

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE®

KJV ADULTS Personal Study Guide SPRING 2021

STUDY 1:
*Essentials of
Christianity*

STUDY 2:
*How to Share
Christ*



LifeWay | Adults

A PROMISE THAT WILL NEVER BE BROKEN

It hurts when people break a promise. Some people make promises they have no intention of honoring. Others sincerely mean well, but circumstances interfere and they're unable to do what they said they promised they'd do.

God is not like us. When He makes a promise, He keeps it. Period. He is always faithful to His word. For example, He promises an abundant and eternal life to those who trust in His Son, Jesus Christ.

“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.... For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:9,13).

But we don't automatically enjoy the benefits of this wonderful promise. We must understand and believe Jesus died on the cross, taking our sin upon Himself, and then rose from the dead, making a new, eternal life possible for us. As we believe, we also acknowledge His lordship, turning from sin and surrendering our lives to Him.

God's promise is for you. If you would like a new life in Christ, repent of your sins and put your faith in Him. Admit to God you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive you. Turn from the sin that has kept you from God and accept Jesus' gift of forgiveness. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I'm sorry for all the wrong I've done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in your faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

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We believe that the Bible has God for its Author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

Bible Studies for Life: KJV Adults Leader Guide sometimes lists websites that may be helpful to our readers. Our staff verifies each site's usefulness and appropriateness prior to publication. However, website content changes quickly, so we encourage you to approach all websites with caution. Make sure sites are still appropriate before sharing them with participants, friends, and family.

WELCOME

Bible Studies for Life is committed to discipleship—your discipleship. That’s why you’ll find two studies in this book that are key to your Christian growth.

We’ll first sit with Robby Gallaty and dig into seven key truths—doctrines—that every follower of Christ needs to understand. Dr. Gallaty is well-known for his passion in discipleship, and he is the ideal person to help us dig into *Essentials of Christianity*.

We also grow in Christ as we share Him with others. Marshelle Wilburn gets us into Scripture to see six things we need to know and practice in sharing our faith. *How to Share Christ* will move us beyond knowing the importance of witnessing to others to help us apply those principles to our own lives as witnesses for Christ.

May God richly bless you as you join those in your Bible study group to study and grow more and more into Christlikeness.

Lynn H. Pryor

Team Leader, Bible Studies for Life

 @lynnpryor



MY GROUP'S PRAYER REQUESTS

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing prayer requests.

THE PATHWAY OF DISCIPLESHIP

Growing in Christ is a journey—a lifelong journey—but what does that look like? LifeWay’s research reveals eight markers consistently present in the lives of believers who are growing spiritually. Each year, Bible Studies for Life engages all eight of these areas. Following this intentional plan for discipleship ensures progress on the pathway to becoming more like Christ.

Visit www.BibleStudiesforLife.com for a fuller picture of this discipleship plan through 2022.

8 MARKERS	FALL 2020	WINTER 2020-21	SPRING 2021	SUMMER 2021
BUILD RELATIONSHIPS	After God’s Own Heart: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments			
SEEK GOD	All In: A Life of Commitment			
OBEY GOD AND DENY SELF		When Emotions Rise		
ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE		Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus		
EXERCISE FAITH			Essentials of Christianity	
SHARE CHRIST			How to Share Christ	
LIVE UNASHAMED				The Church God Desires
SERVE GOD AND OTHERS				Elijah: Living Outside the Comfort Zone

ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

Exercise Faith. Within the pages of Scripture, God has revealed truth, the core things that define Christianity. Knowing these truths is more than an academic exercise; as we trust what God has revealed to us, our faith impacts how we live both now and for eternity.

- Session 1 **The Nature of God** (John 14:8-11,16-20,23-26)
- Session 2 **The Purpose of Humanity** (Genesis 1:1-5,26-31)
- Session 3 **The Nature of Sin** (Isaiah 59:1-13)
- Session 4 **The Death of Jesus** (John 19:8-11,16b-18,28-30)
- Session 5 **The Resurrection of Jesus** (John 20:3-9,19-23,27-29)
- Session 6 **The Work of the Holy Spirit** (John 15:26-27; 16:7-15)
- Session 7 **The Return of Jesus** (Matthew 24:3-8,29-32,42-44)

HOW TO SHARE CHRIST

Share Christ. Maturing believers understand Christ's Great Commission applies to all believers, but we may struggle with what we say or how we carry it out. This study helps us understand how we can share Christ with others.

