

STRONG

STUDENTS

MIDDLE &
HIGH SCHOOL

STUDENT BOOK



Connected

By Christ, in Christ, for Christ



Connected

Over the next thirteen weeks, you will learn you are connected by Christ to other believers, in Christ, and for Christ's purposes. This course will challenge you to value your relationships with other believers and with Christ. It will encourage you to show Christ's love to unbelievers so they might respond to the gospel.



Time with God

Keep a journal as you work through your Time with God each week. A great way to think through passages and gain insights is to ask yourself simple questions. See the list below and sample questions for each one.

- Who?** *Who wrote this passage? To whom was it written?*
- What?** *What is this passage about? What happened to the characters in the passage?*
- When?** *When was this passage written? When did the events in the passage take place?*
- Where?** *Where was this passage written? Where did the events in the passage take place?*
- Why?** *Why was this passage written? Why is it organized as it is?*
- How?** *How should this passage affect its readers? How might I live out this passage?*

As you answer these questions in a journal, you will begin to see what each passage means and how God wants you to use it.



How to Go to Heaven

God has promised you eternal life. You can know for sure you will spend eternity with Him in Heaven (1 John 5:13).

1. You must understand that you are a sinner and God won't let sin into Heaven. God is perfect and could never allow evil to dwell in His presence. You must face the reality that you are a guilty sinner (Rom. 3:23).
2. You can't earn eternal life. You are already guilty, and nothing you do can pay for your sin. Unless God miraculously saves you, you are destined for eternity in Hell. That is a terrifying fact. Thankfully, God has miraculously provided salvation for everyone (Eph. 2:8, 9).
3. God sent His Son to earth to become a man and die to pay for your sins. Jesus Christ remained perfect because He remained the Son of God. When Jesus died on the cross, God the Father accepted His sacrifice to fully pay for your sins. Jesus' resurrection from the dead proved that God had accepted Jesus' death. Jesus can now offer you eternal life (Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 15:20).
4. Jesus did all the work to secure salvation, but that doesn't make anyone automatically saved. You must accept His payment for your sins by placing your trust in His finished work on the cross. God will not accept anything else. When you place your trust in Jesus, God guarantees you have eternal life (John 5:24).

If you aren't sure you are saved, place your trust in Jesus Christ right now, and you can know for certain you will spend eternity with Him!



CONNECTIONS THAT ENDEAR US

Theme: God gives believers Christ's love for each other and for the lost.

I. The Holy Spirit _____ Connections (Acts 16:6–34)

A. Connection to a _____ Macedonian (Acts 16:6–9)

When the Holy Spirit interrupted Paul's _____ and asked him to do things that didn't always make _____, Paul was ready to _____.

Paul's heart was _____ with God's heart to take the gospel where it would _____.

B. Connection to a _____ businesswoman (Acts 16:10–15)

The rich businesswoman worshiped God but without a _____ relationship with Him. God burdened Paul to approach Lydia with the _____.

C. Connection to a _____ slave (Acts 16:16–21)

The trouble Paul and Silas faced testifies to how deeply God _____ the girl.

D. Connection to a _____ jailer (Acts 16:22–40)

Paul and Silas trusted God with all their _____. They spent their night in prison singing _____ to God and _____.

The jailer _____ and fell down before the missionaries, asking how he might be _____ from his _____ to _____.

II. Christ _____ Connections (Acts 16:35–40; Phil. 1:1–8)

A. By His _____ (Acts 16:35–40)

The Holy Spirit is "called _____" believers to _____ them live for God. That's what the missionaries did for the new believers.

B. By His _____ (Phil. 1:1–8)

Paul had the Philippians on his _____ and in his _____, and he longed for them earnestly. Paul's love for the Philippians came from Christ in him.

Paul called on God as his witness to the _____ of his love for the Philippians. We are to have the _____ for others.



Time with God

Read each passage and answer the questions to spend personal time with God.

MONDAY

Read Acts 16:6–10.

How were Paul's plans changed?

What can you learn from Paul's response to his changed plans?

THURSDAY

Read Acts 16:22–40.

How did God bring good out of Paul's imprisonment?

Talk to God about the price you are willing to pay to spread the gospel around the world.

TUESDAY

Read Acts 16:11–15.

How was Lydia's heart prepared to hear the gospel?

How might you prepare yourself to share the gospel with someone?

