



COLLEGE GOLF FELLOWSHIP

Discover



Book One of the Foundations Series

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."
- Matthew 7:24

FOUNDATIONS

A blueprint for building a relationship with God

Discover

BOOK ONE OF THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES

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All the books in THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES:

BOOK ONE: DISCOVER

BOOK TWO: RESPOND

BOOK THREE: BIBLE STUDY

BOOK FOUR: PRAYER

BOOK FIVE: FELLOWSHIP

BOOK SIX: EVANGELISM

BOOK SEVEN: MATURE

For more information, visit www.CollegeGolfFellowship.com
or contact us at info@collegegolf fellowship.com.

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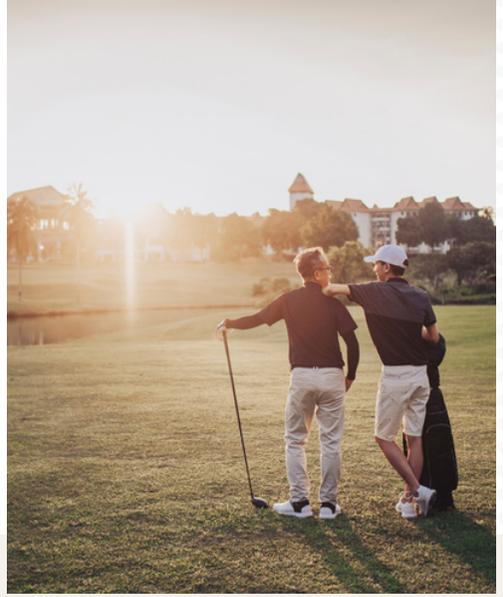


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INTRODUCTION

FOUNDATIONS is a seven book series that lays the foundation for the Christian Life and is a blueprint for building a relationship with God. DISCOVER is the first book of the series that explores how we can begin a relationship with God. The remaining books give us practical ways to respond to what God has done to bring us to Himself as we seek to grow in our relationship with Him.

Book ONE



Understanding the Gospel: Beginning a Relationship with God

OPENING DISCUSSION QUESTION:

Imagine that you are standing before God, and He asks you in a kind but forceful voice, “Why should I let you into heaven?” What would you say?

OVERVIEW:

In this book, we want to answer the following question: “How can one enter into a personal relationship with God and receive eternal life?”

In the first three chapters, we will examine three key issues:

1. How does one gain acceptance with God and receive eternal life?
2. Can acceptance with God be earned?
3. How certain is my salvation?

“The most important thing about a person is what comes into his mind when he thinks about God.”

- A.W. Tozer

Chapter One

HOW DOES ONE GAIN ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD AND RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE?

To enter into a personal relationship with God and receive eternal life, we must first understand what the Bible calls the Gospel, which simply means Good News. In order to understand this Gospel message, we will use the following four questions:

- 1. GOD'S POSITION: What is God like?**
- 2. MAN'S POSITION: What are we like?**
- 3. GOD'S PROVISION: What has God done?**
- 4. MAN'S DECISION: What is our decision?**

1. GOD'S POSITION: What is God like?

How do you see God? What is He like to you?

How is God described in the following verses?

- **Exodus 34:6-7**

How does God feel and act toward us?

- **John 3:16**

Is this how most people see God? Why or why not?

What does Jesus say God is like? Does his expectation of mankind seem appropriate and realistic? Why or why not?

- **Matthew 5:48**

2. MAN'S CONDITION: What are we like?

How do you see yourself? Are you basically good, bad, or something else?

How does the Bible describe our condition before God?

- **Romans 3:10-12, 23**

How would you define sin? Do you think most people today view themselves as sinners? Why or why not? Why is it so important to understand this truth?

Three Biblical Terms for Sin:

- **Sin** = missing the mark (archery term)
- **Transgression** = stepping over a boundary
- **Iniquity** = evil, crooked, disfigured (not the action, but the character of the action)

