

Faith course - Growth in faith -



Delve into the depths of the Christian faith!

„Now I trust God to take care of you. I commit you to the message about his grace. It can build you up. Then you will share in what God plans to give all his people.“

Acts 20,32

ALIVE24

Growth in Faith

Who is the "Growth in Faith" course intended for?

This document "Growth in Faith" is intended for all those who have already accepted faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and want to live consciously with Him. Growth in faith is important because we are to become more and more like Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Overview Faith Course

Growth in Faith

The faith course covers the following topics. At the end of the course there is a test where you can check whether you have absorbed the content correctly. It is advisable to take one or two lessons each week and internalise them.

Faith Course	Growth in Faith	Completed (✓)
Lesson 1	What happens when we have accepted Jesus	
Lesson 2	Dangers at the beginning of faith	
Lesson 3	Baptism and communion	
Lesson 4	Gott is all-powerful and all-knowing	
Lesson 5	Living in sanctification	
Lesson 6	Keep his word	
Lesson 7	Living in community with other Christians	
Lesson 8	Jesus is the Lord	
Lesson 9	The fruits of the Holy Spirit	
Lesson 10	Confess Jesus	
Lesson 11	Faith and works	
Lesson 12	Learning from other Christians	
Lesson 13	We are children of God and priests	
Lesson 14	Unique Israel	
Lesson 15	Revelation - an overview	
Lesson 16	Jesus is coming again	
Completion	Test	
Resolution	Test resolution	

Lesson 1

What happens when we have accepted Jesus?

What supernatural processes take place during conversion to Jesus?

The Bible describes the transformation into a child of God in several biblical passages:

2. Corinthians 5,17:

„When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here!“

Galatians 2,20:

„I have been crucified with Christ. I don't live any longer, but Christ lives in me. Now I live my life in my body by faith in the Son of God. He loved me and gave himself for me.“

1. Corinthians 6, 19-20:

„Don't you know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit? The Spirit is in you, and you have received the Spirit from God. You do not belong to yourselves. Christ has paid the price for you. So use your bodies in a way that honours God.“

The moment we give our lives to Jesus and are baptised, supernatural events take place in our lives. Through baptism, we experience the death of Jesus and the resurrection from death to new, transformed life. You receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Christ lives in you and has taken over the reigns of your life. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. We are thus a new creation. We no longer belong to ourselves, but everything we are or have belongs to Jesus. There is no one better to whom we can give our lives.

From this hour, a new era begins for you. There is no more chance in your life. Jesus takes care of you! Jesus reigns in your life. Everything is subordinate to him. You are a child of God! There is nothing more marvellous! You have regained access to the Father through Jesus' death on the cross of Golgotha. You no longer need to be afraid of dying! How marvellous! Thank the Lord for that!

Lesson 2

Rangers at the beginning of faith

We are at the beginning of our life of faith - what do we need to pay attention to?

At the beginning of our faith in Jesus, we are already a new creation and can claim all the promises, such as the certainty of eternal life, but we are still just a small plant. The plant needs to be watered and protected so that it can grow.



The devil (Satan - God's adversary) tries to snatch faith from us, especially in this young phase of faith. I am thinking here of the parable of the sower. Jesus told us that a sower sowed seed. Some of it fell on fertile ground, some on the path, on rocky ground or among thorns, where the seed did not sprout so well.

Jesus interprets the parable in Matthew 13, 19 - 23:

„People hear the message about the kingdom but do not understand it. Then the evil one comes. He steals what was planted in their hearts. Those people are like the seed planted on a path. The seed that fell on rocky places is like other people. They hear the message and at once receive it with joy. But they have no roots. So they last only a short time. They quickly fall away from the faith when trouble or suffering comes because of the message. The seed that fell among the thorns is like others who hear the message. But then the worries of this life and the false

promises of wealth crowd it out. They keep the message from producing fruit. But the seed that fell on good soil is like those who hear the message and understand it. They produce a crop 100, 60 or 30 times more than the farmer planted.“

What dangerous influences does Jesus mention that can become dangerous for us, especially at the beginning of our faith, and how can we prevent this?

- Satan comes and takes away faith
- The believer is fickle and has no roots
- Worries become so great that we no longer have time for faith
- Greed for wealth and the seemingly beautiful things in the world makes faith fade away

When we read the Bible and grow in faith, we get roots that hold us in times of crisis.

If we cast our cares on Jesus, he will take care of us. Bring all your worries to Jesus. He will help you. The Holy Spirit can take away our greed for riches if the Holy Spirit lives in us. Jesus even promises us that if our faith stands on good ground, we will bear fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold or thirtyfold. We want to experience that! That is why you continue to follow the faith growth course. How should we grow in faith?

We grow in faith when we study his word (the Bible), live a life according to Jesus' will, cultivate our relationship with Jesus and have experiences with Jesus or take the experiences of other Christians to heart.

When you realise that Satan wants to take away your faith. You realise that your interest in Jesus is fading. You realise that other things are becoming more important. Then only one thing will help. Pray to Jesus and describe what you are feeling right now. Ask him to give you faith again so that you can deepen it and hold on to it.

You can also entrust yourself to a counsellor to pray for you so that your faith in Jesus can be revived. Consciously say "yes" to Jesus again.

Lesson 3

Baptism and Communion

What is actually behind baptism and the Lord's Supper?

Baptism

After we have given our lives to Jesus Christ through prayer, a new era begins in our personal lives. Our great desire is to obey our new Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This also includes being baptised.

Matthew 28, 18 - 20

„Then Jesus came to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.’“



Here Jesus says that we should be baptised if we are disciples of Jesus. Baptism is performed by complete immersion in water. Why is full immersion important for baptism?

Another biblical passage gives us a clue:

Romans 6, 3 - 5

„All of us were baptised into Christ Jesus. Don't you know that we were baptised into his death? By being baptised, we were buried with Christ into his death. Christ has been raised from the dead by the Father's glory. And like Christ we also can live a new life. By being baptised, we have been joined with him in a death like his. So we will certainly also be joined with him in a resurrection like his.“

The person being baptised is baptised in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The baptismal process shows the holy transformation of the person being baptised. The old life is baptised into the death of Jesus Christ and buried (under water). The old life dies. The new life appears when the baptised person comes out of the water again, just as Jesus Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Immersion in water is an important process here. With baptism, we confess that we now belong to Jesus, that the old life has died and that we are now walking in the new life. Sin can no longer catch us because Jesus Christ helps us.

Communion

Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ instituted the Lord's Supper before his crucifixion. The Bible also gives an indication of how the Lord's Supper should be conducted.

1 Corinthians 11, 23 - 26

„I passed on to you what I received from the Lord. On the night the Lord Jesus was handed over to his enemies, he took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it. He said, 'This is my body. It is given for you. Every time you eat it, do it in memory of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup. He said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Every time you drink it, do it in memory of me.' You eat the bread and drink the cup. When you do this, you are announcing the Lord's death until he comes again.“

When we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we celebrate the new covenant in Jesus Christ. A corresponding reverent attitude before our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is required during the celebration. Bread and a cup of wine or grape juice are prepared. We read the text from 1 Corinthians 11:23 - 26. We then break the bread, take it and pass it on to our brothers and sisters in the Lord. In the second step, we drink from the cup and pass the cup on accordingly. The bread is no longer bread, but the broken body of our Lord Jesus. The wine

or grape juice is no longer the drink, but the blood of our Lord Jesus. It is important that we realise this. After each step, we pray to Jesus and thank him for what he has done.



In the Lord's Supper, we remember that Jesus paid our penalty by dying on the cross of Golgotha on our behalf. He gave his body and blood for us. He was the perfect sacrifice because he is sinless.

We can receive two gifts in the Lord's Supper. By eating the bread, which is Jesus' body at this moment, we are made whole in spirit, soul and body. By drinking the wine, which is now Jesus' blood, we are cleansed of our guilt.

The Lord's Supper is a deep communion with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

We may take communion as often as we wish. The Bible has no rules on this. On the other hand, we should not neglect the Lord's Supper because this means we forgo the blessing. Furthermore, we should proclaim the death of Jesus Christ with the Lord's Supper until he returns.

Lesson 4

God is all-powerful and all-knowing

How can we understand this omnipotence of God?

For many people, it is a problem to imagine a God who is omnipotent and omniscient. Because God is not physically visible to us humans, we often only look for a solution in human help and not in our God. The human media on the internet, social networks, television etc. try to talk God and his abilities down to us. In this lesson, let us try to get to know God in his greatness and omnipotence.



God is the creator of the Universe and the Earth

Firstly, we need to understand that God is the creator of the universe and the earth. Unfortunately, the creative God is being driven out of school textbooks, universities and the media and replaced by the theory of evolution. The theory of evolution is a terrible theory that destroys our childlike belief in a Creator God and thus casts doubt on the omnipotence of our God.

Hybrid forms of the theory of evolution and the Creator God are being developed, which are only an artificial construct that does not do justice to our almighty God. Only when we understand the omnipotence of our God in its fullness, depth, breadth and height will our trust in God and his Son Jesus Christ become great again.

