
Session 1



OUTLINE OF THIS SESSION

1. Open in prayer.
2. Get acquainted with other members of the class.
3. Read *Welcome! How This Series Came About* (pg. 7)
4. Course Overview: *Your Life in Christ* (pg. 65)
 - God Cares For You
 - The Person of Jesus Christ
 - The Work of Christ
 - The Spirit Within You
5. Review *Completion Record* on page 105.
6. Learn how to make your Bible reading exciting:
 - a. Use a contemporary Bible translation or paraphrase.
 - b. Study *Where to Read in Your Bible* (pg. 8).
 - c. Study *How to Mark Your Bible as You Read* (pg. 8-9).
7. Complete the *Reading and Marking Exercise* (pg. 10).
8. Your *Beginning with Christ Memory Verse Overview* and the five short passages you will be memorizing (pgs. 11-15).
9. Read *How to Memorize a Verse Effectively* (pg. 16).
10. Read the *At Home Assignment for Session 2*.
11. Close the session in prayer and encouragement.

AT HOME ASSIGNMENT FOR SESSION 2

- *Memory Verses:* Carefully read your *Beginning with Christ Memory Overview* (pages 11-15), study the five verses you will be memorizing. Memorize the verse on *Assurance of Salvation*, 1 John 5:11-12.
- *Bible Reading:* Obtain a contemporary translation or paraphrase of the Bible. Read and mark in it each day. Bring it to class with you.
- *Bible Study:* Complete *Section 1; God Cares for You*, questions 1-12 of your Bible study (pages 66-68).
- *Other:* Complete the *Summary Quiz* on page 18.

BEGINNING WITH CHRIST MEMORY VERSE

Assurance of Salvation, 1 John 5:11-12

Welcome

How this Series Came About

The *Equip to Serve (ETS) Series* (formerly called The 2:7 Series) is a new concept for training church laymen in Christian discipleship. It is the product of much prayer, research, repeated field testing within the church environment, and rewriting based on this experience. The Series is divided into six graduated books, which emphasize the production of well-rounded church laymen.

What is the purpose of *The ETS Series*? The Holy Spirit expresses through Paul in *Colossians 2:7*, that we should be “Rooted and built up in Him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” This clearly defines the specific goals of this training:

- ◆ *For a Christian to become built up in Christ and established in his/her faith.* This includes instruction in practical Bible study techniques, Scripture memory skills, how to have an exciting devotional life, and how to be effective in evangelism.
- ◆ *For a Christian to learn to overflow with gratitude in his/her everyday life.* This series will help an individual learn to experience and enjoy a stable and consistent Christian walk.
- ◆ *For a Christian to be instructed.* This implies that training must take place before a person develops into the kind of Christian layman whose life will have an impact on his/her community.

What are some results of *The ETS Series*? Many trained through this series develop qualities enabling them to assume greater responsibilities and become more effective in

their local churches. Marriages and families have been helped as individual members grow spiritually and become firmly established in their walk with God. After graduating from this series, these maturing Christians have additional tools to help others in their growth in Christ and in reaching out to non-Christians.

Course Requirements & Suggestions

- ◆ Each of the six books in *The ETS Series* has 12 class sessions.
- ◆ You will not want to miss more than two of the 12 sessions. It is difficult to catch up once you get behind.
- ◆ There should be a maximum of 15 students in most class groups to enable the best personal attention and create a more informal atmosphere.
- ◆ You must complete certain requirements to graduate from this course. While not difficult, graduation will require purposeful effort. Plan to get a passing grade and graduate.
- ◆ Keep in mind that anything truly worthwhile will be costly in some way.
- ◆ Most class sessions will require you to spend about one hour of outside preparation. A few sessions will require between one and two hours of preparation time.
- ◆ If you complete your assigned work on time, you will find the training more enjoyable and derive more permanent benefit from the course.
- ◆ This is not a lecture series. You will have an opportunity to participate in every session.

Where to Read in Your Bible

- ◆ If reading the Bible is fairly new to you, you might want to start with books in the New Testament. (Some, however, might find the Gospel of Matthew to be difficult reading, so begin with Mark or John.)
- ◆ Finish reading all of one book before starting another.
- ◆ Perhaps the two most difficult books in the Bible are Leviticus and Revelation.
- ◆ Instead of reading the Gospels consecutively, intersperse them with other books for variety.
- ◆ When you are ready to begin reading in the Old Testament, you might pick one of the following books: Joshua, 1 Samuel, 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, 2 Kings, Genesis, Daniel. Some of these books have difficult parts, so just skim through those sections.