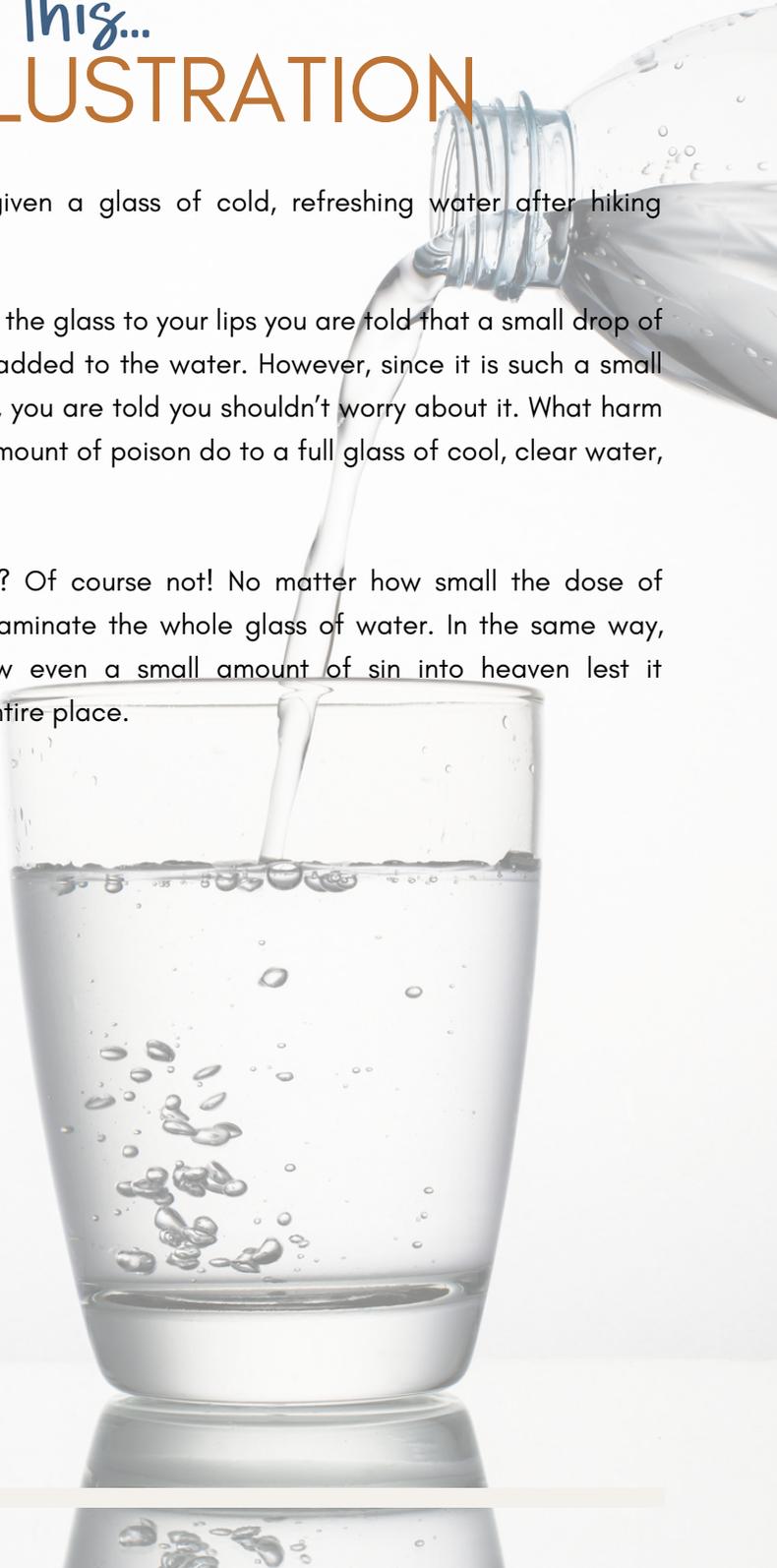
Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION

Imagine you are given a glass of cold, refreshing water after hiking through the desert.

Just before you put the glass to your lips you are told that a small drop of cyanide has been added to the water. However, since it is such a small amount of cyanide, you are told you shouldn't worry about it. What harm can such a small amount of poison do to a full glass of cool, clear water, right?

Would you drink it? Of course not! No matter how small the dose of poison, it will contaminate the whole glass of water. In the same way, God will not allow even a small amount of sin into heaven lest it contaminate the entire place.



What are the consequences of our sin?

- **Romans 6:23**

- **Isaiah 59:2**

Why couldn't God simply overlook sin and sweep it under the rug?

*"Sin is so much worse than just doing bad stuff... Sin is building our identity on anything other than God."
- Tim Keller*

3. GOD'S PROVISION: What has God done?

According the following verses, what has God done to solve the problem of sin and our separation from Him?

- **Romans 5:8**

- **1 John 4:10**

- **1 Peter 3:18**

How did this solution solve the problem caused by:

- 1.) God's standard of perfection and just nature;
- 2.) God's love for mankind?

