



# **KNOW HOW**

## **Part 2**

Simple Bible studies  
for living the Christian life

John Benton

## CONTENTS

	Page number
1. Know how to approach baptism and the Lord's supper	3
2. Know how to pray	6
3. Know how to discern what is right	9
4. Know how to overcome temptation	12
5. Know how to please God	16

© 2018 John Benton

Cover image: iStock

## **1: Know how to approach baptism and the Lord's supper**

The practice of the New Testament church was that when people became Christians they were baptized into the fellowship of the church and so were admitted to the Lord's table (sometimes called 'communion') (*Acts 2:41,42; 1 Corinthians 10:1-4*).

### **1. Baptism**

The Lord Jesus commanded that those who believe on him should be baptized in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

#### **Its requirement.**

Notice this is a command, not an option. Our baptism is the first expression of our obedience to Christ and our willingness to follow him. It should therefore take place as soon as is appropriate after conversion. (*Acts 2:41,42; 8:34-36; 9:18; 16:31-34*).

Generally speaking the New Testament word for baptism has the meaning to immerse. This is underlined by the parallel between baptism and Christ's death and resurrection and also from the fact that folk had to go down into the water to be baptized (*Matthew 3:16; Acts 8:38,39; John 3:23*).

The act of being baptized does not save us, we are saved by faith (*Mark 16:16*). But baptism is the God-given appropriate picture which symbolizes the many facets of our new life as Christians in the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **Its symbolism**

- It is a symbol of repentance and wanting to live for God (*Luke 3:3, 8-14; Acts 2:38*).
- It is a sign of solidarity with God's people. The sinless Lord Jesus Christ was himself baptized to identify himself with us (*Matthew 3:13-15*).
- It is a symbol of sins forgiven (*Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21*).
- Perhaps we associate baptism particularly with John the Baptist, but from the beginning the disciples of Jesus baptized people (*John 3:22; John 4:2*).

- It is a symbol of our being renewed by the Holy Spirit (*Luke 3:16; Acts 10:47,48; Titus 3:4*).
- It is a symbol of being united to Christ in his death and resurrection (*Romans 6:3,4; Colossians 2:12*).
- It is a symbol of Christ being our Lord and master (*Acts 2:38; Acts 19:5; 1 Corinthians 1:11-15*).
- It is a symbol of being received into Christ's body, the church (*Acts 2:41; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4,5*).

In baptism therefore we are making a public declaration of our faith in Christ and are promising, with the help of God, to live as his disciple personally seeking to further his kingdom and participate fully in his church.

## 2. The Lord's Supper

Baptism is a once for all act which should take place near the beginning of our Christian lives. Having become a Christian and having been publicly baptized into Christ and his body, the church, our fellowship with Christ and with each other is symbolized in an ongoing way by the people of the church regularly partaking of bread and wine in the Lord's supper together. (*Luke 22:19,20; 1 Cor. 11:17-34*).

### The Meaning

The bread symbolizes the body of Christ (*1 Corinthians 11:24*):

- when we eat we remember Christ, who became one of us, and what he did for us in dying for us at Calvary (*John 6:51*).
- in another sense the church is the body of Christ, and when we eat together from the one loaf we proclaim that we are one with Christ and with each other (*1 Corinthians 10:17*).

The wine symbolizes the blood of Christ (*1 Corinthians 11:25*):

- when we drink we remember Christ's death for us at Calvary (*1 Peter 1:18,19; John 6:54*).

- when we drink we show our participation in the new covenant of God's free mercy and love (*1 Corinthians 11:25; Jeremiah 31:31-34*).

We *remember* the Lord's death, but as we come in faith we have spiritual fellowship with the living Lord Jesus Christ and look forward to the time when he will return (*1 Corinthians 11:26*).

That the supper is seen as communion with the living Lord is shown by the fact that the early church were at the supper not on Friday - the day of Jesus' death - but on Sunday the day of his resurrection. *Acts 20:7*

### Our Attitude

The meaning of the Lord's Supper should govern our attitude as we come to the table.

- We should come humbly and repentantly. We remember that we are sinners. But that we may have fallen into sin recently should not keep us from the Lord's Supper. As we come repentantly we are showing that we need Christ and it was while we were sinners that Christ died for us. The Lord's Table is to comfort humble, believing sinners. (*Romans 5:8-10*).
- We should come thankfully. We thank God that Christ has done everything that was necessary to save us and make us totally acceptable to God (*1 Corinthians 10:16*).
- We should come in love and unity with others, especially Christians in the church. It was through their divisions and lack of love that Paul had to warn the Corinthians that they were abusing the Lord's Supper (*1 Corinthians 11:17-22, 27-32*).