- Session 1 **Our Commission** (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21)
- Session 2 **Start with Prayer** (1 Timothy 2:1-8)
- Session 3 **The Message** (Romans 10:8b-17)
- Session 4 **Live the Message** (Colossians 3:1-3,12-17)
- Session 5 **Share the Message** (Acts 17:16-18,22-23,30-31)
- Session 6 **Trust God to Work** (Matthew 13:3-8,18-23)

Introduction



ESSENTIALS OF CHRISTIANITY

What is the deal with Christianity?

This question is hardly new. People have been asking it as long as Christianity has existed. Sometimes, they ask the question in wonder: “These people seem so ordinary ... so why does it seem like they have something I don’t have?” Other times, they ask in exasperation: “Who do these Christians think that they are?” And sometimes they’re puzzled: “You really believe a guy rose from the dead and is coming back in the sky?”

People are good at misunderstanding Christianity. Even believers can misunderstand some of the basics of the faith. That’s why it is important that we focus on the essential truths. In these seven sessions, we’ll be exploring things like:

- ▶ God’s nature
- ▶ Humanity’s purpose
- ▶ What sin is
- ▶ Jesus’ death, resurrection, and return
- ▶ The work of the Holy Spirit

By the end, sure, I pray that you come out with a richer understanding of Christianity than you had before. But more than that, I pray that you come away with a different view of this figure at its center—a man who was dead, who isn’t dead anymore, and whom people haven’t been able to stop talking about for two thousand years.

ROBBY GALLATY

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SESSION 1

The Nature of God



QUESTION 1:

When have you thrown up your hands and determined something was too complicated?

THE POINT

God has revealed Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

THE PASSAGES

John 14:8-11,16-20,23-26

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Daylight saving time. Some of us welcome it. Others think it's unnecessary. The rest of us dread it because we struggle every spring and fall to change the clocks in our cars.

We all face things that seem complicated to us, but with enough work and determination we usually can figure them out. Yet some things are beyond our ability to grasp. A four-year-old may be learning to count, but we don't expect him to be able to understand advanced calculus. The child's brain is still developing and it will be a while before abstract ideas like calculus are within his ability to understand. While calculus is beyond his comprehension now, he will grow in his understanding.

One subject that remains beyond our ability to grasp is the Trinity. A key truth in Scripture is that God has revealed Himself as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Three Persons, but One God. Our finite minds cannot fully comprehend how three can be one, but we can still appreciate the beauty of the nature of God.

John 14:8-11

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.

KEY WORDS: **The very works' sake** (v. 11)—The miracles that Jesus performed. These not only demonstrated Jesus is God, but they also validated the truth of His words and teaching.

When we think about the Trinity, it's easy to get our brains in a twist. How can *one* be *three*? Are there three Gods? Are they really all the same, but we just have three names for them?

The Trinity is a word we use to try to put God's nature into human words. It describes the three ways God has revealed Himself to us. He has revealed Himself as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, we do not find the word "Trinity" anywhere in Scripture, but many passages help us understand exactly how it works. John 14 is one of those places.

On Jesus' last night with His disciples before His arrest and crucifixion, Jesus told them, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him" (v. 7). This wasn't clear to Philip, so he made a request: "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus essentially told him, "You're looking at Him." Jesus equated Himself with the Father, but He was not saying He *is* the Father. As He said on an earlier occasion: "I and my Father are one" (10:30).

Legend has it that when Patrick went to Ireland to share the gospel, the people were having trouble understanding the Trinity. So he reached down, plucked a clover from the ground, and explained how the clover had three distinct leaves, but it was just one plant. This might be a helpful way to get the idea of the Trinity in our minds, but it falls short in an important way: God is not divided into parts. Each part of a clover is just a part of the whole. But each Person of the Trinity is *fully* God, not just a part of Him. (Every analogy used to help us understand the Trinity works to a point, but they all fall short.)

