

# *Birth Truth, Identity Truth, & Growth Truth*

## TEACHING NOTES

**Birth truth**

**Identity truth**

### KEY VERSES

Titus 3:5-7

### KEY THEMES

Birth truth – how we got it  
Identity truth – what we have  
Growth truth – why we have it

INTRODUCTION INNOCECE CONSCIENCE HUMAN GOVT. PROMISE LAW GRACE

**Growth truth**

**Lesson objective:** *To understand the reality of how we came to Christ, who we are in Christ, and what God is calling us to as maturing followers of Christ.*

**PERSONAL STUDY****Session 1****Prepare your heart and mind**

Take time to focus on God and what He has for you during this intentional time with Him. Ask Him to help you learn what He has for you.

**Birth truth****What really saves us?**

If you were to ask several believers what it is that actually saves us, you would get a wide variety of answers. Some would talk about doing more good than bad in life and hoping God will see things in our favor. And others might tell you about going to church, reading the Bible, praying, and serving – basically being religious enough. While these are good things that can help us grow in our relationship with God, they are not what provide our actual salvation. This personal study will provide the clarity that God's Word brings to this central doctrine of the Christian faith.

If someone were to say to you, "I know you're a Christian. How do you know you have salvation from God?" how would you respond? Write down your response.

**What does God's Word tell us about how we have salvation?**

Read the following verses and write down what they teach us about our condition and God's provision for us to be saved.

Romans 3:23 and 6:23

Romans 5:6-8

Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:4-7

John 1:12 and Revelation 3:20

Now go back and read what you wrote about what saves you. Is there anything you would change or add after reading these verses? If so, what?

### **Being prepared to share the hope we have**

God's desire is for all of us who have put our faith in Jesus for salvation to be ready to share this plan of salvation with others. It is important for us to be able to help people understand their need for God and how He has provided a way for us to be made right with Him. At the end of this study you'll find the Bridge Illustration. This is a simple visual, that when drawn out and explained, provides a simple and clear way to present the Gospel to someone.

Take some time to look at the Bridge Illustration and read through the verses you have not already looked up. You could even practice sharing this with a friend.

### **Key verse**

Put to memory Titus 3:5-7. Place the provided scripture card where you can see it throughout the day.

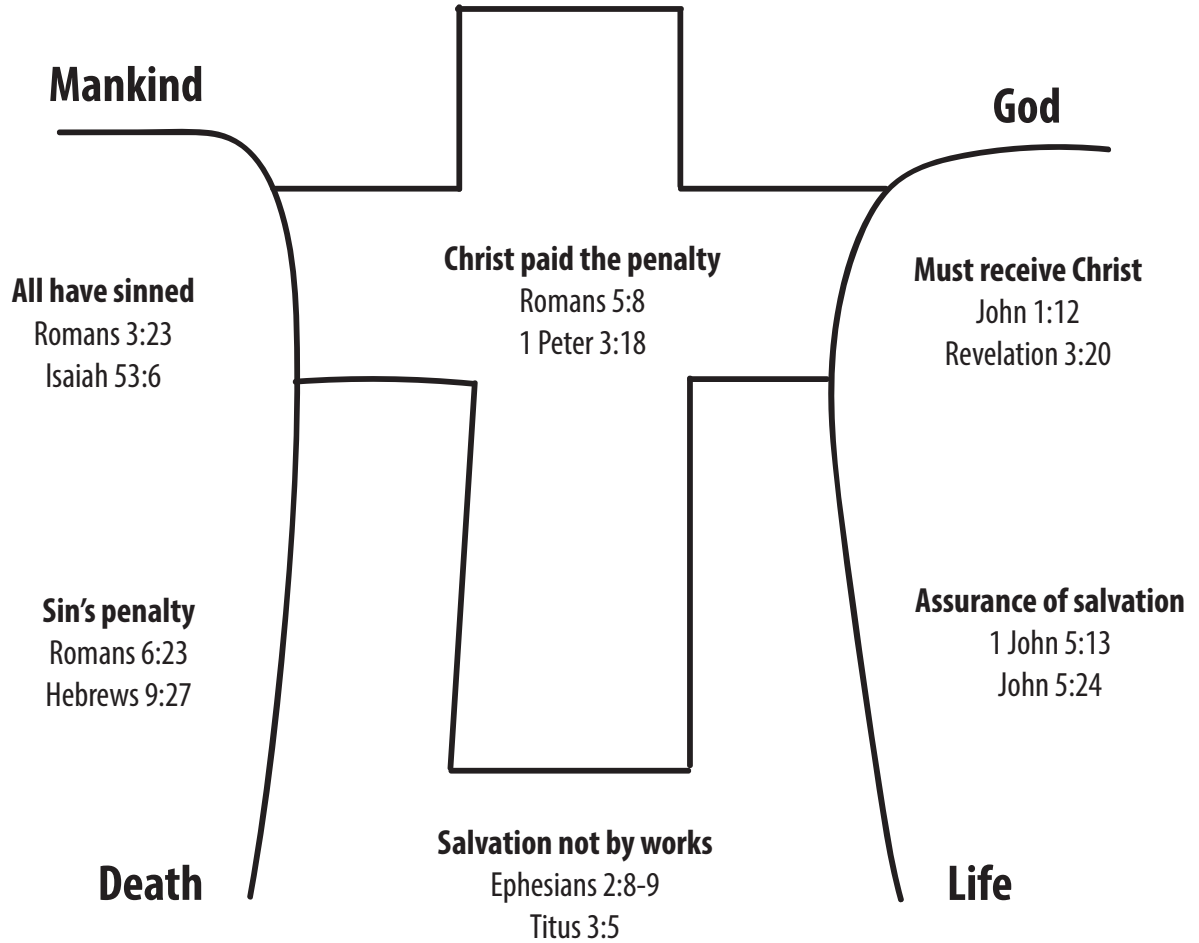
*He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit. He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.*

