

# Begin Workbook



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Begin! Over the next few weeks, we'll focus on our church's mission to ensure that **every man, woman, and child has repeated opportunities to hear and see the Gospel**. Our goal is not just to connect people to a church experience, but to pursue gospel saturation in Western New York, where everyone has regular encounters with the good news of Jesus Christ through word and action.

Achieving this vision requires every person in the body of Christ, as God has placed and gifted each of us uniquely to contribute to His mission. As a church, we are committed to equipping and mobilizing every believer to fulfill their role in this mission by **loving God, the Church, and the world**. Whether you're new to faith or have been walking with God for years, this class is for you—an opportunity to grow, be equipped, and be part of a journey toward gospel saturation.

Each week, we'll explore a new aspect of your relationship with God: *being saved by Him, being loved by Him, and being adopted into His family*. This workbook is your companion to the videos you'll be watching, with space to reflect, pray, and explore practical ways to live out these truths daily.

### How to Use This Workbook

- **Watch the Videos:** Start each week by watching the video that introduces the weekly theme.
- **Write and Reflect:** Use the reflection prompts to journal your thoughts and insights.
- **Engage with Activities:** Each activity is designed to help you apply what you're learning. One recurring activity will guide you in building out your grace story—an account of God's work in your life.
- **Week-to-Week Connection:** Each week builds on the last, so as you complete each section, reflect on how the themes interconnect, creating a holistic picture of your identity in Christ.

*At the end of each session, you'll fill out a completion form. Your facilitator will provide you with the link to the form. This form will capture your attendance for the class, will be a forum to provide feedback, and most importantly, will be a time for you to reflect on class content.*

Lastly, if you haven't already, we invite you to download the [Church Center App](#). Through this app, you'll be able to communicate with your Begin cohort, and better connect with all that's happening at The Chapel.

## **WEEK 3: YOU ARE ADOPTED BY GOD**

## **Overview**

To be adopted by God means more than acceptance—it means we're brought into His family and share in the privileges and responsibilities of being His children. In the Church, we're part of a community where we belong, are valued, and contribute to God's mission in the world.

## **Opening Questions**

*Take a moment to reflect on this past week and today's theme and discuss the following with questions with those around you:*

*What did you learn last week? What did you learn through this week's practice and reflection activities?*

What comes to mind when you hear the word *adoption*? How does it make you feel to think of yourself as adopted by God?

## Teaching

*What does belonging look like and feel like to you? How does knowing that you belong to God's family impact your faith journey?*

### **Section 1: The Biblical Concept of Church**

The Church is not a building but a living community of God's people, united in Christ. It is described in Scripture as the priesthood of believers, the temple of God, the family of God, and the body of Christ. Each of these markers highlights a unique aspect of the Church's identity and mission. As a royal priesthood, believers have access to God through Christ and serve Him in worship and intercession. The Church, as the temple, is where God dwells and is made known to the world. As God's family, we are adopted as His children and relate to one another as brothers and sisters. Finally, as the body of Christ, we are interconnected, with Jesus as our Head, each playing a vital role in His mission.

#### **Key Points:**

- The Priesthood of Believers:
  - All believers share in Christ's priestly status, giving them direct access to God (1 Peter 2:9).
  - We are called to offer spiritual sacrifices, intercede for others, and represent Christ in all aspects of life (Romans 12:1-2, Hebrews 13:15-16).
- The Temple of God:
  - The Church is where God dwells and where the world encounters Him.
  - Believers collectively form a living temple that reflects God's presence to others.
- The Family of God:
  - We are adopted as children of God, knowing Him as Father and relating to Jesus as our elder brother (John 1:12-13, John 20:17).
  - As God's household, we live as brothers and sisters, caring for and supporting one another in Christ (1 Timothy 3:14-15).
- The Body of Christ:
  - The Church is one body with many parts, united by the Spirit and led by Christ as the Head (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Colossians 1:18).
  - Each member has a vital role to play, contributing to the growth and mission of the Church.
- These markers reveal the Church as a vibrant, interconnected community with a divine purpose.
- Every believer has a role in reflecting God's love, serving others, and advancing His kingdom.

*Which of the markers (Priesthood of believers, temple of God, family of God, Body of Christ) stand out to you? Why?*

*How do these truths shape the way you see the Christian life?*

*How do these truths shape the way you see your commitment to the local church?*

## **Section 2: Our Role in the Church**

Every believer has been given spiritual gifts by the Holy Spirit to serve and build up the Church. These gifts are not for personal benefit but to strengthen the body of Christ and fulfill its mission. Discerning and using your gifts involves identifying the needs you see, recognizing your passions, taking advantage of opportunities, and observing where God produces fruit through your service. Serving in both formal and informal ways allows you to contribute meaningfully to the Church's health and growth. Each believer's role is indispensable, and God uses our gifts to glorify Him and bless others.