The Lord's Supper shows the atonement through the cross of Christ is the central truth of Christian faith. (*1 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 6:14*).

## 2: Know how to pray

In a secular society, prayer to our Father in heaven is one of the distinguishing features of a Christian.

There is a sense in which prayer should come naturally to us as God's children, but even the disciples felt the need to ask Jesus to teach them to pray (*Luke 11:1*).

### 1. **REALISE WHAT PRAYER IS**

This will stimulate you to want to pray. Prayer is communion with the living God, our Father.

- He has chosen us (*Ephesians 1:3,4*).
- He has made us his children wholly acceptable to him (*Ephesians 1:5,6*. *1 John 3:1,2*).
- He has brought us near by the blood of Christ (*Ephesians 2:13*).
- He has opened the way for us into his presence (*Hebrews 10:19*).
- He has given us his Holy Spirit to help us pray (*Romans 8:26,27*).
- He invites us and encourages us to pray (*Luke 18:1*).
- He makes great promises to us concerning believing prayer (*Mark 11:22-25*).
- He finds our prayers pleasing (*Revelation 5:8*).

How privileged we are!

### 2. **DEVELOP HABITS OF PRAYER**

Habits will develop into a constant attitude and outlook of prayerfulness.

#### Church Prayer

The Bible stresses prayer **TOGETHER**.

Most of the New Testament references deal with prayer **TOGETHER** (*Matthew 6:9-15*) [note our Father, give us, etc...].  
(*Matthew 18:18-20; Acts 1:14; Acts 3:1; Acts 4:23-31; Acts 12:5,12; 1 Timothy 2:1-8 with 1 Timothy 3:15*).

We learn from one another and encourage one another as we pray together. Make the church prayer meeting a priority!

## Family Prayer

A golden chain of family worship runs through the whole Bible (*Genesis 18:19; Deuteronomy 4:9,10; Psalm 145:4; 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:14,15*).

If you possibly can you should have prayer with your family or with those who share your house.

## Private Prayer

We should pray alone too.

- The Lord Jesus did - *Mark 1:35; Mark 6:46*
- Jesus commands secret prayer - *Matthew 6:1-8*
- The apostles prayed privately - *Acts 9:11; Acts 10:9; Romans 1:8-11*.

If possible such prayer should be frequent, solitary and uninterrupted (*Daniel 6:10*). Prayer brings many blessings and delivers us from anxieties (*Philippians 4:6,7*) and makes us more stable, joyful people.

### **3. FOLLOW PATTERNS OF PRAYER**

The prayers recorded in God's Word the Bible, are there for our help.

Our Lord Jesus has given us a pattern of prayer (*Luke 11:2-4*).

The Bible shows us :

- how to praise God in prayer, e.g. *Psalm 103*.
- how to pray for young converts (*Ephesians 1:15-23*).
- how to pray for spiritual growth (*Philippians 1:9-11*).
- how to pray for Christian workers (*Colossians 4:2-4, 2 Thessalonians 3:1,2*).

It is a very good exercise to link Bible reading with prayer by reading a passage of Scripture and then turning it into prayer. You can do this by asking such questions as 'what do these verses tell me which I should praise and thank God for?' 'Are there lessons here which I need to pray into my own life?' etc. Bible reading will stop you from leaving out important aspects of prayer, adoration, thanksgiving, confession, intercession, dedication, petition, and lead you away from the danger of self-centredness in prayer, into a well-rounded prayer life.

#### 4. BE PREPARED FOR PROBLEMS IN YOUR PRAYER LIFE

Satan will seek to throw up every possible barrier and obstacle to you becoming a man or woman of prayer.

'I don't feel like it'

- let duty be your guide when the way is hard (*Colossians 4:12*).

'I can't work up any enthusiasm'

- look on the need (*1 Thessalonians 5:17*).
- ask the Holy Spirit to help you (*Ephesians 6:18; Romans 8:26,27*).

'I feel too tired'

- what time did you go to bed? Think practically - read *Isaiah 40:31*.

'My thoughts wander'

- don't be restricted to one posture or place (*1 Timothy 2:1,2; Ephesians 6:18,19*).
- pray out loud (*Psalms 3:4*).

'My prayers are self-centred'

- yes, use a prayer list! Or even photographs!
- use the pattern of the Lord's prayer.
- ask the Lord to give you a burden for others.

'I fall into repetition'

- study the way people argue their prayers in the Bible (see, for example, *Psalms 74*).
- praying with others will help you.