How to Mark Your Bible As You Read

Felt-tip pens *cannot* be used on the thin paper on which most Bibles are printed. We suggest you obtain an inexpensive paperback Bible with heavier paper for your reading and marking. You can use a ballpoint or a fine felt-tip pen to mark your Bible with the following symbols:

1. Brackets []
2. Short diagonal lead-ins \
3. Parallel diagonal lines in the margin //
4. Circles ○
5. Vertical lines in the margin |
6. Underlining _____

In addition, you may use a felt-tip “highlighter” (usually yellow) to mark *through* the words you want to draw attention to instead of underlining them. The “highlighter” will leave a background of colour light enough to allow you to read the words.

You may choose to use all of these markings as you read, you may choose to use only one or two of your favorite ones, or you may choose to make up some of your own.

In the following four passages of Scripture, from three different versions, marking is illustrated.

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Isaiah 11:1-7 (Living Bible)

The Royal Line of David will be cut off, chopped down like a tree; but from the stump will grow a Shoot - yes, a new Branch from the old root.

²And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel and might; the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. ³His delight will be obedience to the Lord. He will not judge by appearance, false evidence, or hearsay, ⁴but will defend the poor and the exploited. He will rule against the wicked who oppress them, ⁵For he will be clothed with fairness and with truth.

⁶In that day the wolf and the lamb will lie down together, and the leopard and goats will be at peace. Calves and fat cattle will be safe among lions, and a little child shall lead them all. ⁷The cows will graze among bears; cubs and calves will lie down together, and lions will eat grass like the cows.

Luke 5:15-17 (Living Bible)

¹⁵Now the report of his power spread even faster and vast crowds came to hear him preach and to be healed of their diseases. ¹⁶But he often withdrew to the wilderness for prayer.

¹⁷One day while he was teaching, some Jewish religious leaders and teachers of the Law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.) And the Lord's healing power was upon him.

1 Kings 12:3-13 (Berkeley)

³When Jeroboam and all the assembly of Israel arrived, they addressed Rehoboam, saying, "Your father made our yoke unbearable. [Now lighten the unbearable service of your father and the heavy yoke he laid upon us, and we will serve you.]" ⁵He responded, "Give me three more days, then return to me."

When the people left, ⁶Rehoboam conferred with the elders who had stood by Solomon when he was still alive, saying, "How would you advise me to reply to the people?" ⁷They advised him, "If you will be a servant to this people now and serve them and reply to them with kind words, they will

always be your servants." ⁸But he rejected the advice which the elders gave him. Then he conferred with the young men who grew up with him and who stood by him. ⁹"What do you advise us to say to this people who petitioned me, 'Make lighter the yoke your father laid upon us?'"

¹⁰The young men who grew up with him replied, "Thus you must say to this people who petitioned you, 'Your father made heavy our yoke, do make it lighter for us,' you must say to them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's loins. ¹¹Now my father has laid upon you a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke. My father flogged you with whips, I will flog you with scorpions."

¹²Jeroboam and all the people came back on the third day to Rehoboam as the king had directed, saying, "Return to me on the third day." ¹³The king spoke harshly to the people, disregarding the advice given him by the elders.

1 Thessalonians 1:1-7 (Amplified)

Paul, Silvanus (Silas) and Timothy to the assembly (church) of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah: [Grace (spiritual blessing and divine favor) to you and heart peace] ²We are ever giving thanks to God for all of you, continually mentioning [you when engaged] in our prayers, ³recalling unceasingly before our God and Father your work energized by faith and service motivated by love, and unwavering hope in (the return of) our Lord Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

⁴[O] brethren beloved by God, we recognize and know that He has selected (chosen) you; ⁵for our [preaching of the] glad tidings (the Gospel) came to you not only in word, but also [in (its own inherent) power] and in the Holy Spirit, and with great conviction and absolute certainty (on our part). You know what kind of men we proved [ourselves] to be among you for your good. ⁶And you [set yourselves to] become imitators of us and [through us] of the Lord Himself, for you welcomed our message in [spite of the] much persecution, with joy [inspired] of the Holy Spirit; ⁷so that you [thus] became a pattern to all the believers - those who adhere to, trust in and rely on Christ Jesus - in Macedonia and Achaia [most of Greece].