### **Key Points:**

- Spiritual gifts are unique abilities given by God to each believer to serve the Church (Romans 12:6-8). These gifts contribute to the health and growth of the Church and are essential to its mission.
- Questions for Discovering Your Gifts:
  - *What needs do you see in the Church?*
    - Reflect on areas you feel burdened to address, such as teaching, caring for others, or welcoming newcomers.
  - *What do you have a passion to do?*
    - Pay attention to the areas where God has given you a deep desire to serve.
  - *What doors are open to you?*
    - Consider the opportunities currently available in your season of life and step into them.
  - *Where have you seen God change lives through your service?*
    - Reflect on feedback and visible fruit from your ministry efforts to discern where God is using you.
- Spiritual gifts are often discovered by actively serving in a variety of ways. As you serve, you gain clarity about how God has gifted you.
- Serving doesn't have to be limited to formal roles within the church. Use your gifts in everyday life—teaching in small groups or with your family, encouraging others, or offering practical help.
  - Every act of service, whether formal or informal, contributes to the Church's mission and glorifies God.
- Each believer's gifts are vital to the Church's health and mission. Your service strengthens the body of Christ and brings glory to God.

*What does it mean to you to be adopted by God?*

*How can you more fully embrace your role in the church as a family member?*

*What are some practical ways you can connect or serve in the church?*

### **Section 3: Growing in Community**

Being part of the Church means living and growing in community. The early Church modeled this in Acts 2:42, devoting themselves to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer. Gospel Community is more than Sunday gatherings; it's about believers intentionally sharing life, encouraging one another, and living out the truth of the gospel. These communities prioritize authentic relationships, encouragement, accountability, prayer, and mission. When we invest in Gospel Community, we deepen our faith, grow spiritually, and reflect Christ's love to the world.

#### **Key Points:**

- Acts 2:42 highlights the early Church as a community devoted to teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and prayer.
- Characteristics of a Gospel Community:
  - Centered on the Gospel:
    - The gospel shapes decisions, relationships, and actions.
    - Members remind each other of gospel truths in challenges and celebrate hope in Christ.
  - Built on Authentic Relationships:
    - Transparency is encouraged, creating a safe space for sharing struggles, joys, and prayer requests.
    - Vulnerability and mutual support are prioritized.
  - Encouraging and Accountable:
    - Members build each other up spiritually and hold each other accountable in their walk with Christ.
    - Accountability partners help track growth, celebrate victories, and pray for areas of struggle.
  - Living on Mission Together:
    - The community looks outward, sharing Jesus' love with others and inviting them into the faith.
    - Acts of service and outreach reflect the gospel in action.
  - Focused on Prayer and Spiritual Growth:
    - Prayer strengthens the community's connection to God and each other.
    - Members study Scripture together, seeking wisdom and growth in faith.
- The goal of Gospel Community is to deepen personal faith while collectively showing the transformative love of Jesus to the world.
- Relationships within the Church lead to spiritual maturity and create a Christlike community that impacts others.

*What steps can you take to grow deeper in relationships with others in your Church?*





## **Section 4: Baptism and Communion**

Baptism and communion are two essential practices within the Church that reflect our faith and deepen our connection to God and one another. Baptism symbolizes our union with Jesus in His death and resurrection, signifying that we have died to sin and been raised to new life in Christ (Matthew 28:19). Communion, or the Lord's Supper, is a regular reminder of Christ's sacrifice, where we remember and proclaim His death until He returns (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). These sacred practices strengthen our spiritual lives and affirm our identity as members of the Church.

### **Key Points:**

- Baptism signifies being united with Christ in His death and resurrection, representing the death of our old selves and our new life in Him. It is an act of obedience and a public declaration of faith (Matthew 28:19).
- In our congregation, baptism is also a requirement for Church membership.
- Communion is a sacred practice where we remember Christ's sacrifice and the new covenant in His blood (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). It serves as a proclamation of Christ's death and a reminder of His promise to return.
- Both practices deepen our relationship with God and strengthen our bond with the Church community.
- They are vital expressions of faith and central to our spiritual lives as members of the Church.

*If you've been baptized, how did it impact your faith journey? If you haven't, what questions do you have about taking this step?*

## **Section 5: The What and Why of Church Membership**

Church membership is a meaningful commitment to a local body of believers, reflecting the New Testament model of connected, active participation in the Church. It's about more than attending services—it involves engaging in the Church's life and mission, submitting to its leadership, and fostering accountability and growth. Hebrews 10:24-25 encourages believers to meet regularly, support one another, and spur each other on to love and good works. Membership formalizes this commitment, creating a mutual relationship where the Church and the individual commit to one another in accountability and fellowship.

