

Having a Real Relationship with God



Kay Arthur



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PRECEPT SOUTH AFRICA



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Italics in Scripture quotations reflect the authors' added emphasis.

Cover design by Kristopher K. Orr

40 Minute Bible Study Series
HAVING A REAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

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This is a special Precept Edition

Published by Precept South Africa
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7405, South Africa
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With permission from WaterBrook & Multnomah
10807 New Allegiance Drive Suite 500
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

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ISBN 978-1-62119-630-3

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Printed in South Africa
by Bakwena Print
February 2023

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This small-group study is for people who are interested in learning for themselves more about what the Bible says on various subjects, but who have only limited time to meet together. It's ideal, for example, for a lunch group at work, an early morning men's group, a young mothers' group meeting in a home, a Sunday-school class, or even family devotions. (It's also ideal for small groups that typically have longer meeting times—such as evening groups or Saturday morning groups—but want to devote only a portion of their time together to actual study, while reserving the rest for prayer, fellowship, or other activities.)

This book is designed so that all the group's participants will complete each lesson's study activities *at the same time*. Discussing your insights drawn from what God says about the subject reveals exciting, life-impacting truths.

Although it's a group study, you'll need a facilitator to lead the study and keep the discussion moving. (This person's function is *not* that of a lecturer or teacher. However, when this book is used in a Sunday-school class or similar setting, the teacher should feel free to lead more directly and to bring in other insights in addition to those provided in each week's lesson.)

If *you* are your group's facilitator, the leader, here are some helpful points for making your job easier:

- Go through the lesson and mark the text before you lead the group. This will give you increased familiarity with the material and will enable you to facilitate the group with greater ease. It may be easier for you to lead the group through the instructions for marking if you, as a leader, choose a specific color for each symbol you mark.
- As you lead the group, start at the beginning of the text and simply read it aloud in the order it appears in the lesson, including the “insight boxes,” which appear throughout. Work through the lesson together, observing and discussing what you learn. As you read the Scripture verses, have the group say aloud the word they are marking in the text.

- The discussion questions are there simply to help you cover the material. As the class moves into the discussion, many times you will find that they will cover the questions on their own. Remember, the discussion questions are there to guide the group through the topic, not to squelch discussion.
- Remember how important it is for people to verbalize their answers and discoveries. This greatly strengthens their personal understanding of each week's lesson. Try to ensure that everyone has plenty of opportunity to contribute to each week's discussions.
- Keep the discussion moving. This may mean spending more time on some parts of the study than on others. If necessary, you should feel free to spread out a lesson over more than one session. However, remember that you don't want to slow the pace too much. It's much better to leave everyone "wanting more" than to have people dropping out because of declining interest.
- If the validity or accuracy of some of the answers seems questionable, you can gently and cheerfully remind the group to stay focused on the truth of the Scriptures. Your object is to learn what the Bible says, not to engage in human philosophy. Simply stick with the Scriptures and give God the opportunity to speak. His Word *is* truth (John 17:17)!

HAVING A REAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Have you ever wondered if it's possible to have a meaningful relationship with God? An authentic relationship that works in the day-in-and-day-out circumstances of life? Do you hunger for a genuine experience of community and of God?

This is an *inductive* study that will help you discover for yourself how such a relationship is possible. By inductive we mean you are going to go straight to the source—the Bible—to see what God has to say about the relationship He wants to have with you and about the community He wants to bring you into.


WEEK ONE

Leader: Take a few minutes and discuss where our culture is and what people are seeking. What are some of the questions they are asking? How do they feel about life? about God? Do they have a religion that works? a belief—a relationship—that has changed their lives? One that they feel is authentic?

OBSERVE

Have you ever wondered what we have to do, what we have to become in order to merit a relationship with God? Let's read what God has to say in the New Testament book of Romans.

Leader: Read aloud Romans 5:6-11. Have the students circle the words we and us in the text. As the students mark each pronoun, have them say it aloud as you come to it in the text. That way everyone will be sure to mark every reference.