In order to understand how good the good news of the Gospel truly is, we must understand what Jesus' death accomplished for us. Remember, we are all sinful, imperfect people, and because of this, we are separated from God and deserve death. However, when Jesus died on the cross as a substitute or "atoning sacrifice" for us, he literally absorbed the wrath of God that our sin deserved. Therefore, in Jesus' sacrifice, our penalty was paid in full, the righteous anger of God toward sin was satisfied, and we were given Jesus' perfect standing before God. This made us acceptable before a perfect and holy God and made a personal relationship with Him possible again.

How does Jesus' death on the cross put these attributes of God on display?

- **Justice** = receiving what is deserved
- **Mercy** = not receiving what is deserved
- **Grace** = receiving something better than is deserved

"The Gospel reminds us that we are not as good as we think we are, yet we are more deeply loved than we ever deserve to be."

- Tim Keller

Think on this....

ILLUSTRATION

In medieval times, there was a good king who ruled his kingdom with love and justice.

If a law was broken, justice was served to protect and care for the people of the kingdom. If someone was caught stealing, the penalty was being whipped ten times in front of the kingdom.

One day a boy was brought forward having been caught red-handed stealing. As the boy was brought before the king for his punishment, there was a gasp as everyone noticed the boy was the king's own son!

The king obviously had a dilemma: 1.) He could let his son go free and not look like a just king; or 2.) He could whip his son and not look like a loving father.

The king did something unimaginable. After claiming that a punishment must be paid for the crime, he stepped down from his throne, took off his royal robe, wrapped his arms around his son, and said, "Start the punishment." The king took the penalty for his son and maintained his just nature, as well as his loving nature. God has done the same for us through Jesus' death on the cross.



4. MAN'S DECISION: What is our response?

We've looked at three things we need to know and understand about the Gospel. Now let's look at the decision we have to make.

What words are used in the Bible to describe what our response should be to enter into a relationship with God and receive eternal life?

- **John 3:16**

- **Mark 1:15**

- **John 1:12**

What does the word "believe" mean in the Bible?

The Bible does not use the term "believe" in relation to Christ in the same sense in which we speak of believing in George Washington. When so used, believe means nothing more than acknowledgement of the facts of Washington's existence. But when the Bible speaks of believing in Christ, it is talking about not only acquiring intellectual knowledge or even agreement with the fact, but also volitional commitment or personal trust. In other words, to "believe in Christ" means to transfer our trust from ourselves onto the person and work of Jesus Christ alone for forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life.

Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION



Charles Blondin, the famous 19th century French tightrope walker, successfully crossed Niagara Falls a number of times (an 1100 foot span, 160 feet above the raging waters).

On one occasion Blondin pushed a wheelbarrow across. He then asked how many in the crowd believed he could push the wheelbarrow across with someone in it. The crowd cheered until he asked, "Does anyone believe enough in me to get in the wheelbarrow and cross Niagara Falls with me?"

No one volunteered. Finally, Blondin's manager climbed on his back and they crossed the great falls together.

The crowd's belief was purely intellectual, but Blondin's manager went beyond intellectual assent to personal trust. That's the kind of faith the Bible says we must have in Christ in order to receive the gift of eternal life.



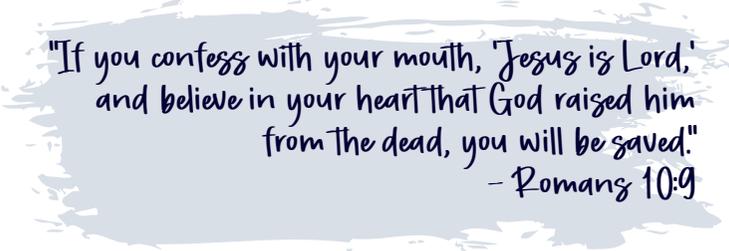
What does the word “repent” mean in the Bible?

The term “repent” works hand in hand with believe. Repent simply means to turn 180 degrees away from something and go the opposite direction. It requires a change of mind. Jesus used this term to show the decision that we must make to turn away from our sin and the things in this world that we think will satisfy us but ultimately do not, and put our complete trust in Jesus alone to rescue us.

What does it mean to “receive Jesus”?

To “receive Jesus” we are simply accepting the free gift (grace) of eternal life found in Jesus Christ alone. We are simply receiving that which is offered to us in Jesus’ perfect life, sacrificial death, and resurrection from the dead, and saying thank you, knowing there is nothing I could have done to deserve it.

