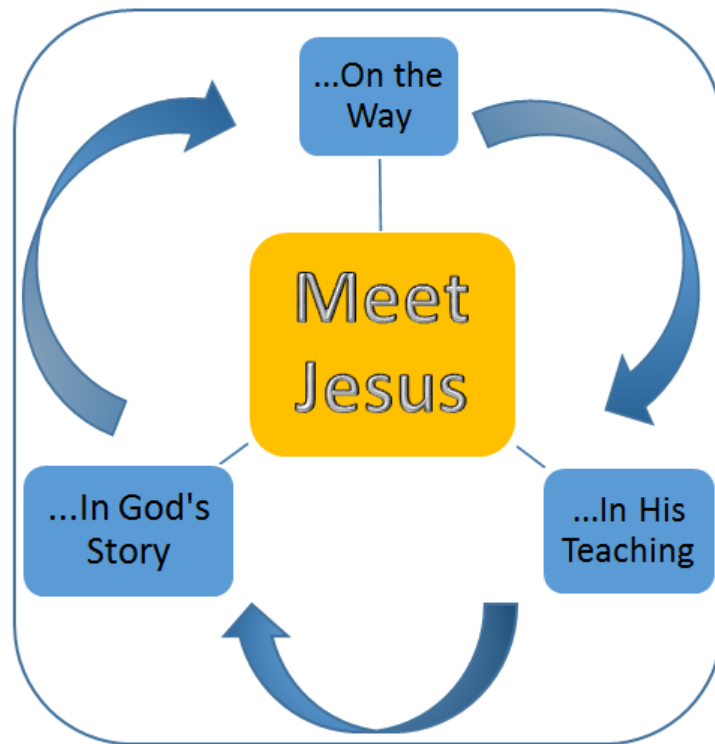


# Meet JESUS

## *In God's BIG-Story*



Jim Fredericks

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For additional **personal engagement**, I would encourage you reading “*Times of Refreshment*” along with these five weekly texts about Jesus. This is a free PDF download on the “*Bible Resources*” tab on my website, [JimFredericks.com](http://JimFredericks.com).

When you finish these Bible studies in this “*Meet Jesus...*” series, I have also written other resources to support you as companions on your journey with Jesus. These are available at [JimFredericks.com](http://JimFredericks.com). Other guides in Scripture are available under the “*Companion through Scripture*” tab, designed as companions to guide you to the next level.

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# Welcome!

**“Meet Jesus...”** as we relate what the Bible says to our everyday lives in a natural, engaging, and empowering way. **“Come & See”** just as you are.

## **And it’s actually fun!**

Our aim is to remove the artificial barriers people may have erected against looking together into the Bible. This is a welcoming, embracing, anyone-can-come group, whether casual observer or active participant. You set the level of involvement that you are comfortable with. Bring your inquisitive thinking so we can learn together.

The Bible is accessible for anyone with a desire to know what this popular book has to say, whether curiously exploring Christianity or young in their walk with Christ. This *“whole-person”* approach involves our inquisitive minds and our enlivened affections/emotions triggered by our sanctified imagination so we activate our will.

This is a safe place to ask questions on your heart. None are excluded.

In **“Meet Jesus...”**, we focus on the essential, growth-rich *ABC’s of our value and worth* interwoven throughout Scripture. Such a life is worthy of investing my all into. Now as we spend regular time in Scripture, each year becomes fifty-two weekly opportunities for LifeChange.

**“God has not hidden truth from us, but for us to increase our delight in Him.”** Ask any miner the effort needed to mine for silver or gold. Also ask if the return from the mother-lode is worth the effort. And God’s Word is the mother-lode of truth.

**“If you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand...”** (Proverbs 2:4).

Jim Fredericks

Yorba Linda, CA

**ENGAGE with GEN. 1:1-31+2:25 as if you were there.**

As an introduction to this natural and engaging approach to learning from the Bible, please read “*Welcome*” on the previous page.

