

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*Challenged to Change*  
Matthew 3:1-17

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

**Gathering Time Leader:** If possible, find a map of Prince Edward Island, Canada. Point out that the writer traveled from Murray's Harbour upward to the Atlantic Ocean. Locate the larger city of Charlottetown and it's relationship to Murray's Harbour. Going the wrong direction was not a good idea!

**Bible Study Leader:** The youth leader needs to provide poster board or a large piece of paper or newsprint for today's activity.

**Worship Time Leader:** Prepare copies of the reading which will be done to open and/or close today's Sharing Time.

## **Music Sources:**

**Wherever He Leads I'll Go**, *The Worship Hymnal* #438; CCLI #25194  
**Footsteps of Jesus**, *The Worship Hymnal* #550; CCLI #115705

# 1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

## ***Challenged to Change***

### **Focal Text**

Matthew 3:1-17

### **Background Text**

Matthew 3:1-4:16

### **Main Idea**

The gospel calls all people to a new direction in life that is demonstrated through actions.

### **Question to Explore**

What kind of change should Jesus make in my life?

### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to respond fully to God's call to change their lives.

### **Gathering together:**

#### **Wherever He Leads I'll Go**

Read Isaiah 57:15 as a call to worship.

***"This is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy; 'I live in a high and holy place, but also with him who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite.'"***

### **First thoughts:**

**This is the Way; Walk in it.**

The writer remembers a visit on Prince Edward Island, Canada. She and her husband had spent a lovely evening feasting on fresh lobster at the home of a friend. They

visited until late in the evening before beginning their drive back to Charlottetown from the small village on the far end of the island. They talked about their visit as they drove through small towns along the way. Finally, they began to wonder if they had missed a turn somewhere for the villages they passed through no longer seemed familiar. Suddenly they realized the ocean was before them. They had driven across the island in the wrong direction. With the ocean stretching out before them, it was a strange feeling to realize that they had traversed the entire island in only an hour's time, but they were far from where they needed to be. After making some inquiries and traveling over some roads already covered, they found a sign which said, "Charlottetown, this way!" With relief they began to travel down the road and an hour later arrived at their destination. Our study and worship today reminds us of how good it is in life's journey to be able to say, "This is the Way; walk in it." Repenting of our sins and turning to God is the first step on that Way. Seeking Him in each of life's decisions – large and small – ensures that the Way continues to be clear to us. Today we will focus on God's way and our walking with Him through our life's journey. For many, this study will be a confirmation of a decision made long ago. For others, it may be the beginning of a walk with God which will transform one's life.

## **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *Challenged to Change*

#### **Focal Text**

Matthew 3:1-17

#### **Background Text**

Matthew 3:1-4:16

#### **Main Idea**

The gospel calls all people to a new direction in life that is demonstrated through actions.

#### **Question to Explore**

What kind of change should Jesus make in my life?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to respond fully to God's call to change their lives.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Like the writer of the gathering time, you may have been driving somewhere and found out that you were headed in the wrong direction? There is only one remedy for that situation – turn the car around and head back. The biblical term for turning is “repent.” It means to turn 180 degrees and head in the opposite direction. Repentance is not a popular topic today. When people learn that they are sinful and are headed in the opposite direction from God, God calls them to change the direction of their lives. This is tough because some habits are deeply ingrained, the product of years of sinful actions and attitudes. However, there is only one remedy for the problem of sin – repentance. God brings salvation to the repentant heart, but those who refuse to repent will face his righteous judgment. The fact that God can, and wants to, heal us from our sin is good news indeed!

## Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

The events of Matthew 3 happened more than twenty-five years after the final events of chapter 2. All four Gospel writers noted John the Baptist as the first person to appear at the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. Jesus stressed John’s importance in God’s plan by stating, “***There has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist***” (Matthew 11:11), being in essence the last prophet to prepare hearts for the coming Messiah. Unlike the prophets of the Old Testament, John was privileged to see Jesus personally and turn hearts directly to him. However, John would die as a martyr before seeing God’s full salvation accomplished through Jesus’ death, resurrection, ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit (Mark 6:14-29). Born into a priestly family (Luke 1), John preached a message of repentance, announcing the coming of God’s Messiah in the person of Jesus Christ.

## Focusing on the Meaning:

**"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (vv. 1-6).**

John’s ministry location was **the Desert of Judea**, a barren desert area in the valley of the Jordan River and in the hills to the west of the Dead Sea. John summed up his message in one statement, “***Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near***” (cf. 4:17). Calling people to repent of their sins into a right relationship with God, John sounded much like the Old Testament prophets. Repentance involves turning around the direction of one’s life, thought, and actions to a direction aligning with God and his divine standards. God’s **kingdom** is the realm of his sovereign rule where his authority brings all things under his righteous standards. Jesus accomplished this with his coming, his miracles, preaching, forgiveness of sins, death, and resurrection. He demonstrated that God’s sovereign rule had broken into this dark evil age, and his salvation would be made evident in the changed lives of people (Luke 17:21). Since God’s kingdom was about to arrive with the coming of Jesus the king, then people should get their lives in order and **prepare the way** for him.

John’s physical appearance was similar to the prophet Elijah (2 Kings 1:8; cf. Matthew 11:2-9; 17:9-13), reminding his hearers of Malachi’s prophecy that Elijah would precede the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 3:1; 4:5-6). John demonstrated that he had rejected the luxuries of life by his clothing and diet, providing a visible demonstration of living a life of brokenness and repentance before God.

