

# New Christian Life Group

## Table of Contents

### IMPORTANT NOTE- FACILITATORS PAGE NUMBERS DIFFER FROM PARTICIPANT'S

Welcome!.....	iii-iv
Facilitator Overview.....	v
Week 1, first meeting- <i>Introduction and Purpose of the Group</i> .....	1

### **Section One- Doctrinal Foundations**

Lesson 1- <i>Review Plan of Salvation</i> .....	2-3
Lesson 2- <i>Baptism</i> .....	4-6
Lesson 3- <i>Eternal Security</i> .....	7-8
Lesson 4- <i>Holy Spirit, part 1</i> .....	9-10
Lesson 5- <i>Holy Spirit, part 2</i> .....	11-12
Lesson 6- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	13-16

### **Section Two- Spiritual Disciplines (building blocks on foundation)**

Lesson 7- <i>Bible Reading, part 1- Its Importance</i> .....	17-18
Lesson 8- <i>Bible Reading, part 2-Steps, How to</i> .....	19-20
Lesson 9- <i>Bible Reading, part 3a -In Depth Study</i> .....	21-22
Lesson 10- <i>Bible Reading, part 3b- In Depth Study cont.</i> .....	23-25
Lesson 11- <i>Journaling</i> .....	26
Lesson 12- <i>Review, fun quiz- "Bible &amp; Journaling"</i> .....	27-28
Lesson 13- <i>Memorization/Meditation</i> .....	29-30
Lesson 14- <i>Prayer, part 1- Its Importance</i> .....	31-32
Lesson 15- <i>Prayer, part 2- How to</i> .....	33-34
Lesson 16- <i>Review, fun quiz- "Memorization &amp; Prayer"</i> .....	35-36

### **Section Three- Inward Development**

Lesson 17- <i>Battle of Two Natures</i> .....	37-38
Lesson 18- <i>Transforming Character, Temptation, part 1</i> .....	39-41
Lesson 19- <i>Transforming Character, part 2</i> .....	42-43
Lesson 20- <i>Transforming Character, part 3</i> .....	44-45
Lesson 21- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	46-47

### **Section Four- Outward Development**

Lesson 22- <i>Community, Doing Life Together</i> .....	48-49
Lesson 23- <i>Spiritual Gifts, part 1 (gifts assessment in Appendix A-1)</i> .....	50-51
Lesson 24- <i>Spiritual Gifts, part 2 (review gifts)</i> .....	52
Lesson 25- <i>Serving in the Church</i> .....	53-54
Lesson 26- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	55-56

Mid-term Personal Evaluation and Feedback- Appendix A-2

### **Section Five- Ongoing Faith**

Lesson 27- <i>Trusting God, part 1- Living by Faith</i> .....	57-58
Lesson 28- <i>Trusting God, part 2</i> .....	59-61
Lesson 29- <i>Tithing, part 1- Old Testament</i> .....	62-63
Lesson 30- <i>Tithing, part 2- New Testament</i> .....	64-65
Lesson 31- <i>Living Generously</i> .....	66-67
Lesson 32- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	68-70

(continued)

# New Christian Life Group

## **Section Six- God and Me**

Lesson 33- <i>Understanding God's Will, part 1</i> .....	71-72
Lesson 34- <i>Understanding God's Will, part 2</i> .....	73-74
Lesson 35- <i>Finding My Individual Calling, part 1</i> .....	75-76
Lesson 36- <i>Finding My Individual Calling, part 2</i> .....	77-78
Lesson 37- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	79-80

## **Section Seven- Great Commission- Communicating Your Faith**

Lesson 38- <i>Part 1- Why? The Motivation (Has 1 supplement in Appendix A-3)</i> .....	81-82
Lesson 39- <i>Part 2- Relating to People</i> .....	83-84
Lesson 40- <i>Part 3- Telling the Message (Has 2 supplements in Appendix A-4 &amp; 5)</i> .....	85-86
Lesson 41- <i>Part 4- The Power of Your Own Story</i> .....	87-88
Lesson 42- <i>Part 5- Writing Your Own Story</i> .....	89-90
Lesson 43- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	91-92

## **Section Eight- Reproducing Our Life in Others- (mentoring/discipleship,)**

Lesson 44- <i>Why Mentor (disciple) Others</i> .....	93-95
Lesson 45- <i>Choosing Who to Mentor</i> .....	96-98
Lesson 46- <i>How to Mentor</i> .....	99-101
Lesson 47- <i>Helping Our Disciples Through Their Troubles</i> .....	102-103
Lesson 48- <i>Review, fun quiz</i> .....	104-105