“*In the beginning God...*” These first four words promise new life and love for each of us, now available through faith in Christ. God initiates; we respond, *all-in*. In creation, we discover a partial answer to life’s most fundamental question (“*What’s God like?*”). Creation shouts loudly, telling us something about our Creator (Ps 19:1-4; Romans 1:20) since what we see (creation) points to what we cannot see with our physical eyes (the Creator). Six times God states, “*it was good.*” Then after creating humanity, as much like Himself as anything created could ever be, God states: creation is now “*very good.*” Genesis 1:26-28 is one of the most crucial texts in Scripture, in broad strokes answering the second essential question, “*How does God see me/us?*” Since God is *relational* at His core (note the “*us*” in 1:26), God designed humanity to belong relationally with Him and with each other, which means personal choice. Have you ever wondered how such tragedies can happen in a world God created “*very good*”? Read Genesis 2:16-17, God’s one condition, and the response of **all humankind** in chapters 3 and 4 (Adam and Eve were the *entirety* of humankind at that time.). Instead of *allegiance* to God, Adam & Eve went rogue, choosing their own path.



**What we see in creation corresponds with who the Creator is. God creates out of who He is. What does Genesis 1:3-25 suggest about our Creator, as we look at the repetitions in each of the six days?**

**QUESTIONS for group dialog.**

1. **Read with this lens.** What we see (creation) points to who the Creator is. What do the repeated words, “*it was good,*” tell us about God’s character?
2. What do the often repeated phrases, “*Let there be...and it was so*” immediately suggest about God?
3. From Genesis 1:26-28, how would you support the statement: “we reflect God’s nature and He designed us to participate with Him in His world”?

**DIALOG together in group this week.**

- Relate what you are most grateful or thankful for today.
- Read the passage twice out loud, each reading a few verses.
- Retell: What does this say about God and about me?
- Request our caring Father to meet any specific personal need.

## From GENESIS 1:1-31 +2:25, what stirs your mind & affections?

**1:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...3 And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. 4 God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. 12 The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." 21 So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." 23 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.


28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day....**2:25** Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

How is God drawing me to live this out loud? *"I will..."*

**ENGAGE with GENESIS 3:1-24 as if you were there.**

Genesis 2 ends with the man and woman in Eden, free to enjoy all its delights, with only one limitation coupled with this vast freedom of choices (2:16-17). Then Satan came to Eve with deceit in his heart. She would not have fallen for his schemes if he said, “*Eve, I am a thief and a liar. I’ve come to steal and kill and destroy you*” (John 10:10). Instead, our enemy’s ploy is deceit, an outward veneer of truth hiding an inward core of death, like a fishhook. And Satan hooked Eve, first with deception, then debate and denial, and finally by defaming God. The first sin in Genesis 3 is not about doing grossly wicked things. The point of testing is obedience, deciding for myself what is good and what is bad. “Will you learn good and evil in dependence on Me or go rogue and declare your independence?” Since God knows all things, embracing His unrivaled authority in our lives is our highest and best. “Where are you, my friends? Normally we would now be walking arm-in-arm” (3:8a) reveals God’s broken heart seeking to restore relationship. Death is separation and spiritual death is spiritual separation from God. Through choices in Genesis 3, mankind separated ourselves from God’s presence and proximity and much of His intended provision.

 ***“Genesis 2 ends with the man and woman in Eden, free to enjoy all its delights, with only one limitation (2:16-17). This life is so captivating! Yet when we look around today, why don’t we experience this kind of relational life? God’s arch-enemy, Satan, came to Eve disguised as a serpent with deceit in his heart. Eve and Adam, God representatives went rebel, and all creation fell. BUT GOD has a plan to restore His creation of people, and it centers in Jesus Christ.”***

**QUESTIONS for group dialog.**

1. In 3:6, what avenues of deceit do you see, like what the enemy uses today?
2. “*Where are you?*” What heart do you hear behind God’s question in 3:9? More anger or more a longing to dialog in order to restore? Be careful not to project how we would feel on God.
3. Compare 3:4 with 3:22-24. Is Satan’s statement in 3:4 true or a lie? Or is it deceit, a semblance of truth covering up a destructive lie?

**DIALOG together in group this week.**

- Relate what you are most grateful or thankful for today.
- Read the passage twice out loud, each reading a few verses.
- Retell: What does this say about God and about me?
- Request our caring Father to meet any specific personal need.