'I'm full of doubts'

- read again what God has promised (*John 14:13,14; John 15:7; John 16:24*).
- read again some of the great triumphs of prayer in Scripture (*2 Chronicles 20; Isaiah 36:37; Acts 12:1-19*).

'Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;  
Prayer makes the Christians armour bright;  
And Satan trembles when he sees  
The weakest saint upon his knees'.

William Cowper.

### **3: Know how to discern what is right**

Obedience to God's will is the delight of a converted person (*Psalm 1:2; 1 John 5:3*) but not the unconverted (*Romans 8:9*).

But how do we know what is right to do?

We are talking here about daily behaviour, principles of moral conduct - not about questions of guidance. We deal with that in a separate study.

Second-hand beliefs and convictions always fail (*2 Chronicles 24:17,22*). We have got to sort things out for ourselves.

Those who WANT to do the will of God will never be left in the dark (*Psalm 25:12; John 7:17*).

'What's wrong with it?'; 'Why shouldn't I?'; 'Others do it, so why can't I?'. People who think like this, without a spirit of submission, have already made up their minds. They will not know the light of God.

#### **1. THE BASIC GUIDELINES OF CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR ARE CLEAR**

The Christian's behaviour is to be governed by LOVE. We are called to love God and to love our fellow-men (*Mark 12:29-31; Galatians 5:6*).

Firstly, what love means in practise is spelled out in Scripture by the Ten Commandments (*Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21; Matthew 22:37-40*).

- We are saved by Jesus, not by law-keeping (*Galatians 2:16*).
- But right is still right, being saved does not alter that (*Matthew 5:19*). God has not changed (*1 Peter 1:16*).
- This is why the Ten Commandments are repeated and explained more fully in the New Testament (*Matthew 5:17-48; Mark 2:23-28; Romans 13:9*).
- Christian living cannot be divorced from the law since one of the chief blessings of the new covenant is that God's law is written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit (*Jeremiah 31:33; Ezekiel 36:27; Hebrews 8:10*).

Secondly, what love means in practice is shown to us by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ in the way he lived (*John 13:34*).

This is why again and again in Scripture the Lord Jesus is set forth as the one whose pattern of life we should seek to imitate (*1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6; Philippians 2:5*).

A Christian whose heart is submissive to the Lord, and reads the Scriptures through will soon come to know what is clearly commanded and what is clearly forbidden.

The whole Bible gives us light on these matters (*2 Timothy 3:16,17; Matthew 4:4*).

## 2. **WHAT ABOUT WHERE THINGS ARE NOT CLEAR?**

Although the great guidelines are clear, the Bible does not deal specifically with every possible situation which may confront us. Some things do not appear to be clearly commanded or clearly forbidden. What do we do then?

### a) **Ask 5 questions**

- Will it bring glory to God? (*1 Corinthians 10:31*).
- Will it help my Christian faith and life? (*1 Corinthians 10:23, Hebrews 12:1*).
- Does it tend to enslave? (*1 Corinthians 6:12*).
- Will it strengthen me against temptation? (*Matthew 6:13*).
- Is it of the world rather than God? (*1 John 2:15,16; James 4:4*).

Where the answer to these questions is against God's kingdom, or you feel doubtful - don't do it! (*Romans 14:23*).

'The things which hinder are not necessarily low or vulgar. They may be in themselves noble, intellectual things, beautiful things. But if our participation in any of these holds us up in our running, makes our going less determined and steady, they become weights and hinder'. G. Campbell Morgan

b) **Remember 5 principles**

On these questionable matters not everyone will come to the same conclusions (*Romans 14*).

- Because someone differs from you in these areas, it does not mean that he or she is less sincere in following the Lord (*Romans 14:6*).
- When we differ on these questionable things we are not to quarrel (*Romans 14:10*).

We should keep our own conclusions on such matters to ourselves and not try to foist them on other people (*Romans 14:22*).

- If we feel we can do something with a clear conscience we are still not to do it if it will cause a fellow Christian to go against his or her conscience (*Romans 14:13-17,21*).

One of the great principles of the Christian life is to listen to our consciences and keep a clear conscience in what we do (*Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:5; 1 Peter 3:16*).

Christians must live differently from the world (*Matthew 5:20, 47, 48*).

## 4: Know how to overcome temptation

God wants his people to be holy (*1 Peter 1:16,17; Titus 2:14*). He hates sin. Holiness will mean we can enjoy closer fellowship with him.

