



# **begin**

**WEEK 1**





**week one**

# **You are saved by God**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

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# Overview

Salvation is a free gift from God, one that brings freedom, transformation, and new life. This week's session explores what it means to be saved by grace and how this foundational truth impacts our identity and purpose in Christ. Understanding that salvation is a gift helps us live without the pressure of earning God's love, freeing us to rest in His grace.

## Opening Questions

*Before we begin, process your thoughts and feelings as you embark on this course. Discuss the following with questions with those around you.*

*What drew you to attending Begin?*

*What are you looking forward to?*

*Describe in brief your spiritual journey thus far.*



# Teaching

## Section 1: Who is God?

God is bigger and greater than we can fully understand, but the Bible helps us know who He is. Here are some things we do know about Him:

- **He is all-powerful:** Nothing is too hard for Him. (*Jeremiah 32:17*)
- **He knows everything:** He sees and understands all things. (*Psalms 139:1-4*)
- **He is always with us:** No matter where we go, He is near. (*Psalms 139:7-10*)
- **He created and sustains everything:** He made the world and holds it all together. (*Colossians 1:16-17*)
- **He is one God in three persons:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*2 Corinthians 13:14*).

*What comes to your mind when you think of God?*

## The Trinity

God is one, but He exists in three persons - the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. Each plays a unique role. The Father is our Creator, who loves us and calls us His children. The Son (Jesus) is our Savior, who died and rose again to bring us back to God. The Holy Spirit is our Helper, who guides and strengthens us to live for God. Together, they show us who God is - loving, powerful, and always with us.

	Who He Is	What He Does	Key Scripture
<b>God the Father</b>	The eternal Father of the Son, Creator, and Sustainer of all things.	He loves us deeply, gives us our identity as His children, and provides for our needs.	<p>"See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!"</p> <p><b>1 John 3:1</b></p> <p>Other Scripture: <b>Genesis 1:1, Matthew 6:26</b></p>
<b>God the Son (Jesus)</b>	The eternal Son of the Father, our Savior and Mediator	He became human, died for our sins, rose again, and restores our relationship with God.	<p>"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."</p> <p><b>John 3:16</b></p> <p>Other Scripture: <b>1 Timothy 2:5, Romans 6:4</b></p>
<b>God the Holy Spirit</b>	The Helper, Comforter, and Guide who empowers believers.	He reveals God's truth, transforms our hearts, and gives us power to live for Christ.	<p>"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses..." <b>Acts 1:8</b></p> <p>Other Scripture: <b>John 14:26, John 16:8</b></p>

*Have you heard the term "Trinity" before? What comes to mind when you think about it?*

*How does knowing that God is our Creator (Father), our Savior (Jesus), and our Helper (Holy Spirit), shape the way we relate to Him?*



## Section 2: What's the Gospel?

The gospel is the foundation of our faith—it's not just how we start our journey with God, but how we grow in it. We never outgrow our need for the gospel! Tim Keller reminds us that "The gospel is not just the A-B-C's, but the A-Z of Christianity. Our goal is to help you understand the gospel clearly so you can live it out and share it with others.

*What is the gospel? If you were to explain the gospel to someone in 2-3 sentences, what would you say?*

## The Gospel

Read each section below and reflect on / discuss the prompts as time allows.

**God's Design:** We were created for a relationship with God.

In the beginning, God created everything perfectly. He made people to know Him, love Him, and live in a world without pain, suffering, or brokenness.

*"So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."* **Genesis 1:27**

*"God saw all that he had made, and it was very good..."* **Genesis 1:31a**

## Reflection Questions

*How does knowing that God created you on purpose change the way you see yourself?*

*How does understanding God as Creator impact how we view the world around us? What are some things in life that show us the beauty and goodness of God's creation?*

## The Problem: Sin broke our relationship with God.

People turned away from God. Instead of following His way, we chose our own way. This sin separates us from God, leading to brokenness in our lives and in the world.

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

## Reflection Questions

*Where do you see brokenness in the world? Where have you experienced it personally?*

*What are some consequences of sin in our relationship with God and with others?*

*How can we turn back to God when we recognize sin in our lives?*





## **God's Solution:** Jesus came to rescue us.

God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to fix our broken relationship with Him. Jesus lived a perfect life, died to pay for our sins, and rose again to give us new life.

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* **John 3:16**

### **Reflection Questions**

*How does Jesus' coming and His death show God's love for us?*

*How do you feel about the idea that Jesus died for you personally?*

*How does knowing Jesus loves us enough to rescue us change the way we live?*

## **A New Beginning:** Jesus is coming back.

One day, Jesus will return to make everything right. He will remove all pain, sadness, and sin, creating a new world where we can live with God forever in perfect peace.

