

# Discipleship Class



## Becoming a disciple of Jesus

January 25, 2021



## Table of Contents

1. YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS .....	2
2. SPENDING TIME WITH GOD .....	4
3. UNLEASH THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD!.....	5
4. “AM I TRULY SAVED?” .....	6
5. “DO I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH?” .....	7
6. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING .....	8
7. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT .....	9
8. MY INNER STRUGGLES .....	10
9. OVERCOMING TEMPTATION.....	11
10. ENEMIES OF FAITH .....	12
11. SHARE THE GOOD NEWS .....	13
12. STEWARDSHIP .....	14
13. TAKE UP THE CROSS .....	16
14. SUMMARY OF OUR BELIEFS (DOCTRINE) .....	17
15. INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE .....	18

*“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?”*

(Matthew 16:24–26)

# PWC DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

## 1. YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS

### The gospel

This class is intended for new believers, someone who has decided to begin living for God and become a disciple of Jesus. The intention is to create genuine, bona fide disciples of Jesus and not nominal Christians or ordinary church members. A disciple is someone who BELIEVES and OBEYS Jesus' teaching.

In this session, we will review the gospel message, the story of salvation. This is where it all begins.

Key verses:

1. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)
  2. *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"* (Romans 3:23)
  3. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23)
1. God created the universe.
    - a. *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* (Genesis 1:1)
      - i. Everything was good, perfect.
    - b. God created man in His likeness and image. Gen. 1:26-28
      - i. God made man in His likeness and image.
      - ii. God made man to have dominion over the earth.
      - iii. God blessed man.
  2. Mankind rebelled against God.
    - a. Gen. 3 shows how man disobeyed God and sin entered the world.
    - b. We all have inherited a sinful nature. *"Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—"* (Romans 5:12)
    - c. Man is a sinner - *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"* (Romans 3:23)
    - d. Our sin separates us from God now and for eternity.
      - i. *"but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."* (Isaiah 59:2)
      - ii. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 6:23)
  3. Jesus came to die as a perfect sacrifice for our sins.
    - a. *"that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,"* (2 Corinthians 5:19)
    - b. *"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* (2 Corinthians 5:21)
    - c. We cannot be saved by any other way – religion, our righteousness, good works etc.
      - i. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast."* (Ephesians 2:8–9)
      - ii. *"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."* (John 14:6)
  4. We must believe the gospel message, repent of our sins, and receive Jesus as our Savior.
    - a. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."* (John 3:16)
    - b. *"But to all who did **receive** him, who **believed** in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,"* (John 1:12)

## PWC DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

### The New Birth

When someone receives Christ as Savior a spiritual birth takes place, aka 'born-again', 'saved'. There is a change of heart. God has removed the heart of stone and given us a heart of flesh.

*"Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So, it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."* (John 3:1-8)

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)*

We know we are born-again when we sense a change in our lives, a change in desires, especially a desire to serve God and conviction when we sin.

### The Need to Grow

After the New Birth, the baby Christian must grow in faith so he can live a victorious Christian life, not one of struggle or failure.

*"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18)*

*"Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to **grow up** in every way into him who is the head, into Christ," (Ephesians 4:15)*

### The Parable of "The Seed and The Sower"

*"Listen! Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it. Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and immediately it sprang up, since it had no depth of soil. And when the sun rose, it was scorched, and since it had no root, it withered away. Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. And other seeds fell into good soil and produced grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." (Mark 4:3-8)*

*"And he said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones along the path, where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them. And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. But those that were sown on the good soil are the ones who hear the word and accept it and bear fruit, thirtyfold and sixtyfold and a hundredfold." (Mark 4:13-20)*

Jesus teaches us through the Word/Bible. Let us examine the four types of soil.

- The path: hard ground; seed cannot penetrate; the Word is stolen quickly.
- The rocky ground: They receive the Word with joy but do not last; the emotional receiver.
- Among thorns: Cares, riches and other things choke the Word out.
- Good soil: Hear the Word; obey the Word; they bear fruit.

**Application:** After you are born-again, you must zealously desire and pursue spiritual growth.

Which type of soil are you?



## 2. SPENDING TIME WITH GOD

The most important habit we can develop as disciples of Jesus is to spend time with God every day in prayer and meditation on His Word. It is the most potent means of spiritual growth but sadly, too many Christians do not have a regular devotional/quiet time and they remain stunted in growth, spiritually weak and ineffective in the kingdom. If you practice this, God will change your life!