### **Key Points:**

- The New Testament emphasizes believers' active connection to and participation in the Church community.
- Christians are called to regularly gather, encourage one another, and spur one another on toward love and good works (Hebrews 10:24-25).
- Membership formalizes a mutual commitment between a believer and a local church.
- Membership signifies a commitment to live out the Christian life in community, participating in the Church's mission and submitting to its leadership.
- Membership provides a context for accountability, spiritual growth, and deep relationships. It establishes a framework where both the Church and the individual can invest in one another's spiritual well-being and mission.
- The New Testament rejects the idea of "lone-ranger" Christianity; believers are always connected to a larger community.
- Membership is an intentional way to identify with a local Church and live out faith in fellowship with others.

At the conclusion of class, please fill out this form:



[thechapel.com/beginthree](http://thechapel.com/beginthree)

## **Teaching Notes**

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

## Grace Story

Every person that has repented of their sin, surrendered their life to Jesus, and asked to begin a personal relationship with Him, has a **story to tell**. In our context, we like to refer to this as our grace story. Whenever people encounter Jesus, He leaves them with a story to tell. God's grace has invaded our lives; we exist to share it.

Take 10 minutes to continue refining your grace story. Write about your personal experience of coming to faith. As you reflect on the story you wrote the first week and refined last week, also consider the following prompt:

- How has being part of God's family impacted you? How has being part of the Church strengthened your faith and sense of belonging as an adopted child of God?

If you haven't made this decision yet, use this space to reflect on your thoughts or questions about salvation.

## 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 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. Apply - Consider how you should respond to what you've read. Answer the reflection prompt provided if that's helpful
4. 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 1:1-14**

- *Reflection Question:* God's plan of adoption was set before the foundation of the world. His grace, lavished on us through Christ, is the foundation of our adoption as His children.
  
- *Prayer:* Thank you, Father, for choosing me before time began. Help me to understand the depth of Your love and grace that led to my adoption as Your child.

#### **Day 2: Romans 8:1-17**

- *Reflection Question:* Our adoption comes through Christ's sacrifice and the work of the Holy Spirit. As children of God, we are heirs with Christ and share in His glory.
  
- *Prayer:* Jesus, thank You for making my adoption possible through Your sacrifice. I am grateful for the Holy Spirit, who assures me of my sonship. Help me live as a co-heir with Christ.

**Day 3: Galatians 4:1-7**

- *Reflection Question:* Through Christ, we are no longer slaves but sons and daughters of God. The Spirit of God assures us of our adoption, giving us the confidence to call God, "Abba, Father."
  
- *Prayer:* Holy Spirit, thank You for confirming my identity as God's child. May I always have the boldness to approach my Father with confidence and affection.

**Day 4: 1 John 3:1-12**

- *Reflection Question:* As adopted children of God, we are called to live as His children, displaying love and purity. Our new identity is a reflection of God's great love for us.
  
- *Prayer:* Thank You, Father, for the privilege of being called Your child. Help me live in a way that reflects Your love and purity, showing the world who I am in You.

**Day 5: 2 Corinthians 5:14-21**

- *Reflection Question:* Being adopted into God's family means that we are a new creation in Christ. We are ambassadors for Christ, sharing the message of reconciliation with others.
  
- *Prayer:* Jesus, thank You for making me a new creation. Help me to live as an ambassador for You, sharing the message of reconciliation with the world.

## Day 6: Colossians 3:1-17

- *Reflection Question:* As God's children, we are called to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Our new identity in Christ requires a transformed way of living.
  
- *Prayer:* Lord, help me to live according to my new identity in Christ. Help me to clothe myself with the virtues that reflect who I am as Your child, living in a way that honors You.

## Day 7: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

- *Reflection Question:* Our adoption into God's family comes with a commission to share the message of reconciliation with the world. We are called to invite others into God's family through the gospel.
  
- *Prayer:* Father, thank You for entrusting me with the message of reconciliation. Help me to share the good news of adoption with others and invite them into Your family.

### Next Step Goal

Write a new next step goal. Remember, 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. Be sure to write a SMART goal: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound.

### **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?*





Take your Next Step

Baptism Questionnaire



Register for Belong



**Supplemental Resources**

*This section includes resources to supplement what's learned and discussed in class this week.*

## Final Reflection

As you complete this workbook, take some time to review your weekly reflections. Reflect on how God's love, salvation, and adoption have shaped your journey. What did you learn from these classes?

### Grace story

Write out your full grace story, combining elements from each week, focusing on:

- Your experience of salvation.
- Personal experiences of God's love.
- How belonging to His family has impacted you.
- Consider how you can integrate Scripture into your story.

Write out your grace story in 5-10 sentences. As you write, challenge yourself: if you had to share your story with someone in 1-2 minutes, what would you say?

### **Challenge:**

Commit to at least one practice from this workbook to carry forward after this course—whether confession and repentance, Scripture meditation, community connection, or writing next step goals. Also challenge yourself to continue reading and praying daily - not because you have to, but because you have a desire to continue to know God and experience His love. Let these practices help you continue growing in your identity and confidence in Christ.