## **Section Nine- Now It's Your Turn**

Lesson 49- <i>Brief Review of Entire Curriculum and Group Experience</i> .....	106-107
No Lesson – <b>Facilitator notes only</b> - <i>Open discussion, questions</i> .....	108
No Lesson - <i>Graduation, celebration, PARTY!!</i>	
Appendix A-6- <i>Bonus personal study- Spiritual Fasting</i> .....	At end of curriculum

### **Goals- By the conclusion of the group:**

- 1. Each participant should be able to develop consistent, spiritual disciplines and habits that they will apply throughout their lifetime in order to grow themselves spiritually.***
- 2. Each participant should be able to develop a solid, biblical worldview & convictions they can defend and teach to others.***
- 3. Each participant should become fully devoted, missional member of their church.***
- 4. Each participant should be able to lead others into a relationship with Christ and disciple/mentor them, thus becoming a reproducing Christian.***

### **The following is only provided in the Facilitator's Guide**

- ***Group members must commit to regular attendance for duration of group (approx. 14-18 months.)***
- ***Should be a closed group after Section One.***
- ***Each meeting to last 1 ½ hours.***
- ***Start each week with checking any assignments from prior week.***
- ***Weekly assignments- occasionally may pre-read upcoming week, memory verse each week. Additional verses and reading suggestions are provided for some lessons in the "Appendix's".***
- ***Plan more service projects, outings together apart from meeting nights.***
- ***Group materials- Training curriculum for participants, facilitator's guide with key, if a CedarCreek group- CC daily journal, New Believer NT.***

# New Christian Life Group

## Section One

### Lesson 1- Review Plan of Salvation

*(Facilitator- start the group with a short, fun icebreaker. Afterwards, hand out the entire curriculum and the New Christian New Testaments. Stress that before the group moves forward through the lessons, that it's important to make sure everyone has the same understanding as to how a person BEGINS a relationship with Christ. So this will be a review for many of them. Reports from past groups are that some have for the first time understood "grace" in this first lesson and have placed their faith in Christ afterwards. Here we go-)*

Read the following verses and answer the questions. *(Ask for volunteers to read the verses. Give them the page numbers in the bibles if you handed them out. Be careful not to call on people yet until the group gets to know each other better)*

#### **Romans 3:23-**

Who has sinned? *(all)*

How would you define "sin"? *(every thought, motive, word, action that's less than God's perfect and holy standard.)*

What are examples of sin? *(lust, adultery, stealing, anger, temper, self-centeredness, etc)*

#### **Romans 6:23-**

What does "wage" mean? *(You deserve it. You get paid for something you did. Example- a paycheck)*

What is the penalty of sin? *(Spiritual death after this life. You don't drop dead physically after a sin you commit in this life. )*

#### **Romans 5:8-**

How did God show His love? *(By Christ dying for us).*

What was our condition when Christ died? *(We were sinners. God doesn't wait for us to clean up our life first)*

Many people try to earn their way into heaven. What are ways that you or others you know have tried to deserve heaven? *(Good deeds, going to church, giving money, etc.)*

(continued)

## New Christian Life Group

### Ephesians 2:8,9-

What does this verse say about our efforts to get to heaven? (*We can't take credit or boast about what good we have done. It's a gift and not a reward for our good deeds.*)

Talk about the dynamics of a "gift", like at Christmas or your birthday. (*You don't have to deserve it, buy it, do anything for it. The gift-giver would be offended if you tried to do something to earn it or declined it.*)

### John 1:12,13-

Is everyone that God created a child of His? (*No, just like not every child on my street is my child- only those born to me*)

What two things are necessary to become God's child? (*Believe AND receive. Must believe intellectually with our head, then trust and accept with our heart. Many are 18 inches from heaven- distance between head and heart*)

Questions so far?

### Romans 10:9,10-

How do we receive Christ? (*Must admit verbally [mouth] and believe internally [heart] that Jesus died for you and you will make Him Master/Lord and believe that He has risen from the dead. Tell God you are a sinner by nature and don't deserve to go to heaven, but will accept Jesus death on the cross as the payment for your sin. This is done as a prayer.*)

Are you confident that this is what you understood and believed when you prayed? If not 100% sure but today understand and desire to accept Christ, then do so right now by praying. Your group leader will help you. (*This can be done in the group as a group. Ask who would like to pray to make 100% sure, then, lead a prayer for them to pray. Encourage them to repeat out loud. If done as or in the group, be sure to celebrate! If sense awkwardness or reservations, ask them to see you after the group to pray if they want to. Stress that it is important that everyone has Christ in their life to continue on this study as what we learn applies to believers and will make more sense.*)

Questions?