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Reading and Marking Exercise

For your reading and marking exercise, you will now work on *Romans 12* from *The Living Bible*. As you do this exercise, you will want to (1) pray that God will speak to you from His Word, (2) think through the passage, and (3) mark the thoughts that impress you most. After you have read this passage, you will have an opportunity later to share one or two things that you marked.

Romans 12 (Living Bible)

And so, dear brothers, I plead with you to give your bodies to God. Let them be a living sacrifice, holy – the kind He can accept. When you think of what He has done for you, is this too much to ask? ²Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but be a new and different person with a fresh newness in all you do and think. Then you will learn from your own experience how his ways will really satisfy you.

³As God's messenger I give each of you God's warning: Be honest in your estimate of yourselves, measuring your value by how much faith God has given you. ^{4,5}Just as there are many parts to our bodies, so it is with Christ's body. We are all parts of it, and it takes every one of us to make it complete, for we each have different work to do. So we belong to each other, and each needs all the others.

⁶God has given each of us the ability to do certain things well. So if God has given you the ability to prophesy, then prophesy whenever you can – as often as your faith is strong enough to receive a message from God. ⁷If your gift is that of serving others, serve them well. If you are a teacher, do a good job of teaching. ⁸If you are a preacher, see to it that your sermons are strong and helpful. If God has given you money, be generous in helping others

with it. If God has given you administrative ability and put you in charge of the work of others, take the responsibility seriously. Those who offer comfort to the sorrowing should do so with Christian cheer.

⁹Don't just pretend that you love others: really love them. Hate what is wrong. Stand on the side of good. ¹⁰Love each other with brotherly affection and take delight in honoring each other. ¹¹Never be lazy in your work but serve the Lord enthusiastically.

¹²Be glad for all God is planning for you. Be patient in trouble, and prayerful always.

¹³When God's children are in need, you be the one to help them out. And get into the habit of inviting guests home for dinner or, if they need lodging, for the night.

¹⁴If someone mistreats you because you are a Christian, don't curse him; pray that God will bless him. ¹⁵When others are happy, be happy with them. If they are sad, share their sorrow. ¹⁶Work happily together. Don't try to act big. Don't try to get into the good graces of important people, but enjoy the company of ordinary folks. And don't think you know it all!

¹⁷Never pay back evil for evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honest clear through. ¹⁸Don't quarrel with anyone. Be at peace with everyone, just as much as possible.

¹⁹Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for He has said that He will repay those who deserve it. [Don't take the law into your own hands.]

²⁰Instead, feed your enemy if he is hungry. If he is thirsty give him something to drink and you will be "heaping coals of fire on his head." In other words, he will feel ashamed of himself for what he has done to you. ²¹Don't let evil get the upper hand but conquer evil by doing good.

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Your *Beginning With Christ* Memory Verse Overview

Here is an overview of the five verses that you will memorize by the end of Book 1.

Jesus Christ said, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20) Coupled with this wonderful truth is the statement in His Word that “as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12).

If you have, to the best of your knowledge, received Jesus Christ, God’s Son, as your own Saviour, according to the Scripture quoted above you have become a son of God in whom Jesus Christ dwells.

Too many people make the mistake of measuring the certainty of their salvation by their feelings. Don’t make this tragic mistake. Believe God. Take Him at His word: “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13)

It is impossible in these few pages to go into all the wonderful results of the transaction that took place when you received Christ. A child may be born into a wealthy home and become the possessor of good parents, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, but at the time of his birth it is not necessary that he

be informed of all these wonderful things. There are more important matters to take care of first. He must be protected, for he has been born into a world of many enemies. In the hospital room he is handled with sterilized gloves and kept from outsiders that he might not fall victim to the myriad germs waiting to attack. It is the knowledge of such enemies which enables the doctors and nurses to take measures to protect the precious new life.

You have become a child of God; you have been born into His family as a spiritual babe. This is a strategic moment in your life. It is our desire to share with you a few simple truths, which will strengthen you for the battle ahead and keep you safe from the onslaughts of Satan.

