

HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH

# THE PLAN OF SALVATION

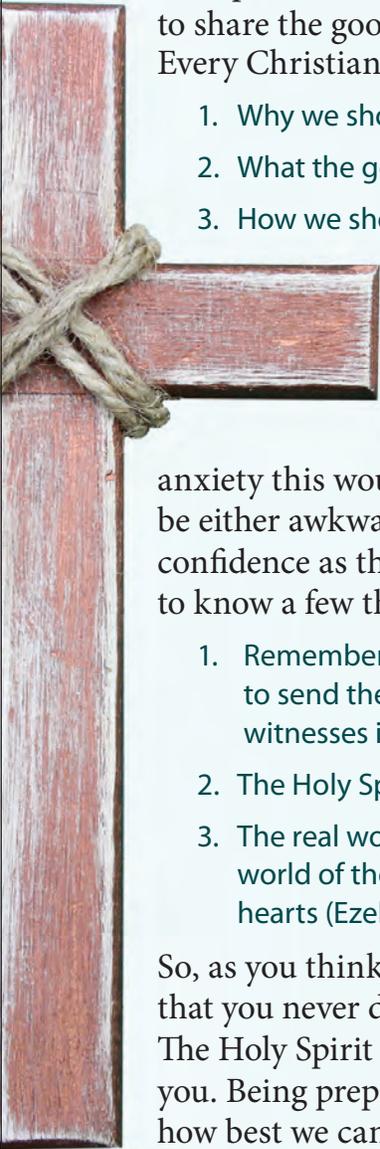


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# THE PLAN OF SALVATION

Jesus called his disciples to spread the good news throughout the world. Ever since then, Christ's followers have lived the good news and spoken and written about it. Today, the need and responsibility to share the good news is not any less serious, urgent, and present. Every Christian should know:

1. Why we should share the good news
2. What the good news is
3. How we should go about sharing the good news



Knocking on a stranger's door to share the gospel is not for everyone. Some people are simply too terrified with that idea, others do not feel that their lives are worthy of being Christ's ambassadors, and others cannot deal with the anxiety this would cause. Sharing the good news does not have to be either awkward or cause a high level of anxiety. To give believers confidence as they share the good news, it's helpful for all believers to know a few things:

1. Remember that the Holy Spirit is in charge. Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to all believers so that we may be his witnesses in the world (Acts 1:7-8).
2. The Holy Spirit will give you the right words (Luke 12:11-12).
3. The real work belongs to the Holy Spirit, who convicts the world of the need of a savior (John 16:8), changes people's hearts (Ezek. 36:27), and transforms people (John 3:5-6).

So, as you think about the call to share the good news, remember that you never do it alone and the timing is not yours, but God's. The Holy Spirit is with you to remind you, empower you, and guide you. Being prepared with the content of what we should say and how best we can say it is, however, always a good idea.

*Many believers feel that they cannot share the gospel effectively unless their own lives are perfect. How would you reply to this issue? Do we have to wait until our lives are perfect to represent Christ?*

# WHY WE SHARE THE GOOD NEWS: CALLED TO MAKE DISCIPLES

We share the gospel because we are moved by the conviction that God called us to do just that: make disciples.

1. Sharing the good news is an intimate part of what being followers of Christ means (Matt. 28:19–20).
2. Despite any nervousness or anxiety we might feel, the evangelistic experience is full of blessings.
3. The world is in need of the good news we have available.

Jesus has called us to become lifelong learners. Think about a child. When a child is born, she doesn't know how to speak, feed herself, get dressed—nothing. All she knows is that she feels hungry, cold, and tired and wants to have her basic needs met. She begins to learn by observing and copying. This begins lifelong learning by imitation. That's a disciple! See? We already know how to be a disciple: We all are disciples: we started out by being followers, copiers of the behaviors we saw growing up. But in terms of sharing the good news, we need to learn to be a more specific kind of disciple: a disciple of Jesus.

## BEING DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Being disciples of Jesus means:

1. We are imitators of Jesus (Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6).
2. We learn to see people and the world as Jesus would—with love and compassion (2 Cor. 5:16).
3. We recognize that Jesus is King of our lives and the world (Phil. 2:9–11) and belong to him alone (1 Cor. 6:19–20; Rom. 14:8).
4. We seek to live out the fruit of the Spirit in our lives: “love, joy, peace, forbearance [patience], kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22–23).
5. We become God's instruments, spokespeople, and envoys to:
  - . Testify of his goodness and love;
  - . To warn of the dangers of a life away from God and of impending judgment;
  - . And to do justice, act with love, and show mercy in a world that is desperate for justice, love, and mercy.