### Assignment- Memorize Romans 6:23

- Bring your curriculum and pencil/pen to each meeting.

Pray (*Collect the N.T.'s after each group meeting and hand out next meeting*)

## New Christian Life Group

### Section One

#### Lesson 2- "Baptism"

*(Facilitator, start out with a fun, short icebreaker. Ask who has their memory verse, Rom. 6:23, and can quote it. Mention that from now on we will pair up and review them at the beginning of each lesson. Also, if you don't know already, ask who accepted Christ during last weeks lesson. Hand out N.T.'s.)*

**Open discussion-** How many of you were baptized as infants?

From what you know or have been taught, what do you think the purpose of baptism is and why do people do it?

Many people believe that water baptism removes sin from a person. From what we discussed last lesson on salvation, how does God forgive us? *(The only answer is by grace through Jesus. The blood of Jesus is the only cleansing agent. For baptism to cleanse us from sin would be a good deed and based on Ephesians 2:8 & 9 we're not saved by any good deeds.)*

**Read 1 Corinthians 1:13-17.**

What was the Apostle Paul saying here? *(That Jesus didn't send him to baptize but to preach the good news of salvation through Christ. He distinctly separated salvation from baptism.)*

Baptism was a practice of the New Testament Christians and continues to this day in most Christ-centered churches. There is much confusion on the "why's", "who's", "when's" and "how's" of baptism.

#### A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE-

**WHY?-** Read **Matthew 28:19**. In light of what Jesus said here, why do you think people should be baptized? *(Because He commanded it. It wasn't a suggestion, or "if you want to".)* Is this a command to *be* baptized or *to* baptize? *(Both! Christians are to be baptized and also Jesus gave us the authority to baptize others.)*

In some churches only the pastor or priest, baptizes. But in other churches, like ours at CedarCreek, you'll see Christians baptizing other Christians. A Christian should be baptized before baptizing another person otherwise it would seem a little hypocritical to ask someone to obey Jesus in baptism if they have not been.

(continued)

## New Christian Life Group

**WHO?-** Read Acts 2:41; 10:47,48. Who was baptized? (*Those who understood and accepted Christ.*)

No where in scripture are there evidences of infant baptisms. Through the centuries this has become a church tradition in some churches and religions but there is no biblical support for this. Infants are not able to understand their sinful condition or the eternal consequences of their sin. Caution should be exercised for baptizing young children and make sure they understand the message of salvation through Christ and can respond to it. Parents and church leaders should not be in a hurry to baptize very young children. Some churches, again like CedarCreek will do infant/child dedications instead of baptism. This is where the parent(s) will dedicate their children and commit themselves to raising their children in a Christ centered, biblical environment.

**WHEN?-** Read Acts 2:41 and Acts 16:29-35 (*Set the story up- what was going on in this story*). What do these people have in common as to *when* they were baptized? (*It was immediately after their conversion*)

Were any of these people baptized *before* they personally believed in Christ? (*no*)

**HOW?-** Read Mark 1:9,10 and Acts 8:38,39. Were the baptism examples by immersion, sprinkling or pouring? (*Immersion- they went into the water and came up out of the water. Whenever possible, seek immersion. However, the “method” is not a biblically legal requirement or law. Sometimes, due to health reasons a person may not be able to go under the water. In those cases sprinkling would be appropriate. The immersion has a special meaning which we’ll talk about.....right now! Read on.*)

The original Greek word is- “Baptizo”- *to dip, immerse, be placed into.*

Water baptism is symbolic of the believer being placed into God’s family through Christ. When a believer goes under the water, it’s symbolic of, and identifies with the death and resurrection of Christ. It’s also a symbol of our old nature dying to the world and our new life beginning in Christ.

**Personal Question-** According to this study on baptism, have you been baptized since placing your faith in Christ? If not, do you think you should be?