The New Testament is clear that there is always forgiveness for Christians who fall into sin as we return to the Lord confessing what we have done (*1 John 1:8,9; Luke 11:4*), but the Lord will discipline us if we continue to play with sin (*Hebrews 12:4-10*).

Within this environment of forgiveness and discipline the will of God is that we learn to overcome temptation and become holy people (*1 Peter 1:15,16*).

Everyone is tempted to sin (*Matthew 18:7*). Our Lord Jesus Christ was tempted throughout his life (*Matthew 4:1-11; Matthew 16:23; Hebrews 4:15*). Temptation is not wrong in itself therefore. But it is giving it room in our thoughts and giving in to it in our actions that is wrong.

### 1. **OUR ENEMY**

We need to be able to recognise our enemy the devil and his strategies (*Matthew 4:1; 1 Corinthians 7:5; Ephesians 6:12*).

How does he operate?

There is an often repeated pattern (*James 1:14,15*). It is exemplified in Eve, Achan, David and others.

I saw	I coveted	I took
The eyes	The heart	The action

Check this out by referring to *Genesis 3:6; Joshua 7:21; 2 Samuel 11:2-4*.

[By the heart, we mean all the inward aspects of man including the mind, the affections, and the will].

This pattern helps us to identify key areas on which we need to focus our attention. The moment we welcome temptation, in the sense of beginning to play with sin mentally, is the beginning of sin (*Exodus 20:17; Matthew 5:48*).

## 2. OUR WEAKNESS

- We do not like to admit our weakness, but Satan is stronger than us and he is far more subtle and clever than we are. We are only able to overcome him in the strength of the Lord (*Ephesians 6:10,11*).
- Only as we are submitted to the Lord can we effectively resist the devil (*James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:6-8*).
- Hostile to God, sinful human nature inevitably seeks to fill the spiritual vacuum at the centre of its being without God (*Romans 8:9*). Sin promises to satisfy that emptiness instead (*1 John 2:16*). Unless we are filled with God and his love we are vulnerable.
- All of us have fallen human natures - (the 'flesh' in Scripture). But because we are individuals the flesh shows itself in different ways in different people.

Some are more prone to pride than others. Some more prone to immorality. Some are more prone to please people and be thought well of by them, than to please God, etc...

We need to know ourselves and be on our guard with respect to our own particular weaknesses.

Read *John 13:36-38*. What was Peter's particular weakness?

Read *Mark 10:35-37*. What temptation particularly appealed to James and John?

When we are prepared to recognise our weakness we will see that it is sensible for us to avoid certain places or certain situations.

When we are prepared to recognise our weakness we are on the way to finding real strength by going to God (*2 Corinthians 12:7-10*).

## 3. OUR RESOURCES

The armour of God (*Ephesians 6:13-17*).

- As soldiers for Christ in the battle with Satan, the Lord has given us armour to wear. We have the truth, v 14, we have Christ's righteousness, v 14, we have the gospel, v 15, we have faith in him, v 15, we are saved, v 17.

- All these things protect us from Satan's different methods of attack.
- His lies are met by truth. His accusations against us met by Christ's righteousness. His lulling us to spiritual sleep met by the way the gospel stirs our hearts. His sending trouble is met by faith in God to work all things for our good. His threats to destroy us are met by certainty of salvation which God has given us in Christ. This armour is ours in Christ, but we need to 'put it on' as we face temptation.

### The Word of God (*Ephesians 6:17*).

- The Word of God was used by Jesus in his time of temptation in the desert (*Matthew 4:4,7,10*).
- The Word of God is the sword of the Holy Spirit so it can only be used effectively as we are prayerful as well as knowledgeable.
- The powers of darkness are afraid of the truth of God (*James 2:19*).
- As we live close to Christ, God's Word helps us to see the truth and discern Satan's lies and see through his temptations, and the consequences of giving in to them, so that we do what is right (*Matthew 4:8-11. 2 Corinthians 11:4*).

### All prayer (*Ephesians 6:18*).

- The Lord Jesus met the temptation he was facing in Gethsemane with prayer. He told his disciples to watch and pray so that they would not enter into, or give into temptation (*Mark 14:32-38; Luke 22:40,41*).
- The great key to Satan's temptations is that he makes sin seem so pleasurable and vivid, while the things of God seem distant. By prayer, God gives us his Holy Spirit who makes the things of Christ vivid and real to us and this helps us greatly to exercise self control as we face temptation (*Galatians 5:22,23*).
- The Spirit strengthens us in our inner man (*Ephesians 3:16*), as we know the love and power of God.
- In response to prayer, God sends his angels to intervene on our behalf (*Luke 22:43; Hebrews 1:14*).