**Key verses:** *“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”* (Mark 1:35)

*“O LORD, in the morning you hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for you and watch.”* (Psalm 5:3)

*“But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”* (Matthew 6:33)

Many refer to this as “Quiet Time” or “Daily Devotions.” It is simply a time you set aside to spend with God daily. Here is a guide:

1. Start with 15 minutes daily and keep doing so until it is a habit.
  - a. It takes up to 30 days for a new habit to develop. You may forget and fall off the wagon but do not beat yourself up. Keep going.
  - b. It is better to do this first in the day.
  - c. Choose a special place.
2. Begin by prayer. Prepare your heart.
3. Read the Scripture slowly; meditate on it. Use the SPACEPETS as a guide to glean truth.
  - a. **S**in to avoid.
  - b. **P**romise to claim.
  - c. **A**ttitude to change.
  - d. **C**ommand to obey.
  - e. **E**xample to follow.
  - f. **P**rayer to pray.
  - g. **E**rror to avoid.
  - h. **T**ruth to believe.
  - i. **S**omething to thank God for.
4. Make some notes when you discover something new, or God speaks to you.
5. Spend some time in worship and prayer. (See section on prayer.)
  - a. **A**doration – praise and worship, include singing.
  - b. **C**onfession – of sins, failures, weaknesses
  - c. **T**hanksgiving – this changes our perspective.
  - d. **S**upplication – make your requests.
6. Apply what you learnt that day.

**Application:** This lesson is critical to your spiritual growth. Start immediately. In a short space of three months, you will see the difference in your spiritual life. Start a daily time with God. Keep doing it. Do not ever stop!

### 3. UNLEASH THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD!

- *“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:16–17)*
- *“For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)*
- *“For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)*
- *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Joshua 1:8)*
- *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law, he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.” (Psalm 1:1–3)*
- *“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.” (Psalm 119:11)*
- *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” (Psalm 119:105)*

The Bible is God's Word, a library of 66 books, written over 1500 years by more than 40 different men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

God's Word brings enlightenment to us. It gives knowledge, revelation, truth, guidance, and wisdom. It gives us strength and shows us how to deal with many problems in life. It is our primary source of counsel. Each person must make time for God's Word. We spend hours on the TV, internet, video games, Netflix etc.

#### **A good approach:**

- Get to know God by reading His Word. Dedicate 20-30 minutes daily to it and that should get you through the Bible in one year.
- Use a modern translation – ESV, NIV, NKJV
- Start by reading through the New Testament systematically, one book at a time. Do not limit yourself to a chapter/day. Please do not say “I read a Bible verse today.”!
- Get the big picture; do not worry about details at the beginning.
- Ask God - *“Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.” (Psalm 119:18)*
- As you read, ask 3 simple questions:
  - What does the passage say? (main facts)
  - What does it mean?
  - How can I apply this to my life?
- Have a notebook, diary e.g., Microsoft OneNote and write.
- Memorize important verses.

**Application:** God's Word is powerful and exciting! We have a treasure trove in the Bible. Start your journey. Dig in! God's Word will bring you strength, wisdom, and victory.

## 4. “AM I TRULY SAVED?”

Many new Christians struggle with guilt over their past and are uncertain about their salvation. This can hinder their growth.

### **Forgiveness**

#### **Key verses:**

- *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”* (Romans 8:1)
- *“as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.”* (Psalm 103:12)
- *“I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”* (Isaiah 43:25)
- *“...You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”* (Micah 7:19)
- These verses assure us of God’s forgiveness.

### **Assurance**

You can be sure that once you have repented of your sins and asked Jesus to forgive you and be your Savior, you are saved.

- *“And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”* (1 John 5:11–13)
- *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.”* (John 6:47)
- *“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,”* (Romans 8:16)
- Can this be any clearer? It is not in the future. It is now!

There are times in our early Christian life when we will doubt our salvation. We ‘feel’ as if we are not saved. That is quite common and expected because Satan would like us to doubt our relationship with God. But we “walk by faith, and not by sight.” We trust God’s Word.

Remember John 3:16

**Application:** Be reassured that you are forgiven of your sins and you are saved. God’s Word is clear on that. He does not want us to be in doubt or live our lives in uncertainty.

If you are trusting in Christ as your personal Savior, and if this faith results in a sincere love for Him and commitment to Him, then our heavenly Father wants you to know that you are His child. If you should today, you will be with Him in heaven.

### 5. “DO I HAVE TO GO TO CHURCH?”

Many have said, "I don't have to go to church to be a Christian". It may be true that going to church does not make you a Christian, but every true disciple will be part of a Bible-believing church.

God created the church, the body of Christ, as His family. We become part of it, and this is crucial to our growth in grace and knowledge. It is a source of inspiration and encouragement. Other believers serve as a model of the Christian life.

Key verse: *“not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”* (Hebrews 10:25)

#### What is the church?

- Church (Greek “*ekklesia*”) – “called out ones.” A group of believers called out of the world system to serve Jesus Christ.
- It is not a building.
- There is the universal, invisible, mystical church.
- There are local churches (fellowships) like PWC.
- Jesus said: *“And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”* (Matthew 16:18)

#### Symbols used to describe the church:

- The body of Christ. *“And he is the head of the body, the church.”* (Colossians 1:18)
- The bride of Christ. *“For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.”* (Ephesians 5:23)
- The branches of Christ. *“I am the vine; you are the branches.”* (John 15:5)
- The building of Christ. *“... built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”* (Ephesians 2:19–22)

#### How can I identify a good (authentic) church? A checklist:

- Is worship a key element of the gathering? Is God the focus?
- Is the Word of God being proclaimed? Are the Scriptures central to the message?
- Is the born-again experience mentioned?
- Is there evidence of love? Is it expressed?
  - Or do you feel judged? Or like an outsider?
- Can you sense the Presence of God there?