(continued)

## New Christian Life Group

God wants people to be baptized out of obedience to Him and as a public testimony of being a Christ follower, not simply to join a church. Whenever God tells us to something and we do it, it helps us to grow in our relationship with Him. When we fail to follow God's directives, our spiritual progress is greatly hindered. This has more to do with the *fellowship* with God versus *relationship* with God. Example- when a parent tells his son to clean his room and he does it, the fellowship is sweet! They grow closer together. If the child rebels, complains or procrastinates, the fellowship is affected. The parents don't throw the kid on the street and say, "you're no longer a part of our family!" But, time around the dinner table is probably going to be a little tense to say the least. Mom and dad are irritated and the son avoids conversation and eye contact. You get the drift here. *Relationship*-secure. *Fellowship*-a little rocky. So, baptism is really one of the first steps of living a life of obedience to God and the journey grows ever sweeter!

Are there any other questions about baptism? (*If time allows, tell about your own salvation and baptism experience*)

**Assignment-** If you have not been baptized as a believer in Christ, arrange to do so next opportunity. (*Find out when the next baptism and classes are and get them signed up*)

- Memorize Acts 2:41

**Pray**

## New Christian Life Group

### Section One

#### Lesson 3 “Eternal Security”

*(Start out with a short, fun icebreaker. Pair up and review memory verse, Acts 2:41. Hand out N'T.'s)*

Read **Romans 8:31-39**. Verse 39 says, “*nothing in ALL creation..*” What does this mean to you?

1. What kind of standing do we now have in God? *(Secure and safe. Right standing)*
2. At what point will God remove His love and leave us? *(Never!)*

Read **Philippians 1:6**. God always finishes what He begins. What does this say about you? *(Not only does God forgive us forever but He keeps working in us to perfect us)*

Read **Colossians 2: 13-14**. Our sins used to separate us from God. What happened to them? *(They were nailed to the Cross- cancelled and destroyed forever!)*

Read **Hebrews 10:12, 14, 17, 18**. Some people think they have to be forgiven all over again every time they sin. According to these verses is that biblical and true? Explain. *(Christ’s death was perfect because He was perfect. Man can never pay for another persons sins because he also is a sinner. There is no longer any need to be forgiven once we’re genuinely forgiven. It’s not proper theology to ask for forgiveness every time we sin. It’s like asking for an air conditioner to be in the hotel you’re going to. It’s there or it isn’t. We should thank God for already having forgiven us when we sin. Still confess it’s wrong and ask for help to change and stop sinning. The eternal punishment for it was put on Christ.)*

Read **1 Peter 1:3-5**.

1. What’s our expectation of eternal life based on? *(Christ being raised from the dead)*
2. How certain is our reservation in heaven? *(Beyond decay and will never change. It’s there waiting!)*

Read **1 John 2:1,2**. What happens if (when) we sin? *(The blood of Christ is pleading on our behalf. God sees Christ crucified, not our sin.)*

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## New Christian Life Group

Read **1 John 5:11-13**. There are really only two types of people- those who have Christ and those who do not. No one can be on the fence, half in and half out.

1. What fate does each type have? (*Life or death*)
2. Is it possible to know, 100%, without a doubt that you are going to heaven? Explain. (*We must trust what the bible says and not how we feel. "These things were written SO that...". If the bible says we're forgiven because of Christ, take it to the bank!*)

**Open Discussion-** Since we're not *saved* by our deeds or performance, can we be *lost* as a result of them? Is there ever a time when our sin will not be forgiven in heaven? What if we continue to disobey God and our lives never really change, are we still saved? Were we even ever saved? (*Ok here we go- Performance has no bearing on forgiveness. Either we received the free gift or we haven't. It is possible that a person who continues to sin and can't break their habits was never saved to begin with. In the physical realm there's such a thing as a still birth. Same idea spiritually. Someone may have come very close but never really transferred their trust and Lordship to Jesus. Be very careful to express false hope to someone who merely repeated a prayer of salvation! We should say, "you're forgiven if you have sincerely and genuinely trusted Christ for salvation." Only God knows. There are many who prayed but were not saved. See Matthew 7:21-23 and Hebrews 6.*)

**Assignment-** Memorize Philippians 1:6

*(Consider introducing prayer request cards/partners- Each week, pass out blank cards (old business cards work best) that they will put a request or two that they want someone of the same gender to pray for them. On the card, have them include their name and best number and time to contact them. Have group pick (gender-specific) randomly. Before next group meeting, call partner and see how they are doing. This helps us to connect throughout the week and to pray for each other. This only works for those who are present since we exchange cards at the end of the meetings.)*

**Pray**

## New Christian Life Group

### Section One

#### Lesson 4, Part 1- "The Holy Spirit"

*(Facilitator- Start group with a short, fun icebreaker. Pair up and review memory verse- Phil. 1:6. Hand out NT's.)*

Read **Ephesians 1:13-14**. What 3 things happened when you placed your faith in Christ?