*"He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."* **Revelation 21:4**

### **Reflection Questions**

*What do you think a perfect world without pain or sadness would be like?*

*How does knowing that Jesus will return give us hope today?*

## **Our Response:** We can receive God's gift through faith in Jesus.

*Salvation is a gift we cannot earn. To receive it, we must turn from our sin and trust in Jesus alone. When we do, God forgives us, makes us part of His family, and gives us a new life and eternal life.*

*"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." **Ephesians 2:8-9***

*"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." **Romans 10:9***

## **Reflection Questions**

*If God offered you a fresh start and forgiveness, would you want to receive it? Why or why not?*

*What's one question you still have about faith, Jesus, or the gospel?*

*What is one step you want to take in your faith journey?*





## Section 3: Saved by Grace

Salvation is a gift from God—we can't earn it by being good or doing good things. The Bible says we are saved by grace through faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9). Sin is anything that goes against God's perfect standard, and it separates us from Him. But God loves us so much that He offers us grace - forgiveness and a fresh start - through Jesus. When we trust in Jesus, we are saved from sin, given a new identity in Him, and freed to experience His love and a changed life.

### Key Points:

- Sin is anything that opposes God's will and falls short of His glory (Romans 3:23)
- It includes thoughts, actions, and attitudes that violate God's nature (1 John 3:4)
- The consequence of sin is spiritual death and separation from God (Romans 6:23)
- Grace is unmerited favor - a gift we cannot earn.
- Jesus took the penalty for our sins, offering us forgiveness and new life with God.
- We are saved through faith in what Jesus has done, not by our own efforts (Ephesians 2:8-9)
- When we believe in Christ, we no longer face the penalty for sin and are given eternal life.
- Through Christ, we are forgiven and become children of God with a new identity.
- We can begin to experience the love of God daily by walking freely in salvation.

*Do you believe that Christ forgave your sins?*



# Section 4: The Freedom of Salvation

Living in the freedom of salvation means trusting in the grace Jesus gives us every day. Salvation is more than just being saved—it's a journey. It starts when we put our faith in Jesus, means we are made right with God, helps us grow to be more like Jesus, and promises us a future with Him forever. Because of Jesus, we are free from sin's punishment and no longer controlled by sin. Now, we can follow God and grow in our relationship with Him through reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and being honest with God about our struggles. These habits keep us close to Him and help us live in the freedom He gives us.

## Key Points:

- Salvation brings freedom we can experience daily.
- Jesus calls us to live confidently and closely with Him, unhindered by guilt and empowered by His grace (Galatians 5:1).
- We can walk in this freedom by spending time with God daily through Scripture reading, prayer, and worship.
- Cultivate a rhythm of connecting with God and embracing His grace when we feel guilt.
- Practices like morning prayer, Scripture reading, or stillness before God deepen our experience of freedom in Christ.
- Knowing God's Word helps us understand our identity, His promises, and His grace (John 8:36).
- Regular confession and repentance keep us free from the weight of sin and renew our relationship with God (1 John 1:9).
- Confession means acknowledging sin, thanking God for forgiveness, and choosing to turn from it through repentance.

*What are some daily practices you currently engage in to connect with God? How do you make sure these are regular rhythms in your life?*

*What next step can you take in your communion with God? How can you begin to more fully experience freedom found in Him?*



# Teaching Notes

As you watch the video, use this page to take notes.

# Practice & Reflection

This week, take some time to practice what you've learned and to spend time in reflection.

## Daily Reading & Prayer Plan

Each day includes a short passage from Scripture, a reflection question to help engage with the text, and a prayer prompt. As you prepare to engage the Scripture daily, consider the following steps:

1. **Read** - Read the passage slowly - consider reading it 2-3 times, and reading it out loud at least once
2. **Observe** - Ask questions of the text. Who wrote this text? Who are they writing to? What's happening? Where is this happening? When? Write down your observations.
3. **Interpret** - based off the observations you just made, what is the intended meaning of this text?
4. **Apply** - Consider how you should respond to what you've read. Answer the reflection prompt provided if that's helpful.
5. **Pray** - Thank God for what He's shown you, and pray to faithfully live it out. Use the provided prayer prompts to guide you.

### Day 1: Ephesians 2:1-10

Reflection Question: How does this passage emphasize that salvation is entirely God's work and not ours?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, thank You for saving me by grace and not by anything I could do. Help me to truly understand the depth of Your mercy and to live each day with gratitude for the new life You've given me in Christ.



### **Day 2: Romans 5:1-11**

Reflection Question: How does knowing that God loved us even while we were sinners encourage you to trust in His love today?

Prayer Prompt: God, thank You for the peace I have with You through Jesus. Even in difficult times, remind me of the hope I have because of Your love poured out through the cross. Help me to trust in Your love and share it with others.

### **Day 3: Titus 3:3-7**

Reflection Question: What does this passage teach about the transformation that happens through salvation?

Prayer Prompt: Father, I praise You for Your mercy that saved me and for the Holy Spirit who renews and transforms me. Teach me to leave my old ways behind and live as someone who has been made new by Your grace.