FRIDAY

Read Philippians 1:1–5.

Describe Paul's relationship with the Philippian church.

How might you build stronger relationships with other believers?

WEDNESDAY

Read Acts 16:16–21.

How did Paul help the slave girl?

Who are the disadvantaged or downtrodden people in your life? How might you reach out to them with the gospel?

SATURDAY

Read Philippians 1:6–8.

What characterizes the love of Christ?

Who is God compelling you to love with the love of Christ?

Tough Questions Answered



When should believers stand for religious freedom?



Scripture teaches that believers should not retaliate or seek revenge against others (Rom. 12:19). We are called to show humility, grace, and forgiveness. But that does not mean we should never stand up for our religious rights. Showing grace and compassion for the lost sometimes means ensuring our ability to spread the gospel.

In Acts 16, Paul stood up for his rights as a Roman citizen. Although he was willing to suffer personally for the sake of the gospel, he was not willing to be treated unfairly so that others could malign the name of Christianity or the church. When Paul cast the spirit out of the slave girl, he had ruined her owners' source of income. In retaliation, the owners falsely accused Paul and Silas. Because they had been mistreated in public, their effectiveness in spreading the gospel would be hindered unless their names were cleared. Others needed to know that Paul and Silas were not lawbreakers.

Showing grace and compassion for the lost sometimes means ensuring our ability to spread the gospel.

God has placed us under government authorities, which we are to honor and respect (Rom. 13:1; 1 Peter 2:17). When authorities fail to honor the rights of believers, however, we are called to stand up, especially when the situation involves our Christian witness or our defense of the gospel. First and foremost, believers are to follow God's commands. When the apostles were confronted for preaching even after being charged not to do so, Peter replied that they must obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). Jesus commanded His followers to be witnesses for Him (Acts 1:8). If our efforts to follow this command are unjustly hindered, we are right to speak out.

As Christians around the world face increasing opposition, it's important to defend the rights we enjoy as believers, just as Paul defended his rights as a Roman citizen. In doing so, we defend Christ's name and maximize witnessing opportunities.

Whether you are called to suffer personal mistreatment or to stand for your rights or the rights of other Christians, remember that the Holy Spirit will empower you.

A Famous Thanks



In 1969, Neil Armstrong stepped out of the lunar module and became the first man to walk on the moon. The walk would not have been possible without the Extravehicular Mobility Unit (EMU), the space suit that kept Armstrong alive and protected while he was on the moon's surface. In 1994, Armstrong honored the 25th anniversary of the moon landing with a thank-you to "the EMU gang," all those who had engineered and built the suit. "Its true beauty," wrote Armstrong, "was that it worked. . . . To all of you who made it all that it was, I send a quarter century's worth of thanks and congratulations."



Paul's thank-you letter to the Philippians expressed great appreciation for their support of him in a time of need. Despite his distance from them, he held them in his heart. It's never too late and you're never too far away to express appreciation to your fellow believers. You might even consider putting your thanks in writing.

Memory Verse Review



Memory Verse—Philippians 1:7

Though Paul had not seen most of the Philippian believers face-to-face for years, he still held them dear in his heart. Because of their shared bond in Christ and their same compassion for the lost, it seemed as if they were with him in his suffering. For this reason, it was fitting for Paul to think about them with thankfulness and confidence.

1. Do you hold fellow believers dear to your heart? How do you know?
2. What can you do to deepen your love for fellow believers?
3. With whom will you specifically seek a mutually supportive relationship?

Measuring Growth



After his conversion, Paul devoted his life to following God's direction in sharing the gospel with unsaved people. Through a vision, the Holy Spirit led Paul and his fellow travelers to the city of Philippi, where God had prepared hearts to receive the good news about Jesus Christ. The church began there when Lydia, a jailer, and members of their households believed the gospel and were baptized. Years later, Paul wrote to the church in Philippi, expressing his love and thankfulness for them. Though Paul didn't have day-to-day personal contact with those believers, he held them dear in his heart because of their mutual commitment to the advancement of the gospel of Christ and because of the love of Christ they shared.

Look for the following indicators that you value your connections to other believers.

1. I see my connections to my fellow believers as vital to my spiritual growth.
2. I show the love of Christ to other believers by serving them sacrificially.
3. I seek to make connections with the lost so I might share the gospel with them.

Additional Memory Verses—Philippians 1:3–6.