

# LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS

## SESSION ONE NOTES: "GOD'S LOVE"

God is not beyond our contact, but someone who loves us and wants to be in a personal relationship with us, and who wants to give us a better life.

Our misconceptions of Christianity can be an obstacle to our finding this better life through Christ:

- We may have grown up with the idea that Christianity is all about a set of rules to keep so that we can go to heaven.
- Or that Christianity is only about loving your neighbour ("as long as I live a good life it doesn't matter what I believe").
- Or that God is someone whom we cannot know or contact in any way, and who does not do anything that we can experience.

The truth is:

- God loves us unconditionally. There is nothing we can do that would make Him love us more or less.
- He wants to make contact with us and have a personal relationship with us.
- He wants to give us a new and better life.
- For this reason, he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ.

We can experience a better life through authentic Christianity:

- The knowledge of God and the power to live the Christian life.
- Happiness, peace and joy, better personal relationships, healing.
- Genuine community.

**Whatever state your spiritual life is in at present, you can take steps which will allow Jesus Christ to establish or restore or deepen your relationship with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

- If you have been merely a nominal Catholic or have fallen away from the faith, Jesus offers you a whole new life—you can find or recover a genuine relationship with him (be baptized in the Spirit and experience spiritual gifts).
- If you have been trying to live the Christian life in some way but have found it difficult, or have not experienced much contact with God, Jesus will give you an experiential contact with him so that you will know that you know him, and he will give you new power to live the Christian life (he will baptize you in the Spirit, let you experience spiritual gifts).
- If you have already experienced personal contact with Christ, Jesus will give you a new and fuller relationship with himself (prayer "in the Spirit", spiritual gifts).
- If you have already been baptized in the Spirit, the Lord will teach you more about what it means to be baptized in the Spirit and he will lead you into a deeper life in the Spirit.

**You can begin right away to turn to the Lord**

- The Lord will reach out to you, but you must reach out to him. "When you call to me and come to me, I will listen to you. When you seek me, you shall find me." (Jeremiah 29:12-13)
- Starting today, pray every day to the Lord and meditate on his words in Scripture. (See next page).

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## DAILY SCRIPTURE & REFLECTION WEEK ONE – “GOD’S LOVE”

Fri 28<sup>th</sup> May

**“May you be rooted deep in love and founded securely on love that you may have the power and be strong to apprehend and grasp with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth [of it] to know the love of Christ [by experience] which far surpasses mere knowledge; that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God!” Ephesians 3:17-19**

Wow! Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians is quite something and we are praying this for you in the weeks to come. What does it mean to know the love of Christ by experience rather than just have “mere knowledge” about it?

Sat 29<sup>th</sup> May

**“The Lord takes pleasure in those who...hope in His Loving Kindness” Psalm 146:11**

We don’t even have to **know** His Loving Kindness to please Him, just hoping that it is as good as it is said to be, is enough to make Him take pleasure in us - so relax in His delight in you. In this place of peace pray: “Lord in these weeks I’m hoping to really experience Your Love for me”

Sun 30<sup>th</sup> May

**“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew and approved of you” Jeremiah 1:5**

Whatever we may have been told or thought, we are no accident. God planned us and delighted in us before we were even conceived, knowing us personally and approving of who we would become! He’s been looking forward to a deeper relationship with you for thousands of years but won’t force your hand, He will always move at the pace you are comfortable with.

Mon 31<sup>st</sup> May

**“Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head” Luke 9:58**

**“Behold I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person and they with Me” Revelation 3:20**

Jesus respects our free will so much that He makes Himself a beggar waiting to be invited in rather than barge into our lives. But it is enough to invite Him, and He promises He will not just come in, but also He will eat with us, i.e. share our normal day to day experiences if we want Him to – so, do you?

Tues 1<sup>st</sup> June

**“Lord I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof but only say the word and...” I shall be healed Matt 8:8**

Sometimes our sense of our sinfulness can make it hard for us to believe that Jesus would want to come more fully into our lives; so, are we willing to be forgiven? ... because He is always willing to forgive! On earth He was always getting into trouble because of His ‘mixing with sinners’, “it’s not the healthy that need a doctor but the sick” He would say.

Weds 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**“All whom My Father gives to Me will come to Me and the one who comes to Me I will most certainly not cast out!” John 6:37**

Jesus’ promise is to receive **all** who come to Him so that He can give them “life to the full” (John 10:10). Ask yourself - am I living this ‘life to the full’ or am I just getting by/surviving?

Thurs 3<sup>rd</sup> June

**“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” Romans 5:8**

Jesus loved you when you were totally snared in sin - even enough to die a painful death to set you free and restore you to His Father’s loving family.