## From GENESIS 3:1-24, what stirs your mind & affections?

2:1 A Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”

2 The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, 3 but God did say, ‘You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.’”

4 “You will not certainly die,” the serpent said to the woman. 5 “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”

6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He answered, “I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid.” 11 And he said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” 12 The man said, “The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.”

13 Then the Lord God said to the woman, “What is this you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.”

14 So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, “Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. 15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”

16 To the woman he said, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”

17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken for dust you are and to dust you will return.” 20 Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.

21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 22 And the Lord God said, “The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” 23 So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24 After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.


How is God drawing me to live this out loud? "I will..."

**ENGAGE with MARK 1:9-28 as if you were there.**

Mark was the first of the Gospel writers to write down the oral story of Jesus' life. From his first words, Mark describes the decisive inbreaking into history of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This creates a sense of crisis as He ruptures the status quo. With Jesus' baptism, Mark deliberately points us back to the 1<sup>st</sup> creation in Genesis 1 & 2. The same Three Persons were active in speaking the 1<sup>st</sup> creation into existence, God the Father, God's Spirit who flutters or hovers over the water, and Jesus, the Word (see John 1:1 + 14).

The arrival of King Jesus (1:15) launches God's restoration plan for all that was lost in Genesis 3. Storms are pregnant with the possibility of breakthroughs. Jesus' Kingship calls for us to bow our knees, ***all-in*** with wholehearted allegiance toward His loving sovereignty. As Creator, all creation owes allegiance to Him...and what a loving, caring s sovereignty it is!

Jesus restores intimacy with the Father for all who repent and believe in Jesus. This is the BIG-Story that makes sense of life as we fully give ourselves to Jesus. "*Gospel*" or "*Good News*" means history-making, life-shaping news, not daily news. And so it is! Jesus calls for decisive action on our part. He impacts people through His words and His works of power demonstrating His Kingdom authority (1:21-28). Then He trains up His new family (1:16-20) to follow Him in the "family business" of evangelism and discipleship.

 *"The Bible paints a panoramic picture of God's bountiful and ever-present supply poured into the lives of His people with the intriguing use of water....God pleads with them; 'I will be like that dew in your spiritual life'" (Fredericks, "Times of Refreshing").*

**QUESTIONS for group dialog.**

1. In 1:9-13, how does Mark weave the Father's care and the Spirit's power together with the Reality of trials at the beginning of Jesus' adventure?
2. Read 1:14-15 several times, perhaps the key passage in the first eight chapters of Mark. What strikes you?
3. Notice how Mark describes the two-fold thrust of raising up His team of followers in 1:14-20 and the work of evangelism in 1:21-28. Why do you think Mark selected these stories?

**DIALOG together in group this week.**

- Relate what you are most grateful or thankful for today.
- Read the passage twice out loud, each reading a few verses.
- Retell: What does this say about God and about me?
- Request our caring Father to meet any specific personal need.



From MARK 1:9-28, what stirs your mind & affections?

1:9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. 10 Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, 13 and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him.

19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

25 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.


How is God drawing me to live this out loud? "I will...."

**ENGAGE with EPHESIANS 2:1-22 as if you were there.**

“Who are you, really?” This is the second most important question, after “What is God like?” Ephesians chapter 2 helps answer this question in a surprising way for our individualistic Western society. Paul not only describes who we are as *individuals* (2:1-10), but also who we are as *community* (2:11-22). As we begin to understand God, understanding that He is a Community-of-Three, Father, Son and Spirit, this makes more sense since we have been designed as His image-bearers.

In this powerful chapter, Paul uses the same rhythm in both parts, “describes how we were before Jesus” (individual, 2:1-3; community 2:11-12), the change agent (“But God...,” 2:4 and 11), and who we are now (as individuals 2:5-10; as community 2:13-22). Studies show that two of today’s most concerning problems are a personal sense of shame and guilt and a disconnectedness. The Good News in Ephesians 2 fully deals with both: Jesus’s death frees us from guilt and shame and His life draws us into community as a “new creation” (2:16).

