrews 4:12-16

Read Often Matthew 14:22-33

Read Often Matthew 13:1-23

Matthew 7:24-28

Mark 12:30

Hebrews 13:8

Galatians 6:1-5

Romans 12:21

Romans 12:2

Matthew 5:42

Matthew 5:43-48

Ephesians 4:26

Matthew 5:23-26

Read Often Matthew 5 to 7