

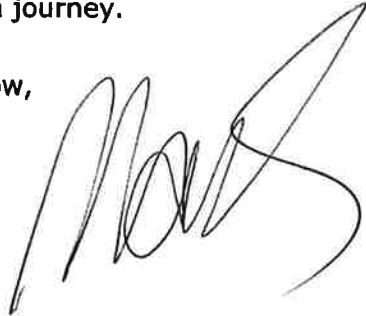
# LETTER FROM MARK

Everyone needs a Fresh Start. Whether you're a brand new Christian or you've been one for years, it's always helpful to step back and re-evaluate who you are in Christ and what you believe.

This Bible study helps you do just that. In this booklet, you'll find 9 Keys to experiencing a Fresh Start with God. Every key is a response to a question commonly asked about the Christian life. The good news about this workbook is that each lesson will only take about 10 minutes to do! Obviously, at the end of 10 minutes you won't have all the knowledge available on the topic, but it will get you thinking. Ask questions. Keep learning. And know that you will learn more about your relationship with God as you walk with Him over the rest of your life.

Thank you for your willingness to do this study. It's always exciting to see people take a step of faith in their lives, and this step will help you move ahead with a solid foundation in your Christian journey.

Learn and grow,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Mark', written in a cursive style.

# 9 KEYS TO A FRESH START WITH GOD

KEY

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# GET A GLIMPSE!

## EMBRACE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING A CHILD OF GOD

### KEY TRUTH

Wow! You're a child of God. Don't downplay or dismiss the fact that God really, really loves you. If you're able to get a glimpse of what it means to be embraced by God's unconditional love, it will forever change how you view yourself and how you live your life.

It's easy to be consumed with negative thoughts you have about yourself, rather than believe the biblical truths about your identity as a child of God. At times, everyone has doubts. But instead of allowing your mind to replay all the negative words, phrases, and images that you've heard about yourself, try to fill your mind with the truth and the privilege of being known and loved by the God of the universe.

#### KEY VERSE

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

*John 1:12*

# **GET A GLIMPSE!**

## **EMBRACE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING A CHILD OF GOD**

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

Before you became a Christian, you were God's creation, but now you're His child. How does it feel to know that you are God's child?

What are three words that you think best describe God? Next to each word, write why you chose that one.

1.

2.

3.

Is it difficult or easy for you to embrace God as your Father? Why?

How might your view of your earthly father affect your view of your Heavenly Father?

In what ways could being embraced and loved by the God of the universe affect how you view yourself?

What are two or three things you need from God right now?

# GET A GLIMPSE!

## EMBRACE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING A CHILD OF GOD

### KEY STEPS

1. Write down what you learn about God or what you understand about being God's child from these verses:

Matthew 7:7-11

Ephesians 1:7-8

2. Spend some time talking to God (through prayer or writing a letter) about how you feel about being His child.

3. Being God's child is both a privilege and a responsibility. This week, when you're tempted to do something wrong, pause for a moment and think about those two words: privilege and responsibility. Then remind yourself that you're God's child and ask Him for strength to get out of the temptation.

#### KEY QUOTE

"Is who you are determined by what you do, or is what you do determined by who you are? That's an important question, especially as it relates to Christian maturity. I subscribe to the latter. I believe wholeheartedly that your hope for growth, meaning, and fulfillment as a Christian is based on understanding who you are – specifically your identity in Christ as a child of God."

Neil Anderson,  
*Victory Over the  
Darkness*

# **GET A GRASP!**

## **UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD HAS DONE**

### **KEY TRUTH**

You're free! Did you know you were once a prisoner? It's true, you were. But when you became a child of God, you were released from the dark prison (separation from God) and delivered into the light of freedom (connected to God). Now that you're a child of God, your salvation is an expression of God's love for you and His commitment to you. And God promises that His commitment and love will never end.

How does that make you feel?

#### **KEY VERSE**

*"...thanking the Father who makes us strong enough to take part in everything bright and beautiful that he has for us. God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons. He's set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much, the Son who got us out of the pit we were in, got rid of the sins we were doomed to keep repeating."*

*Colossians 1:12-14*

# **GET A GRASP!**

## **UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD HAS DONE**

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

Are there specific areas of your life in which you've seen a change since becoming a Christian? What areas?