Understand that there is no perfect church. The church is made up of imperfect human beings.

**Warning:** You will be hurt and disappointed in any church because there are some false saints, immature saints, carnal saints, and regular saints who stumble. The hurts do us a favor by helping us to grow and mature.

#### What about church membership?

- It shows you are committed to Christ.
- It enables you fulfil God’s purpose in the world.
- It combats the culture of selfishness and pride of independence.
- It shows who are on the team (workers prepared for service to God)
- It ensures growth by transparency and accountability.

**Application:** The church will be maligned by Satan, the world, and media. Remember she is the body of Christ and that He is returning for His Bride, a glorious church without spot or wrinkle.

Make a commitment today to regularly attend a local church. Be baptized and become an active member.



## 6. PRAY WITHOUT CEASING

**Introduction:** In this lesson we will discuss the subject of prayer. Is it necessary? What are some conditions and suggestions for praying? Do you have some struggles with praying? What are they?

**Key verses:** *“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint;”* (Luke 18:1 KJV)

*“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.”* (Mark 1:35)

*“Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”* (Matthew 6:9–15)

Prayer is communication with God. More precisely, it is communion with God (talking to God and listening.)

We pray directly to God in Jesus’ Name, not to Mary or any of the saints.

### **The prayer life of Jesus:**

- Jesus (and the Psalmist) prayed early in the morning. (Ps. 5: 3)
- Jesus also prayed all night (Luke 6:12)
- Jesus prayed before making important decisions, e.g., choosing the apostles. (Luke 6:13)
- Jesus prayed when facing the most difficult test in His life in the Garden of Gethsemane before the crucifixion. He prayed with such intensity His sweat was like drops of blood. (Luke 22:44)
- He is still praying for us. (Heb 7:25)

**Examples of prayer:** Hannah in 1 Sam. 1; The Early Church in Acts 12

### **What should we pray about? Some examples:**

- To overcome temptation (Matt. 6:13)
- Things we desire (Mark 11:24)
- For wisdom, knowledge, and enlightenment; to know God more (Eph. 1.17-18)
- Our anxieties and cares (Phil. 4:6, 1 Peter 5:7)
- For those in authority (1 Tim. 2:1)
- That all men be saved (1 Tim. 2: 4)
- That God would send laborers for the harvest (Matt. 9: 38)
- For the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6)

### **What are some conditions for prayer?**

- Faith. *“Therefore, I say unto you, what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”* (Mark 11:24 KJV)
- Forgiveness of others (Lord’s Prayer above)
- Righteousness. *“If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear me:”* (Psalm 66:18)
- Persistence. *“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?”* (Luke 18:7)
- Abiding in Christ. *“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”* (John 15:7)

We are to *“Pray without ceasing.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

Do not be afraid to ask God. *“You do not have, because you do not ask.”* (James 4:2)

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”* (Matt 7:7)

**Application:** We learn to pray by praying. Desire to become a person of prayer, living a life of devoted prayer to God. Take time throughout the day to talk to God and acknowledge him.

## 7. THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Introduction:** Believers are empowered to live for God, pray and share the gospel when they are filled with Holy Spirit. Pentecostals are distinguished from other evangelical Christians by our belief and emphasis in the power, presence, and manifestation of the Holy Spirit in the church today. We believe “It’s not by might, nor by power but by My Spirit, says the Lord.” (Zech. 4: 6)

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (Acts 2:4.) The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an experience after salvation that is available to every child of God.

- Jesus promised the baptism in the Holy Spirit. “On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. <sup>5</sup> For John baptized with water, but in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Acts 1:4, 5.
  - God fulfilled this promise on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). God came to dwell in them through His Holy Spirit.
  - Five examples of Spirit Baptism in the book of Acts. Note that they all spoke in tongues.
    - Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
    - Samaritans (Acts 8:5, 12, 14-17).
    - Saul’s conversion (Acts 9:17, 18; 1Cor.14:18).
    - Cornelius’ household (Acts 10:44-46).
    - Disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:1-6).
  - Tongues are the physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Why speak in tongues?
    - I am speaking to God. (1 Cor.14: 12).
    - I am building up myself with power (1Cor. 14:4)
    - I open the door for the gifts of the Spirit.
  - Other results of being Spirit-filled:
    - We are empowered to be effective witnesses (Acts 1: 8).
    - We receive boldness (Acts 4:8-13; 19:21).
    - We sing and give thanks to God (Eph.5.18, 19).
  - Every believer has the privilege of speaking in tongues. “Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.” 1 Corinthians 14:5.
  - Praying in tongues is akin to praying in the Spirit.
    - “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.” 1 Corinthians 14:14–15.
    - “But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit.” Jude 20
    - “Praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.” Ephesians 6:18
  - God gives His Spirit to believers for divine, supernatural power.
    - God communicates to humans by His Spirit to our Spirit. Those who pray in the Spirit become sensitive to God’s voice.
    - The Holy Spirit helps us pray for things that we do not understand or have trouble praying about (Romans 8:26).
    - The Holy Spirit gives us power for signs and miracles.
  - People receive the Holy Spirit by asking and the laying on of hands.
- We must continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18; 1Cor. 14:14, 15). We can and should pray in the Spirit daily.