1. *(God identified you as His own.)*
2. *(God gave you His Holy Spirit.)*
3. *(God guaranteed your eternity and His promises.)*

What do the following verses say about the Holy Spirit?

**Romans 8:9-11** *(Spirit controls us, no Spirit-not even a Christian, Spirit live is us, gives us life)*

**1 Corinthians 6:19-** *(We're the temple of God. Spirit lives in us)*

TERMINOLOGY NOTE- when a person accepts Christ, technically we accept what Christ has done for us. It's actually the Holy Spirit that comes into our life, not Christ. He's in heaven. We are "in Christ", yes, but Spirit is in us

**Read John 16:5,6.** The disciples were concerned when Jesus told them He was leaving them after 3 ½ years and going back to heaven. What was Jesus response? *(That is was to their advantage that He left so they could have the Holy Spirit. Jesus, as a human could only be with them when physically present. But the Holy Spirit would be with and in each of them everywhere they went.)*

According to the following verses, what specific role does the Spirit play in our lives?

**John 14:16-18, 26-**

1. *(Counsel's)*
2. *(Leads)*
3. *(Teaches)*
4. *(Reminds)*

**John 16:7-14-**

1. *(Convinces/convicts)*
2. *(Guides)*
3. *(Glorifies Christ)*
4. *(Reveals Christ to us)*

(continued)

## **New Christian Life Group**

**Open discussion-** Knowing these truths about the Holy Spirit, how should we conduct our lives? (*Possible ideas- exercise deeper faith, be bolder, pray more, serve God and others more, ask God for his wisdom and direction,*)

**Assignment-** Memorize Ephesians 1:13 (extra credit for verse 14)

**Prayer**

## New Christian Life Group

### Section One

#### Lesson 5, Part 2- "The Holy Spirit"

*(Facilitator, start group with a short, fun icebreaker. Pair up and review memory verse from last lesson. See if anyone did the "extra credit" verse. Hand out N.T.'s)*

Continuing with the study on the Holy Spirit, according to the following verses, what specific role does the Holy Spirit play in our lives?

**Acts 1:8-**  
**(Empowers us)**

**Romans 8:26-**  
1. **(Helps us)**  
2. **(Prays for us)**

**1 Corinthians 2:10 & 11-**  
**(Reveals God's deepest secrets)** *(Who doesn't want to know God's deepest secrets!?)*

**1 Corinthians 12:4-11-**  
**(Gifts us to serve)** *(Most people have natural talents and abilities. But the Holy Spirit gives us special gifts to serve in the church. We will discover what our gifts are and how to use them in lessons 23-25.)*

What warnings do the following verses give us?

**Ephesians 4:30** *(Don't bring sorrow to God)*

**1 Thessalonians 5:19** *(Don't stifle, put out, extinguish, ignore Spirit)*

Even though the Holy Spirit lives in us and we can never lose our salvation due to lack of performance, we can bring sorrow to God by how we live. Our *relationship* (position) with Christ is secure but our *fellowship* (condition) with Him can be affected.

(continued)

## **New Christian Life Group**

**Open discussion-** Knowing these truths we learned from the last two lessons about the Holy Spirit, how then should we conduct our lives? (*Possible answers- exercise deeper faith, be bolder, pray more, serve God and others more, ask God for His wisdom and direction, etc.*)

**Assignment-** Memorize 1 Corinthians 3:16

- In preparation for our next lesson, review the previous lessons and memory verses

**Pray**

## New Christian Life Group

### Section One

#### Lesson 6- “Review Salvation, Eternal Security, Baptism and The Holy Spirit”

*(Facilitator- This is a review, “fun quiz” of Section One. First, pair up and review last week’s memory verse. Then, if meeting as a mixed gender group, separate the men and women if possible in different rooms after the icebreaker. Mention that this will give the men and women the opportunity to not only review the lessons but to talk about anything that they may want to bring up that they wouldn’t otherwise in mixed company. End the group in prayer, then, come back together at the end for the social time. This works only if your group has both a male and female leader. If not, then do review all together. Review memory verse from past lesson as well the prior lessons. You may want to consider a prize for who has all the verses correct such as, a Starbucks or McD’s gift card, gas card, cash, cert. to a Christian bookstore, etc.)*

*This lesson is an open discussion format. Let the group think through and answer. Encourage them to look back at the prior lessons during this time. The idea is make sure all have at least the basics down for each topic. If someone needs more time or have questions that can’t be answered during group, get with them as soon as possible. Don’t take too much time on each point. We already went over these. This is a quick but thorough review. Have some fun with it.)*

This is a review of the past lessons from Section One. It is in an open discussion format. Try to answer the questions the best you can from what you remember. However, the goal is to make sure we all have the same understanding before moving forward to the next Section. Therefore, feel free to use your lessons for the answers if you need to. Have fun!