What bad habits do you still struggle with that you want God to help you change?

People often forget how valuable their salvation is. Why do you think that is?

If someone asked you for advice on how he/she might be able to better appreciate what God has done for them, what would you suggest?

Did you know the angels in Heaven had a party when you became a Christian? (See Luke 15:10) How does that make you feel?

# **GET A GRASP!**

## **UNDERSTAND WHAT GOD HAS DONE**

### **KEY STEPS**

1. Get a bigger picture of what God has done for you by looking up these verses and writing down what you learn:

Romans 5:8

Romans 6:23

2. Do you know someone who is struggling in his/her faith? Write a letter to this Christian friend and remind that person that no matter how much he or she hurts now, he or she has been freed from the prison of their life without Christ.

3. Is there someone you know that needs to hear about what salvation really means? Pray for the opportunity to speak to that person and then go talk to him/her.

#### **KEY QUOTE**

"If because of the death of Christ God is satisfied, then what can the sinner do to try to satisfy God? The answer is nothing. Everything has been done by God, Himself. The sinner can and need only receive the gift of righteousness God offers."

Charles Ryrie,  
*Basic Theology*



# **GET SOME GRACE!**

## **REST SECURELY IN GOD'S ARMS**

### **KEY TRUTH**

Good news! Just when you thought you were in big trouble, you've been completely forgiven. That's part of the truth that you studied in the last lesson.

Whenever you choose to ask for forgiveness from God, He embraces you as a loving, forgiving father, not as a condemning, "I told-you-so" judge. God's arms are always open and always welcoming—never stop running to Him, no matter what you do.

# **GET SOME GRACE!**

## **REST SECURELY IN GOD'S ARMS**

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

Who is an authority figure in your life? Explain how different you feel being around that person when you're guilty of something versus being around that person when you've done nothing wrong.

What words come to mind when you think about forgiveness?

Are you a forgiving person? Explain.

Is there anyone who needs your forgiveness?

# **GET SOME GRACE!**

## **REST SECURELY IN GOD'S ARMS**

### **KEY STEPS**

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about forgiveness:

Psalm 103:12

Hebrews 8:12

2. Are you convinced that God forgives all of your sin? If so, thank Him. If not, re-read the key verse and then explain why you think you aren't forgiven.

3. Is there someone who has forgiven you recently? If so, thank the person and encourage him or her by explaining how that act of forgiveness makes you feel.

#### **KEY QUOTE**

"Forgiveness is man's deepest need and God's highest achievement."

Horace Bushnell

# **GET RID OF GUILT!**

## **DON'T LET YOUR PAST RUN YOUR FUTURE**

### **KEY TRUTH**

Good news! Just when you thought you were in big trouble, you've been completely forgiven. That's part of the truth that you studied in the last lesson.

Whenever you choose to ask for forgiveness from God, He embraces you as a loving, forgiving Father, not as a condemning, "I told-you-so" judge. God's arms are always open and always welcoming—never stop running to Him, no matter what you do.

#### **KEY VERSE**

*Friends, don't get me wrong: By no means do I count myself an expert in all of this, but I've got my eye on the goal, where God is beckoning us onward—to Jesus. I'm off and running, and I'm not turning back. So let's keep focused on that goal, those of us who want everything God has for us. If any of you have something else in mind, something less than total commitment, God will clear your blurred vision—you'll see it yet!*

*Philippians 3:13-15*

# **GET RID OF GUILT!**

## **DON'T LET YOUR PAST RUN YOUR FUTURE**

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

Is there anything from your past that you're embarrassed by? Have you accepted God's forgiveness, or do you dwell on past mistakes?

How do you respond to haunting past memories? What would you tell someone who is struggling with his or her past and asks for your help?

Are you excited about your future? What goals do you have? If you could do anything for God, what would you do?

Is there someone you trust who could help you grow as a Christian and help you meet your goals?

# **GET RID OF GUILT!**

## **DON'T LET YOUR PAST RUN YOUR FUTURE**

### **KEY STEPS**

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learned:

Philippians 4:6-9

Hebrews 12:1-2

2. Write out what it means to be completely forgiven of past sins.

3. Next time you feel guilty about a past sin that you've already confessed to God, write the sin down on a piece of toilet paper. Then take a thick marker and write the word "forgiven" across the page. Next, flush it down the toilet. If you're ever tempted to think about it again, remind yourself that it's already been flushed.

