

"A great introduction or refresher on living the Christian life—in a life-giving relationship with Jesus. Biblically grounded, clearly explained and solidly applied to real life, it will help readers to get going or keep going in following Jesus."

**GRAHAM BEYNON**, Pastor, Grace Church, Cambridge; Director of Independent Ministry Training, Oak Hill College, London

"This is the discipleship course I've been waiting for! Simple but well-written, with thought-provoking discussion questions and illustrations, this guide to life in Christ will encourage and equip new believers—and those who have followed Jesus for years—to live out a joyful, hopeful, purposeful life with him."

**CAROLYN LACEY**, Author, *Extraordinary Hospitality (For Ordinary People)* and *Say the Right Thing*

"A simple, winsome and helpful tool for discipling new Christians (and rediscipling older ones) in our modern world. It's a great blend of accessible biblical material, robust theology and clear questions that both comfort and confront. And it's written in an engaging style, with examples from everyday life that ring true. Life seems complex in the 21st century, but as Tim Chester shows, everything we need for discipleship—a life with Jesus in the modern world—is available to us in the gospel. I can think of any number of groups to use this with."

**STEPHEN MCALPINE**, National Communicator, City Bible Forum, Australia; Author, *Being the Bad Guys*

"The Christian life is a privilege, but one we often find deeply confusing. We easily lose sight of who Jesus has made us to be, how he wants us to mature, and how he has called us to honour him in our communities, and churches and behind closed doors. In these short, simple studies we have help. Through story, engagement with Scripture, prose and personal reflection, Tim Chester provides biblical fuel for growth and, in the process, helps new and mature believers alike to live more wholeheartedly for Christ."

**HELEN THORNE**, Director of Training and Resources, Biblical Counselling UK

"This is really refreshing material. Accessible and adaptable, it enables us to see how following Jesus is fleshed out in ordinary life. Through stories and Scripture, we are given a glorious perspective on the gritty practicalities of life in our world. If you ask a Christian friend or your small group to use *Life with Jesus*, I'm sure you'll find that the engaging questions prompt conversations which connect our lives together and with our God. Whether you've been following Jesus for a few weeks or many decades, you will be encouraged to walk more closely with him, for our good and his glory."

**JOHN RUSSELL**, Lead Minister, Cornerstone Church, Nottingham

"*Life with Jesus* covers the foundations of being a disciple of Jesus in an accessible way. It explains how to know Jesus personally and what it is like to follow him. The structure is helpful, with stories which begin each chapter elegantly linked to a Bible study, followed by teaching and application questions. The book would work well in one-to-one or small-group settings. It's terrific, and I will certainly use it with athletes and coaches."

**GRAHAM DANIELS**, General Director, Christians in Sport

LIFE  
WITH  
JESUS

Life with Jesus  
© Tim Chester 2023

Published by:  
The Good Book Company

[thegoodbook.com](http://thegoodbook.com) | [thegoodbook.co.uk](http://thegoodbook.co.uk)  
[thegoodbook.com.au](http://thegoodbook.com.au) | [thegoodbook.co.nz](http://thegoodbook.co.nz) | [thegoodbook.co.in](http://thegoodbook.co.in)



Unless indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 2011 Biblica, Inc. Used by permission.

Tim Chester has asserted his right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 to be identified as author of this work.

All rights reserved. Except as may be permitted by the Copyright Act, no part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means without prior permission from the publisher.

ISBN: 9781784988234 | Printed in India

Design by Ben Woodcraft

# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	7
<b>PART ONE:</b> A new life	
1. Gospel: We share the victory of Jesus	11
2. Grace: We enjoy the welcome of Jesus	17
3. Church: We belong to the family of Jesus	23
<b>PART TWO:</b> A changed perspective	
4. Obedience: Jesus gives us a new view of God	31
5. United: Jesus gives us a new power for life	37
6. Suffering: Jesus gives us a new hope for the future	43
<b>PART THREE:</b> A real connection	
7. Bible: We can hear God's voice	51
8. Prayer: We can seek God's help	57
9. Communion: We can know God's love	63
<b>PART FOUR:</b> A compelling lifestyle	
10. Money: Jesus enables us to lead a contented life	71
11. Sex: Jesus enables us to lead a full life	77
12. Witness: Jesus enables us to lead an attractive life	85
<b>LEADER'S GUIDE</b>	92



# INTRODUCTION

*disciple n.* 1. One of Christ's personal followers.

What does it mean to be a disciple of Jesus? What does it mean to follow him?

That's what this course is about. You may have just become a Christian and want to know what happens next. You may have been a Christian for more years than you care to remember and simply want a refresh.

We're going to explore what it looks like to follow Jesus and how Jesus enables us to keep going. We'll see that Jesus gives us a new life with a new hope in a new family. Indeed, being a Christian doesn't start with what we do, but with what Jesus has done for us. Then we'll look at how knowing Jesus changes our view of God and our obedience to God. Our connection to Jesus gives us a power for life and a hope for the future. We'll explore how we can remain connected to Jesus through the Bible, prayer and the Lord's Supper. Finally we'll look at the impact that knowing Jesus makes to key areas of our lives. It all adds up to a compelling life that will attract other people to Jesus.