If you have never made the decision to repent of your sins and trust Christ alone for forgiveness to bring you into a right relationship with God, you can use the prayer on the next page to express your heart in receiving God’s gift of eternal life. (Note: it is not a prayer that saves you, but a person--Jesus Christ. This prayer is simply a way of expressing your heart to God to receive what He has offered you in Christ.)



*"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,'
and believe in your heart that God raised him
from the dead, you will be saved."
- Romans 10:9*

Dear God,

I admit that I have sinned and that my sin separates me from you. I believe that Jesus paid the penalty for all my sins when he died on the cross in my place. I repent (turn away from) my old life and put my complete trust in Jesus alone to forgive me and save me. I receive your free gift of eternal life now. Thank you for loving me and offering me this gift. Help me to now live a life that honors you.

In Jesus name,

Amen

 **MEMORY VERSES:** Romans 3:23 Romans 6:23

Romans 5:8 John 3:16 John 1:12

WHAT IS ETERNAL LIFE?

If you have made the decision to place your trust in Jesus Christ, you have been given the greatest gift anyone could ever receive – eternal life! However, most people do not fully understand what eternal life actually is and all the benefits that come with it. So, what is eternal life?

Is it salvation from sin? Is it entrance into heaven where there is no more pain, tears, sorrow, or suffering? Is it experiencing fulfillment in life through a personal relationship with God? Is it participation in God's Kingdom giving you ultimate purpose in life? Is it being adopted into God's family giving you a whole new identity and full inheritance as His child? Is it living in the power and presence of God so that you mature and look more like Jesus? YES...and so much more!

How does Jesus describe eternal life in the following verses?

- **John 10:10; John 17:3**



Eternal life is knowing and experiencing a relationship with Jesus! This is the “full” or “abundant” life that Jesus is talking about. However, this leads us to another important question:

When does eternal life begin?

Does it start now or after we die? It is imperative to understand that eternal life begins the moment we place our trust in Jesus! At that moment, we begin to experience everything mentioned on the previous page and even more. As we grow in relationship with Jesus and learn to trust and surrender to Him, we begin to experience more of this “abundant” life. Nevertheless, the fullness of eternal life will not be experienced until we enter heaven and see God’s kingdom in all its glory!

The rest of the Foundations Series will help us grow in relationship with God and learn to live in the tension of the “now and not yet” of eternal life in the Kingdom of God.



Chapter Two

CAN ACCEPTANCE WITH GOD BE EARNED?

What does the Bible say about getting into heaven by doing good works?

- **Ephesians 2:8-9**

- **Romans 4:4-5**

Upon what basis does God save us?

- **Titus 3:4-5**

Christianity is radically different from every other world religion. The other religions say "do" and you will get to heaven. Christianity says "done." Christ has already made the provision for an eternal relationship; all we have to do is receive the free gift. Every other religion puts a relationship with God on a performance standard. If we perform, then we are accepted; if we don't perform, then we're rejected. The biblical view is that Christ died for our sins and offers acceptance with God as a free gift. This is called grace—receiving what we don't deserve. We can't perform to obtain it. Our only response is to place our faith in Christ and his payment for our sins.

Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION

Imagine yourself with all of humanity lined up at the rim of the Grand Canyon.

A perfect, holy, and loving God is standing on one side beckoning us to come to Him. Because of our sin, we are stranded on the opposite side separated from God by the 10-mile wide chasm. If reaching God was dependent on us jumping across on our own strength, and how far we jump is directly proportional to how good, moral, or religious we have been, how far would you make it? A mass murderer might jump one foot and plummet to his death. An exceptionally good person might be able to jump twenty feet, but will still fall short. Mother Theresa or Billy Graham may make it fifty feet, but will still never be able to jump across this giant chasm because no one is perfect. It would take an act of God to come to us, deal with our sin issue, and bring us back to Himself.

*"Jesus didn't come to make **BAD** people **GOOD**.
Jesus came to make **DEAD** people **ALIVE**."*

- Craig Groeschel

If God's acceptance could be earned by our good works, would anyone be absolutely sure of eternal life? Why or why not?

*But how good is good enough?
And who defines good?*

If we can't earn God's acceptance through good works, does God intend for us to do good deeds? Why?

- **Ephesians 2:10**

What should be our motivation for doing good works?