## 8. MY INNER STRUGGLES

**Introduction:** Every Christian faces an inner battle, a fight between the old sinful nature and the new spiritual nature.

**Key verses:**

**The change:** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is **a new creation**. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

**The conflict:** “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So, I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,” (Romans 7:15–22)

“But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

**The old nature:** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

**The new nature:** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.” (Galatians 5:16–24)

**What to do:** “to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (Ephesians 4:22–24)

- We all face this struggle until we die.
- It becomes easier as we grow spiritually.
- The nature we feed the most will win.
- We strengthen the old nature by:
  - Unwholesome movies, Netflix shows, websites.
  - Unwholesome speech, music, books
  - Pornographic material
  - Living closer to the world than God
  - Pride – thinking we can manage on our own.
- We strengthen the new nature by:
  - Daily time with God, prayer, and Word
  - Fasting
  - Fellowship - Surrounding ourselves with good Christian friends/community.
  - Desiring holiness
  - Reading good Christian books; listening to podcasts of preaching and teaching.
  - Listening to good Christian music, e.g., worship music.

**Application:** Be aware of the battle on the inside. Do not be surprised. It is a fight you must engage in and win.

## 9. OVERCOMING TEMPTATION

Every believer faces temptation to sin. We must learn how to deal with this.

**Key passage:** *“Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.*

*And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ““Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.””*

*Then the devil took him to the holy city and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, ““He will command his angels concerning you,’ and ““On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.”” Jesus said to him, “Again it is written, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”*

*Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.”” (Matthew 4:1–10)*

- Temptation is a suggestion to sin, but sin is yielding to the suggestion. Jesus was tempted yet he did not sin.
- What are some common areas of temptation? Lie, cheat, steal, gossip, lust. What else?
- Satan will always tempt us in the weak areas of our lives. He does not play fair. It will often bring discouragement.
- How did Jesus overcome temptation?
  - a. He was filled with the Holy Spirit.
  - b. He used the Word of God. *“I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”* (Psalm 119:11)
  - c. He did not yield.
  - d. He resisted. *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* (James 4:7)
  - e. He rebuked Satan.
- God has promised to help us when we are tempted. *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- We must resist the devil.
- What if we fail? And we may! Do not be discouraged. God loves you still. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (1 John 1:9)

**Application:** We all face temptation as followers of Christ. It is our battle to win. This is how we become OVERCOMERS. Remember the Holy Spirit is with you to help you live in victory.

## 10. ENEMIES OF FAITH

**Introduction:** You may know some who began to walk with Christ but fell away (backslid.) This course was designed to provide a foundation for your Christian walk. Now you can identify enemies you face. Can you list them?

### **The Sinful Nature (The Flesh)**

- *“For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.” (Galatians 5:17)*
- *“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.” (Romans 7:18)*
- *“Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” (Matthew 26:41)*

### **Satan**

- *“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” (1 Peter 5:8)*
- *“Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Ephesians 6:11–12)*

### **World System**

- *“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” (1 John 2:15–17)*
- *“You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)*

That line up may seem formidable but remember whose side we are on! Jesus is the Winner always. We are victorious and triumphant in Him.

- *“Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)*
- *“For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.” (1 John 5:4)*
- *“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.” (Romans 8:37)*
- *“And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death.” (Revelation 12:11)*

**Application:** We face the enemies of faith every day. The battle will be manifested in our minds, flesh, family, friends, work mates, entertainment choices etc. Choose allegiance to Jesus above everything else. Take up the cross and follow.



## 11. SHARE THE GOOD NEWS

**Introduction:** Our purpose is “to know Christ and to make Him known.”

*“And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.””* (Matthew 4:19)

*“And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.”* (Mark 16:15)

*“And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.””* (Matthew 28:18–20)

*“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.””* (Acts 1:8)

*“The Lord is ... not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”* (2 Peter 3:9)

- Sharing the gospel is also known as witnessing or evangelism.
- It is not a suggestion but a command from Jesus. Every person, including our family and friends, who does not know Jesus is headed for eternal punishment in hell. This should not sit well with us. We must win the lost at any cost.
- Sharing the gospel helps us to grow in our faith and brings us tremendous joy. The Holy Spirit is rejoicing in us when we talk about the Savior.
- Do not follow the example of many who have no burden (godly concern) for the lost or are ashamed of Jesus. God holds us all accountable. *“For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.”* (Luke 9:26) If you struggle with this, ask the Holy Spirit for boldness and to lead you in sharing Christ.

