



# begin

**WEEK 1: YOU ARE SAVED BY GOD**

# 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.

## 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?

A.W. Tozer describes God as a being of infinite holiness, majesty, and glory, and far beyond human comprehension. As humans, we can't fully comprehend God, but some attributes we know about Him are:

- He is all-powerful (Jeremiah 32:17)
- He is all-knowing (Psalm 139:1-4)
- He is ever-present (Psalm 139:7-10)
- He is creator, sustainer, and redeemer (Colossians 1:16-17)
- He is triune (2 Corinthians 13:14)

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

### The Trinity

The doctrine of the Trinity teaches us that God is one God in His essence, yet three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This reveals God's nature and character to us. Before He ever created or saved, God existed as one God in three persons. What are some things we should know about each member of the Trinity? Well, the Father is our Creator, whose love gives us our identity as His children. The Son, Jesus, is our Redeemer, reconciling us to God through His sacrifice and resurrection. The Holy Spirit is our Helper, empowering and guiding us in God's mission. Together, they show us God's love, redemption, and strength, deepening our relationship with Him and helping us live confidently in His love and purpose.

### **Key points:**

- Each person of the Trinity plays a distinct yet interconnected role: the Father initiates God's plan, the Son accomplishes it, and the Holy Spirit empowers it.
- The Father: Creator and Sustainer who loves us as His children (Genesis 1:1, 1 John 3:1).
- The Son: Redeemer and Savior who reconciles us to God through His death and resurrection (John 3:16, 1 Timothy 2:5).
- The Holy Spirit: Comforter and Helper who empowers and transforms us for God's mission (John 14:26, Acts 1:8).
- The Trinity shows God's love, redemption, and empowerment, strengthening our confidence in Him.

## **SECTION 2: WHAT'S THE GOSPEL?**

In this section, we'll focus on understanding the gospel, which is central to our growth as Christians. Our goal is for you to leave with a clear understanding of the gospel for your own encouragement, as we never outgrow our need for it. Tim Keller reminds us that "The gospel is not just the A-B-C's, but the A-Z of Christianity. The gospel is not just the minimum required doctrine necessary to enter the kingdom, but the way we make progress in the kingdom." We also want to equip you to share the gospel with others, whether in your community, workplace, or family.

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

Creation: Here we start with God, who he is, and what He did in the beginning.

- There is only one Triune God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who is the Creator and source of everything (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 46:10; Genesis 1:1; Revelation 4:11).
- God's greatness is limitless, and He is worthy of our obedience and affection (Psalm 145:3).
- God is perfect in all His attributes, such as His holiness, justice, and love (Exodus 15:11; Psalm 145:8-9).
- In the beginning, God created everything "very good" (Genesis 1:31). There was no evil, disease, or death.

Fall: Here we learn who we are, the bad news of sin and its consequences, and how we have broken relationship with God.

- God created people to reflect, know, and serve Him, and yet we are guilty of rejecting Him (Genesis 3:6-7).
- We have all sinned and have ignored God's rightful place of authority and lived in defiance of His commands. We have placed our priorities and pleasure above His (Romans 3:19, 23).
- God is our King, and yet we have chosen to rebel against His kingdom and seek to establish our own.
- Sin is not merely a set of actions or words. It is the basic orientation of our heart. We have rejected God (Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 15:19). Sin is rejection and rebellion against Him, choosing instead to worship and serve created things (Romans 1).
- Sin against our wonderful Creator is worthy of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:30, 46; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10).

Redemption: Here we learn about the work of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners like you and me.

- God the Father graciously sent God the Son, Jesus to take on flesh. He joyfully and willingly came to do that which was required of us. We could not obey the will of God perfectly, but He did (John 1:14; Romans 8:3-4; Hebrews 2:14-18).
- Jesus suffered a death that He did not deserve and took our sins upon Himself. God's anger and wrath towards sin, our sin, was poured out on Jesus (1 John 4:10; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:4-6)
- Jesus willingly died as a substitute for those who would trust in Him. God the Father accepted the punishment of Jesus for those who would trust Him and applies His obedience to them as well (Romans 2:21-25; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13-14).