*Ask the students to read through the same verses again on their own, and when they come to the word **love**, to mark it by drawing a heart over it, like this: *

ROMANS 5:6-11

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us,

in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

INSIGHT

Sinners means people who basically run their own lives, doing things their own way rather than God's way.

Therefore they fall short of God's standard and separate themselves from God.

DISCUSS

According to verse 8, when did God demonstrate His love to us and how?

What was our status when God demonstrated His love to us?

Look at the occurrences of the words *we* and *us* that you have marked and discuss what you learn about the state of mankind when Christ died for them.

Does this raise these questions in your mind:

Why are we helpless?

What is a sinner?

Whose enemy are we and why?


Those are good questions that will be answered next week.

OBSERVE

Now let's take a closer look at this passage and see what these verses tell us about God and Jesus Christ.

Read through the text again on pages 6-7, each one on your own, and mark every reference to **God** and to **Jesus Christ**.

Mark God like this: 

Mark Jesus Christ with a cross: 

ROMANS 5:6-11

⁶ For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

⁷ For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

⁸ But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.

¹⁰ For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death

List everything you have learned about God and about Jesus Christ in the sidebar column on page 7.

INSIGHT

Justified means to be acquitted, to be declared not guilty, to be made righteous, to be put in right standing.

Reconciled means to no longer be at enmity (or enemies) with one another. The dictionary definition is “to make friends again; to win over; to settle a quarrel, a disagreement; to make satisfied; to be no longer opposed.”

Reconciliation means to change from being at enmity (or separated) to becoming friends.

DISCUSS

What did you learn about God from these verses?

What did you learn about Jesus Christ from these verses?

In whose eyes do we need to be justified? Why?

How are we are justified?

According to verse 9, what do we need to be saved from? How will we be saved? What does this tell you about people who never have an authentic relationship with God?

of is Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

¹¹ And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

GOD

JESUS CHRIST

Discuss what it means to be reconciled so you make sure you understand what you read in the Insight Box. Then discuss how and when we are reconciled to God. What did Christ do that made that reconciliation possible? (You may have covered this already, but review is good—so go for it!)

INSIGHT

We didn't become sinners at enmity with God because God pulled away from mankind, abandoning us, leaving us on our own. Our relationship with God was damaged by man's own willfulness. At the beginning of creation, Adam and Eve, the first man and woman God created, made a choice to listen to someone else rather than to God. Like rebellious children, they walked away from the protection of being obedient to their Creator and Sustainer. Adam's decision to eat something God had forbidden him to eat broke his intimacy with God. Consequently we became ungodly sinners, enemies of God.

WRAP IT UP

Just think: If we are reconciled by Jesus' death on the cross, then verse 10 of Romans 5 says we shall be saved by His life! In other words, Jesus didn't stay dead. He rose from the dead. He lives and we will live too, saved by His life. We will look at this in greater depth later.

The question you need to ask yourself is this: Where do you stand in your relationship with God if the Bible is true? Are you a sinner, ungodly, and an enemy of God? According to what you have read, is there hope for you? Can you have an authentic relationship with God?

Have you received reconciliation and become God's friend—or does there seem to be something standing in your way? If it's the latter, do not despair. There is hope. Simply talk to God about it. Tell Him where you think you are and what your questions are. Then wait for Him to answer. He will, because He longs to have an intimate and meaningful relationship with you!

Next week we're going to take a good look at this issue of sin. What makes us sinners in God's eyes? What is sin? What form does it take, and where does it lead? It will be most enlightening.

40-MINUTE BIBLE STUDIES



This unique Bible study series from Kay Arthur and the teaching team of Precept tackles the issues with which inquiring minds wrestle—in short, easy-to-grasp lessons ideal for small-group settings. The study courses in the series can be followed in any order. Here is one possible sequence:

How Do You Know God's Your Father?

by Kay Arthur, David and BJ Lawson

So many say “I’m a Christian,” but how can they really know God’s their Father—and that heaven’s home? The short book of 1 John was written for that purpose—that you might *know* that you really do have eternal life. This is a powerful, enlightening study that will take you out of the dark and open your understanding to this key biblical truth.