### How do I begin?

- Write out your testimony.
  - What were you like before you knew Jesus?
  - How you came to receive Jesus?
  - What happened after you received Jesus? What changes were there?
  - You should be able to relate this in about 3 minutes to someone.
- Let your godly life be an example. *“In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”* (Matthew 5:16)
- Have a list of people to pray for – family, friends, workmates etc.
- Start with one person.
  - Love them. Be kind and gentle.
  - Listen to questions and objections.
  - Prepare a response. *“but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect.”* (1 Peter 3:15)
- Take the prep session on Evangelism.

**Application:** Develop a lifestyle of witnessing and discover one of the greatest joys in the Christian life.

## 12. STEWARDSHIP

A steward is entrusted with the responsibility of managing resources and /or property provided by another. We are all stewards, entrusted with time, talents/gifts/abilities, and treasure (riches, finances) to manage for the kingdom of God.

**Scripture:** *“For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So, take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* (Matthew 25:14–30)

We must be good stewards of what God gave us – time, talent, and treasure.

### **Time**

*“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.”* (Ephesians 5:15–16)

Disciples must use their time effectively for the Kingdom of God. Do not waste time. Life is short and there is much to be done for Jesus.

### **Talent**

*“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace:”* (1 Peter 4:10)

(See also: Romans 12: 6-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11; Ephesians 4: 11-13; 1 Peter 4: 9-11)

We all have been given gifts, talents, abilities, skills that we can use for the Kingdom of God.

We can discover these using the **SHAPE** test (<https://www.freeshapetest.com/>)

- **S**piritual gifts – teaching, intercession, evangelism, encouragement, giving
- **H**ear – what does your heart beat for? Your passion? Homelessness, the poor, children, marriage and family, homeless, financial stewardship?
- **A**bilities – skills, talents
- **P**ersonality – introvert, extrovert, detailed, motivator,
- **E**xperiences – positive and negative experiences

One way that ensures your growth and excitement in faith is to get involved in the Kingdom. Do whatever you can. Find something to do:

- Share the gospel with others you know.

## PWC DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

- Invite others to church, online services.
- Join a small group.
- Get involved in greeting, ushering, Children's church, youth ministry, music.
- Share on Social Media.
- Ask: What skills/gifts/abilities do I have? How can I use it for the Kingdom of God?

### Treasure

*"Will man rob God? Yet you are robbing me. But you say, 'How have we robbed you?' In your tithes and contributions. You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing me, the whole nation of you. Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need." (Malachi 3:8–10)*

*"Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure, you use it will be measured back to you." (Luke 6:38)*

*"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"* (Acts 20:35)

*"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:6–7)*

This can be a difficult area for many as the thinking of the world and our personal greed surfaces. Believers who have obeyed God and been good stewards of his provision can testify that we cannot outgive God. At PWC, we practice giving to God 10% of our income as a reflection of our faith and commitment to Him. Please note that this church does not subscribe to the Prosperity Gospel, but we do believe in the blessing of God.

**Application:** When we ask Jesus to be our Lord, we are asking Him to assume full control over our lives. We obey and serve Him in every area of our lives.

## 13. TAKE UP THE CROSS

**Introduction:** We are at the end of this course which centers around the words of Jesus:

*“Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?” (Matthew 16:24–26)*

There is an old song: “I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back.”

To take up our cross as a follower of Christ means we are willing to die for Him. We can only enjoy our Christian life and be victorious if we are obedient to Him.

So far, we have covered important discipleship lifestyle habits of

- Going to church (Lesson 5)
- Growing by regular time with God in prayer and the Word (Lessons 2, 3, and 6)
- Going out to share the gospel (Lesson 10)
- Giving
- Getting involved

We have seen the pitfalls/struggles we face with sin, Satanic temptation, our sinful nature, the pull of the world and our inner struggles.

If you want your life to count for Christ, let us look at what Jesus said:

- **Deny himself:** “I” no longer call the shots in my life. Jesus does. I deny “SELF” and I place Him on the throne. My desires, dreams, wants, wishes are now subject to Him. However, do not make rash, foolish decisions. Get godly counsel. Keep whatever is good and glorifying God in your life but deny yourself of the wrong things.
- **Take up his cross:** The cross was an instrument of death. It symbolizes death to my old life. To take up your cross means we are willing to die for Him. We are now committed to Him.
- **Follow me:** I follow Jesus now, not the world. As we read the Scriptures daily, He tells us what we should do. We obey the Word. He also speaks to us in God’s house as the Word is being declared. In addition, the Holy Spirit speaks to us and we should follow His promptings, His guidance to us. There is that “inner voice” speaking. Listen. Obey.
- *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)*
- To be a disciple involves complete surrender to the Lord, not only today but throughout our lives. It is the way to inner peace, overflowing love, reassuring hope, and tremendous joy. In the surrendered life, we find meaning and eternal purpose. Live for Jesus. This is all that matters.