*How are you being a disciple of Jesus in your life?*

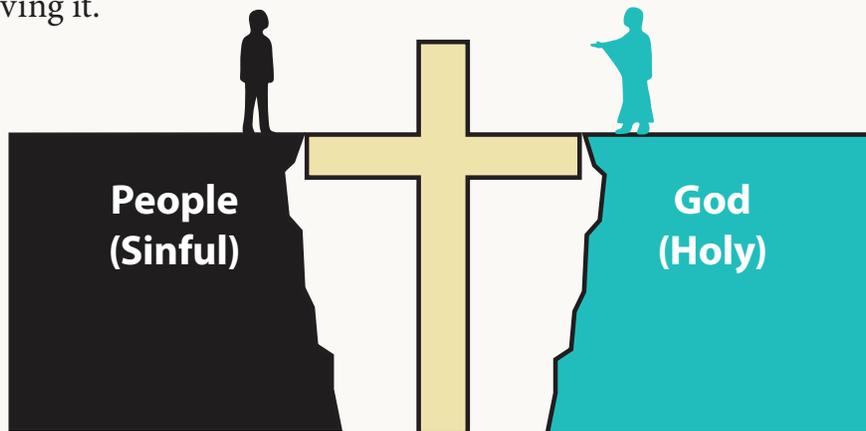
# WHAT'S THE GOOD NEWS? THE BASICS OF EVANGELISM

Some people accept the good news after hearing the stories of the conversion experiences of believers. Others find God's transforming love through friendships or by listening to or reading about other people's lives. Others discover it alone while reading Scripture or after going through an unexpected experience. Although the Holy Spirit draws people and opens their eyes in many different ways, the basics of the message are the same:

1. God loves people.
2. People are bound to sin and cannot get free on their own.
3. God sent Jesus to free us from sin and death.
4. Because of God's grace—not our works—we can be assured of our salvation.
5. Becoming disciples of Jesus begins with repentance of sin and a request for forgiveness.
6. As disciples of Jesus, we grow and mature in a deeper relationship with God throughout our lives.

*John 15:8: "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*

These are some helpful tools that organize the basic message and are intended to help both the one presenting the gospel and the person receiving it.



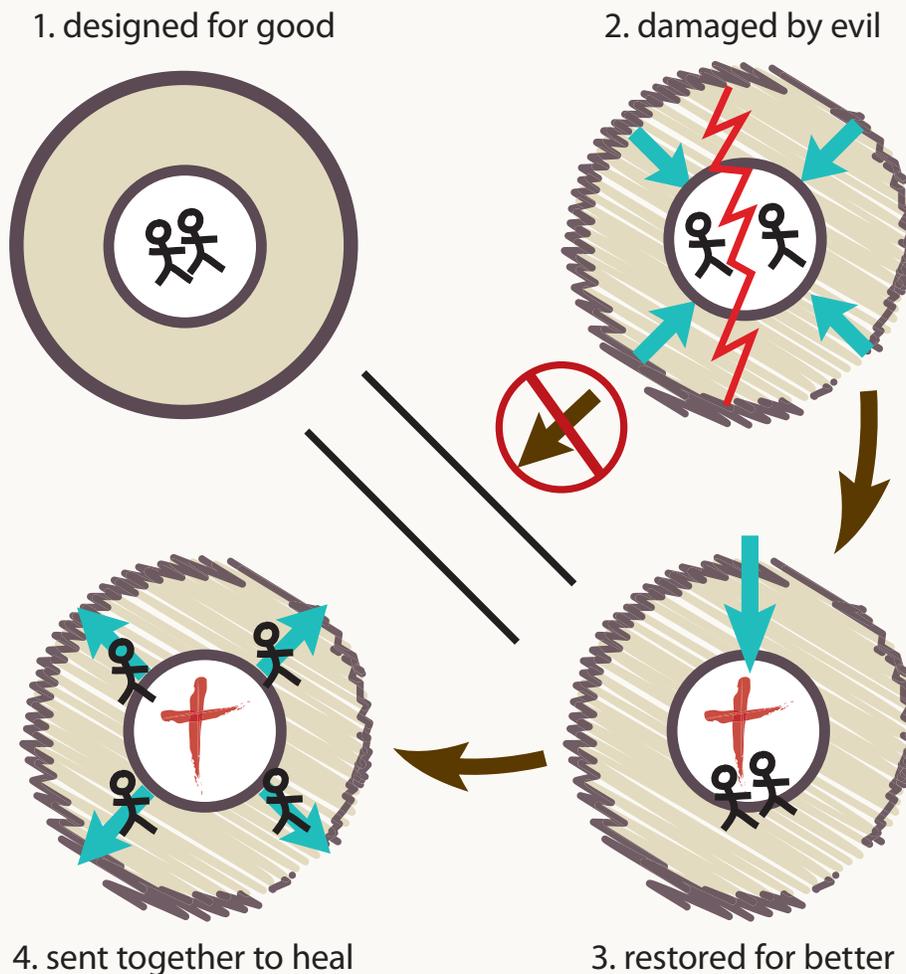
This drawing illustrates how Jesus' work on the cross allows sinful people to begin a relationship with God and be rescued from eternal death.