You can use this course on your own, with another person or in a small group—there's a Leader's Guide at the back which gives some ideas on how to use it. If you're new to Christianity, it would be good to read it with someone who's been a Christian for a while,

someone who knows the ropes. Each session is designed so it can be done in about an hour if you've read the chapter ahead of time, or a bit more if you come without any preparation. This means you could work through each session one-to-one in a lunch break or with a small group in an evening. Don't feel you have to answer every question. It's much better to focus in on what seems most relevant to you or your group.

Following Jesus is not always easy. It can cut against the grain of our selfish desires. We can find ourselves out of step with the world around us. But it is the good life. It's a life that is full and rich, a life with purpose, a life with God, and a life that leads to eternal life.



# PART ONE

## A new life



The Christian message is the good news that Jesus has risen, conquering sin and death—and that now Jesus invites us to share his new life.

It's a life of forgiveness because sin has been overcome and it's a life of hope because death has been defeated.

It's also life in a new family, the church.

Being a Christian doesn't start with what we do; it starts with what Jesus has done for us.





# 1. GOSPEL

## We share the victory of Jesus

### **JACK'S STORY**

It felt a bit weird telling Jordan what had happened. Jack was fit to burst with excitement, but at the same time he wasn't sure how Jordan would react. It was Monday morning and they were driving to the school where they both worked.

"I went to church again yesterday," said Jack.

"Oh yeah," said Jordan, showing more interest in the traffic.

Jack explained what the preacher had said and described the invitation to become a Christian. "And that's what I did. I prayed to God. Just like that. It felt great."

"Wow, that's quite something," said Jordan. "So what happens now?"

Jack wasn't sure what to say. "We take a left down the High Street—like we always do."

Jordan laughed. "Very funny. But seriously. What does becoming a Christian actually mean? Are you going to become a monk or something?"

"No, of course not. At least, I don't think so. I don't know."

Jack thought to himself. What *had* happened?

## COLOSSIANS 1 v 15-23

Read the following extract from the Bible. They are the words of the apostle Paul. Mark any phrases you find striking or puzzling.

*<sup>15</sup> The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup> For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup> For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup> and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

*<sup>21</sup> Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. <sup>22</sup> But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— <sup>23</sup> if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

1. How do these verses describe Jesus, the Son of God?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does verse 21 describe people before they become Christians?

3. How does verse 22 describe people *after* they become Christians?
4. What has Jesus done to bring about this change?
5. How does this passage answer Jack's question?

## **WE SHARE THE VICTORY OF JESUS**

The Christian message is *good news*—that's what the word "gospel" means. Imagine a country at war. Finally a messenger arrives: "Good news—our army has triumphed". The Christian message is the good news that Jesus has triumphed.

To understand who the winners and losers are in the victory of Jesus, we need to wind the clock back to the beginning of history. God is for ever a community of three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit—full of life and love. In his love, God made a world of beauty and wonder to share his joy. But humanity rejected God's rule or "kingdom". We wanted to be gods of our own lives. We still do. This is what the Bible calls "sin". Our rebellion has put us on a collision course with God.

### **Good news and bad news**

Jesus, the Son of God, came to restore God's kingdom. That's good news because God's kingdom is a kingdom of life, freedom and joy (as Jesus repeatedly demonstrated during his life on earth). But there's a problem. The coming of God's kingdom is not good news

if you're a rebel against God—and that includes all of us. For rebels, the coming of God's kingdom means defeat and judgment.

### **The wonderful twist**

The wonderful twist in the story is that Jesus didn't judge God's enemies (that's still to come). Instead, God's judgment fell upon Jesus himself at the cross. Jesus died under God's judgment *in our place* so we could go free. He died so that the coming of God's kingdom might be good news rather than bad news. Three days later God raised him to life again as the beginning of God's new people and the Lord of God's restored kingdom.

### **THINK IT THROUGH**

1. What is the impact for us of the death of Jesus?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is the impact for us of the resurrection of Jesus?

### **First and foremost**

This means that, first and foremost...

- Christianity is *not* a project to build a better world—that's the job of Jesus, though we do get to join in.
- Christianity is *not* about trying to be good—though it does transform us.
- Christianity is *not* a new set of opinions—though it does make us see many things differently.
- Christianity is *not* becoming religious—though it will make us want to pray.

First and foremost, Christianity is about Jesus. It tells the story of his birth, life, death and resurrection. It's the good news that Jesus has defeated sin and death. As a result, Jesus gives forgiveness and eternal life to his people. Instead of being enemies of God, we've now been reconciled to God: "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviour. But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation" (v 21-22).

One day Jesus will come again to this earth to judge humanity. But Christians don't need to fear that day, because through Jesus we're now "free from accusation". So, for Christians the return of Jesus will mean the restoration of God's kingdom in a world made new—a world without suffering and sadness.

### THINK IT THROUGH

3. How has becoming a Christian changed the way you think or feel or behave?
  
4. What are some of the ways you need to continue to change?

### ACTION POINTS

Head: Ask a couple of people in your church what changed when they started following Jesus.

Heart: Are there guilty or shameful memories that haunt you? Imagine them being washed away by the work of Jesus.

Hands: You've left behind your old allegiance to sin and started a

new life with Jesus. Is there an area of your life where you still need to switch allegiance?

**NOTES**