Our inability to fully understand how the Father and the Son are one but separate does not mean we can't appreciate the way He works. We might not understand how an engine works in our cars—we may have no idea what each individual part does—but we can still rely on it to take us from place to place. In the same way, we may not understand exactly how God works, but we can know and trust that He does work.

When the Word of God became flesh and made His home among us (1:14), He came to us as Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus is fully God, and He revealed God to us in a way we can relate to. He became human like us. He looked like us. He could walk with us and talk with us. The people could see and touch Jesus. And most importantly, even though He is God, Jesus died as a human. The key difference is that Jesus died with our sins upon Himself. He died in our place so that we could be cleansed from our sins and have eternal life with Him.

Look back at what Jesus said to Philip. By looking at Jesus—a historical figure, a man with flesh and blood—we see God. God the Son shows us God the Father.

Every culture in every place and every time can know God “because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead”

(Rom. 1:19-20). But Jesus reveals God in a different way. He does so in a personal, relatable way. Jesus, who is fully human, is also fully God. God the Father, the sovereign all-powerful, holy Creator of the universe, can be seen in Jesus Christ, God the Son.

QUESTION 2:

In what ways does Jesus show us what God is like?

John 14:16-20

16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

KEY WORD: Comforter (v. 16)—Literally, one called alongside another. The Spirit protects, guides, and supports believers until Jesus returns.

It's hard giving people bad news. We don't like to see their faces fall or their spirits dampen. You might have been in that position before, trying to find the gentlest way to tell somebody something you know will upset him or make him sad. A man in one of my discipleship groups had to call his oldest son to tell him that his middle son was going away to a live-in rehab facility. He knew this would cause a huge mix of feelings: hope and joy because his

brother was getting needed treatment, but sadness and heartbreak because they weren't going to see him for a while. Delivering hard news is difficult, but it is easier if there's good news that accompanies it.

Jesus had just given His disciples seemingly sad news: He was going away, and they couldn't come with Him. It had already been a traumatic night because they learned one of *them* would betray Jesus before the night was over. But Jesus didn't leave them hanging in despair. He was about to leave them, but He would be giving them a gift that was, if they could believe it, better than the gift they had sitting in front of them. Jesus told them later that evening that it was *good* that He was going, because if He didn't, the gift wouldn't come (John 16:7).

This gift, Jesus said, would be a "Comforter," translated from a Greek word that literally means "a calling to one's side." It refers to someone who comes alongside us to comfort, encourage, and exhort us. Specifically, Jesus was referring to the third Person of the Trinity: the Holy Spirit. A key to understanding the Holy Spirit is Jesus' use of the word *another*. The Greek language had two words for "other/another," and Jesus used the word that means "another of the same kind." In other words, this Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would be just like Jesus. They are both God.

Jesus told us two things about the Holy Spirit:

1. The Comforter was coming so that the disciples wouldn't be left "comfortless." Jesus wanted them to know that His physical absence didn't mean that the Father had left them on their own.
2. The Comforter was coming so that they could still have access to God just as they had access to God when they talked with Jesus face-to-face.

QUESTION 3:

How does the Holy Spirit work in the life of a believer?

The eleven disciples sitting with Jesus—Judas had already departed (13:30)—had already fulfilled the only requirement for receiving the Holy Spirit: they recognized and acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, the One who came to save them. The promise of the Holy Spirit meant they would not be disconnected from a relationship with God.

This is also good news for us. We don't have Jesus physically standing beside us, eating dinner with us, or teaching us face-to-face. But we still have access to Him because we have His Holy Spirit. When Jesus, the Son of God, is in your life, God the Holy Spirit is in your life. The Holy Spirit will work through you in ways you can't comprehend to carry out the desires and the will of the Father.

John 14:23-26

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

24 He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

One of my friends took a college course on the history of the English language. He learned how English is a blend of a lot of languages, including French. To illustrate this, the professor passed around an article written in French. Bit by bit, the professor walked them through the French, showing them that, when they had someone helping them read it, they were able to use what

they had already learned to understand more than they thought they could.

In a sense, this is what Jesus did when He gave us the gift of the Holy Spirit—but on a scale we can't even imagine. When Jesus said it was good that He was going away and the Holy Spirit was taking His place (16:7), He meant it. In God's Word, we have the written testimonies of people who encountered the living Jesus; they recorded what Jesus said and did while He was on earth. But now we have the Holy Spirit to guide us in the same way Jesus guided His disciples.