The theory of evolution is diametrically opposed to the Bible's testimony of the creation of heaven, earth and mankind.

The following are some of the contrasts between the theory of evolution and the Bible. These arguments should help us to trust the Bible's account of creation again.

Contrasts between the creation account and the theory of evolution

	Creation report	Theory of evolution
First author	God himself; written down by Moses (source Bible)	Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace; Darwin published the book "The Origin of Species" in 1859 (source Wikipedia)
Chronological sequence of the formation of the earth, the universe and mankind	God created the earth, the sky, plants, animals and humans in 7 days	The theory of evolution assumes the development of the earth, plants, animals and humans over a long period of millions of years
First act of the history of the earth's origins	"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).	The universe was created by the Big Bang around 13.8 billion years ago.
How animals, plants and humans evolved	God created animals, plants and man through a word and with the help of the earth. God created man in his own image.	Through mutation and selection. Mutations are spontaneous changes in the genome that lead to new characteristics. Today's mutations in the body often lead to cancer. Selection is the choice of the stronger at the expense of the weaker
What does death mean?	Death is the wages of sin, i.e. the punishment for man's sin (only Jesus can forgive sin through his death on the cross of Golgotha)	Death is an important part of the theory of evolution. It is necessary for new species to emerge.
How old is the earth?	less than 10,000 years	According to the theory of evolution, the earth is around 4.54 billion years old
What are people's ancestors?	Humans are created directly by God.	Apes are a precursor to humans.
Why are there archaeological finds?	According to the Bible, a worldwide Flood took place around 4500 years ago. The entire earth was flooded and every living thing died.	Archaeological finds should help to support the theory of evolution.
The universe is perfectly attuned to human beings	In his wisdom, God created the universe for mankind. Everything is perfectly attuned to people out of love for people	Chance has created the universe perfectly.

As Christians, we believe in the Bible's account of creation. God is omnipotent and can only create with a word. The theory of evolution is an attempt to get by without God. That is why all secular media and institutes like to fall back on the theory of evolution and present the

theory as fact. What a tragedy! Christians in particular are tempted to fall into the zeitgeist and believe in the theory of evolution. What a loss of faith? How can Jesus resurrect our bodies? How does Jesus raise the dead? How does Jesus heal? Just through his word or does it take him millions of years? Jesus is omnipotent. One word is enough!

Colossians 1, 15 - 16:

„The Son is the exact likeness of God, who can't be seen. The Son is first, and he is over all creation. All things were created in him. He created everything in heaven and on earth. He created everything that can be seen and everything that can't be seen. He created kings, powers, rulers and authorities. All things have been created by him and for him.“

We praise and glorify Jesus in his omnipotence and strength. Thank you Lord Jesus! You are almighty, who rules over all created things and through Jesus everything was created. How marvellous! David praises God above his creator God in a psalm.

Psalms 19, 1 - 7

„The heavens tell about the glory of God. The skies show that his hands created them. Day after day they speak about it. Night after night they make it known. But they don't speak or use words. No sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into the whole earth. Their words go out from one end of the world to the other. God has set up a tent in the heavens for the sun. The sun is like a groom leaving the room of his wedding night. The sun is like a great runner who takes delight in running a race. It rises at one end of the heavens. Then it moves across to the other end. Everything enjoys its warmth. The law of the LORD is perfect. It gives us new strength. The laws of the LORD can be trusted. They make childish people wise.“

Jesus heals and raise the dead

We have a wonderful Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is almighty, wise and strong. We can only marvel at what Jesus did for us on the cross of Golgotha. All guilt is forgiven and we have access to the kingdom of God and can make contact with our Father in heaven. He gives us so much. He heals with his divine power and raises the dead.

Matthew 12, 10 - 13:

„A man with a weak and twisted hand was there. The Pharisees were trying to accuse Jesus of a crime. So they asked him, 'Does the Law allow us to heal on the Sabbath day?' He said to them, 'What if one of your sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath day? Won't you take hold of it and lift it out? A person is worth more than sheep! So the Law allows us to do good on the Sabbath day.' Then Jesus said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' So he stretched it out. It had been made as good as new. It was just as good as the other hand.“

One word from Jesus was enough and the man's hand was healed. What a marvellous Lord we have.

Jesus not only heals, but also raises the dead.

John 11, 39 - 44

„Take away the stone,' he said. 'But, Lord,' said Martha, the sister of the dead man, 'by this time there is a bad smell. Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days.' Then Jesus said, 'Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?' So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up. He said, 'Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me. But I said this for the benefit of the people standing here. I said it so they will believe that you sent me.' Then Jesus called in a loud voice. He said, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out. His hands and feet were wrapped with strips of linen. A cloth was around his face. Jesus said to them, 'Take off the clothes he was buried in and let him go.'“

Jesus only needs to call and the dead man comes out of the tomb. What an almighty Lord we have!

God reigns over the weather

The weather forecast can predict the next day fairly accurately. But even the second day or the whole week can be a guessing game if the weather forecast is not stable. God rules over the weather. He is omnipotent!

Psalms 135, 6 - 7:

„The LORD does anything he wants to do in the heavens and on the earth. He does it even in the deepest parts of the oceans. He makes clouds rise from one end of the earth to the other. He sends lightning with the rain. He brings the wind out of his storerooms.“

To the only wise God

God is omniscient. No one is equal to him. All wisdom is united in God and Jesus.

Romans 16, 25 - 26

„May God receive glory. He is able to strengthen your faith. He does this in keeping with the good news and the message I preach. It is the message about Jesus Christ. This message is in keeping with the mystery hidden for a very long time. The mystery has now been made known through the writings of the prophets. The eternal God commanded that it be made known. God wanted all the Gentiles to obey him by trusting in him.“

God, the Father in heaven, is the only wise God. Let us entrust ourselves to him. All wisdom and knowledge is united in him.

The Lion of the Tribe of Judah

Jesus, the Lamb of God who is to redeem the world, is now the Lion of the tribe of Judah

Revelation 5,5



„Then one of the elders said to me, ‘Do not cry! The Lion of the tribe of Judah has won the battle. He is the Root of David. He is able to break the seven seals and open the scroll.’“

Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for the world. He is sinless, holy without blemish, the sacrificial lamb of God. There was no other sacrifice available. God, the Father in heaven, sacrificed his Son on the cross of Golgotha for the redemption of the world out of love for us humans. All who accept Jesus in prayer are saved and will not perish. A little later, Jesus ascended back to heaven and there he was given all power in heaven and earth and was handed over to him.

Matthew 28, 18

„Then Jesus came to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Jesus rules over the universe and the earth. He is now the Lion of the tribe of Judah. Nothing happens without his will. However, we are living in a phase of fallen creation. During this time, Jesus has given us the freedom to do good or evil, to accept or reject Jesus. This is why Satan, God's adversary, also rules in the world. He too only has a limited time to rule. That is why we see epidemics, wars, cruelty, fraud, theft and more and more anti-Christian laws. However, as Christians we need not fear, because all the promises in the Bible will be fulfilled. Jesus will ensure this in his omnipotence. He will make sure that a madman does not drop a nuclear bomb and destroy the earth. He will make sure that the economy works. He will ensure that wars remain limited. He makes sure that evil does not spread indefinitely.

However, evil in the world will reach its peak in the last years of the earth, when all the armies of the world will fight against Israel. Then Jesus, the King of kings, the Lion of Judah, will return and will destroy all the armies of the world with his omnipotence and save Israel. Then comes the judgement and the millennial kingdom of peace, where Jesus will reign. Let us follow Jesus and trust him!

Let us look up to the only true God, the Father in heaven and his Son Jesus Christ. He created the universe, the earth and people through a word. Jesus heals people and raises

the dead through a word. One day our bodies will be resurrected by a word. Thank you Lord Jesus! We want to entrust ourselves completely to you.

Psalm 27,1

„A psalm of David. The LORD is my light, and he saves me. Why should I fear anyone? The LORD is my place of safety. Why should I be afraid?“



The almighty universe

Created by God the Father in heaven, his Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit

(The Triune God)

Lesson 5

Living in sanctification

Is it possible to live holy?

The Holy Spirit helps us to become more like Jesus. Peter writes in the Bible:

1 Peter 1, 16

„It is written, ‘Be holy, because I am holy.’“

It is important for our life of faith that we live holy lives. How do we achieve this? Not through our performance, but through Jesus' precious blood that flowed on the cross of Golgotha! To do this, it is absolutely essential that we have made a life confession, where we confess all the sins that occurred in our old life and allow Jesus to forgive us. It is helpful and desirable that we confess our sins to others (e.g. to a counsellor or a Christian whom we trust!).

1 John 1, 9:

„But God is faithful and fair. If we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure.“

Normally, this confession of guilt already takes place when we become Christians. As believers, we bring our sins to Jesus, which we become aware of or are made aware of by the Holy Spirit. It is important that we truly repent of our sins and try, with the power of Jesus, not to commit these sins again. Letting our sins be forgiven is just as important for our relationship with Jesus as breathing in and out is for our natural life. However, we will realise that we will grow in faith and be transformed more and more into the image of Jesus.