THE FOUR CIRCLES illustration, by James Choung, shows God's original intention for his creation. (1) God made humans to be and do good. However, (2) sin affected our ability to do good. We became self-centered and enslaved to sin. Our sin breaks our relationship with God, nature, and one another.

(3) Thankfully, Jesus came to restore humanity. His death on the cross liberated us from the slavery of sin and death.

(4) Being free from sin, believers can become ambassadors of God. God is sending believers to heal relationships by preaching the good news of Jesus to a lost humanity.

Humans cannot move from circle 2 to 4 because sin has opened a gap that separates God from humans. Only through Christ is it possible to reach God.



# THE GOOD NEWS: A LOVING GOD

If we want to share our faith with others, we are best served if we know the details of what we want to share.

## GOD LOVES US

Our story began with love and the Garden of Eden. God created all things out of love. The Garden of Eden was a place filled with goodness. Humanity was meant to enjoy God's company in this wonderful place!

## OUR REBELLION

But things went wrong. Instead of enjoying and being satisfied with being made in God's image, we wanted to be like God. Rather than enjoying the freedom of love in relationship with God and each other, we became enslaved to evil, sin, rebellion, and death. We turned our backs to God and became enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). In short, the problem was and is rebellion—or sin. We became slaves to sin, evil, and death.

*Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

## LOVE VS. REBELLION

God's Love	Human Rebellion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• God is love (1 John 4:8).</li><li>• God's love endures forever (Ps. 100:5).</li><li>• God cares for his creation (Ps. 145:9, 15–16).</li><li>• God loves the world (John 3:16–18).</li><li>• God loved humanity and sent Jesus to bring salvation (Rom. 3:22–24; 5:5–8; Eph. 2:1–10; 1 John 4:9–10).</li><li>• God loves the church (Eph. 5:25).</li><li>• God's love allows humans to love (1 John 4:7–12).</li><li>• God's love is so great that he is ready to forgive the rebellious (Jer. 33:8).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• People do evil (Judg. 2:11).</li><li>• People are disobedient (Rom. 5:19).</li><li>• People transgress (Eph. 2:1).</li><li>• People sin (Lev. 26:40).</li><li>• People are lawless (Titus 2:14; 1 John 3:4).</li><li>• People trespass (Rom. 5:15–17).</li><li>• People are ungodly (2 Tim. 2:18).</li><li>• People suffer death (Rom. 6:23).</li></ul>

*Can you write about a time when you experienced God's love?*

# DIVINE HELP

We all sense that something has gone wrong with the world. This is not the way it was supposed to be! So we look for solutions, and we attempt to solve our basic problem: we try good behavior, social and personal reforms and changes, the guidance of gurus or wise people. But we are unable to find a permanent solution of our own. God has solved our problem. **Romans 6:23: “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

And we realize that to be freed from the bondage that enslaves us, we need help from someone greater than us. We must come to realize that our efforts are futile. Only God can make us free and give us life. **Titus 3:5: “He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”**