- Jesus rose from the dead on the third day showing His victory over sin, Satan, and death. This validated everything Jesus said and did (1 Corinthians 15:20-22, 55-57).
- Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, in the highest place of authority as the one true King and represents His people in the presence of God (Romans 8:35; Hebrews 1:1-4; 7:25).

New Creation: Here we learn about what God will do at the return of Christ and the hope that is in Him.

- God has promised that He will right every wrong, and no injustice will go unpunished (Romans 12:17-21; Revelation 21:8).
- Jesus promised that He would come back for us, and one day He will return to bring final judgment, to establish His kingdom in full, and make everything new (John 14:3; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Revelation 19-22).
- God has promised that those who believe in Christ will have eternal life in Him, both now and forever (John 3:16; 17:3; Revelation 21:1-7).

Response: Repentance and Faith.

- Restored relationship with God, forgiveness of sins, and an abundant life in Him are available (John 10:10). How do we receive it?
- We can never merit, earn, or deserve the acceptance of God. Our hearts, not our actions, are the root of the problem (Ephesians 2:8-9, Galatians 2:16,21).
- We must trust completely in the value of Christ's perfect life, substitutionary death, and victorious resurrection. At the same time, we must turn from those things which enslave us. Our allegiance must turn from ourselves to God. Faith and repentance are the proper response to the Gospel (Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21). Those that receive Jesus receive eternal relationship with God, forgiveness of sin, renewed purpose, and eternal hope.
- Our lives are to be lived as He designed: for His glory (Ephesians 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, 10:31). Thankfully, He has given us His Spirit to make this possible (Ephesians 1:13-14).

### **SECTION 3: SAVED BY GRACE**

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that salvation is by grace through faith—it's a gift from God, not something we can earn. Sin, which separates us from God, is anything that falls short of His glory and is a violation of His holy standards. Although we are all sinners, God offers grace, the unearned gift of forgiveness and reconciliation through Jesus. When we accept Christ, we are saved from the penalty of sin, and our identity is rooted in Him, freeing us to experience His love and live a transformed 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**

Walking in the freedom of salvation means living daily in the grace and confidence that Jesus has given us. Salvation is an all-encompassing word. It includes something called conversion (when we are brought to faith in Christ), justification (the idea that we are declared righteous before God through faith in Christ), sanctification (a lifelong process of becoming more like Christ), and glorification (our promised future where we will be without sin and reigning with Christ forever). Central to our salvation is a new relationship with God that is marked by freedom. Because of Jesus, we are free from the penalty of sin and free from slavery to sin. We are free to obey God, which we could never do before. Our relationship with God grows through regular practices like spending time in God's Word, prayer, worship, and engaging in confession and repentance. These daily habits help us stay connected to God, experience the freedom He has given to us, embrace His grace when we feel guilt, and walk closely with Him each day.

#### **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.

Discuss:

*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?*

**AT THE CONCLUSION OF CLASS, PLEASE FILL OUT THIS FORM**



**[thechapel.com/beginone](https://thechapel.com/beginone)**



# 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 write about your personal experience of coming to faith. Answer the following prompts:

*What was your life like before you came to know Christ?*

*What were your beliefs, struggles, or priorities?*

*How did you view yourself and your purpose?*

*What led you to seek or respond to Christ? Was there a specific moment, conversation, or experience that helped you understand the gospel?*

*How has your decision to follow Christ changed your perspective, values, or relationships?*

*What specific differences have you noticed in your life?*

*What does your life look like now as you walk with Christ?*

*How do you experience His presence, guidance, and love in your daily life?*

*What ongoing challenges or growth are you experiencing in your faith journey?*

*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. Scripture - 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 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.
5. 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.



## **SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES**

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