Even after our time together, soak in these spiritual Realities until our lives glow from its light. This is a model of how to relate to our Father in a freedom that releases us from the chains of bondage. (1) Acknowledge our past history, (2) yield to our Father through faith in Christ, and (3) live out of the abundance flowing from intimate relationship. For spiritual health, we must know who we really are. How we finish the following sentence is crucial: “I am....” Who are you in Christ? Do you know your true identity?

 “From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible paints the picture of God’s Big-Story. In Genesis 1 and 2, God designs us in His image for the most captivating life imaginable! God’s arch-enemy, Satan, deceived our ancestors and all of creation fell in Genesis 3. But our Father patiently woos us back to intimacy with Him through Jesus.”

**QUESTIONS for group dialog.**

1. Which specifics describe your life prior to coming to Christ through faith (2:1-3 & 2:11-12)?
2. What’s your response to the “But God” statements in 4:4 & 2:13?
3. What are some of the results of God restoring you to new life in Christ, as individuals (2:5-10) and in community (2:14-22)?

**DIALOG together in group this week.**

- Relate what you are most grateful or thankful for today.
- Read the passage twice out loud, each reading a few verses.
- Retell: What does this say about God and about me?
- Request our caring Father to meet any specific personal need.

From EPHESIANS 2:1-22, what stirs your mind & affections?

**2:1** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2 in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3 All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

11 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12 remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, 15 by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, 16 and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. 17 He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. 18 For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members of his household, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. 21 In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. 22 And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

How is God drawing me to live this out loud? *"I will...."*

**ENGAGE with 1 JOHN 1:-2:2+3:1-5 as if you were there.**

The aged Apostle John lays down a sure pathway for healthy spiritual growth in 1 John. “*From the beginning*” in Genesis 1 and 2, God created humanity in His image, as much like Him as a created being could be. Why? To experience relationship with God and to multiply His love to others in community. This eternal life burst into time and space in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine in the person of Jesus, providing a certain way to return to His original Eden-intent.

In chapter one, John focuses on walking in God’s Light (what is true) as a powerful stream of life. The word “truth” (6 times in our passage) means “*not concealed,*” that is, not hidden in darkness. As we keep in step with the Spirit, walking in His Light on our journey, we live an “uncovered” life towards God. We stop falling for the counterfeit, attempting to satisfy God-given needs in illegitimate ways. The Christian life is a dynamic, interactive, all-in relationship, or *koinonia* with Jesus in community, not mere rules keeping. Jesus brought this “shared life” all the way to us from the Father’s heart. This eternal quality of life is now lavishly available to each of us by faith in Jesus Christ. As we keep in step with the Spirit, walking in His Light on our journey, we live an “uncovered” life, saying “yes” as we fill our needs in God’s way.

**What is your heart-response to Jesus’ offer?**

*What we think of Jesus Christ sets the tone for how we view Christianity. John desperately wants his readers to know that Jesus Christ really came, and was fully human like us (although without sinful responses). When we give our wholehearted allegiance to Jesus, He calls us to walk in His light so we may live in close relationship, with Him and with one another.*

**QUESTIONS for group dialog.**

1. In 1:1-2, why do you think the Apostle John used so many “sense-oriented” words to describe how the early apostles knew Jesus?
2. Who God is determines what God calls us to. In 1:5, what does light convey about who God is?
3. John writes in broad strokes, not for perfection but progress on our journey. How do you understand the “if we claim...yet” structure in 1:6,-2:2?

**DIALOG together in group this week.**

- Relate what you are most grateful or thankful for today.
- Read the passage twice out loud, each reading a few verses.
- Retell: What does this say about God and about me?
- Request our caring Father to meet any specific personal need.

From 1 JOHN 1:1-2:2+3:1-5, what stirs your mind & affections?

**1:1** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. **2** The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. **3** We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. **4** We write this to make our joy complete.

**5** This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. **6** If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. **7** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.


**8** If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

**10** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. **2:1** My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. **2** He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world....

**3** See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2** Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. **3** All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. **4** Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. **5** But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin.