**Prayer:** “Heavenly Father, I thank you for forgiving me of my sins and giving me eternal life. I am undeserving of your mercy and grace. I now surrender my life to you and ask you to purify my heart, cleansing me of all impurities. Strengthen me, O Lord, so I can live for you daily. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. Help me to pray, meditate on your Word and spend time with you every day. Lead me in your paths. Help me to know, listen and obey your voice, Lord Jesus. Dear God, I ask you now to use me. Show me what I can do to bring others to you and glorify Your name. May my life be pleasing to you. It is all I can do to show you how much I love you and am thankful for your salvation. I ask these things in Jesus Name. Amen.”

May you continue to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## 14. SUMMARY OF OUR BELIEFS (DOCTRINE)

We believe that:

- 1) The Bible is the inspired Word of God. It is without error and bears authority over our lives. It is the full revelation of God's redemption plan for mankind. [2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21; Psalm 119:105; 12:6; Proverbs 30:5]
- 2) There is one true God who is eternal, of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things. The God of the Bible exists as three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and each person is fully God and there is one God. [Genesis 1:1,26,27, 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; 2 Corinthians 13:14]
- 3) The Lord Jesus Christ was fully God and fully man. He was born of a virgin and lived a sinless life. He suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried to reconcile us to the Father. By his death, He paid the full price for all our sins. [Matthew 1:22, 23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5; 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14,15; 1 Corinthians 15:3,4; Romans 1:3,4; Acts 1:9-11; 1 Timothy 6:14,15; Titus 2:13]
- 4) Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven and there sits until He shall return to judge all men at the last day.
- 5) The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son of God. He is present in the world to make men aware of their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in every Christian from the moment of salvation. He provides the Christian with power for living, understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance in doing what is right. He gives every believer a spiritual gift when they are saved. As Christians, we seek to live under His control daily. [2 Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16,17; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18]
- 6) Man was created in the likeness and image of God, but sin has separated him from a good, loving God. [Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1, 2]
- 7) Salvation from sin is provided freely for all mankind by the death of Jesus. Those who are saved from sin will inherit eternal life.
  - a. The evidence of salvation is the born-again experience.
  - b. Salvation is by faith alone, not by good works.
  - c. [Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8,9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:5;]
- 8) There will be a final judgment in which the wicked dead will be raised and judged according to their works. Whosoever is not found written in the Book of Life will be consigned to the everlasting punishment in the lake of fire. [John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; 1 Cor. 2:7-9]
- 9) Sanctification is the process by which the believer is delivered from the power of sin and made holy before God. It is both instantaneous and progressive. It is pursued by the life-long growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. [(2 Corinthians 4:16; 2 Peter 3:18)]
- 10) The Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Spirit is available to every believer and that the initial evidence of this experience is speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. [Acts 1:5; 2:14, 8-17; 10:44-46; 19:6]
- 11) Divine healing is included in the atonement of Christ. [Isaiah 53:4-5; Matthew 8:16-17; Mark 16:14-18; James 5:14-16; Exodus 15:26]
- 12) The Lord Jesus Christ will soon return for His church and judge the world. He will usher us into a new heaven and new earth. [1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 3:1-4]
- 13) It is the responsibility of every believer to dedicate his life to carrying out the work of the Great Commission. [Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-20; Acts 1:8]



## 15. INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE

The Bible is a library of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. Here is a quick summary<sup>1</sup>:

1. The Beginnings (Gen. 1-11)
  - Creation
  - Fall of man
  - Flood
2. The patriarchs (Gen. 12-50)
  - Abraham (2000-1700BC)
  - Isaac
  - Jacob
  - Joseph
3. The Exodus and wanderings (Exodus-Deuteronomy)
  - Moses
  - The Exodus (1446 B.C.)
  - The Law
  - The Tabernacle
  - Wandering in the desert
4. The Judges
  - Conquest of Canaan –Joshua
  - Deborah, Samson, Gideon, Jephthah-Judges
  - Eli- 1 Samuel
  - Samuel
5. The United Kingdom (1&2 Samuel)
  - Saul
  - David
  - Solomon
6. The Divided Kingdom (1&2 Kings and Chronicles)
  - Rehoboam/Jeroboam
  - Israel, the Northern ten tribes- Samaria
  - Judah, the Southern two tribes- Jerusalem
  - Elijah/Elisha
7. The exile
  - Israel to Assyria in 722 BC
  - Judah to Babylon in 586 BC
8. The return
  - Cyrus, king of Persia 538 BC
  - Haggai, Zechariah, Ezra and Nehemiah
  - Malachi
9. The Silent Years (Intertestamental Period)
10. The Life of Jesus
11. The Church
12. The Epistles

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from [www.biblemirror.com](http://www.biblemirror.com).

