



FREEDOM

PREPARING FOR VICTORY





PREPARING FOR VICTORY

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i.

INTRODUCTION

Preparing for Victory

Preparing for Victory is a seven-lesson Bible study guide designed for individual devotional study. It serves as a prerequisite for participating in Find Freedom.

In naming this Bible study guide Prepare for Victory, the assumption is that as we follow Christ, we should live victorious lives. If Jesus paid the ultimate price on the cross to purchase our victory over sin, Satan, and sickness, then why do so many Christians live in defeat?

Three of the top causes of spiritual defeat include ignorance, unbelief, and the traditions of man. These foundational Bible studies are designed to dispel ignorance, to build faith, and to replace dead traditions with the living Word of God.

Think of Prepare for Victory as your pre-weekend homework. We encourage you to set aside time to complete each lesson so you do not hurry through each point. As you interact with the guide questions and Scriptures, allow the truth of God's Word to bring about personal illumination and transformation. It is our prayer that this tool will help you walk in the fullness of the freedom, victory, blessings, and power that is available for you in Jesus Christ.

ii.

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1. FIRST THINGS FIRST

Preparing for Victory

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

MATTHEW 6:33

If we really want God's best, we must be more than casual inquirers in spiritual matters. We must seek God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Many times in Scripture when God's people became desperate for a deep spiritual encounter, they started with a time of consecration and devotion, seeking Him wholeheartedly.

1. What did Paul consider to be of "first importance?"

Read 1 Corinthians 15:3,4

What Jesus did for us is of first importance. We are saved because of what He did for us, not because of what we do for Him.

Read Matthew 6:25-34

2. What did Jesus expect His followers to have a top priority?

v. 33

3. Jesus contrasted seeking God with worrying. What did He say we should not worry about?

v. 25

v. 28

v. 31

v. 34

4. Why should we not worry about these things?

v. 32

5. Devotion is a heartfelt commitment that expresses itself through worship, sacrifice, offering, service, and obedience.

Describe the type of devotion God wants from us.

1 Corinthians 7:35

2 Corinthians 11:33

1 Chronicles 28:9

6. Why should we be devoted to?

Ezra 7:10

Acts 2:42

Acts 18:5

7. Consecration is the act of setting something apart for God's use. What do the following verses teach about consecration?

Leviticus 11:44

Joshua 3:5

Exodus 19:22

8. How do we consecrate ourselves to God?

Romans 6:13,14

2 Chronicles 29:4,5

9. Fasting is one way God's people can consecrate themselves to His purpose. What did Jesus teach His disciples about fasting?

Matthew 6:16

Matthew 6:17,18

10. Fasting differs from a hunger strike or diet because its purpose is to humbly seek God, not to shed inches. True fasting releases spiritual power. What are some results of fasting in Isaiah 58:6-11?

v. 6 v. 8

v. 9 v. 10 v. 11

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?

2.

THE STORM-PROOF LIFE

Preparing for Victory

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

MATTHEW 7:24

When a watch claims to be waterproof, it does not mean that if it is submerged in water, it will not get wet. It will get wet, but if it is really waterproof, then the water will not destroy the watch. There are no water-free watches, only waterproof ones. Likewise, Christianity does not promise a storm-free life. Every life will occasionally be hit by storms. Christianity promises that if we build our lives on biblical foundations, the storms of life will not destroy us. We will weather the storms. We cannot have storm-free lives but we can have storm-proof lives.

Read Matthew 7:24-27

1. How did Jesus describe the wise man who built his house on a strong foundation?

v.24

2. When the rain, wind, and floods hit the house, why did it stand?

v.25

3. How did Jesus describe the foolish man who built his house on the sand?

v.27

4. What did Jesus say happened to the house on the sand?

v.27

5. What do these verses mean to you and what will you do about it?

6. Biblical Christianity is not just what we know or believe; it is what we do about what we know and believe. What did Jesus say to those who hear His Word but do not do what He says?

Luke 6:46

7. How did Jesus describe the man who put His Word into practice?

Jesus said that the person who practices His Word will have strong foundations.

8. What does “practice” mean? What happens when someone practices a musical instrument or sport?

9. What happens when we practice God’s Word?

10. Why do most musicians and athletes practice with a coach or a teacher?

11. Why are spiritual coaches and teachers important?

12. Who are your spiritual coaches or mentors?

13. Paul compared his apostolic ministry to building and laying spiritual foundations. What did Paul say is the only foundation we can build our lives on?

1 Corinthians 3:10,11

14. What are the foundational doctrines or teachings of the Christian faith?

Hebrew 6:1,2

15. What is the inscription on God's foundation?

2 Timothy 2:19

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?

SPIRITUAL HOUSE CLEANING

3. Preparing for Victory

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

MATTHEW 7:24

Some people are “pack rats” – keeping and storing all kinds of useless junk. Others follow the “when in doubt, throw it out” policy, maintaining a clutter-free house, office, and desk. When it comes to our spiritual life, especially past sins and bad habits, we must follow the “throw it out” rule, constantly getting rid of everything that hinders our spiritual progress.