#### **Day 4: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21**

Reflection Question: How does being a “new creation” shape your view of yourself and your purpose?

Prayer Prompt: Lord, thank You for making me a new creation in Christ. Help me to embrace my role as Your ambassador, sharing Your message of reconciliation with those around me. Empower me to live as a reflection of Your love and grace.

#### **Day 5: John 3:1-21**

Reflection Question: What does it mean to be “born again,” and how does this passage expand your understanding of salvation?

Prayer Prompt: Jesus, thank You for teaching me what it means to be born again. Help me to fully understand the new life You offer and to live as someone transformed by Your love. Let Your light shine through me so others can see Your truth.

#### **Day 6: Romans 6:1-23**

Reflection Question: How does this passage encourage you to live out the freedom you’ve received through salvation?

Prayer Prompt: God, thank You for freeing me from sin and raising me to new life with Christ. Help me to live each day in the freedom You’ve given me, resisting sin and choosing to live in righteousness that honors You.



## Day 7: Psalm 103:1-12

Reflection Question: How does reflecting on God's forgiveness and compassion inspire gratitude and worship in your heart?

Prayer Prompt: Father, I praise You for Your forgiveness, compassion, and steadfast love. Thank You for removing my sins and treating me with mercy. Help me to live with a heart full of gratitude and worship You in all I do.

# Next Step Goal

## Why Set a Goal?

As we grow in our faith, taking intentional steps helps us move closer to God and live out His purpose for our lives. Setting a "Next Step Goal" each week is a way to apply what you've learned and build habits that deepen your relationship with Him.

## What Is a SMART Goal?

SMART goals are specific, actionable, and designed to help you make meaningful progress. Here's what each letter in the acronym means:

- **S** – Specific: Your goal should be clear and focused. Instead of saying, "I want to pray more," say, "I will spend 10 minutes in prayer each morning this week."
- **M** – Measurable: Include a way to track progress. How will you know if you've achieved your goal?
- **A** – Achievable: Make sure your goal is realistic based on your current circumstances. For example, committing to 10 minutes of Bible reading is achievable, whereas an hour might feel overwhelming.
- **R** – Relevant: Tie your goal to what God is doing in your life right now. If this week's teaching was about spending time with God, focus your goal on prayer, Bible reading, or reflection.
- **T** – Time-Bound: Set a timeframe for your goal. Weekly goals help you focus and stay motivated.

## Examples of SMART Next Step Goals

- Spending Time with God: "I will spend 10 minutes reading the Bible each morning using the Week 1 reading plan."
- Joining Community: "I will attend a small group this week and introduce myself to two new people."
- Getting Baptized: "I will contact my pastor by Thursday to ask about the steps for baptism."

## Writing Your Next Step Goal

1. Reflect: Think about what God is teaching you this week. Ask yourself:
  - What is one way I can grow closer to God based on what I've learned? How can I spend time with God daily this week?
  - Is there a specific area in my faith where I feel God is prompting me to take action?
  - Is there an act of obedience I've been feeling called to take, like baptism, joining a group, or serving?
  - How can I practice what I've learned in this week's teaching?
2. Write Your SMART Goal: Use the space below to write your goal for the week. Make sure it is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

*Example: "I will spend 10 minutes each morning this week reading and reflecting on one of the passages from the daily reading plan."*

3. Plan Your Steps: What do you need to do to accomplish this goal? Write down any practical steps or resources you'll need.

*Example: "Set a reminder on my phone each night to wake up 10 minutes earlier."*



# Confession & Repentance Exercise

A key aspect of living in freedom is engaging in regular confession and repentance. Even though we're forgiven, sin can still disrupt our fellowship with God and weigh us down. Regular confession keeps us free from the weight of sin and enables us to fully experience God's grace. In 1 John 1:9, it says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In confession, we agree with God that we've sinned, we thank Him for his forgiveness, and we choose to turn away from sin and trust God to change our wrong attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors. This is the act of repentance. By doing this, we can restore our fellowship with God. Confession and repentance is a regular act of the Christian faith.

Practice confession and repentance this week.

1. Read Psalm 139:23-24: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
2. Pray: Lord, search my heart and reveal anything in me that doesn't honor You. Show me the anxious thoughts and hidden sins and shame I need to surrender, and lead me in Your everlasting way.
3. Confess: Write down anything that comes to mind that you need to confess. Consider these prompts as you reflect and confess:
  - Is there anything that God has commanded me to do that I have not been obeying?
  - Is there any sin against the Lord or others that I have been covering up?
  - Is there any way that I have wronged someone and not sought to make it right?
4. Close in prayer. Consider this prayer: Father, I come to You with a humble heart, confessing my sins and acknowledging where I have fallen short of Your will. Forgive me, Lord, and cleanse me of anything that separates me from You. Help me to turn away from sin and walk in Your truth and righteousness.
  - James 5:16 says to confess your sins to another person and to pray for each other. If possible, meet with another believer this week and confess your sins and pray together.