# PWC DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

## 1. The Beginnings

Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This is the beginning of the physical universe and so the beginning of history. The actual creation takes place in only six days, with man and woman being the final creation, the ones who are made in God’s image and given authority over the rest of creation. Adam and Eve’s disobeyed God and this brought the entrance of sin and spiritual death into the world. It also includes a promise of God’s plan to provide a solution to sin. We see mankind becoming worse and worse until God is sorry that He made man and decides to destroy the earth with a flood and start over with the family of the one man who is still faithful to Him—Noah. God saved Noah and his family (8 people altogether) along with all kinds of land animals and birds through the ark that Noah built at God’s instruction. God caused it to rain for 40 days and the waters covered the whole earth, even the highest mountains. Noah and his family were in the ark for a year and 10 days until the water evaporated enough and left dry land. All of mankind today is descended from Noah and one of his three sons—Shem, Ham, and Japheth. The family of Shem is the one focused on mostly in the Bible as the Jews come through him.

After the flood, Noah’s sons had many children with their wives and their children multiplied until there were many people on the earth again. Unfortunately, they did not want to follow God’s commandment to fill the whole earth and were determined to stay together in one place. They started building a great city and tower at Babel where they could all live together and show how strong they were. God had other plans and mixed up their languages so that they could not stay together any longer. They separated into their various language groups and filled the whole earth.

## 2. The Patriarchs

The word “patriarch” means a man who rules his family. The term refers to the time period of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s 12 sons. Abraham was a descendant of Shem who lived in a city named Ur. God called him to leave there and go to a land where He would show him. This land turned out to be the land of Canaan, where Abraham lived as a nomad in tents for most of the rest of his life. God made a number of promises to Abraham, but there are three that seem to be the most important for the rest of the Bible story. (Genesis 12:1-3, 7) We have a promise that God would give the land of Canaan to Abraham’s descendants, that he would make Abraham to be a great nation, and that through Abraham, all the families of the earth would be blessed. The land and the nation were both tools God would use to bring about that last promise, which is fulfilled in Jesus.

These same promises were then given to Abraham’s son, Isaac, and Isaac’s son, Jacob, who God also named “Israel.” Jacob then had 12 sons who would become the 12 tribes of Israel. This happened in Egypt. They moved to Egypt after Joseph, one of Jacob’s youngest sons, became the second ruler in Egypt and had them live there under his care. They became slaves over time after a ruler arose in Egypt who did not know Joseph and was afraid of the Israelites. It was during this time that Moses was born.

## 3. The Exodus and Wilderness Wanderings

Moses was born to an Israelite family, but because of the law at the time, which was to kill all male children, through God’s providence, he was adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter. He knew his people and his God, however, and was determined to help his people be delivered from slavery. His timing was not God’s timing though. When he was 40 years old, he had to run away from Egypt because he had killed an Egyptian for beating one of his people. He was gone for 40 years and only came back at age 80 when God directly spoke to him and told him to go back to lead the people out of Egypt. He did this with the help of his brother, Aaron. God performed 10 plagues in Egypt to demonstrate His power over their false gods. Finally, Pharaoh let the Israelites leave. God had Moses lead them through the middle of the Red Sea, as it was divided with a wall of water on each side of them. The Egyptians had changed their mind and tried to follow, but God drowned their army in the sea. God led the Israelites with a cloud by day and fire that floated in the sky at night. He provided them with food and water. He led them to Mount Sinai, where He gave them The Law, including the Ten Commandments. This is where you might say that they actually became a nation, since now they had a national law.

## PWC DISCIPLESHIP COURSE

God then led them to the land of Canaan, but they refused to have faith in God's promise to give them the land and decided to go back to Egypt. God decided to punish them by not allowing them to go into the land at that time, but to cause them to wander in the wilderness until all the adults who were responsible for this rebellion had died. This was to happen in 40 years. The only ones left at the end of this time were Joshua and Caleb, who were faithful to the Lord all along.

### 4. The Conquest and Judges

God had Moses pass the leadership of the Israelites to Joshua and he led them across the Jordan River into the land of Canaan. They conquered Jericho and every other city and army they came against through God's help. Unfortunately, they did not completely drive out the people of the land as God had commanded so God decided to use the nations they left to see if His people would be faithful or not.

They were not faithful and turned to the false religions of the surrounding nations. God then allowed the surrounding nations to oppress the Israelites and they suffered until they repented and turned back to God. Then God would raise up a "judge" who would lead them to fight their enemies and deliver them from their oppressors.

The first of the judges was Othniel, Caleb's nephew and son-in-law. The judges include Samson, the strongest man who ever lived, as his strength came from the Holy Spirit. They also include Deborah, the only woman judge, and many other interesting characters.

The last of the judges was Samuel. He was a great judge, as well as a prophet and priest, but sadly his sons were corrupt. Because the people of Israel did not want his sons ruling them, they used this as an excuse to ask for a king. Samuel and God were not happy with their desire to be like all the other nations, but God said to give them a king anyway. He chose Saul to be the first king of Israel.