Jesus said the Spirit would “teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” Later, as the Spirit moved God's people to action, we see Him empowering them to share the Gospel in languages they didn't speak (Acts 2:4), heal the sick and the lame (3:1-9), and discern truth from lies (5:3-4). Whatever the act or situation, each time someone did an amazing thing through the power of the Holy Spirit, it was to further the kingdom of God. It allowed them to reach people who had been unreachable, speak to those who had not heard, and teach the gospel and make disciples in impossible places.

The Holy Spirit we read about in Scripture is the exact same Spirit at work in our hearts today. He still convicts us, moves us, and empowers us. And He dwells inside of everyone who calls Jesus Lord. The Father sent the Son to give us an example to follow and to die for our sins. He sent the Holy Spirit to continue the work of the Son by empowering believers to be His church.

In a similar way to the professor who helped her students understand French even though they didn't speak a word of it, the Holy Spirit comes alongside us and instructs us in the ways of God. Through the Holy Spirit we can find God's truth in Scripture, live the way Jesus taught, and carry out the work that Jesus left for us to do: to make disciples of all nations.

QUESTION 4:

How does understanding God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit help you engage with Him in your daily life?

QUESTION 5:

How does our understanding of the Trinity affect our understanding of community?

ENGAGE

The Bible teaches that God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In each of the columns below, list words or phrases that describe how you relate to each person of the Trinity.

Father**Son****Holy Spirit**

Example: He makes a plan
for my life

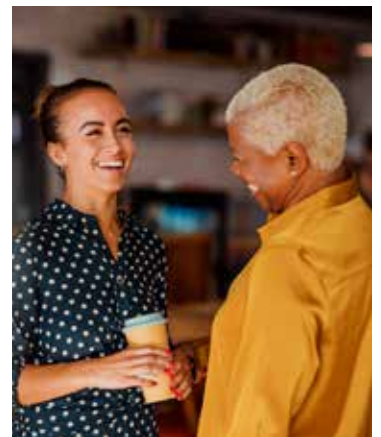
He saved me

He teaches me

LIVE IT OUT

What will you do with the truth about how God has revealed Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?

- ▶ **Pray.** Give thanks to God for being a God who reveals Himself to us. Thank Him for coming to us in Jesus Christ and for giving us His Holy Spirit to work in us and through us.
- ▶ **Study.** Compare two passages: Genesis 1:1-2 and John 1:1-18. Underline where you see the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in these passages. Make note of the similarities and differences in how the three Persons of the Trinity are described.
- ▶ **Display.** Just as the world around us reveals God, we are called to reveal Him to those around us. Trust the Holy Spirit to give you the opportunity and the words to point others to Jesus.





THE COUNSELOR

By Bob Dean

Translation is an exacting and challenging task. Translators of the Greek New Testament face a special challenge in seeking the best word to communicate the meaning of the word *parakletos*. This challenge becomes obvious when we compare the varied ways in which this word is brought over into English. *Parakletos* is found five times in the New Testament. All of these are in John's writings. Four are in Jesus' upper room discourses on the night before His death: John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7; and the other is in 1 John 2:1. There is little difference in the translations of 1 John 2:1. Nearly all have the word "Advocate" (NASB). The differences are found in the four references in John's Gospel. Some translations have "Advocate" (NRSV, NEB). Others have "Counselor" (HCSB, NIV). Some have

“Helper” (NKJV, NASB). The older English versions, including the *King James Version*, have “Comforter.”

The reason for the differences lies in different understandings of the meaning of *parakletos* in Greek use and in how Jesus used the word. The word meant “one who is called to someone’s aid.” Most Bible scholars agree that the Greeks used the word primarily in a legal setting. *Parakletos* for the most part had a more general meaning: *one who appears in another’s behalf, mediator, intercessor, helper*. The word was used of anyone who was called in to help.