The forgiveness of guilt through Jesus will set us free. Hatred, bitterness, strife and anger will disappear. Love and peace will enter our lives.

Of course, we also long to observe the commandments of Jesus. Observing these commandments does not serve to redeem ourselves. No, we can only stand before God if we have accepted Jesus. Out of love for Jesus, because he has done everything for us, we want to serve him and observe his commandments. Here, too, the Holy Spirit helps us because living according to Jesus' will becomes our heart's desire. The New Testament shows us what we have to observe.

Ephesians 4, 17 - 30

„Here is what I'm telling you. I am speaking for the Lord as I warn you. You must no longer live as the Gentiles do. Their thoughts don't have any purpose. They can't understand the truth. They are separated from the life of God. That's because they don't know him. And they don't know him because their hearts are stubborn. They have lost all feeling for what is right. So they have given themselves over to all kinds of evil pleasures. They take part in every kind of unclean act. And they are full of

greed. But that is not the way of life in Christ that you learned about. You heard about Christ and were taught about life in him. What you learned was the truth about Jesus. You were taught not to live the way you used to. You must get rid of your old way of life. That's because it has been made impure by the desire for things that lead you astray. You were taught to be made new in your thinking. You were taught to start living a new life. It is created to be truly good and holy, just as God is. So each of you must get rid of your lying. Speak the truth to your neighbour. We are all parts of one body. Scripture says, 'When you are angry, do not sin.' Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry. Don't give the devil a chance. Anyone who has been stealing must never steal again. Instead, they must work. They must do something useful with their own hands. Then they will have something to give to people in need. Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen. Do not make God's Holy Spirit mourn. The Holy Spirit is the proof that you belong to God. And the Spirit is the proof that God will set you completely free."

Jesus' commandment is also reproduced in the following verse:

Galater 5, 14

„ The whole law is fulfilled by obeying this one command. 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself.'“

The Holy Spirit gives us a different mindset and we no longer need to obey the law, but the Holy Spirit is in us and produces good works. So we can live freely. Thank you Lord Jesus!



Lesson 6

Keeping his word

Reading the word of God is existential for believing Christians

The Bible is the Word of God and not a history book! The Bible emphasises the importance of the Word of God.

1 Peter 1, 25

„But the word of the Lord lasts for ever.’ And this is the word that was preached to you.“

Psalm 119, 105

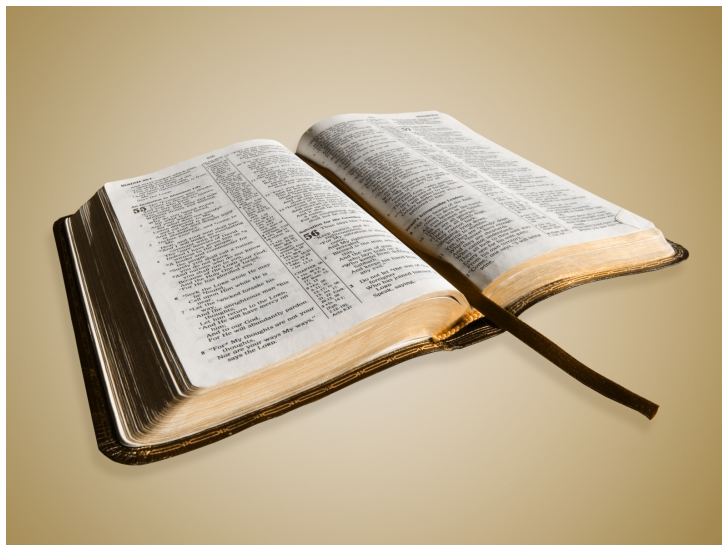
„ Your word is like a lamp that shows me the way. It is like a light that guides me.“

Hebrews 4,12

„The word of God is alive and active. It is sharper than any sword that has two edges. It cuts deep enough to separate soul from spirit. It can separate bones from joints. It judges the thoughts and purposes of the heart.“

John 1,14

„The Word became a human being. He made his home with us. We have seen his glory. It is the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father. And the Word was full of grace and truth.“



Jesus is the Word of God and the Word became man through Jesus Christ, who came into this world around 2000 years ago. Jesus and the Word of God cannot be separated.

When we engage with the Word, we know that, unlike this world, it endures forever. The Word of God is not transient, but remains for eternity. Scripture also helps us to recognise what sin is. The word of God shows me the way. It purifies my thoughts and senses in my heart. It is a double-edged sword. The Word of God also comforts us. We get to know Jesus and God. The Word of God is alive through the Holy Spirit. It has something to do with your life now and in the future.

We read the word of God in silence before Jesus. You can also call it "quiet time". Pray to Jesus before you start reading the Bible and ask him to bring the word to life for you. Withdraw for this time where you will not be disturbed. Pray to Jesus by worshipping him, praising and praising him, thanking him for everything, asking for others and for yourself. Read a passage in the Bible and think about how I can apply it to my life or what I learn about God or Jesus, am I comforted or does the word give me guidance for my life. Take time for quiet time every day. Stay in relationship with Jesus.

Don't neglect this time! I know the times when I had to force myself to have quiet time. I also know the times when I was hungry for the Word of God. The difference was mostly because I was living in sin, where quiet time became a compulsion. After the new surrender of my life to Jesus, there was a hunger for this time that the Holy Spirit brought about. I consider this quiet time to be extraordinarily important. Jesus also withdrew again and again to seek silence before his Father. We can and should pray to Jesus anytime and anywhere, but personal time with his word and in prayer to Jesus is something special. I have come to realise that this quiet time is the lifeblood of a deep relationship with Jesus. If we don't observe it, we run the risk of our relationship with Jesus being disturbed or threatened.

I can recommend the following Bible translations: Luther Translation 1984 or Schlachter 2000 Translation. Study Bibles such as the John Mac Arthur Study Bible (Schlachter 2000), Thompson Study Bible, RYRIE Study Bible or Scofield Bible are also recommended. It is also good if you have two translations so that you can use a second translation for comparison in difficult passages. As a second Bible translation, I recommend the "NEUES LEBEN" translation, which is written more in modern German and still adheres closely to the original text, or the "Neue evangelische Übersetzung" Bible, also known as the NeÜ.

There are now also good Bible apps for smartphones, such as "My Bible", which also contains several translations. For Windows PCs, there is the free Bible software "The Word" from the USA, which also contains German translations. Further translations can be purchased from the software.

Lesson 7

Living in community with other Christians

We cannot live without fellowship with other Christians.



Matthew 18,20

„Where two or three people gather in my name, I am there with them.“

Acts 2, 42

„The believers studied what the apostles taught. They shared their lives together. They ate and prayed together.“

It is a wonderful promise that Jesus is in our midst when we have fellowship with other believers. Thank you Lord!

The book of Acts describes how the first church came into being. It is important that you join a church that is faithful to the Bible. Being a Christian requires fellowship with other Christians! Even if you have to travel a long way, this fellowship with other Christians is very important. Perhaps the new church also has so-called house groups, where you can talk to other Christians in small groups about your faith, experiences of faith and your own

questions. The church is important because you can stand together under the word of God and strengthen each other. You can't do without the church. Jesus is the head of the church.

Ephesians 5, 23

„The husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church. The church is Christ's body. He is its Saviour.“

We are called to be constant in the fellowship of believers, i.e. to attend church faithfully and regularly. The Holy Spirit helps us to long for the church.

Hebrews 10, 25

„And let us not give up meeting together. Some are in the habit of doing this. Instead, let us encourage one another with words of hope. Let us do this even more as you see Christ's return approaching.“



Missing meetings already existed back then, but it is a common phenomenon today. Due to work and family commitments, people sometimes lack the energy to attend a Christian event in the evening. Sunday morning is the only day to sleep in and go on excursions. This sometimes takes higher priority than attending church on Sundays. But media and streaming services can also distract us and make attendance among Christians seem less important. But remember that we only have Jesus in our midst among Christians. In all other activities, we are usually in contact with non-Christians or watch non-Christian films or social media input. This content will put additional strain on our souls and reduce the space for Jesus. A rethink is required here! Then we can enjoy the fellowship among Christians again.

Lesson 8

Jesus is the Lord

Jesus loves us dearly and at the same time he is our Lord

As believers, we are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2, 20

„I have been crucified with Christ. I don't live any longer, but Christ lives in me. Now I live my life in my body by faith in the Son of God. He loved me and gave himself for me.“

I am alive, but it is no longer me, but Christ lives in me and has taken over. All areas of our lives are part of this. It is important that we do not keep any area to ourselves. It all belongs to Jesus.

So we should submit all areas of our lives to him. This includes, for example, our finances, our marriage, our children, our work, our health, our plans, our decisions, our time management, our priorities, our wealth, our material assets, our sexuality, etc. Are you really ready for this? As believing Christians, we must not have any secret corners that we do not entrust to Jesus.