1. What are we supposed to throw off?

Hebrews 12:1

2. What hinders your walk with God and what should you do about it?

3. If we really want to walk with God, we must get rid of everything that hinders our spiritual progress. What do the following Scriptures tell us to get rid of?

Ephesians 4:31

James 1:21

Ezekiel 20:7

Read John 15:1-16

4. What does God do to fruitless branches?

v.2

**5. What are some “fruitless branches” that have been cut out of your life?
Are there more that need to be cut out?**

6. Why does God prune fruitful branches?

v.2

7. What is the key to bearing fruit?

v. 4

8. How can we show that we are disciples?

v. 8

9. Why did God choose us?

v. 16

Read Acts 19:17-20

10. What did many of the believers do?

v. 18

11. What did those who practices sorcery do?

v. 19

12. What was the result of this “spiritual house cleaning”?

v. 20

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?

Do you have anything in your possession that dishonors God or anything that honors sin, Satan, or evil practices (e.g. demonic or ungodly books, magazines, music, movies, video games, idols)?

4.

LEAVE THE OLD LIFE

Preparing for Victory

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ

GALATIANS 3:26,27

If you take a trip to Israel and tour the ancient land where Jesus lived and ministered, you'll discover that the world of the Bible included the concept of ritual bathing where people would wash ceremonially to cleanse themselves from the dirt and defilement of the outside world. Jesus and His disciples came preaching and calling people to be baptized in water to symbolize the cleansing that takes place through their faith.

1. What happened to those who accepted Peter's message?

Acts 2:41

2. What did the men and women who believed Phillip's message do?

Acts 8:12

3. After hearing the good news about Jesus, what did the Ethiopian Eunuch want to do?

Acts 8:35,36

4. Jesus told His disciples to go and make disciples of all nations. What did He say to do with those disciples?

V. 19

V. 20

The New Testament uses four different illustrations to help us understand the significance of water baptism:

- Burial and resurrection (Romans 6:4,5)
- The Israelites crossing the Red Sea when they escaped from Egypt (1 Corinthians 10:1,2)
Circumcision (Colossians 2:11,12)
- The flood (1 Peter 3:20,21)

5. Paul compares Christian baptism to a burial. In order to be buried, a person must first die. What must we die to before we can be baptized?

Romans 6:1-4

6. The Israelites' passing through the Red Sea is a picture of baptism for us. Why were the Israelites fleeing from the Egyptians?

Exodus 14:23; 15:1,2

7. What happened to the Egyptians?

Exodus 14:22-28

Just as the Israelites were in slavery to the Egyptians, we were all slaves of sin. The Israelites were freed from their bondage by passing through the Red Sea. Baptism pictures the freedom from sin that Jesus purchased for us on the cross.

8. Paul says baptism is like a circumcision not done by human hands, but a circumcision done by Christ. What is put off during this spiritual circumcision?

Colossians 2:11,12

9. What did Peter say the flood water symbolized?

1 Peter 3:21

10. What is baptism a pledge of?

1 Peter 3:21

Peter teaches that it is not the "removal of dirt from the body" that saves us. In other words, it is neither the act of baptism nor the water of baptism. Rather, it is "the resurrection of

Jesus Christ" that saves us. Once again we see the Scriptures teaching that we are saved by what Jesus did (His death and resurrection), not by what we do (water baptism). Peter goes on to say that baptism is the pledge of a clear conscience.

Each of the Bible's pictures of baptism show the old life being put away and a new life emerging. In baptism we publicly display what Jesus did through His death and resurrection. We also show that we have identified with this. By obeying His command to be baptized, we identify with the power of the cross and resurrection to deliver us completely from the power and authority of sin.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?

5. HOLY, HOLY, HOLY Preparing for Victory

And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of His glory."

ISAIAH 6:3

We read the Holy Bible, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and serve a Holy God, but do we really know what holiness is? Some religions reduce holiness to a dress code or hairstyle. Holiness of heart will affect all of life, including the way we dress and perhaps even our hairstyles, but true holiness must go way beyond external actions and appearance. The holiness of God must penetrate our hearts and transform our lives.

Read Isaiah 6:1-9.

1. How did Isaiah describe God?

v. 1

2. How did the heavenly beings describe God?

v. 3

3. How did Isaiah respond to the holiness of God?

v. 5

4. How did God respond to Isaiah's confession?

v. 7

5. What happened after the guilt was removed?

v. 8

v. 9

6. The starting point of Isaiah's call was a revelation of the holiness of God. According to the Old Testament, what should our response to the holiness of God be?

Leviticus 11:45

7. According to the New Testament, what should our response to the holiness of God be?

1 Peter 1:15,16

8. In light of judgment day, what kind of people should we be?

2 Peter 3:11

9. Why should we live holy lives?

Hebrews 12:14

10. Holiness is not limited to, but certainly includes, biblical moral standards and boundaries. What is the seventh commandment?