## GOD’S SURPRISING SOLUTION

God’s solution begins with Jesus becoming human. We can be sure that Jesus experienced the whole range of human life: he suffered, he cried, he rejoiced, he laughed, he was tempted, he became angry, he was disappointed. **Hebrews 2:14–18: “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity. . . . Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”**

A common reason for not accepting God—or his existence—is the mistaken belief that God remains indifferent to human suffering. However, when we consider that God became fully human, then this reason is no longer valid. God cares. In fact, God cares so much that “he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

The way Jesus solved humanity’s main issue can be seen in at least three different but complementary ways:

1. He lived a life worthy of imitation: he taught us what being a human means, and how to live in the way God wants us to live.
2. He defeated the powers of evil and death: he made us free to serve and love!
3. He substituted himself for us: he died and rose again, and through his death and resurrection, God forgave us completely.

# THE GOOD NEWS: WHAT JESUS DID, IS DOING, AND WILL DO

The good news that Jesus and the apostles proclaimed is that in and through Christ, God has:

1. Established his kingship,
2. Defeated the powers of evil,
3. Forgiven and justified people from their sins, and
4. Begun the ultimate goal of restoring the entire creation.

## THE KING HAS ARRIVED!

God is the righteous King. In the human experience, kingship, the right to rule, is a forceful imposition: the strongest rule. Many Jews at the time of Jesus seemed to have expected the Messiah to be the sort of king who would use force and violence to get rid of the Romans and all the other enemies of the Jews. But the kingdom of God is unlike any kingdom on earth. In and through Jesus' life and death, God showed that the kingdom of God was not gained through the use of the sword or any other type of violence. It came through the humble obedience and loving sacrifice of his Son, Jesus.

Jesus showed that the kingdom of God is the manifestation of God's power to free his people from sin and death and to defeat the forces of evil.

In short—and this is part of the good news we should proclaim—the Lord reigns! The kingdom of God is near, and God is the righteous and loving King. Also part of the good news, there is nothing we have to do to deserve this gift. It is God's amazing grace that saves us. We are saved by grace alone. And that is wonderful news!

*As you look at your own life,  
where do you see evidence of  
God starting his restoration  
work in your heart and  
mind?*



# VICTORIOUS OVER EVIL

The Gospels describe the beginning of Jesus' public ministry with his time in the wilderness. There, Satan tempted him, but Jesus came out victorious over Satan and evil. Then, Jesus proclaimed, "The time has come.... The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:15).

Jesus' victory in the wilderness was the first glimpse of what was to come. On the cross, Jesus obtained a decisive victory over evil. Did you hear that? Evil has been defeated! The resurrection confirmed Jesus' triumph over the powers of evil and death. The resurrection also restated the fact that God's kingdom has arrived. And, finally, the resurrection confirmed the beginning of a new reality, new possibilities: a new birth for people and for the entire creation and reconciliation with God.

Evil is thrashing, kicking in complete rage, knowing that its final days are coming, trying to destroy and ruin all it can before its final day arrives.

In short—and this too is part of the good news we should proclaim—evil and death are defeated.

*Sometimes, when watching the news, for example, it is easy to believe that evil is winning. But as mere humans, we cannot see the future. How should we pray for people and situations that seem to be mired in evil? What person or situation can you bring to God in prayer today?*

## EVIL

Let's make something clear, evil is a parasite: it doesn't have life on its own; it draws its life and strength from goodness. But, like all parasites, once it gets in and attaches to its host, it can deplete all vitality from it. Evil effectively "rules" over its host. When humanity rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, they opened the door to evil, to the parasite Evil, and it attached itself firmly to the goodness of creation. It has grown strong and arrogant by sucking out the life of all that is good and desirable in God's good creation. And it goes so far as to claim to be the true owner and ruler of the world! However, God is the true King of all. God is the only one worthy of ruling. Evil is an impostor whose temporary insane rule is waning.

# NEW POSSIBILITIES: FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Evil, the parasite, corrupts and distorts: that which was meant to be good becomes distorted or corrupted and used for ill. And evil affected humanity, starting in the Garden. Sin corrupted and distorted the creation that God declared good.

God created us to relate to him, to each other, and to the rest of the good creation he made. Sin, however, spoiled those relationships. Instead of loving and worshipping God, we became God's enemies, and we love to create our own idols to worship. Instead of relating to each other in love and understanding, we would rather dominate and subjugate others, becoming enemies of each other.