The spirit of the time wants to tell us something different. You should realise yourself. You are in control of your life. Take your life into your own hands. Enjoy your life. But Jesus tells us the opposite. You should deny yourself. If you lose your life, you will gain it, but if you keep your life, you will lose it.

Mark 8, 34 - 35

„Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples. He said, 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must say no to themselves. They must pick up their cross and follow me. Whoever wants to save their life will lose it. But whoever loses their life for me and for the good news will save it.“

As a believing Christian, I must be ready to deny myself, even unto death. This shows us the full implications. But with Jesus there is no compromise in terms of a comfortable life. The Lord Jesus demands complete devotion from you. We are to submit and entrust all decisions to Jesus. This includes choosing a job, choosing a partner, moving house, building a house, major purchases, etc. Do you ask Jesus what you should do? Are you ready to move if the Lord wants you to? Are you attached to your neighbourhood, your house, your relatives, etc.? Who or what would you rather have than Jesus? Jesus is your Lord. You belong to Jesus. Nothing is more important than Jesus! Are you attached to your money? Do you prefer your money to Jesus? Nothing is more important than Jesus. Entrust your finances to Jesus too. Be prepared to donate to your church or mission organisations.

Are you ready to repent when the Holy Spirit exposes your sin? Are you ready to break old habits? Listen to the Spirit of God and then act! Entrust yourself completely to Jesus! He will not burden you beyond your strength! He has promised that. He wants the best for you!

Matthew 11, 28 - 30

„Come to me, all you who are tired and are carrying heavy loads. I will give you rest. Become my servants and learn from me. I am gentle and free of pride. You will find rest for your souls. Serving me is easy, and my load is light.”

Romans 8, 28

„We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose.“

So how can we know which way to go? Jesus says in John:

John 10, 27 - 29

„My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never die. No one will steal them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than anyone. No one can steal them out of my Father's hand.“

We believers are meant by the sheep. Jesus says that we will hear his voice. Jesus also says that no one can snatch us out of his hand. Thank the Lord for that! Hearing the voice of Jesus can happen in different ways. There is no formula for this. The Lord will find a way to speak to you. But there are also practical experiences from my life.

These include:

- The Lord made a word of the Bible come alive to me that resulted in me correcting my life
- Other Christians have received a word from the Lord that applied to me
- But the Lord can also speak directly. This usually doesn't happen through a loud voice, but through an impression in me. In one case, it was so clear that the whole voice of the Holy Spirit was in my whole body, telling me a prophetic word that was later fulfilled
- Sometimes I also pray that I ask Jesus to close or open paths for me. For example, I prayed for a new job and asked the Lord that I would only receive one invitation and not multiple invitations for interviews so that I would know it was the Lord's way. And so it happened.
- Paths can close
- Many wrong and right paths are described in the Bible, which Jesus no longer has to reveal to us in particular.

Complete devotion to Jesus is the foundation of our life of faith. And the Lord will also speak to you. Jesus is the Lord!

Lesson 9

The fruits of the Holy Spirit

It is not possible without the Holy Spirit

2 Corinthians 3, 18

„None of our faces are covered with a veil. All of us can see the Lord’s glory and think deeply about it. So we are being changed to become more like him so that we have more and more glory. And this glory comes from the Lord, who is the Holy Spirit.“

All of us, the believers, reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus. The believer of the new covenant can look unveiled at Jesus Christ and his glory, which is revealed in the Bible, as in a mirror. At the time of the apostle Paul, mirrors were polished metals and therefore did not provide a perfect reflection, only a faint one. Although we see the image unveiled, we will only see the glory perfectly one day.

But the verse has another important message. As believing Christians, we are being transformed into the image of Christ. This means that we experience an ongoing transformation as we walk with Jesus. We are being transformed more and more into the likeness of Christ. The Holy Spirit within us brings this about.

In this context, it must be emphasised that the Holy Spirit plays a decisive role in our Christian life. He is our helper and comforter. He reminds us of the teachings of Christ. He drives us. He exposes sin. He leads us into all truth. We receive the Holy Spirit at baptism.

Acts 2, 38

"Peter replied, ‘All of you must turn away from your sins and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Then your sins will be forgiven. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.“

We can also ask for the Holy Spirit.

Luke 11,13

„Even though you are evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children. How much more will your Father who is in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!“

The Holy Spirit is not a topic for fans. The Holy Spirit is given to us so that we as believers can live and serve at all.

The Bible doesn't say it any clearer in Romans.

Romans 8, 8-9

„Those who are under the power of sin can't please God. But you are not ruled by the power of sin. Instead, the Holy Spirit rules over you. This is true if the Spirit of God lives in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ.“

These are clear words. God's Spirit must live in us if we want to be a child of God!

The holy transformation to become more and more like Christ, which I mentioned at the beginning, happens through the Spirit of God in us. When the Spirit of God is in us, we are spiritual and no longer determined by nature. We cannot achieve this in our own strength. It happens through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit remains in us if we do not grieve him, for example through a life of sin or if we take other things more seriously than Jesus. If this is the case for you, please recommit your life to Jesus Christ and confess all your sins to him. He will then forgive your guilt with his precious blood. Ask for the Holy Spirit and walk with Jesus anew.

What fruit will you bear? How can we recognise that we have become more Christ-like? Galatians 5:16 - 26 clearly states the differences between a spiritual life and a life determined by nature. The fruits of the spirit are also mentioned there:

Galatians 5, 16 - 26

„So I say, live by the Holy Spirit's power. Then you will not do what your desires controlled by sin want you to do. The desires controlled by sin do not want what the Spirit delights in. And the Spirit does not want what the desires controlled by sin delight in. The two are at war with each other. That's why you are not supposed to do whatever you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the authority of the law. The result of sin's control in our lives is clear. It includes sexual sins, impure acts and wild living. It includes worshipping statues of gods and worshipping evil powers. It also includes hatred and fighting, jealousy and fits of anger. Sinful desire is interested only in getting ahead. It stirs up trouble. It separates people into their own little groups. It wants what others have. It gets drunk and takes part in wild parties. It does many things of that kind. I warn you now as I did before. People who live like this will not receive God's kingdom. But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed their sinful desires to his cross. They don't want these things anymore. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become proud. Let us not make each other angry. Let us not want what belongs to others.“

The following overview shows the difference between a spiritual life and a life determined by nature:

Life determined by nature

Description	Notes
sexual immorality, immorality, fornication	
Debauchery	Indiscipline, licentiousness
Idolatry	Idolatry also includes greed
Magic	Occult, witchcraft, magic
Hostility	
Quarrels and jealousy	
Outbursts of anger, bickering, discord	
Divisions, intrigues	
Envy	
Drink a lot of alcohol and eat a lot (wild living)	
and things like that	

Spiritual life (Spiritual fruits)

Description	Notes
Love	It denotes voluntary love characterised by respect, reverence and affection. Love leads to willing service.
Joy	Joy that is a heavenly joy based on the revelations of the Word of God.
Peace	The peace that comes from the inner calm that we are saved.
Patience	The patience that also endures injustice and annoying and painful situations.
Kindness	Meeting people with kindness.
Goodness	to be kind; to agree in kindness
Faithfulness	Faithfulness is shown by the fact that we are committed to attending church events; faithfulness in marriage, e.g. also being loyal to our employer.
Sanfmut	Meekness is a humble attitude and does not desire retribution and revenge
Self-control	Self-control has to do with our carnal desires and leads to abstinence and a disciplined lifestyle.

Jesus says in John 15, 5:

„I am the vine. You are the branches. If you remain joined to me, and I to you, you will bear a lot of fruit. You can't do anything without me.“

Without Jesus, without the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing. We will not achieve the fruits of the Spirit through our own efforts! The Holy Spirit produces the fruits. We become more and more like Christ over time when we follow Jesus. Let us shed the life determined by nature through the power of the Holy Spirit!



Lesson 10

Confess Jesus

All people need Jesus - please invite people in your neighbourhood to Jesus.

Invite people to Jesus

Matthew 28, 18 - 20

„ Then Jesus came to them. He said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you, to the very end.’“

Matthew 10, 32 - 33

„‘What if someone says in front of others that they know me? I will also say in front of my Father who is in heaven that I know them. But what if someone says in front of others that they don’t know me? I will say in front of my Father who is in heaven that I don’t know them.’“

Jesus says very clearly that we should go out into the world to make disciples. Jesus prefaces this statement by saying that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to him, thereby emphasising his power to also give his disciples a command to missionary work.

In the second verse, Jesus says that he promises us that if we confess him before other people, he will also confess us before the heavenly Father. The same applies in reverse if we do not confess him before people or even deny Jesus. This is a clear warning!

One thing is also clear: we should not tell people the gospel out of fear. My experience is that the more I get involved with Jesus, the clearer the need of unbelievers becomes to me. The Holy Spirit shows me the plight of unbelievers who are running to eternal destruction.