Translators who emphasize the legal setting for the word use either “Advocate” or “Counselor.” Those who see the word meaning “help” of a more general kind prefer “Helper.” For students of the New Testament, the crucial question is how Jesus used the word. Jesus clearly used the word as a title for the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). One of the themes of John 14–16 is the announcement of Jesus to the disciples that He was going

away. This greatly upset them; therefore, Jesus sought to ease their minds in several ways. One of these ways was to tell them that although He was going away, He was sending them “another” *parakletos*. Jesus reminded them that He had been with them for a short time, but He promised that this other *parakletos* would abide with them forever (John 14:16).

The word translated “another” in John 14:16 is *allos*, which means “another of the same kind.” The implication is that Jesus had been for them a *parakletos*, and that “another” would carry on His work. This makes sense when we examine the predicted work of the *parakletos* in light of Jesus’ ministry among the disciples.

The reference to the *parakletos* in John 14:26 emphasizes His role as Teacher. Jesus assured that the Spirit would teach them all things and would remind them of the things He had taught them. John 15:26 emphasizes the role of the *parakletos* in bearing witness to Jesus. Verse 27 reminded the disciples that they

too were to testify of Christ. The Book of Acts shows that they witnessed in the power of the Spirit. John 15:26-27 comes in the midst of two passages about the persecution coming on the disciples because they were followers of Christ (15:18-25; 16:1-4). Thus 15:26-27 may have a legal background if we think of their testimony for Christ being made in persecution settings. Jesus taught that in times of persecution, the Spirit would give His followers the words to say (Matt. 10:19-20; Mark 13:11; Luke 12:11).

He told them that He must go away in order for the *parakletos* to come and that His coming would be of great benefit to them (John 16:7). Then Jesus described the work of the Spirit in convicting the world of sin (16:8-11). This has a legal setting, but it pictures the Spirit as a prosecutor, not as an attorney for the defense. John 16:12-15 in the larger context emphasizes that the Spirit does not call attention to Himself, but glorifies Christ.

Arguments can be made for both sets of translations. The

translations “Advocate” and “Counselor” point out that this is the clear meaning in 1 John 2:1. Jesus Himself is there described in His role as intercessor with the Father on behalf of believers. A legal setting is claimed for John 15:26-27 and 16:7-11.

Those who favor a more general translation like “Helper” make the following points. Although the Greeks often used the word in legal settings, the legal uses rarely point to a professional person who pleads someone’s case. There is little legal background in John 14–16. These passages emphasize the *parakletos* being with them and teaching them. What is said about the sending, activity, and nature of the paraclete (16:7,13-15; 15:26; 14:16f.,26) belongs to a different sphere, and *parakletos* seems to have the broad and general sense of “helper.”

In considering the meaning of “Comforter,” we need to realize that the meaning of the English word has changed over the centuries. Earlier it meant “Strengtheners.” In the background was the Latin *con*,

“with,” and *fortis*, “strong.” This does not mean that comfort is not a part of the help provided by the *parakletos*, for it surely is part of His helping ministry. Few contemporary translations use “Comforter.” The New King James Version used “Helper” instead of “Comforter.” Supporters of the translations “Advocate” and “Counselor” focus on specific aspects of the word *parakletos*. Perhaps they focus too narrowly. *Paraclete* has the advantage and disadvantage of being neutral and meaningless, unless the Greek background is known. *Helper* is an active word and does not convey the passive sense of Greek etymology (i.e., someone called in). Nevertheless it is the one English word that is both meaningful and fits all the passages in which *parakletos* occurs in the New Testament.

Whenever I study the meaning of this word and seek to select one English word for it, I find myself agreeing with Leon Morris: “It is impossible to find one English word that will cover all that the *parakletos* does.” Morris,

therefore, prefers “Helper,” since it leaves open the kind of help.

The broad interpretation and application of *parakletos* does not exclude the work of the Spirit in a legal way as our Intercessor, Advocate, and Counselor. However, in John 14–16 and elsewhere the New Testament extends it to include other aspects of the Spirit’s work. The conclusion of this article is that although we may use only one English word to translate *Parakletos*, we ought not to restrict its meaning to one word. The meaning and application in the upper room passages are as broad as the work of the Spirit. He is Advocate, Counselor, Comforter, and Helper. 🕯

Bob Dean is a retired editorial and curriculum specialist, LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tennessee.