#### 4. **OUR VICTORY**

Many examples are given in Scripture of God's people winning victory over Satan's temptations and attacks (*Genesis 39:11,12; Job 1:1-22; 2 Corinthians 2:11*).

We are victorious as despite Satan's attacks we continue to stand for the Lord Jesus and remain faithful to him - living for him and not denying him (*Ephesians 6:13; 1 John 5:4,5*).

God is even able to use times of temptation for our good in order to make us grow spiritually. To find out how this can work, read *James 1:2-18*.

## **5: Know how to please God**

We are not saved by trying to please God. He has forgiven us freely through the Lord Jesus Christ (*Colossians 1:13,14*).

But seeking to please God goes hand in hand with enjoying his fellowship, and shows practically that we love him and are thankful to him (*John 14:21; Colossians 1:10; Hebrews 13:21*).

We should aim to please God the whole time. In an ordinary week there are 5 main elements which go to make up our daily lives.

### **1. PLEASING GOD AT HOME**

Hospitality is a way of showing Christian love and even if we live alone we can use our home to show a welcome to others (*Romans 12:13; 1 Peter 4:9*).

The secrets of a good Christian family life are:

- Loving husbands (*Ephesians 5:25; Colossians 3:19; 1 Peter 3:7*).
- Submissive wives (*Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6*).
- Obedient children (*Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20*).
- Gentle, firm fathers (*Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21*).

It is no good pointing the finger at each other in the family. Each person must do what God has told him or her to do.

Loving homes are a bright Christian witness.

### **2. PLEASING GOD AT WORK**

*Ephesians 6:5,6* '...like slaves of Christ'

*Colossians 3:22-25* '...as working for the Lord'

Whatever kind of man or woman your boss happens to be, the Lord Jesus himself is your employer!

So:

- be punctual
- work conscientiously and thoroughly (*1 Peter 3:18*)
- give a full day's work.

Also:

- take a stand for Christ (*Colossians 4:5,6*)
- be a friend
- pray for folk at work
- be a witness (*Acts 1:8*)

### 3. PLEASE GOD AMONG YOUR NEIGHBOURS

The parable of the Good Samaritan is well known (*Luke 10:29-37*).

'Which do you think was the real neighbour?' 'The one who showed him kindness'  
'Go and do as he did'.

So:

- be a friend.
- notice other people's needs (*Matthew 7:12*).
- seek to help.
- put yourself out for them. (*Matthew 5:43-48*)

Also:

don't be too proud to ask for help (*John 4:7*).

don't be a busybody (*1 Peter 4:15*).

don't be distant in your attitude to folk.

### 4. PLEASE GOD IN YOUR SPARE TIME

Real rest and renewal comes from God, not by taking time off from God (*Isaiah 30:15,18*). So it is wise to share our spare time with him.

Another way of looking at this is that you can tell how consecrated to Christ a person is by the way they use their spare time.

If God has your time - he has all of you.

- We are to make the most of our time (*Ephesians 5:16*).
- We do need relaxation and physical exercise (*1 Timothy 4:8*).
- We need time to rest and be with friends (*Mark 6:31*).
- With prayer, plan your time so you do not waste it. Ask the Lord what regular things you should do each week and stick to them. Sort out what seems to be urgent (while really it is not), from what is actually important. Work out the true priorities and stick to them.

But we are to beware of laziness (*Proverbs 6:6-11*).

## 5. PLEASE GOD WITH YOUR MONEY

Living in an age of materialism the Christian should be different (*Romans 12:2*). We should cultivate contentment which is the mark of really knowing God (*1 Timothy 6:6-10*).

ALL our money is God's! (*1 Chronicles 29:10-16*).

We are to be good stewards of what is His.

Earn it !

- If we are able physically and if we have the opportunity we should work to earn our keep and not live off others (*Ephesians 4:28; 1 Thess 4:11,12*).

Budget it!

- How can you be a good steward if you don't?
- It stops unnecessary spending.
- It stops you falling into debt (*Romans 13:8*).

Save some!

- Put aside money to meet your obligations.
- God wants us to provide for our families (*1 Timothy 5:8,16*).

Give it away!

- Immediately put aside at least one tenth for the Lord's work. We are to give sacrificially to him who sacrificed himself for us (*Luke 21:1-4*).
- By giving to God's work and to the needy we bring God's blessing upon ourselves (*Proverbs 19:17; Matthew 25:34-40; 1 Timothy 6:17-19*).

'Only one life - it will soon be past  
Only what's done for Christ will last'.