In *1 Peter 2:2* you will read, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby.” In *Acts 20:32* you will read, “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace which is able to build you up.” His Word will now serve as your spiritual food and will build you up in the faith. You probably have a Bible or New Testament. If not, get one and begin to read it faithfully every day. It is most important that you have time set aside,

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preferably in the morning, to read and study the Word of God and pray.

Now let's be more specific with regard to your intake of the Word of God. In *Psalms 119* we read, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (verse 9), and then the psalmist speaks to the Lord saying, "Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee" (verse 11). So we challenge you to hide His Word in your heart – to memorize it. In this course we have included five key passages with which you may begin.

But we have spoken only about your spiritual food. Let us consider for a moment this new enemy which you face.

Before you trusted Christ, Satan may not have bothered you particularly, but now he has



seen you make the step which angers him more than any one thing in all the world. You have left his crowd and joined the ranks of those who believe and trust in the Son of God. You are no longer in Satan's domain; you now belong to the One who has *bought* and paid for you *with a price*, the price of His own blood shed on the cross. You may be sure that Satan will attempt to trouble you. His attacks assume many forms, but we wish to speak of some of the most common ones and give you help on

how to resist him successfully.

We can overcome him only as we use the weapons which God has provided. Paul said, "And take... the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17). Not only is the Word of God spoken of as the "sword of the Spirit" but it is that through which faith comes as a shield to ward off the darts of the enemy (Romans 10:17; Ephesians 6:16). The Word of God, then, is our weapon of defense as well as our weapon of offense.

For example, consider that our Lord was tempted by Satan in three specific ways, and He defeated him each time with Scripture, saying, "It is written..." (See Matthew 4). If Christ deemed it necessary to meet Satan this way, how much more do we need this mighty weapon, the Word of God. How much more do we need to be prepared to say to Satan, "It is written..." or "Thus saith the Lord..."

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

1 John 5:11-12

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

The five verses of Scripture in this course have been chosen to equip you for your first few encounters with the enemy. His first approach is often to cast doubt upon the work which God has done in your heart, and although you will not hear his audible voice he will whisper to your heart:

"You don't think you are saved and your sins forgiven just by believing and receiving Christ? Surely that is not enough!"

What will your answer be? Your only hope to withstand such an attack is to resort to God's Word. What does God say about the matter? That is the important thing.

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The first memory passage is *1 John 5:11-12* entitled *Assurance of Salvation*.

When this passage has been written on the table of your heart so that you are able to use it every time a doubt arises during the next few days, and when on the basis of this *record* – God’s written Word – you are thoroughly convinced that you now have the Lord Jesus Christ and with Him eternal life, you will have overcome in one of the first tests. This attack may recur, but now you have the Word of God in your heart with which to meet it.

ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYER

John 16:24

“Until now you have not asked for anything in My Name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”

Another attack of Satan may be to cause you to doubt the effectiveness of prayer. He may whisper to you:

“You don’t think God is really personally interested in you? He is far away and is concerned about more important things. Surely you don’t think He’ll hear you when you pray – much less answer your prayers?”

Now that Jesus Christ is your Saviour and Lord, you have the unique privilege of speaking directly with your heavenly Father through Him. He wants you to come confidently into His presence (Hebrews 4:16) and to talk to Him about everything (Philippians 4:6). He is intensely interested in you and your needs.

In the second verse, *John 16:24*, Jesus gives us His *Assurance of Answered Prayer*.

Jesus did not say His disciples had never asked before. You yourself have probably asked many times, especially when in trouble. But now you can ask *in Jesus’ Name*, because you belong to Him. To ask in His Name means to ask in His authority and on His merit. Just as the Father answered Jesus’ every prayer, so will He answer you when you ask *in Jesus’ Name*. He delights to answer your call and meet your needs. Memorize this wonderful promise, apply its truth and experience the joy of answered prayer.

ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

1 Corinthians 10:13

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”

Still another attack may be along this line. Satan may whisper to your heart:

“You have life, all right, but you are a weakling; you have always been a weakling.”

He will remind you of some sin which has gripped you throughout the past years of your life. He will point to something of which you are keenly aware, and say:

“You are weak; you will not be able to stand against this particular temptation. Perhaps you

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will be able to stand against others, but not this one.”