How is God drawing me to live this out loud? *"I will...."*

# Fully Forgiven!

 *"If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).*

Listen closely to what God says about forgiveness. Through faith in Christ, we are so fully and finally forgiven that the Bible almost exhausts language to describe it. God's mercy and grace has thoroughly removed the stain of guilt and the resulting fear of condemnation. How can God convey this reality adequately?

I have listed seven verses with seven magnificent images demonstrating how totally God has forgiven us. He has painted such graphic pictures of forgiveness so that we might never forget how forgiven we are in Christ. Briefly summarize what the verse says about how forgiven you are in Christ. Then try your hand at drawing a picture to describe each of these seven pictures because a picture is worth a thousand words, Picasso!

1. *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us* (Ps 103:12)

2. *"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool"* (Is 1:18)

3. *You have put all your sins behind your back* (Is 38:17)


4. *"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more"* (Is 43:25)

Thoughts

5. *"I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist" (Is 44:22)*

6. *"In those days, at that time," declares the Lord, "search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare" (Jer 50:20)*

7. *"You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19)*

 *"He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).*

**Receiving Personal Forgiveness:** List the sins you do not think God has forgiven, or maybe can ever forgive. Write them down in code if necessary, but please write them down...for yourself only.

**Forgiving Those Who Have Sinned Against You:** Because of God's full and final forgiveness, He calls us to forgive others from our heart. Mentally go through your life. Is there any person at all whom you have not forgiven *from your heart*? If there is, forgive them now...for your sake so you are not hooked.

Thoughts

## For the Group Leaders

Please remember that these groups are not designed for directive teaching, like many of us have been taught. Additionally, I have come to believe that the highest act of teaching is *drawing out* of others what is in them. Then, and only as necessary, *putting in* or *telling*. These studies are not about what you can pass on, but more of what you can encourage in others.

As a group, we want to help each other overcome any barriers that might hinder us from sharing this good news with family and friends. We will ask each person how they intend to respond each week, “*I will...*” statements. Then next week we will follow up, reinforcing this fruitful “*teaching to obey*” response that is so crucial for our flourishing growth.

Active participation switches on our natural desire to learn. So an important responsibility for those who lead is to provide space for each person to learn. Therefore, we want to pass the group leadership around after the leader models a couple weeks. The brief intro can be read before the passage to give the group a focus. The three questions can be used to stimulate mutual dialog (or bring your own). Also, encourage each to put what they think the passage is saying in their own words. Since we are not the “answer man,” when a group leader is asked what the passage means, we will often turn this around by asking: “*What do you think it means?*”

Our learning accelerates as we respond to what we are learning. This is especially true when we share with someone we know about what we have learned this week. Even though the group will be asked to put truth into action, and pass it along to one person they know, each member is still free to choose his/her own level of involvement. Each is most welcome to come and be with us whatever the level of involvement. It’s crucial to provide space for each person to grow at their own rate since each is a unique individual. As group leaders, be sure to provide the space each one needs. Additional teaching tips available on my website under the “*For Teachers*” tab.

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### Dedication:

My heartfelt thanks goes out to those over the years who have been God’s instruments in my spiritual growth. They have grown alongside me in community-learning groups that are intent on multiplying disciples, that is, learners and followers of Jesus. Thanks for your love, honest openness, and willingness to let me use you as human guinea pigs in experimenting over the years to multiply disciples in a “*whole-person*” approach that respects both individual responsibility and community mutuality. I have a passion to be one a guide on our Christian journey, and to release the sleeping giant within. In addition to the “*Meet Jesus...*” series, this is why I have written a series of eight 5-week “*Building Blocks*” on these essentials for our Christian journey. As special thanks to Pastor Jamie Gillentine for his vision to keep the format simple and reproducible.

### Additional Resources Available

When you complete this “*Meet Jesus...*” 5-week study, **free** PDF downloads for the other two in the “*Meet Jesus...*” series are available on my web site @ **JimFredericks.com** under the “*Engage God’s Love-Letter*” tab. -friendly resources. Also, “*Companion toward LifeChange*” has eight 5-week next-level user-friendly studies to build key books solidly into our lives.

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