### **Prayer time**

Take some time now and share with God your gratefulness for providing salvation to you. Ask Him to give you the ability to see opportunities to share this Good News with others.

# Plan of Salvation

*Bridge Illustration*



### Topics

- All have sinned
- Sin's penalty
- Christ paid the penalty
- Salvation not by works
- Must receive Christ
- Assurance of salvation

### Verses

- Romans 3:23 and Isaiah 53:6
- Romans 6:23 and Hebrews 9:27
- Romans 5:8 and 1 Peter 3:18
- Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5
- John 1:12 and Revelation 3:20
- 1 John 5:13 and John 5:24

## Session 2

### Prepare your heart and mind

Begin this time of study with prayer. Ask God to help you push away distractions and focus on Him. Ask Him to bless this time by providing clarity and revealing truth.

### Identity truth

It is essential that we understand identity truth and don't confuse it with growth truth. Identity truth is about our position in Christ. Growth truth builds upon the foundation of that identity. As we've studied books like Romans, Ephesians, and Colossians we've seen this laid out for us. These books start with the truth about what God has done for us as believers and end with what we have now in our position and a call to live worthy of those things.

Before we move on to growth truth, the 'do' of our relationship with God, we need to fully understand the foundation we have in our identity in Him, the 'done' of our relationship. If we don't understand this correctly we can begin to slide into trying to earn our salvation. As we grow in our understanding of our identity in Christ we have to remember that our identity is not progressive, it is not related to our effort, and it is eternal.

### The characteristics of our identity

**Our identity is not progressive** – it isn't something that we add to through experience or hard work. We received our complete identity the moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, we will grow in our understanding of our identity in Christ as we mature in our relationship with Him, but we aren't gaining anything other than a deeper understanding of that reality.

**Our identity is not related to our effort** – there is nothing we can do to earn our identity in Christ. We cannot work hard enough to earn this because our identity is a gift from God. It is secure because of Christ's efforts alone.

**Our identity is eternal** – it does not change based on circumstances. Just like we can't earn our identity through our efforts because it is a gift from God, our identity is eternal because of that same saving work of Jesus Christ.



### Biblical truth about our identity

The Bible has a lot to say about our identity. Take some time now to look up the following verses.

As you read and study them, think through the three points above about our identity and think about how the characteristics and verses fit together.

Feel free to look up as many of the verses as you'd like and use the space below the list to jot down any notes, thoughts, or questions that come to mind as you read.