1 Deuteronomy 5:18

11. What did Jesus say about adultery?

1 Matthew 5:28

12. The church in Ephesus was in the midst of a culture of rampant immorality. Rather than relaxing sexual moral standards to the level of the culture, how did Paul describe the moral standard he expected the Ephesians to live by?

Ephesians 5:3

13. How did Joseph deal with sexual temptation?

Genesis 39:6-10

14. Why do you think Joseph refused to “even be with her?” What is wrong in being with a seductive person as long as you “draw the line” and determine not to be immoral?

15. How do ungodly (“pagan”) people live?

1 Peter 4:4,5

16. How should we live?

1 Peter 4:1,2

17. What should we do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires?

Colossians 3:5

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?

6.

SPIRITUAL POWER

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"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be My witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

ACTS 1:8

In the Old Testament, God's Spirit empowered certain people to do special miracles. Examples of Old Testament Holy Spirit empowerment include: Moses' miracles before Pharaoh, Samson's super human strength, and Daniel's prophetic dream interpretation. In the New Testament, Jesus promised not only occasional spiritual power, but a constant indwelling of the Holy Spirit in each believer.

1. How did Jesus describe the Holy Spirit in the life of a disciple?

John 7:38,39

2. What do these verses teach about the Holy Spirit?

John 14:26

John 16:7

John 13

John 16:14,15

3. What happens when the Holy Spirit comes on a disciple?

Acts 1:8

4. What did Peter do before he received the Holy Spirit?

John 18:25-27

5. What was Peter like after being filled with the Holy Spirit?

Acts 4:8-13

6. When the officials warned Peter not to preach, how did Peter respond?

Acts 4:18-20

7. Describe what happened when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4

8. What did Peter preach after he was filled with the Holy Spirit?

Acts 2:38

9. Does the promise of the Holy Spirit apply to us today, or was it only for those who heard Peter preach 2 000 years ago?

Acts 2:39

10. Why did the apostles in Jerusalem send Peter and John to Samaria and what happened when they got there?

Acts 8:14-17

11. What happened when Ananias laid hands on Saul/Paul?

Acts 9:17

12. What happened while Peter preached to Cornelius and his family?

Acts 10:44-47

13. What did Paul ask the disciples in Ephesus?

Acts 19:1,2

14. What happened when Paul laid hands on them?

Acts 19:6,7

15. What did Paul pray concerning spiritual power?

Ephesians 3:16

16. What did Jesus say about the Holy Spirit

Luke 11:13

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?

7.

FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Preparing for Victory

They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household."

ACTS 16:31

The Great Commission Jesus issued before He left earth is a charge to make disciples. While we are called to make disciples of all nations, the best place to start is with our close friends and family.

1. What was the original call to discipleship?

Matthew 4:19

2. What do you think it means to “fish for people”?

Read Matthew 9:9-13

3. What did Jesus tell Matthew to do and how did he respond?

v. 9

4. As Matthew started to become a disciple, he invited Jesus to his house for dinner. Who else ate with them?

v. 10

5. When questioned by the Pharisees about having dinner with the "sinners", how did Jesus respond?

v. 11-13

6. Who did Cornelius invite to his house to hear Peter preach?

Acts 10:24

7. What happened when Peter preached in Cornelius' home?

Acts 10:44-46

8. What happened to Cornelius' relatives and close friends after they were filled with the Holy Spirit?

Acts 10:47,48

9. In Acts 11, Peter tried to explain to his Jewish friends what happened as he preached at Cornelius' house. He told them how an angel appeared to Cornelius telling him to send for Peter. At the same time the angel was talking to Cornelius, Peter was having a vision from the Lord instructing him to minister to Cornelius and his family.

What did the angel say would happen through Peter's message?

Acts 11:13,14

10. Paul and his team ministered in Phillipi to a businesswoman named Lydia. Besides Lydia, who else responded to the message?

Acts 16:14,15

Read Acts 16:22-24

11. What happened to Paul and Silas?

v. 22-24

12. What were Paul and Silas doing in jail?

v. 25

13. What happened next?

v. 26-30

14. What did Paul tell the repentant jailer?

v. 31

15. What happened to the jailer's family?

v. 32-34

16. What was the first thing Andrew did when he started following Jesus?

John 1:41

17. How can you apply what Andrew did to your own situation? List some of your friends and family members whom you can introduce to Jesus.

The call to follow Jesus, is also a call to fish for people. Andrew obeyed the call by immediately reaching out to his brother, Peter. The Philippians jailer reached out to his relatives and close friends. Lydia ministered to her whole household. Matthew invited his old friends to his home to meet Jesus. If we want to effectively fish for people, then we should follow this biblical pattern and introduce our relatives and close friends to Jesus.

PERSONAL APPLICATION

What did you learn from this Bible study and how will you put it into practice?



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