Do you really not care that your fellow human beings are eternally lost? Certainly not! Some will hear the clear call to mission through the Holy Spirit. These sisters and brothers should take this call seriously and heed it! For example, they can train in a Bible school or learn a profession that is needed in the mission field, such as nursing. However, there will also be many believing Christians who have a normal job or are housewives and have not received a special call to missions. Are we then exempt from Jesus' Great Commission? Certainly not! We will then fulfil our missionary mandate in our immediate surroundings. What options do we have? For example, we can take part in missionary outreaches of the church we are a member of. I also believe very strongly in always being ready for mission. What do I mean by that?

In conversations with our neighbours or work colleagues or other fellow human beings, there are always opportunities to point to Jesus. In my experience, most conversations bring up needs and problems where we can point to Jesus, who cares for us. It is also a good idea to ask people in need if you can pray for them. Very few people will refuse. In addition, our fellow human beings will also bring up the subject of God on their own, for example in the canteen or on business trips. Then we urgently need to tell them about Jesus.

It can also happen that other people make fun of God and Jesus. Then we must not remain silent!

In addition, the Holy Spirit will also show us people who we should approach or who are sent to us. This can also happen on the street. Then we should also approach these people and tell them about Jesus.

For me, it is always helpful to have Christian brochures or leaflets with me that I can give to people. With work colleagues, I usually try to confess my faith when I have a favourable opportunity. You can also give them a Christian brochure or refer them to my Christian website, for example (www.alive24.online).

It is also important to know that although we should confess our faith, we are not responsible for the conversion of our fellow human beings. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. We can pray for this!

Jesus also said that there will be people who totally reject the faith and that we should not throw the gospel to the swine (see Matthew 7:6). The disciples were to leave the villages where they were not accepted. We do not have to spread the gospel by force, but should seek the open hearts of our fellow human beings and tell them the gospel. There will be many people who are open to it and very much seeking it. We may also pray for people who obviously reject the gospel. The Lord can also open the hearts of these people.

If you say you can't because you are afraid of people, then pray to Jesus to take away your fear. Be sure that the Lord Jesus is always with you and that he has all power over heaven and earth and that you don't need to be afraid of anyone! The more you get involved with Jesus, the more you will feel the Holy Spirit within you, who will guide you.

Thank the Lord Jesus for giving us faith and eternal life, and out of gratitude we do not want to withhold the gospel from our fellow human beings, but approach them with Jesus!

Lesson 11

Faith and works

What about works in the Christian faith?

We can never earn salvation through deeds and works. We will never achieve it because we are sinners. Only through Jesus' death on the cross of Golgotha are we righteous before God if we accept faith. By grace alone! Out of gratitude for this, we will serve Jesus and do good works.

Matthew 5, 14 - 16

„You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill can't be hidden. Also, people do not light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand. Then it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine so others can see it. Then they will see the good things you do. And they will bring glory to your Father who is in heaven.“

The Lord Jesus will help us to do good works!

Services:

As believing Christians, we want to serve Jesus out of gratitude for the fact that he has saved us. There are many opportunities to do this in the church or outside the church. Pray to Jesus and tell him that you want to serve him. He will put a task on your heart that you should do. It is also important to remember that we should not stress ourselves out and think that the more we do, the more it will please Jesus. Above all, we should serve Jesus and not perform out of our own strength and subliminally pat ourselves on the back. We should serve Jesus with simplicity and humility.

What opportunities are there to serve, for example?

- We can get involved in children's work
- We can be involved in youth work
- We can be involved in young adult work
- We can get involved in youth work
- We can become lay preachers
- We can visit the sick
- We can visit the elderly
- We can care for the poor and the asocial
- We can do missionary work (distribute tracts, speak to people, perhaps even open a Christian website)
- We can lead a home group
- We can help out in the kitchen at community events
- We can contribute our musical skills
- We can pray for our fellow human beings
- We can get involved in the technology so that the technology for worship works

- We can work in the welcome service (in the community environment)

There are a multitude of ways in which we can use our God-given talents. However, we must remember that everything such as work, the household, marriage, family tasks, our own children and the church must be in balance and that we must not neglect tasks in the family, for example, at the expense of another activity. May the Lord give us wisdom about this. Let us ask the Lord much more about what we should or should not do and not allow ourselves to be pressurised by others or by our own ambition. The Lord knows exactly what you can and cannot do. The Holy Spirit will show you the right and appropriate task.



Lesson 12

Learning from other Christians

We can benefit from the Christian knowledge of the last 2000 years!

We have the great advantage of living in an age where we can find out about the Christian faith from a wealth of books, films and the internet. It is also advisable to read the faith experiences of other Christians for your own encouragement or guidance. Reference works such as concordances, Bible encyclopaedias and commentaries are also helpful. We no longer have to labour over many things because others have already worked them out, from which we can benefit.

There are also good devotional books for quiet time that explain the Bible text. We can also attend seminars or faith conferences to learn from the experiences of others.

In addition to the many sources of information, the Bible, the Word of God, should remain the most important book that we read prayerfully in our daily quiet time. There are also Christian role models, e.g. in the Christian community, from whom we can learn a lot.



Lesson 13

We are children of God and priests

What it means to be a child of God and a priest?

We are children of God

We can count ourselves lucky to be a child of God if we have accepted Jesus and live with him. This is not our merit, but a gift from Jesus Christ. This gift was bought by Jesus at great cost through his death on the cross of Golgotha. All the more reason for us to rejoice in being a child of God.



Romans 8, 13 - 17

„If you live under the power of sin, you will die. But by the Spirit’s power you can put to death the sins you commit. Then you will live. Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. The Spirit you received doesn’t make you slaves. Otherwise you would live in fear again. Instead, the Holy Spirit you received made you God’s adopted child. By the Spirit’s power we call God Abba. Abba means Father. The Spirit himself joins with our spirits. Together they tell us that we are God’s children. As his children, we will receive all that he has for us. We will share

what Christ receives. But we must share in his sufferings if we want to share in his glory.“

When we have given our lives to Jesus and are baptised, we receive the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God helps us to be governed by him and not by our desires. We will discard our old behaviours and follow Jesus. Then the Spirit of God will confirm to us that we are God's children. We want to retain and learn to appreciate this status of being children of God. This makes us sons and daughters of God who can speak directly to our Father in heaven and address God intimately as "Daddy", "Father". The almighty God in heaven is our heavenly Father. Only through his precious Son Jesus Christ can we be children of God. Thank you Lord Jesus! As children, we can share in Jesus' glory later on and also receive an inheritance, even if we still live in the fallen creation and sometimes have to suffer. As sons and daughters, we belong to the family of God and are not strangers in God's house.

Ephesians 2, 19

„So you are no longer outsiders and strangers. You are citizens together with God's people. You are also members of God's family.“

Thank you, thank you, thank you Mr Jesus!!!!

We are priests

Being a priest sounds strange to modern ears at first. What does that even mean?

At the time of the Old Testament, the priesthood was a high office. They were set apart from the rest of the population and were given special rights. At Sinai, Moses was commissioned by God to ordain his brother Aron and his sons as priests of God. This limited Israel's priestly service to them. The priests were the mediators between God and the people. They had to represent the people of Israel before God. Only the priests had direct access to God and did not have to die when they came close to God.

What does the priesthood look like today?

The New Testament does not recognise a priesthood for the Christian community as was customary in the Old Testament. Nevertheless, we need a mediator between God and people because God is holy. For us Christians, Jesus Christ is the mediator between God and us. The only way to God is through Jesus. Jesus is therefore called a "priest after the order of Melchisedec". Melchisedec was king of Salem and priest of God Most High and has a special role in the priesthood, just like Jesus.

We read more about this in Hebrews:

Hebrews 5, 1- 10

„Every high priest is chosen from among the people. He is appointed to act for the people. He acts for them in whatever has to do with God. He offers gifts and sacrifices for their sins. Some people have gone astray without knowing it. He is

able to deal gently with them. He can do that because he himself is weak. That's why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins. He must also do it for the sins of the people. And no one can take this honour for himself. Instead, he receives it when he is appointed by God. That is just how it was for Aaron. It was the same for Christ. He did not take for himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him, 'You are my Son. Today I have become your Father.' In another place God said, 'You are a priest for ever, just like Melchizedek.' Jesus prayed while he lived on earth. He made his appeal with sincere cries and tears. He prayed to the God who could save him from death. God answered Jesus because he truly honoured God. Jesus was God's Son. But by suffering he learned what it means to obey. In this way he was made perfect. Eternal salvation comes from him. He saves all those who obey him. God appointed him to be the high priest, just like Melchizedek."

The priests of that time were appointed by God. No one could appoint themselves as a priest. The priests not only had to sacrifice for the sins of the people, but also for their own sins. Jesus was appointed high priest by God. Jesus gave himself as a sacrifice on the cross of Golgotha for the guilt of the people. He was the perfect sacrifice because Jesus was sinless. He was obedient to God even unto death. Jesus was therefore able to offer eternal salvation to all people who accept him as Saviour and Lord. God himself exalted Jesus and appointed him as high priest in the manner of Melchisedec. Jesus is the mediator between us humans and God. Only with Jesus can we come to God.