Instead of loving God's good creation, we abuse it and destroy it.

Sin distorts and corrupts humanity's efforts to be good or do God's will. Sin enslaves humans, making them think, feel, act, and speak in distorted ways. What seems good to us is, in fact, a distortion of what real good is. God grieves that what he intended for good, we turn into evil; what he intended for beauty and pleasure, we turn into ugliness and suffering. And God, as the rightful King of creation, will judge evil and evildoers.

Fortunately, Jesus' death on the cross—his defeat of the power of sin—accomplished several important things:

1. Freed people from the slavery of sin.
2. Removed the weight of sin by satisfying God's requirements of the law.
3. Reconciled people with God.
4. Saved people from condemnation in the final judgment when Jesus returns.

***Tell your story of becoming a follower of Jesus, why you felt it was important, what it means to you today. Do it verbally, in writing, or as an art project. Share it with at least one person.***

# MAKING ALL THINGS NEW

One of the things that makes the good news so very good is the knowledge that God is committed to make all things new: “Then I saw ‘a new heaven and a new earth’” (Rev. 21:1).

When we think about the good news, if we arrive at the cross and stop there, the good news is incomplete. Jesus rose from the dead. That’s a huge part of the good news! And what’s so good about that is that he is just the beginning of what God wants to do.

Jesus’ resurrection began a new era, an era of transformation. God is transforming and renewing people and, through them, his creation. Although his new creation will not be fully realized until Jesus returns at the end of times, the work of Jesus’ followers offers powerful glimpses of what that future, glorious, transformed new creation will be like.

And this transformation begins with people. Those who hear the good news and accept and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior experience a transformation, a new birth. This new birth is an anticipation of the final resurrection, a taste of the renewal to come for all of creation. Believers are born again (John 3:5–8).

Is just accepting Jesus really all that is needed? Well, yes and no. Yes, we must accept God’s free offer of salvation and restoration. But no, it is not that simple. While accepting Jesus’ invitation to be reborn, to be renewed, is a major step, it is only the first step—it is just the beginning. Jesus also invites us into a new relationship: a renewed friendship with God, with those around us—our neighbors. It is here that we become disciples of Jesus. And being a disciple of Jesus is a lifelong project!

What’s good to know is that we don’t have to work on our project on our own:

“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Pet. 1:3).

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).



# PRESENTING THE GOOD NEWS

Presenting the good news is a calling, and every Christian is called to do it. It is also a spiritual discipline. That means it is not something we just know how to do. We must learn how to do it. It might not be easy. It might be intimidating. For some, it might even be terrifying. And for everyone, it is demanding.

However, sharing the good news essentially is a simple thing. And it begins not at a stranger's door or on a bus or out in a park. It begins in your room at home, in your Sunday school classroom, in your small group. It begins with silence before God, not with words to people. Yes, it's true! It begins with:

1. Bible study—The more we know God, about God, and God's plans for humanity, the better we can share what God has done for us.
2. Prayer—The closer we are to God, the more of life we can share with others. An abundant prayer life will overflow our hearts and minds.

Although evangelism can be practiced anywhere and at any time, here we'll focus on personal evangelism, or personal witnessing. In personal witnessing, we must remember that we are just the messengers. It is the most important message anyone could ever encounter, but we need to remember to let the message be and stay at the center of our words and actions. And let the God who created the universe be the one in charge of transforming and recreating people. In presenting the gospel, we assume some responsibilities and God takes the others. It is a partnership that God invites us to be a part of.



## APPLICATION

Make a list of people to keep in prayer. Ask the Lord to open their eyes at the right time.

# ROMANS ROAD TO SALVATION

As you prepare to be a witness, there are several things you should keep in mind:

1. Remember that you are bringing good news!
2. Love people and accept them where they are. If your words don't arise from love, then the good news will get muddled with controversies and arguments. God's love heals and transforms.
3. Be mindful of the movement of the Holy Spirit. God is active in and engaged with the world. Be sensitive to the Spirit's promptings and opening of doors to demonstrate God's love to the world.
4. Remember the good news:

## We need help!

- *"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).*
- *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).*

God provided a solution. And he did it out of love:

- *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).*

God extends an invitation to accept his solution for our problem. It is an invitation to allow ourselves to be transformed and be part of a new life, a life in the kingdom of God. And it all begins with a confession:

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

# BECOMING INSTRUMENTS OF GOD AND GOD'S PROMISES

Areas to Grow as Instruments of God	Promises of the Holy Spirit
Living and speaking in a way that shows God's power and goodness in our own lives when we have been in need.	Will empower us to be effective witnesses of the good news in word and action (Luke 12:11-12; Acts 1:7-8)
Praying	Will bring our prayers before God (Rom. 8:26-27)
Studying the Bible	Will reveal God to us and remind us of Jesus' teachings (1 Cor. 2:10-12; Eph. 3:3-5; John 16:12-13)
Living a life of obedience	Will empower us for a faithful life (Rom. 8:3-6; 15:13)
Being witnesses of God's love and grace	Will enable us to confess in our hearts that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor. 12:3) and enable us to keep God's laws (Ezek. 36:27)
Living in a way that reflects God's love, mercy, holiness, and power	Will make us free, leading us to salvation (2 Cor. 3:17), will transform us into the image of Christ (2 Cor. 3:18), and will mark us as God's children (2 Cor. 1:21-22)



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**Author:** Benjamin Galan, MTS, ThM, Professor of Old Testament Hebrew and Literature.

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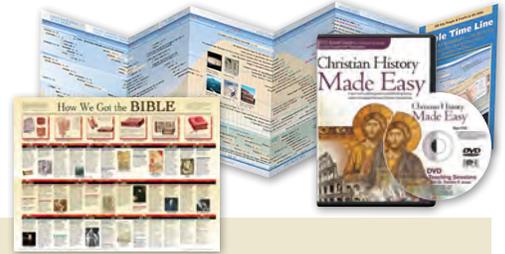


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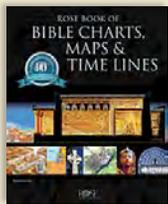
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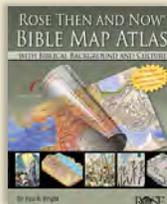
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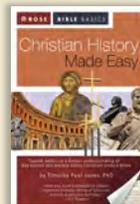
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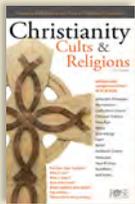


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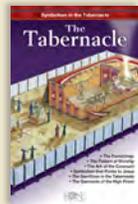


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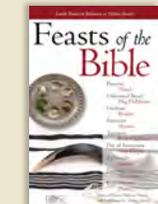
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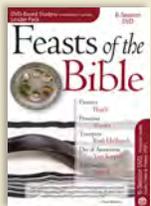


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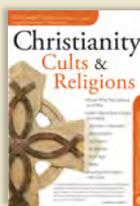
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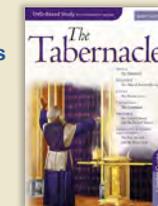
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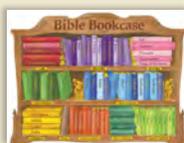


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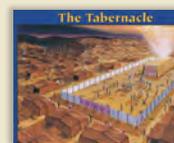
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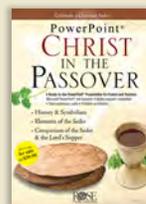


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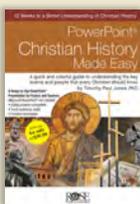
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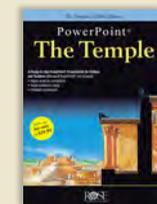
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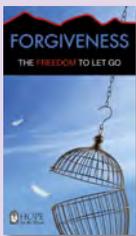
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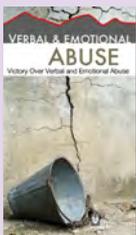
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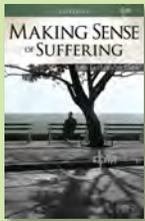
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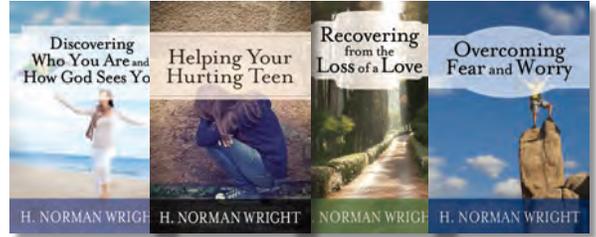


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