John 1:12  
John 8:36  
Romans 5:1-2  
Romans 5:17  
Romans 6:6  
1 Corinthians 1:30  
1 Corinthians 6:11

1 Corinthians 12:13  
2 Corinthians 5:17-21  
2 Corinthians 6:18  
Galatians 2:20  
Galatians 3:26  
Galatians 4:5-7  
Ephesians 1:13-14

Ephesians 2:4-10  
Ephesians 2:18-19  
Philippians 3:20  
Colossians 1:13-14  
Colossians 2:10-13  
1 Peter 1:23

**Key verse**

Continue working to memorize Titus 3:5-7. Attempt to write it out from memory.

**Prayer time**

Take some time to thank God for the new season of *Equipping the Church* and the opportunity to study His Word. Ask Him to challenge, grow, and encourage you through the upcoming teachings, group discussions, and personal studies. Pray for the teachers and writers as they prepare the lessons, the discussions and relationships in your groups, and that you would be open to the truth God wants to share with you.

## PARENT GUIDE

As a parent, the most important priority is to create and nurture a household of faith. The greatest privilege a parent has is to lead their children to personal faith in Jesus. Listed below are two ways to share the Gospel with your children.

### Wordless Book

*This activity is geared for lower elementary kids and is ideal for children who are not yet readers.*

*Materials needed:* yellow, black, red, white, and green construction paper cut in the same size and a stapler or paperclip to hold the paper together.

*Share the following with your kids as you flip through the different colors:*

**Yellow** stands for Heaven, where Jesus lives. When we become Jesus' Forever Friend, we can live forever in Heaven with Him someday. (John 14:2-3)

**Black** stands for all the mistakes and bad choices we make, every time we break God's rules. The Bible calls this sin. (Romans 3:23)

**Red** stands for God's love and Jesus' blood. God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for us. (John 3:16, Romans 5:8)

**White** stands for forgiveness. Forgiveness is when all our sins are wiped away, when the dark is made clean, "whiter than snow." (1 John 1:9, Psalm 51:7)

**Green** stands for growing. Our hearts are growing on the inside when we make good choices to love God and others. (Colossians 2:7, Matthew 22:37-39)

### The Bridge

*This activity works well for primary and upper elementary children.*

*Materials needed:* 2 shoeboxes, a cross cut out of red poster board, and a marker. The cross should be larger than the shoebox length. Place the ends of the shoeboxes next to each other, leaving a small space or gap between the boxes.

*Share the following with your kids:*

One of the shoeboxes represents God and the other one represents us. (Label each box with "God" and "us".) Notice the space between God and us. We move or wander away from God when we make wrong choices—the Bible calls this sin. Sin is every wrong thing we do that breaks God's rules. Sin separates us from God. (Move the "us" box away, creating a larger gap between God and us.)



God knows we can't cross the sin gap on our own to get to Him. God loves us too much to be separated from us forever. God provides a way for us to go to Heaven, and that way is Jesus. *(Place the cross on top of the shoeboxes as a "bridge" to connect us to God.)*

Becoming a Friend of God is as easy as ABC.

**A – admit** that I have made bad choices or sinned, and tell this to God. (1 John 1:9)

**B – believe** in Jesus and that He died on the cross to take the punishment for my sin, and is the only one that can forgive me. (Romans 10:9)

**C – choose** Jesus to be my Forever Friend, and follow Him for the rest of my life. (John 3:16)

### **Praying with your child**

If you feel your child understands and is ready for Jesus to be their "Forever Friend," pray a simple prayer with your child:

*Dear Jesus, I know I have done wrong things. I believe you died on the cross for my sins and took my punishment. I choose to love and trust you. Thank you for forgiving me and being my "Forever Friend." In your name, Amen.*

## ADDITIONAL STUDY

The objective of this first session was that we would grow in our understanding of the reality of how we came to Christ, who we are in Christ, and what God is calling us to as maturing followers of Christ. One way we do this is by studying God's Word to learn more about our birth, identity, and growth truth.

Take some time now to read through the book of Ephesians, while making sure to look for identity truth. As you read, underline or highlight every time the phrases "in Christ" or "in Him" are used.

Spend some time thinking about what these "in Christ" truths mean for your life. How have you seen them at work in your life? How do you hope to see yourself grow in accepting these truths?

After your time of reading and studying, spend some time in prayer. Ask God to continue revealing His truth about who you are in Him and help you stand firm in that reality.