John 14,6

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'"

Through Jesus, we believing Christians also have access to God, our Father in heaven, just like the priests in those days. Jesus Christ makes us a royal people and priests, whereby Jesus is the King and the High Priest. We are also mediators between people and God. We can come before God and stand up for people.

Offenbarung 1, 4 - 6

„I, John, am writing this letter. I am sending it to the seven churches in Asia Minor. May grace and peace come to you from God. He is the one who is, and who was, and who will come. May grace and peace come to you from the seven spirits. These spirits are in front of God's throne. May grace and peace come to you from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness, so what he has shown can be trusted. He was the first to rise from the dead. He rules over the kings of the earth. Glory and power belong to Jesus Christ who loves us! He has set us free from our sins by pouring out his blood for us. He has made us members of his royal family. He has made us priests who serve his God and Father. Glory and power belong to Jesus Christ for ever and ever! Amen.“

What a gift that we are allowed to be priests, children of God and a royal people.

Thank you, thank you, thank you Lord Jesus!!!



Lesson 14

Unique Israel

Why should we as Christians love Israel?

The Jews, the chosen people

The Jews are the chosen people of God. Placed in the fallen creation.

Isaiah 43, 1

„Family of Jacob, the LORD created you. People of Israel, he formed you. He says, ‘Do not be afraid. I will set you free. I will send for you by name. You belong to me.’“

The history of Israel began with the man Abraham. He had contact with God and God commanded him to leave his home in Ur in Chaldea with his family and servants and move to Canaan. God promised that he would become a great nation and that the land of Canaan would become an eternal possession. In the old age of Abraham and his wife Sarah, God gave them their son Isaac. Isaac's grandson Jacob became the founder of the people of Israel. Jacob's sons are the progenitors of the people of Israel. The tribes of Israel were: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin. The largest tribe was Judah. This is where the term "Jew" or "Jewish people" comes from. The line of blessing went from the tribe of Judah via King David to God's Son Jesus Christ.

Satan, the adversary of God

Satan, God's adversary, has been fighting against the people of God from time immemorial in order to prevent the first appearance and the coming second coming of Jesus, the Son of God. This is why there has been resistance against the Jews for many centuries, right up to the Holocaust in the Second World War, when around 6 million Jews were killed. Jesus is a Jew and comes from the chosen people of God from the tribe of Judah.

Matthew 1, 1 - 2

„This is the written story of the family line of Jesus the Messiah. He is the son of David. He is also the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac. Isaac was the father of Jacob. Jacob was the father of Judah and his brothers.“

Satan could not prevent the first appearance of Jesus in this world and his victory on the cross of Golgotha. He also defeated Satan. Satan was given a short time to work, but Jesus is stronger. All those who believe in Jesus need not fear Satan.

Salvation comes from the Jews

Salvation comes from the Jews because Jesus Christ was a Jew who brought salvation to mankind.

John 4, 22

„You Samaritans worship what you do not know. We worship what we do know. Salvation comes from the Jews.“

The worldwide dispersion of the Jews

The Jewish people were scattered throughout the world. The diaspora (meaning dispersion) began with the Babylonian exile (around 722 BC) and triggered another wave after the destruction of Jerusalem (around 70 AD).

The State of Israel is founded

The State of Israel has existed since 14 May 1948, and since then many Jews around the world have been flocking back to Israel.



Israel and the Christians

Christians are to bless and comfort the people of Israel (Genesis 12:3):

"I will bless those who bless you. I will put a curse on anyone who puts a curse on you. All nations on earth will be blessed because of you."“

and Isaiah 40,1:

"‘Comfort my people,’ says your God. ‘Comfort them.’“

As believing Christians, we are to bless and comfort Israel. How can we do this? We can pray for Israel. We do not participate in nasty comments about Jews. We can buy products from the land of Israel to support the economy. We can travel to the land of Israel to support it. We can donate. Let's start with that!

Lesson 15

Revelation of the Bible - an overview

Don't miss the chance to delve into the last book of the Bible?

Right at the beginning of Revelation, the readers are described as happy, although the last book of the Bible also describes the harsh developments of recent times.

Revelation 1,3

„Blessed is the one who reads out loud the words of this prophecy. Blessed are those who hear it and think everything it says is important. The time when these things will come true is near.“

The interpretation of Revelation is not easy and there are different views on this. We should not argue about this. The best strategy is to recognise the words as fact and real and to surrender completely to the Holy Spirit as he interprets the Word to us. Many things that we read there often only become very clear when time has progressed and we recognise things that we can imagine today compared to the past.

It is really worth devoting some time to the last book of the Bible, because it enables us to better understand world events, even if we don't know the exact timetable. Nevertheless, Revelation gives us a guideline and also tangible events that help us to better judge the times. However, one should always be careful when trying to judge the time. Jesus said in his end-time discourse that we should certainly look at the times.

Matthew 24, 32 - 33

„Learn a lesson from the fig tree. As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. In the same way, when you see all these things happening, you know that the end is near. It is right at the door.“

However, we can only judge the things of the last days if we read the prophetic word of the Bible.

The Revelation of John was written around 95 A.D. The Revelation looks into the future with the climax of the return of Jesus and a further vision of what will happen after the return of Jesus.

First part of the revelation

The first part describes who the prophetic words are for and how John was commissioned to write the Revelation.

Jesus Christ reveals the prophetic words from God in order to give them to his servant John.

Revelation 1, 4 - 6

„I, John, am writing this letter. I am sending it to the seven churches in Asia Minor. May grace and peace come to you from God. He is the one who is, and who was, and who will come. May grace and peace come to you from the seven spirits. These spirits are in front of God's throne. May grace and peace come to you from Jesus Christ. He is the faithful witness, so what he has shown can be trusted. He was the first to rise from the dead. He rules over the kings of the earth. Glory and power belong to Jesus Christ who loves us! He has set us free from our sins by pouring out his blood for us. He has made us members of his royal family. He has made us priests who serve his God and Father. Glory and power belong to Jesus Christ for ever and ever! Amen.“

John sends greetings to the seven churches in Asia and wishes them grace and peace from Jesus Christ. Jesus is merciful to us because he did not condemn us, but saved us through his precious blood. He is also the peacemaker who can give us supernatural peace.

John describes Jesus:

- Jesus is a credible witness
- Is the first to rise from the dead to eternal life
- Is the Lord over the rulers of the earth
- Jesus loves us
- Jesus has cleansed us from our sins
- He has made us a royal people and priests to the Father in heaven
- Jesus deserves honour and power for ever and ever

God is described as follows:

- God is always present
- God has always been there
- God sits on the throne (seven spirits are before the throne)

Jesus will return with the clouds. No one will miss that. Everyone will see him then. This will be painful for many, all those who are not united with Jesus.

Revelation 1, 7 - 8

„Look! He is coming with the clouds!' 'Every eye will see him. Even those who pierced him will see him.' All the nations of the earth 'will mourn because of him.' This will really happen! Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End,' says the Lord God. 'I am the God who is, and who was, and who will come. I am the Mighty One.'“

John sees Jesus

John was sent into exile on the island of Patmos. There he received the great vision.

Revelation 1, 10 - 11

„The Holy Spirit gave me a vision on the Lord’s Day. I heard a loud voice behind me that sounded like a trumpet. The voice said, ‘Write on a scroll what you see. Send it to the seven churches in Asia Minor. They are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.’“

John got a big fright when he saw Jesus.

Revelation 1, 12 - 20

„I turned round to see who was speaking to me. When I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands. In the middle of them was someone who looked ‘like a son of man.’ He was dressed in a long robe with a gold strip of cloth around his chest. The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow. His eyes were like a blazing fire. His feet were like bronze metal glowing in a furnace. His voice sounded like rushing waters. He held seven stars in his right hand. Coming out of his mouth was a sharp sword with two edges. His face was like the sun shining in all its brightness. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as if I were dead. Then he put his right hand on me and said, ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One. I was dead. But now look! I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys to Death and Hell. ‘So write down what you have seen. Write about what is happening now and what will happen later. Here is the meaning of the mystery of the seven stars you saw in my right hand. They are the angels of the seven churches. And the seven golden lampstands you saw stand for the seven churches.’“

What a fascination to see Jesus. Beautiful, almighty, loving, marvellous and indescribable, but tangible. We may see Jesus when he returns or when we die as believing Christians. Look forward to it. It will be an indescribable joy that beats everything in this world.

The following events are now mainly presented in pictures so that you can get a better overview of Revelation.

The seven communities



Who is worthy?