In the original language, "workmanship" means "prized masterpiece". In other words, we were created as God's most prized masterpiece to reflect His glory by doing good works.

Remember, good works are not the means of our salvation, but the result of our salvation. We gratefully respond to what God has done to save us in Christ by doing what He has called us to do!

We are saved "from" sin and saved "for" good works!

What do the following verses offer as additional reasons for living a life of good works and obedience to God?

- **Matthew 5:16**

- **John 14:15**

- **James 1:22-25**

- **Galatians 6:7-8**

LAW OF THE HARVEST

- You reap what you sow.
- You reap a lot more than you sow.
- It will take time to reap what you sow.



✚ **MEMORY VERSES:** *Ephesians 2:8-10* *Matthew. 5:16*
 Galatians 6:7-8

Chapter Three

HOW CERTAIN IS MY SALVATION?

If we could ever “lose” our salvation (i.e. God’s acceptance, love, and eternal life), then His love would be conditional and dependent on our performance. If our relationship with God is not secure, our performance toward God is motivated out of fear that we might lose His acceptance and love. Fear never produces intimacy.

However, if God’s love for us is unconditional, we can rest assured that our relationship with Him is secure. Then, we are motivated to do good works out of appreciation and gratitude for what He has done for us, not out of fear of punishment.

In this chapter, we will explore the security of one’s relationship with God.

How much confidence do these verses give you about the security of your relationship with God and receiving eternal life?

- **John 5:24**

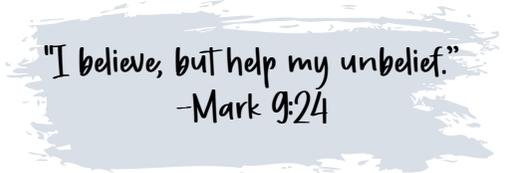
- **1 John 5:11-13**

Do certain sins disqualify me from receiving eternal life? Does God really forgive all my sins?

- **Colossians 2:13-14**

- **1 John 1:9**

What if I have doubts or my faith is not that strong? Is the **strength** of my faith or the **object** of my faith more important to my relationship with God?



"I believe, but help my unbelief."
-Mark 9:24

When God forgives, does He forget or does He hold our sins against us?

- **Hebrews 10:17**

- **Psalm 103:12**

Who is responsible for keeping my relationship with God secure? Do we hold onto God or does He hold onto us? What do you think this means practically?

- **John 10:28-29**

What if I enter into a relationship with God but don't feel different?

Feelings may or may not accompany this decision. Your relationship with God is based on what God does, and not on how you feel. The way we feel does not change what God has done if we truly have received Christ by faith. We must learn not to rely on our emotions, but rather to rely on God and to remember His promises. When we are tempted to doubt the security of this relationship with God, what encouragement do these verses offer?

- **Romans 8:35-39**

How should the idea of being unconditionally loved and accepted by God, with no possibility of losing that love, make you feel?

Our feelings do not authenticate truth. Truth is truth no matter what. However, our feelings do authenticate our understanding of truth.

MEMORY VERSES: *1 John 5:11-13* *1 John 1:9* *Rom. 8:38-39*

Think on this....

ILLUSTRATION

Having doubts? Wondering if your faith is strong enough? You are not alone.

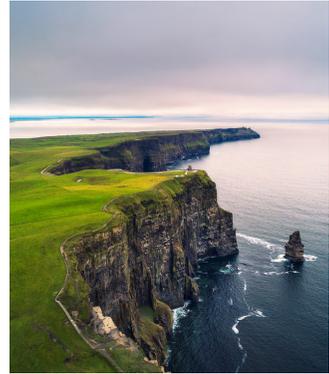
Imagine two people falling off a cliff. One person sees a rope hanging off the cliff and has little to no faith that if he reaches out to grab the rope it will keep him from falling to his death. The second person sees a skinny branch and has super-strong faith that it can save him if he reaches out to grab it.

Both reach out and grab the object. Who will be saved? The person with the strongest faith, or the person who grabs hold of the object that can save them?

The object of our faith is way more important than the strength of our faith!

In other words, super-strong faith in the wrong object will not save you. However, a little bit of faith in the right object will save you.

Jesus is a trustworthy object of our faith, and He promises to hold onto us forever as we trust Him with whatever amount of faith we have.



Foundations Book One

REVIEW AND APPLICATION

In this book, we have investigated the Bible's plan for salvation and how we can receive eternal life. We saw that our sin is a real problem and cannot be erased by doing good works. However, once we place our trust in Jesus, we are completely forgiven of our sin, and the eternal life God gives us can never be lost. How have these concepts helped in your spiritual journey?