#### **From Lesson 1, “Review Plan of Salvation”-**

Open discussion:

Explain how and why a person deserves to go to heaven. What scriptures can you use to support your beliefs? *(No one “deserves” it. Review whatever verses you feel are important.)*

How do you explain that some people *feel* saved and some don’t? *(It’s based on faith in what the bible says, not how you feel. Your feelings will change throughout your life due to circumstances. Don’t trust your feelings!)*

(continued)

## New Christian Life Group

Is it possible to know 100% that you are going to heaven? Are *you* sure? How do you *know*? (**1 John 5:12,13**)

Write out Romans 6:23 on a piece of paper. (**Accuracy idea- have everyone write the verse out on a piece of paper. When done, read the verse from the bible and have them grade their own paper or pass it to their neighbor to grade. Put a check mark on each paper correct. At the end of the group, give prizes to whoever had the most verses right or closest or however you want to do it.**)

Any questions on salvation?

### From Lesson 2, "Baptism"-

Explain what baptism is. (**It's symbolic of an already forgiven life. When immersed, it identifies with the death and resurrection of Christ and that they have died to the old nature and now have a new life. It is a public testimony to others that they are Christ followers.**)

Does it add to our salvation or wash sins away? Can you biblically support your answer? (**NO! In 1 Cor. 1:17, Paul makes a separation between baptism and the gospel. Eph. 2:8,9 states we're saved by grace through faith, not by works.**)

What happens if a Christian is *not* baptized before they die? (**Still go to heaven since it's not connected to salvation. Examples- thief on the cross, people who pray on their death-bed or after an accident. It's important to explain that God doesn't change "rules" for some due to circumstances**)

How soon after salvation should a person be baptized? (**As soon as practically possible**)

If you have not been baptized as a Christ follower, will you at the next opportunity?

Write out Acts 2:41. (**Pass to left or right to be graded. Make it fun!**)

Any questions on baptism?

(continued)

## New Christian Life Group

### From Lesson 3, “*Eternal Security*”-

If you have truly believed and accepted God’s forgiveness through Christ, can you become *un*-saved? Why or why not? Give examples and/or verses to support your answer. ***(NO! You can’t be “un-born”. However, the close relationship and fellowship can be affected. A person may not be close to their parents due to choices and differences but if a DNA sample was taken, they’re still blood-related. Christ blood is what joined us to God so we’re family forever. Our stupid choices can sure destroy how close we get.)***

What about people who really never really change and continue the same habits/lifestyle and have little spiritual interests even though they *say* they believe and prayed to receive Christ? ***(Only God knows if the conversion was genuine. Saying a prayer does not save us. Anyone can repeat words. It gets down to what a person really believes and trusts in, in order to go to heaven. Also, there’s an issue with Lordship. If someone is not willing to even try to change and there’s no conviction and sorrow for sin, then it might be evidence that the Holy Spirit is not in them. We’re not to judge or give a person false hope that as long as they prayed, they’re safe. It’s good for a person to wrestle with this question, “saved or not?”)***

How will you deal with possible future feelings that maybe you’re not a Christian and have doubt? ***(Don’t trust how you feel. Ask yourself, “what do I believe and what am I trusting in for heaven?” There will be days you don’t feel close to God and much like a Christian.)***

Write out Philippians 1:6.

Any questions on eternal security?

### From Lessons 4 & 5, “*Holy Spirit*”-

Who/what is the Holy Spirit? ***(Part of the Trinity- God, Son, Holy Spirit.)***

What role does He play in the life of a Christian? ***(The list is pretty complete in the Holy Spirit lesson. Just talk through some of the things He does. Mainly helps us live the Christian life and is the down payment for our eternal salvation)***

(continued)

## New Christian Life Group

How/when does a Christian get the Spirit? (*At the point of our salvation, not later. It's a gift that we don't work for or earn.*)

Will He leave us if we get really bad? What verses support your answer? (*No! Eph. 1:13,14*)

Write out Ephesians 1:13 and 1 Corinthians 3:16.

Questions on the Holy Spirit?

*(If separated men & women, get group back together to wrap it up)*

**Assignment-** Preview the next lesson.

**Pray**