Having a Real Relationship with God

by Kay Arthur

For those who yearn to know God and relate to Him in meaningful ways, Kay Arthur opens the Bible to show the way to salvation. With a straightforward examination of vital Bible passages, this enlightening study focuses on where we stand with God, how our sin keeps us from knowing Him, and how Christ bridged the chasm between humans and their Lord.

Being a Disciple: Counting the Real Cost

by Kay Arthur, Tom and Jane Hart

Jesus calls His followers to be disciples. And discipleship comes with a cost, a commitment. This study takes an inductive look at how the Bible describes a disciple, sets forth the marks of a follower of Christ, and invites students to accept the challenge and then enjoy the blessings of discipleship.

How Do You Walk the Walk You Talk?

by Kay Arthur

This thorough, inductive study of Ephesians 4 and 5 is designed to help students see for themselves what God says about the lifestyle of a true believer in Jesus Christ. The study will equip them to live in a manner worthy of their calling, with the ultimate goal of developing a daily walk with God marked by maturity, Christlikeness, and peace.

Living a Life of True Worship

by Kay Arthur, Bob and Diane Vereen

Worship is one of Christianity's most misunderstood topics. This study explores what the Bible says about worship—what it is, when it happens, where it takes place. Is it based on your emotions? Is it something that only happens on Sunday in church? Does it impact how you serve? This study offers fresh, biblical answers.

Discovering What the Future Holds

by Kay Arthur, Georg Huber

With all that's transpiring in the world, people cannot help but wonder what the future holds. Will there ever be peace on earth? How long will the world live under the threat of terrorism? Is a one-world ruler on the horizon? This easy-to-use study guide leads readers through the book of Daniel, which sets forth God's blueprints for the future.

How to Make Choices You Won't Regret

by Kay Arthur, David and BJ Lawson

Every day we face innumerable decisions, some of which have the potential to change the course of our lives forever. Where do we go for direction? What do we do when faced with temptation? This fast-moving study offers practical, trustworthy guidelines by exploring the role of Scripture and the Holy Spirit in the decision-making process.

How Can a Man Control His Thoughts, Desires, and Passions?

by Bob Vereen

This study equips men with the truth that God has provided everything we need to resist temptation. Through the examples of men in Scripture—those who fell into sin and those who stood firm—readers will find hope for controlling their passions, learn how to choose the path of purity, and find assurance that through the power of the Holy Spirit and God's Word, they can stand before God blameless and pure.

Living Victoriously in Difficult Times

by Kay Arthur, Bob and Diane Vereen

We live in a fallen world filled with fallen people, and we cannot escape hardship and pain. Somehow difficult times are a part of God's plan and they serve His purposes. This study helps readers discover how to glorify God in the midst of their pain. They'll learn how to find joy even when life seems unfair and experience the peace that comes from trusting in the One whose strength is made perfect in their weaknesses.

Money and Possessions: The Quest for Contentment

by Kay Arthur, David Arthur

Our attitudes toward money and possessions reflect the quality of our relationship with God. And, according to the Scriptures, our view of money reveals where our true affections lie. In this study readers dig into the Scriptures to learn where money comes from, how we're supposed to handle it, and how to live an abundant life, regardless of our financial circumstances.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND PRECEPT

KAY ARTHUR is known around the world as an international Bible teacher, author, conference speaker, and host of the national radio and television programs *Precepts for Life*, which reach a worldwide viewing audience of over ninety-four million. Recipient of the NRB Hall of Fame Award in 2011, Kay is a four-time Gold Medallion Award-winning author of more than one hundred books and Bible studies. She received an honorary doctorate from Tennessee Temple University.

Kay and her husband, Jack, founded Precept Ministries International in 1970 in Chattanooga, Tennessee, with a vision to establish people in God's Word. Today, the ministry has a worldwide outreach. In addition to inductive-study training workshops and thousands of small-group studies across America, PMI ministers in 180 countries with inductive Bible studies translated into more than seventy languages, discipling people by teaching them how to discover Truth for themselves.

Contact Precept South Africa for more information about inductive Bible studies in your area.

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