How will you answer him? Will you attempt to reason? Will you try to produce your own arguments? Will you run to see what this person or that one says, or will you resort to the invincible Word? The third verse, *1 Corinthians 10:13*, is chosen especially to meet this attack of Satan.

This gives *Assurance of Victory*. God promises victory. It belongs to you as a child of His. Believe it and you will see that things impossible with men are possible with God. It will thrill you to see that chains of lifetime habits can be broken by His mighty power. Memorize this verse; write it on the table of your heart.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

This brings us to the next attack of Satan. Although victory is rightfully yours, you will likely fail at some point. Sin will suddenly crop up and immediately your enemy will be on the job to say:

“Now you’ve done it. Aren’t you supposed to be a Christian? Christians don’t do those things.”

Nevertheless, God makes provision in His Word for the failures of His children, and so the fourth verse speaks of the *Assurance of Forgiveness*, *1 John 1:9*.

To confess a sin means to uncover it by calling it exactly what God calls it. Implicit in honest confession is the willingness to forsake the sin (*Proverbs 28:13*). God promises not only to forgive us, but also to cleanse us. What a gracious provision!

ASSURANCE OF GUIDANCE

Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.”

The four preceding assurances have been given to help you meet the principal attacks of Satan. However, the fifth passage for you to memorize is for a different purpose. You may have questions about the future, wondering how this new life of yours is all going to work out. What about God’s will for your life? Will He really lead you? Hence, this verse comes to give you *Assurance of Guidance*, *Proverbs 3:5-6*.

God promises to lead you and direct your path when you rely on Him completely. Memorize and apply this Scripture and you will surely experience His guidance in your life.



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We suggest this procedure as you memorize these verses:

Start with the first one, *1 John 5:11-12*. Read it over several times to help grasp the passage as a whole. Then break it into natural phrases. Memorize the topic and reference first. Then add the first phrase, then the second phrase, and so on. Each time you go over it state the reference, the verse and the reference again at the end. Repeating the reference “fore’n’aft” will prevent future difficulty in remembering the location of the passage.

When you are able to quote the first passage, tackle the second in the same way and review the first. Then when you can quote these two, start the third. When you can repeat the three perfectly, work on the fourth, and so on.

The secret of mastering these verses is *review*. So each day, as you work on your newest verse, review the ones you have already learned. One of the best ways to do this is to carry this pack with you in a pocket or purse so that it is handy to use during spare moments.

After you have memorized these verses and learned to apply them, you will be aware of the strength and blessing that comes from hiding God’s Word in your heart.



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How to Memorize a Verse Effectively

As you start to memorize the verse, read it aloud several times. Each time you read it, say the topic, the reference, and the verse; then repeat the reference. Try to understand what the verse means. (Note that in your *Beginning with Christ* Memory Verse Overview [pgs. 11-15] you will find the five verses you are memorizing explained.)

Guidelines for Memorizing a Verse of Scripture

1. Work on the verses audibly whenever possible.
2. Learn the topic and the reference first.
3. Add the first phrase to the topic and reference.
4. After you have reviewed the first phrase, reference, and topic a few times, add the second phrase. Gradually add phrases until you know the whole verse.
5. As you memorize and review the verse, think about how it applies to your own life.
6. Always review the verse in this sequence:
 - a. TOPIC: "Assurance of Salvation"
 - b. REFERENCE: "First John 5, 11 and 12"
 - c. VERSE(S): "And this is the testimony:

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

d. REFERENCE: "First John 5, 11 and 12"

7. The most important time to review a verse repeatedly is right after you can repeat the whole (topic, reference, verse, reference) without making a mistake. Review the verse a minimum of once daily after that, preferably several times a day for a few days. Some people say that they cannot memorize. In reality, most people tend to have short memories. God has given us a "forgetter," and there are some things we *should* forget. God has also given us the capacity to remember. But we must apply the basic principles of memory to do this. The primary principle is REVIEW. A verse is learned, partially forgotten, relearned, partially forgotten, and relearned again. The relearning process takes progressively less time until forgetting is replaced by knowing. The diagram below illustrates this.

8. _____
9. _____
- _____
10. _____