If you continue to feel guilty, talk to a more mature Christian. Since the Devil has lost you for eternity, the only thing he can do now is make you feel ineffective--by using guilt.

#### **KEY QUOTE**

"The purpose of being guilty is to bring us to Jesus. Once we are there, then its purpose is finished. If we continue to make ourselves guilty--to blame ourselves--then that is sin in itself."

Corrie Ten Boom

# **GET A GROUP!**

## **CONNECT WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS**

### **KEY TRUTH**

It's not true! Don't buy the lie that you can grow as a Christian on your own. The church is God's vehicle to connect Christians to one another and to Him.

God wants to use you in the lives of others, and He's got plenty for you to learn from those He puts into your life. Don't miss a great opportunity to grow. . . and to help others do the same.

#### **KEY VERSE**

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*

*Hebrews 10:24-25*

# **GET A GROUP!**

## **CONNECT WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS**

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

Do you have any fears about connecting with a church body? If so, what are they? How did you get them?

Why do you think God wants believers to gather together? What benefits can you imagine there would be?

What would church be like if all your friends were there? How important are relationships at church? What's the best way to welcome others?

What are three things that make church something you look forward to?



# GET A GROUP!

## CONNECT WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

### KEY STEPS

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn from reading these:

Proverbs 27:6, 9, 17

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

2. Write out the reasons why you're committed to your church and youth ministry. Or make a list of what is keeping you from supporting your church.

3. Ready to do the following?

- Attend church
- Bring a friend
- Pray about how you can get involved in helping the church body

#### KEY QUOTE

"He [Jesus] works on us in all sorts of ways: . . . through nature, through our own bodies, through books, sometimes through experiences which seem (at the time) anti-Christian. . . . But above all, He works on us through each other. Men are mirrors, or "carriers" of Christ to other men. Sometimes unconscious carriers."

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

# **GET TO GOD!**

## **LEARN TO TALK WITH GOD**

### **KEY TRUTH**

He's waiting! Imagine having access to the God of the universe anytime you want. Well, you do. God not only wants to talk with you, He's also available to you whenever you choose to talk to Him. What are you waiting for?

#### **KEY VERSE**

*Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.*

*John 16:24*

**GET TO GOD!**  
**LEARN TO TALK WITH GOD**

**KEY QUESTIONS**

How would you define prayer?

Some people say God only hears your prayers if you're in a certain location (like a church) or assume a specific posture (like kneeling). What do you think? Why?

How would you answer someone who says, "I prayed for something and didn't get it. Why?"

What's the best thing about prayer? What's the hardest thing? What benefits do you think there would be in having a friend to pray with?

# GET TO GOD!

## LEARN TO TALK WITH GOD

### KEY STEPS

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about prayer:

Matthew 7:7-8

John 15:7

2. Commit to pray regularly and share that commitment with a Christian friend.

3. Have a friend hold you accountable to praying regularly by asking about your prayer life a couple times a week. Ask your friend if he/she would like to commit to praying with you on a regular basis (maybe once a week).

#### KEY QUOTE

"It was no exceptional thing for Jesus to withdraw Himself 'into the wilderness to pray.' He was never for one moment of any day out of touch with God. He was speaking and listening to the Father all day long; and yet He, who was in such constant touch with God, felt the need, as well as the joy, of more prolonged and more quiet communion with Him. Most of the reasons that drive us to pray for strength and forgiveness could never have driven Him; and yet He needed prayer."

G. H. Knight, *In the Secret of His Presence*

# **GET A GRIP!**

## **TRUST GOD WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN**

### **KEY TRUTH**

Going through a trial in life? Hang on! God hasn't left you—you're not alone. Instead, there's a tremendous lesson you might learn . . . about yourself, about God, or about life. In fact, pay close attention to what you're learning. You'll probably have an opportunity to help someone who's going through the same lesson.

Stay close to God and keep your eyes open for what He wants to teach you.

#### **KEY VERSE**

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

*James 1:2-4*

**GET A GRIP!**  
**TRUST GOD WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN**

**KEY QUESTIONS**

What benefits are there in going through trials in life? What frustrations are there?

Do you feel close to God or distant when going through trials? Explain.