Have you learned anything different about Christianity than what you thought prior to going through this study?

Review and write down the four main points of the Gospel from Chapter 1 and the Bible verses that go with each point:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Think on this...

ILLUSTRATION



A seminary professor gave a pop quiz on ten theology terms and asked his students to write down the definitions.

He then asked the pastoral students to grade their own quiz. After the professor read the answer to the first question, one student raised his hand and asked if his answer was close enough to get credit. The professor said, "No! If it is not word-for-word exactly as I say, it is wrong." The students couldn't believe how legalistic and harsh the professor sounded. He went on to read the answers to the quiz and then asked how everyone did. Hardly anyone got more than half correct. However, one person did get 9 out of 10 correct. The professor commended this student on his hard work and then gave his grading scale: 10/10 = 100% = A+, anything less = F.

As the students complained, the professor gave them another option. He told them he took the same quiz and received a perfect 100% score, and anyone that didn't like their score could cross the name off the top of their quiz and write in the professor's name and receive his perfect score.

The professor then smiled and explained the Gospel through this brilliant illustration. Jesus lived the perfect life - He received a 100% on the morality test of life. Whether we receive a 20% or a 90%, we still fail to be perfect. However, Jesus offers us His perfect standing before God, if we are willing to transfer our trust from ourselves onto the perfect life, sacrificial death, and life-giving resurrection of Jesus as our only hope for salvation.

n the illustration on the previous page, who do you think would be the most thankful for the professor's gift and why? Who do you think would be the most angry and why?

How does this illustration help you better understand the Gospel and what Jesus has done for you?

How does the following verse summarize the Gospel and this illustration?

- **2 Corinthians 5:21**

Which of the following statements best describes where you are in regard to making a decision to trust Christ alone for salvation? Why?

- I have made the decision and desire to grow.
- I understand the message, but I'm not ready to make the decision.
- I grew up going to church but don't remember ever making a decision.
- I still have questions and would like to learn more.
- Other...

Going back to the original opening discussion question:

Imagine that you are standing before God, and He asks you in a kind but forceful voice, "Why should I let you into heaven?" What would you say now? Is there a difference?

How certain would you be that God would let you into heaven based on what we have studied so far?

**RATE YOUR CONFIDENCE ON A SCALE
FROM 1 TO 10**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Not Sure **Very Sure**

Who are some people that you care about who might be interested in knowing more about having a relationship with God?

FRIENDS

FAMILY

TEAMMATES

CONGRATULATIONS!

You have finished BOOK ONE: DISCOVER of THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES.

When you are ready, BOOK TWO: RESPOND is the next step in the series. The remaining books give us practical ways to respond to what God has done to bring us to Himself as we seek to grow in our relationship with Him.

The following diagram uses a wheel to illustrate the foundational truths of the Christian life:



As we move forward in this series, we will use this diagram to remind us that Jesus Christ is the axle of the wheel and the very center of the Christian life. As we learned, trusting in Christ's work on the cross is the only way we can receive salvation and enter into a right relationship with God. Moving forward, we will learn how the Holy Spirit is the hub of the wheel that secures our relationship with God, keeps us connected to Jesus, empowers us to trust His Lordship, and motivates us to respond to the Gospel by living a life of faith and obedience. The four spokes in the wheel - Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship, and Evangelism - represent things we can do in response to what God has already done for us in Christ. We call these activities spiritual disciplines, and they help us grow in relationship with God. The Holy Spirit will give each believer a growing desire to pursue these disciplines, helping us grow in maturity and accomplish God's purposes.

Remember, we do not do these things to try to gain God's acceptance. Instead, the Holy Spirit reminds us that we are so unconditionally loved and accepted by God in Christ, that we get to do these things out of a grateful heart in order to get to know our gracious Lord and Savior better and live out His purposes.

The rest of THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES will unpack these foundational truths of the Christian life one book at a time. We hope and pray you enjoy the journey!

Up next:
Foundations Book 2: RESPOND

NOTES AND RESPONSES

College Golf Fellowship

College Golf Fellowship exists to encourage you in golf, life, and faith. We desire to come alongside you and show you what an authentic relationship with Jesus looks like. We hope this series helps you lay a solid foundation for your entire life.

THE FOUNDATIONS SERIES

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BOOK TWO: RESPOND

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