Revelation 5, 9 - 14

„Here is the new song they sang. ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and break open its seals. You are worthy because you were put to death. With your blood you bought people for God. They come from every tribe, people and nation, no matter what language they speak. You have made them members of a royal family. You have made them priests to serve our God. They will rule on the earth.’ Then I looked and heard the voice of millions and millions of angels. They surrounded the throne. They surrounded the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they were saying, ‘The Lamb, who was put to death, is worthy! He is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength! He is worthy to receive honour and glory and praise!’ All creatures in heaven, on earth, under the earth, and on the sea were speaking. The whole creation was speaking. I heard all of them say, ‘Praise and honour belong to the one who sits on the throne and to the Lamb! Glory and power belong to God for ever and ever!’ The four living creatures said, ‘Amen’. And the elders fell down and worshipped.“

Who is worthy to take the book? It is Jesus Christ, who has redeemed us if we believe in him!

The seven seals and the seven trumpets

The seven seals

Revelation 6, 1 - 8,5



1. Seal: White horse - Victorious



2. Seal: Fired red horse - War and death



3. Seal: Black horse - Inflation



4. Seal: Pale horse - war, hunger, epidemics, wild animals



5. Seal: The souls under the altar who died for their faith



6. Seal: Great earthquake, stars fall to earth



7. Seal: Silence in heaven, golden censer on the golden altar

The seven trumpets

Revelation 8,7 - 11,19



1. trumpet: Hail, fire with blood (one third of the earth's surface burns)



2. trumpet: Great burning mountain (a third of the sea turned to blood)



3. trumpet: Star named "Wormwood" crashes to earth (one third of drinking water to wormwood)



4. trumpet: Darkening by one third



5. trumpet: Locusts that could sting like scorpions



6. trumpet: A third of humanity dies at the hands of troops



7. trumpet: Dominion over the world belongs to Jesus Christ

The leading actors and the seven bowls of wrath

Leading actors

Revelation 11,1 - 13,18

1.	The two witnesses
2.	A woman: Israel
3.	The dragon: Satan
4.	A male child: Christ
5.	The Archangel Michael
6.	The remnant of the redeemed of Israel
7.	The beast from the sea: The Antichrist
8.	The beast from the earth: The false prophet

The seven bowls of wrath

Revelation 15,1 - 16,21



1. bowl of wrath: malignant ulcers



2. bowl of wrath: Sea turns to blood



3. bowl of wrath: All water becomes blood (springs, rivers)



4. bowl of wrath: Great heat



5. bowl of wrath: Eclipse



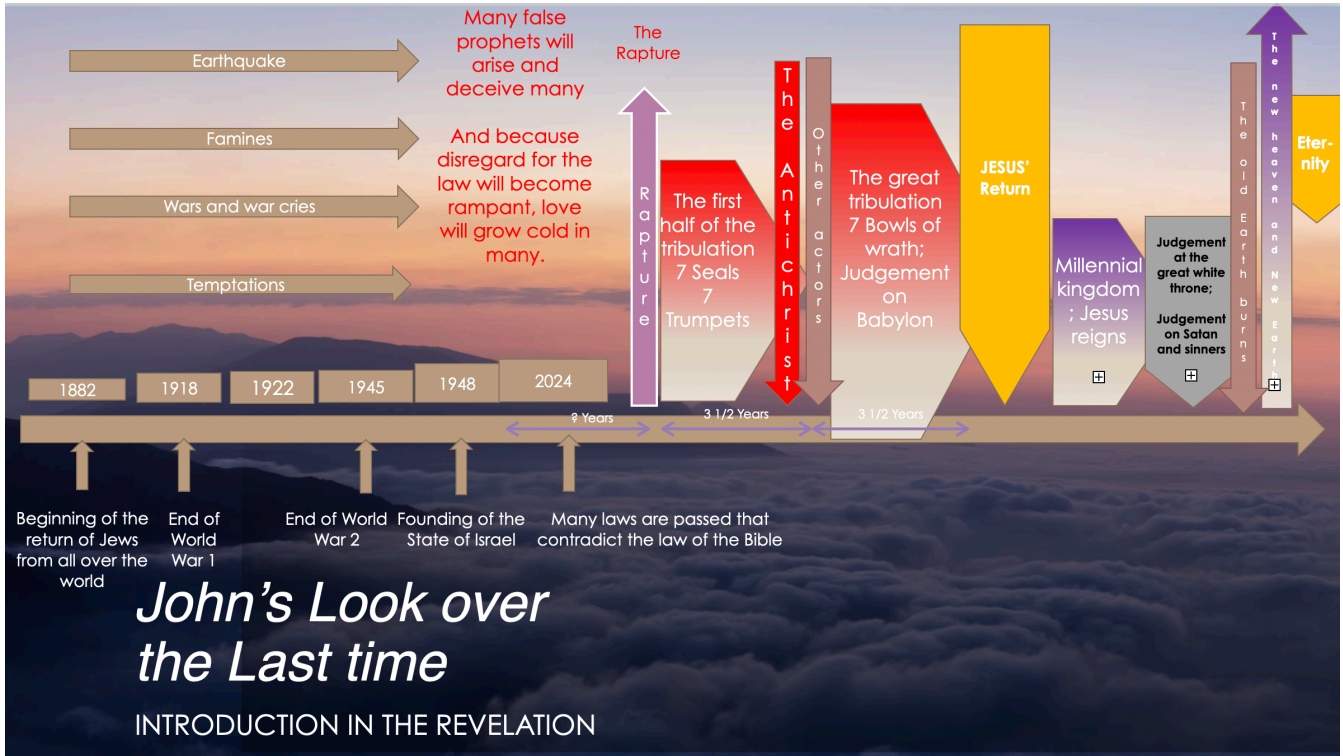
6. bowl of wrath: The Euphrates river dries up



7. bowl of wrath: Terrible earthquake

Timing of the end-time processes

The following diagram shows the end-time processes according to Revelation with additions from Matthew and the Epistles of Peter and Thessalonians:



Lesson 16

Jesus is coming again

Jesus is coming again We are looking forward to Jesus' return and the Rapture

Luke 12, 35 - 40:

"Be dressed and ready to serve. Keep your lamps burning. Be like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding dinner. When he comes and knocks, they can open the door for him at once. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready when he comes. What I'm about to tell you is true. The master will then dress himself so he can serve them. He will let them take their places at the table. And he will come and wait on them. It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready. It will even be good if he comes in the middle of the night or towards morning. But here is what you must understand. Suppose the owner of the house knew at what hour the robber was coming. He would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready. The Son of Man will come at an hour when you don't expect him."

Titus 2,11 - 13:

"God's grace has now appeared. By his grace, God offers to save all people. His grace teaches us to say no to godless ways and sinful desires. We must control ourselves. We must do what is right. We must lead godly lives in today's world. That's how we should live as we wait for the blessed hope God has given us. We are waiting for Jesus Christ to appear in his glory. He is our great God and Saviour."

The Lord invites us to expect his return on this earth. We should always have the attitude that we are expecting Jesus and are ready to receive him immediately. We should wait for him. How do we do that? I think it is a good opportunity to consciously await the Lord in the quiet time and to fully expect this event during the day. By the way: the Lord wants us to wait for him today, even if it turns out later that the Lord has only returned in the next generation. Why? Because it gives us a glimpse of the heavenly future and we are not caught up in this world.

In 2 Peter 1,19 it says:

"We also have the message of the prophets. This message can be trusted completely. You must pay attention to it. The message is like a light shining in a dark place. It will shine until the day Jesus comes. Then the Morning Star will rise in your hearts."

We should pay attention to the prophecies in the Bible and the latest world news. In this way, we can prevent ourselves from falling for false prophecies or fear scenarios. We need

not fear the future because Jesus holds the future in his hands. However, all the events that are written in the Bible will come to pass. There will be a time of tribulation and terrible events. But the Lord will come again!

The waiting attitude that we can read in 1 John 3,3 fulfils another important task:

"Christ is pure. All who hope to be like him make themselves pure." *This refers to Jesus' return.*

The possible return of Jesus Christ at any time protects us from sin. Would you give in to your sinful desires if you were expecting Jesus to return now? How ashamed we should be if Jesus returns at the moment he finds us in a sinful act.

Let us wait for the return of Jesus, not out of fear, but in joyful expectation of seeing our Lord again, in whom we believe. The next event to come is the Rapture. The rapture of the church can take place at any time without notice. Let us look forward to it!

The return of Jesus is described in Revelation 19,11-21:

„I saw heaven standing open. There in front of me was a white horse. Its rider is called Faithful and True. When he judges or makes war, he is always fair. His eyes are like blazing fire. On his head are many crowns. A name is written on him that only he knows. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood. His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses. They were dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of the rider's mouth is a sharp sword. He will strike down the nations with the sword. Scripture says, 'He will rule them with an iron sceptre.' He tramples on the grapes of God's winepress. The winepress stands for the terrible anger of the God who rules over all. Here is the name that is written on the rider's robe and on his thigh. The greatest King of all and the most powerful Lord of all I saw an angel standing in the sun. He shouted to all the birds flying high in the air, 'Come! Gather together for the great supper of God. Come and eat the dead bodies of kings, generals, and other mighty people. Eat the bodies of horses and their riders. Eat the bodies of all people, free and slave, great and small.' Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies. They had gathered together to make war against the rider on the horse and his army. But the beast and the false prophet were captured. The false prophet had done signs for the beast. In this way the false prophet had tricked some people. Those people had received the mark of the beast and had worshipped its statue. The beast and the false prophet were thrown alive into the lake of fire. The lake of fire burns with sulphur. The rest were killed by the sword that came out of the rider's mouth. All the birds stuffed themselves with the dead bodies.“

Test

Tick the correct answer from your point of view. There are always three answers to the question. Only one answer is correct at a time. You will find the correct answers on the page after the test.