### 5. The United Kingdom

Saul began as a good king, but in his about 40 years of kingship, he became rebellious, and God decided not to allow his family to continue as kings. God chose the young man, David, as the next king. Samuel anointed him as king long before he actually took over as king. David proved himself as a great warrior and leader even as a young man. Saul became jealous and tried to kill him, so David ended up living as a fugitive until Saul died in battle against the Philistines.

David also reigned for about 40 years and was an excellent king and remained faithful to God, although he stumbled at times. God promised David that his descendants would always rule on the throne, a promise that was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus who is ruling now.

David's son, Solomon, became king after him, and because of his request of God, God made him the wisest man who ever lived. He built the temple of God and wrote Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Solomon (or Song of Songs). Unfortunately, he did not remain faithful until the end, but turned away from God to idols because of his many wives.

### 6. The Divided Kingdom

Solomon's son, Rehoboam, became king next but was foolish and drove away 10 tribes who made Jeroboam their king. These northern ten tribes were known as **Israel** and the southern two tribes as **Judah**. Rehoboam and David's descendants after him remained king over Judah, while various kings ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel. After many years, the idolatry introduced by Jeroboam and continued by every king after him led God to punish Israel by having the Assyrians take them into captivity. This left only Judah for some time until they followed Israel in their idolatry. Judah did have some good kings who tried to lead the people in following only the true God, but there were mostly wicked kings.

### 7. The Captivity

Israel was taken captive by Assyria in 722 B.C. and eventually, God punished Judah by having Babylon take them into captivity, destroying Jerusalem and the temple in the process. Daniel and Ezekiel were taken to Babylon in this time while Jeremiah was left to prophesy to the people left in the land.

### 8. The Return

The captivity of Judah lasted for 70 years. During that time, the Medes and Persians conquered the Babylonians. King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. They had some

## **PWC DISCIPLESHIP COURSE**

trouble, and it took them longer than it should have to rebuild it and also to rebuild the walls of the city. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah cover this time. This time period goes through the rest of the Old Testament, ending with Malachi.

### **9. The 400 Years of Silence**

After the end of the Old Testament, there are about 400 years until the New Testament begins. During that time, God was not having any prophets write any new books of the Bible, so we call that a time where God was silent. During this time, Alexander the Great conquered Palestine in 330 B.C. A group of Jews led by Judah Maccabee successfully recaptured the temple and purified it in 164 B.C. Soon they regained control of the country and set up their own government, the first independent government since Jerusalem had been conquered by the Babylonians four hundred years earlier.

This Jewish kingdom endured for a century. In 63 B.C. a Roman general conquered Jerusalem and brought Jewish independence to an end. The Romans eventually designated a man named Herod to rule Palestine. Herod accommodated devout Jews by rebuilding the temple.

### **10. The life of Jesus**

After these 400 years, the time was perfect for the coming of the Christ (the Greek word for the Hebrew word “Messiah”, which both mean “anointed one”). God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus and she became pregnant with Him, although she was a virgin. She married Joseph and he became a father to Jesus. When Jesus was about 30 years old, he was baptized by John the Baptizer as He was about to begin His preaching. He then traveled and preached for the next 3 and a half years. He chose 12 of His disciples (followers) to be His apostles (those sent out). At the end of His time, the leaders of the Jews convinced Pilate, the Roman governor, to crucify Jesus, although He had done nothing wrong. Jesus willingly died, as this was His primary mission in coming to earth as a man—He came to be a sacrifice for sin. Thankfully, Jesus did not stay dead, but three days later (as the Jews counted time), He rose from the dead on the first day of the week. He appeared to His apostles and others and they were convinced beyond any doubt that He really was raised. He stayed with them for about 40 days until He returned to heaven.

### **11. The Church**

Less than two weeks later, on the Day of Pentecost, the church began in a big way. As the King in heaven, Jesus baptized His apostles with the Holy Spirit. They used the signs that the Holy Spirit provided as a starting point for convincing many Jews about Jesus being the Christ. They explained the plan Jesus had to save them and their need to be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of their sins. About 3,000 men and women were baptized that day. The church continued to grow more and more as the gospel continued to spread in Jerusalem. Eventually, persecution forced the Christians to leave Jerusalem for other places and the gospel was spread in that way to Judea and Samaria. After that, it spread everywhere, eventually including the Gentiles (non-Jews) as well. The apostle, Paul was the primary apostle to the Gentiles and the book of Acts tells us a lot of detail about his travels and preaching.

### **12. The Epistles**

While this is included as a separate time period, it does somewhat overlap with the beginning of the church. Much of the New Testament was written as the events in Acts were unfolding. All of the New Testament was completed during the first century, while there were apostles still living. While all the scriptures are written by apostles and prophets, the Apostle Paul wrote the majority of the letters in the New Testament. Other writers include James, Jude, Peter and John who also wrote Revelation, the prophetic New Testament book that informs us of the End-Times Events, triumphant return of our Lord Jesus and the restoration of Paradise.

God declares, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

“Even so, come Lord Jesus.”

*Rev. Dr. Michael Ali*