What was the last trial you went through? What happened?

How important is your attitude when going through trials?

What positive lessons have you learned from others as they've gone through trials in life?

# **GET A GRIP!**

## **TRUST GOD WHEN BAD THINGS HAPPEN**

### **KEY STEPS**

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about trials:

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

James 1:2-4

2. Spend some time in prayer and let God know that you will trust Him regardless of what happens in your life. Thank Him that He will be with you no matter what happens.

3. Who is going through a trial now that you can care for and encourage? (Important! Before sharing your thoughts with that person on trials, take time to listen, encourage, and pray. Wait a while before sharing any Bible verses. Your friend needs to know you care first.

#### **KEY QUOTE**

"Trials are medicines which our gracious and wise Physician prescribes because we need them; and he proportions the frequency and weight of them to what the case requires. Let us trust his skill and thank him for his prescription."

Sir Isaac Newton

# **GET TO GROW!**

## **DEVELOP NEW, HEALTHY HABITS**

### **KEY TRUTH**

You've got mail! And there's a bunch for you. The Bible is accurately referred to as "God's Word," but a better description would be "God's love letter to us." Everything written in the Bible is an encouragement, an instruction, or a warning from your loving Father in heaven.

So the next time you think about picking up your Bible, remember that you're not holding some ancient book. Instead, you've got mail from a God who loves you.

#### **KEY VERSE**

*"Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us."*

*II Timothy 3:16-17*



# **GET TO GROW!**

## **DEVELOP NEW, HEALTHY HABITS**

### **KEY QUESTIONS**

Do you have a favorite Bible verse? What is it? How did it get to be your favorite?

How important do you think it is to read the Bible? How often should you read it? How does Matthew 4:4 relate to that question?

Do you have any doubts about whether or not the Bible is really God's word? If so, list them. (Then seek some answers—they're out there! You're not the first one to have questions.)

What benefits are there in reading the Bible?

# **GET TO GROW!**

## **DEVELOP NEW, HEALTHY HABITS**

### **KEY STEPS**

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about the Bible:

Joshua 1:8

Psalms 119:9-11

2. Write out why you believe it is important to read God's word.

3. Begin a regular Bible reading plan (read through the book of John, for example) or memorize one or more of the verses from this lesson.

#### **KEY QUOTE**

"There is a difference between devotion to principles and devotion to a person. Hundreds of people today are devoting themselves to phases of truth, to causes. Jesus Christ never asks us to devote ourselves to a cause or a creed; He asks us to devote ourselves to Him."

Oswald Chambers

# **GET TO GIVE!**

## **CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE GIFTED!**

### **KEY TRUTH**

Congratulations! Did you know that you're gifted? When you became a Christian, God gave you special abilities to serve Him and do amazing things that last for eternity. Maybe you won't be able to walk on water or fly through a crowded mall, but you'll be able to serve God in a way that will make a difference in your world.

Do you know what your spiritual gifts are? Are you ready to find out and use them?

#### **KEY VERSE**

*Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.*

*1 Peter 4:10*

**GET TO GIVE!**  
**CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE GIFTED!**

**KEY QUESTIONS**

What would you say to someone who was afraid or intimidated to use his/her gifts and abilities? What excuses keep most people from using their gifts?

What talents do you have that can be used for God? What abilities do you have that you don't think God could use?

How comfortable are you in serving others? Can you think of a time that you put someone's needs above your own? What happened?

What dangers might there be in serving God? What benefits?

# **GET TO GIVE!**

## **CONGRATULATIONS, YOU'RE GIFTED!**

### **KEY STEPS**

1. Look up the following verses and write down what you learn about serving God:

Romans 12:3-8

1 Corinthians 12:12-26

2. Decide that you will faithfully serve God no matter what challenges come up. Write a short letter to God declaring your commitment.

3. Don't wait until you find the "perfect" place of service (one that you're totally excited about and uses your abilities), just serve somewhere! The best way to find the right place is to get involved wherever there is a need. Talk to someone in your church or youth ministry this week about getting started.

#### **KEY QUOTE**

"Before the judgment seat of Christ my service will not be judged by how much I have done but by how much of me there is in it. No man gives at all until he has given all. No man gives anything acceptable to God until he has first given himself in love and sacrifice."

A.W. Tozer