Lesson	Your choice (X)	Answers
Lesson 1		What happens when I have accepted Jesus
If we have accepted Jesus, we want to obey Jesus. We start our new life with two new activities. What are they?		We are usually baptised as children and are received into the church as young people
1.2		When we give our lives to Jesus and are subsequently baptised, supernatural events take place. Jesus moves into our hearts through his Holy Spirit. He transforms our lives.
1.3		The surrender of my life happens in a prayer. My guilt is forgiven through Jesus. Baptism is not so important and can be omitted.
Lesson 2		Dangers at the beginning of faith
How can we prevent Satan from taking away our young faith?		We cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus. We read the Bible and stay in relationship with Jesus through prayer. In this way, Satan cannot attack us.
2.1		
2.2		I believe in Jesus and that's why I don't worry about Satan.
2.3		I try to hold on to my faith through my own strength. Then nothing can happen to me.
Lesson 3		Baptism and communion
If we have accepted Jesus, we want to obey Jesus. We start our new life with two new activities. What are they?		Jesus wants us to be baptised and to take part in the Lord's Supper in the future. Through baptism we publicly demonstrate our new life and with communion we bear witness to Jesus' death until he returns.
3.1		
3.2		Since I was baptised as a child, there is only the activity of the Lord's Supper to fulfil
3.3		I live with Jesus. But legal activities are not planned.

Lesson	Your choice (X)	Answers
Lesson 4		God is omnipotent and omniscient
The Bible says that the earth was created by God. Today there are many theories about the creation of the earth. Which one is correct? 4.1		Even though I am a Christian, I believe in the theory of evolution because it has been confirmed by science.
4.2		God is omnipotent and omniscient. God created the earth and mankind within 7 days.
4.3		As a Christian, I know that there is the theory of evolution and the belief in creation. God created the earth, but it also took millions of years.
Lesson 5		Living in sanctification
The Bible says that we should live holy lives. How do we do that? 5.1		We must put the laws of the Bible into practice with our own strength. Then we will become more like Jesus.
5.2		The holiness of man is never achieved. That's why I don't strive for it. Jesus forgives my sins.
5.3		We do not become holy through our own strength. The Holy Spirit, who lives in us, produces good works. He transforms us bit by bit into the image of Jesus.
Lesson 6		Keep his word
When we have become Christians. Do we still need the Bible then? 6.1		Because we are mature Christians, we no longer need the word of God.
6.2		The Bible is a very old book, so I supplement it with modern Christian books. That's enough for me.
6.3		The Bible is the living Word of God. The Holy Spirit brings the Bible to life for us. The Bible is important for our Christian life.
Lesson 7		In Living in community with other Christians
Why is fellowship with other Christians important? 7.1		Fellowship among Christians is important because Jesus is among us. Fellowship among Christians is an image of heaven.
7.2		Nowadays we can stream church services via YouTube. I no longer need to attend church.
7.3		Family is at the centre of our lives and it's also important to go on outings on Sunday mornings because we finally have time. So the church service has to be cancelled from time to time.

Lesson	Your choice (X)	Answers
Lesson 8		Jesus is the Lord
Jesus is our Lord. How does this manifest itself in life? 8.1		Today, it's important to put your life centre stage via Tik Tok or Instagram. I want my ego to take centre stage. That's why I adapt my Christianity a little.
8.2		Jesus is our Lord. That is why I place all areas of my life under his rule. Jesus sits on my throne and no longer my "I".
8.3		Due to the many streaming services Netflix, Amazon Prime, Paramount etc., I had to limit my time with Jesus somewhat.
Lesson 9		The fruits of the Holy Spirit
We have had the Holy Spirit as our helper since Jesus ascended to heaven. How does the Holy Spirit work in the life of a Christian? 9.1		The Holy Spirit dwells within us and is our helper and comforter. He transforms us into the image of Jesus. He also exposes our sin. As Christians, we cannot live without the Holy Spirit.
9.2		The Holy Spirit is only for fans. He doesn't play a major role in our Christian lives.
9.3		We are warned about the Holy Spirit. We have already heard about extreme churches. We don't want to get involved.
Lesson 10		Confess Jesus
When Jesus left the earth, he said that we Christians should go into all the world and spread the good news. How do we put this into practice in our lives? 10.1		We support missionary organisations, which is why we no longer evangelise personally.
10.2		Even if we support missionary organisations, we want to use opportunities to tell others about Jesus.
10.3		Today, there are many opportunities for non-Christians to learn about the Christian faith (internet, social media, missionary organisations, etc.). Therefore, we no longer need to be active and witness our faith.
Lesson 11		Faith and works
We cannot earn salvation personally. Should we nevertheless accept ministries in the church? 11.1		Jesus gives us salvation through his death on the cross of Golgotha because he paid for our guilt there. We cannot earn our salvation. It is a gift. Out of gratitude for this, we gladly accept ministries in the church.
11.2		There are many active Christians in our community. That's why I no longer got involved.
11.3		I am not active because there is no task for me.

Lesson	Your choice (X)	Answers
Lesson 12		Learning from other Christians
We can also learn from other Christians. Is that important for us? 12.1		For me, only my own experiences with the Christian faith count.
12.2		I am cautious about the experiences of Christians from earlier times. Today we are much further along in terms of realisation. That's why I only read current content.
12.3		You can learn a great deal for your own faith from the fathers of faith, as well as content from the Reformation period, the revival period and also from current authors.
Lektion 13		We are children of God and priests
It is a gift to be a child of God. Are we also priests? 13.1		At the time of the Old Testament, priests were appointed as mediators to God. Today there are no more priests.
13.2		Priests were appointed at the time of the Old Testament. The New Testament does not recognise a priesthood for the Christian community. Jesus Christ is our High Priest, the mediator between us and God. Without Jesus, we could not come before God. If we are Christians, we are also priests because we are allowed to come before God and can be mediators between people and God.
13.3		Priests were appointed in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ was appointed as high priest. Christians are children of God, but not priests.
Lesson 14		Unique Israel
The Jews are God's chosen people. They play a major role in the Old Testament. The New Testament was a turning point in time. Are the Jews important in the New Testament? 14.1		The Jews are important. Salvation came into the world through the Jews because Jesus was a Jew. We Christians are a common people with the Christian Jews. The Jews are the root and we are only "grafted" into the olive tree. Without the Jews, we would also be lost in the New Testament.
14.2		The Jews are important because they laid the foundation for Christians in the Old Testament. Due to the current politics in Israel, Christians do not necessarily have to be on Israel's side.
14.3		It is indeed impressive that the state of Israel was founded in 1948. But with the beginning of the New Testament, the Jews no longer play a role with God.

Lesson	Your choice (X)	Answers
Lesson 15		Revelation - An overview
The Revelation of John is not easy to understand. Who plays the biggest role in Revelation? 15.1		The Antichrist plays the biggest role in Revelation. He is the ruler of this time who has usurped power. Everyone must submit to him or they will die.
15.2		Revelation is difficult to understand. That's why I can't say anything about it.
15.3		Revelation is a very important book because it describes the end-time processes leading up to the return of Jesus. Jesus plays the biggest role in Revelation. Revelation begins with the appearance of Jesus. He is worthy to carry out the judgements. He leads the reign. He returns to earth with great power and destroys all the armies of the world. He reigns in the 1000-year kingdom.
Lesson 16		Jesus is coming again
The return of Jesus will be an earth-shattering event. Does the return of Jesus play a role in a Christian's life? 16.1		The return of Jesus is only for fans. The return of Jesus does not play a major role in Christian life.
16.2		The return of Jesus is an important event. The Rapture can happen at any time and we should prepare ourselves for it. We should look forward to the return of Jesus at the end of time.
16.3		There is much debate about the return of Jesus. The experts don't agree on this either. That's why I avoid this topic.

Test resolution

Find out the solution to the test here:

Lesson 1	1.2
Lesson 2	2.1
Lesson 3	3.1
Lesson 4	4.2
Lesson 5	5.3
Lesson 6	6.3
Lesson 7	7.1
Lesson 8	8.2
Lesson 9	9.1
Lesson 10	10.2
Lesson 11	11.1
Lesson 12	12.3
Lesson 13	13.2
Lesson 14	14.1
Lesson 15	15.3
Lesson 16	16.2

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