John found a receptive audience to his message because people from **Jerusalem**, the surrounding region of **Judea**, and the region around the **Jordan River** came to John in the desert to hear him preach. They demonstrated their repentance before God by **confessing their sins**. “Confession” is stating the truth about something. These

people were willing to be honest with God about the sin in their lives. John **baptized** those who confessed their sins **in the Jordan River**. The term “baptize” means “to immerse or plunge in water,” a term used outside of the Bible for washing hands or a ship that went down at sea. The people John baptized were making a personal commitment to God to surrender to his kingship in their lives.

### **"Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (vv. 7-10).**

Some had not surrendered to God's kingship even though they were religious leaders. **Pharisees** were mostly lay leaders who were serious about being separated from “sinners” by meticulously following God's law and the numerous religious traditions designed to keep people holy. **Sadducees** were an elite group of aristocratic and priestly leaders who held most of the religious and political authority among the Jews. John recognized their hypocrisy before God and called both groups to repent, “**You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?**” Scheming like snakes, they thought they could escape God's coming wrath for their sin through all of their religious activity. They wanted to prove to God how good they were rather than acknowledge the many ways they had fallen short of his divine standard (Romans 3:23). “**Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.**” Those who have truly repented of their sins will live lives that demonstrate such. These leaders relied upon their ancestry, believing that God would save them simply because they were descendants of **Abraham**. Simply having a religious heritage means nothing, because “**out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.**” God looks at the fruit of each life, and “**every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.**” (See John 15:6).

### **"He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (vv. 11-12).**

John spoke of a certain person who would bring in God's kingdom. John's baptism was “**with water for repentance.**” God's representative is “**more powerful**” and important than John. John was the herald, but another person would come who would be God's messianic deliverer. This person would **baptize** the repentant “**with the Holy Spirit**” unto salvation, but he would baptize the unrepentant “**with fire**” to God's eternal judgment. He would separate repentant and unrepentant hearts as one threshes grain, separating the wheat from the chaff. He would gather the good wheat into his barn, and the useless chaff he would destroy “**with unquenchable fire.**”

### **"To fulfill all righteousness" (vv. 13-17).**

Jesus was “the coming one” to whom John referred. Jesus came to John to affirm John's message and be identified as God's Messiah. He wanted **to be baptized by John**. John objected because Jesus' “**baptism**” was a far greater baptism “**with the Holy Spirit and with fire**” (v. 11). Jesus did not need to repent like the others (vv. 2,



6), but instead Jesus wanted to be baptized **“to fulfill all righteousness.”** His baptism would begin his earthly ministry that would “fulfill” God’s saving plan that had been prophesied through the Old Testament (Isaiah 53:11). Jesus would accomplish God’s righteous plan to bring salvation to sinful people, a plan that would culminate in his own death on a cross. Jesus affirmed John’s call to repentance and claimed his own vital place in God’s saving plan. Standing in the water with sinners needing God’s salvation, Jesus identified himself with sinful people and was baptized with them as a sign of solidarity.

Having been immersed, as Jesus was coming up out of the water God opened the heavens (cf. Acts 7:56; 10:11). Jesus saw **“the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him”**, anointing him for his task (Isaiah 11:2). This anointing inaugurated Jesus’ public ministry (Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:16-21). He was the long expected Messiah and the one for whom John prepared the way.

God the Father spoke from heaven (notice the presence of all three persons of the Trinity) with a word of encouragement and affirmation, **“This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”** These words recall several significant passages in the Old Testament. **“This is my Son”** echoes Psalm 2:7, a psalm about King David, the one specially anointed by God. This psalm was then applied to any king descended from him (cf. Matthew 1:1). God stated to the king, “You are my Son; today I have become your Father.” Thus, God the Father declared that Jesus was the Messiah who would bring about God’s reign on the earth (Psalm 72). The phrase, **“with him I am well pleased”** (or **“in whom I delight”**) recalls the same phrase from Isaiah 42:1, the opening verse in a series of “songs” about **“the Servant of the Lord”** (Isaiah 42:1-9; 49:1-6; 50:4-10; 52:13-53:12). In these songs, God’s Servant would suffer frustration, rejection, and ultimately death. The Servant would be obedient to God no matter the cost in order to fulfill his calling, and as a result, he would restore Israel as God’s people and bring God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. The phrase **“my Son, whom I love”** echoes Genesis 22:2, where God told Abraham, **“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love”** and sacrifice him to the Lord. In the end God spared Isaac (Genesis 22:11-12), but Jesus knew the meaning of the reference. Abraham the father was willing to sacrifice his own son, and Isaac the son was willing to be sacrificed. The apostle Paul stated that God **“did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all”** (Romans 8:32). God’s only Son, whom he loved, God was willing to sacrifice so that sinners might be saved. Through Jesus’ atoning death, God would bring his salvation to the entire world. Jesus was indeed God’s anointed Messiah, the obedient Suffering Servant, and God’s beloved Son who would offer himself willingly to be sacrificed (John 10:17-18).

## **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

John brought a message of repentance to prepare for God’s kingdom rule in the lives of his hearers. Repentance involves bringing the entire direction of one’s life in line with God’s standards. Those with repentant hearts confessed their sins and were baptized in the Jordan River. Some religious leaders, however, chose to trust their religious

activity and religious heritage to find God's approval. John called them to repent and demonstrate "fruit" by the kinds of lives they lived.

John also pointed his hearers to God's Messiah who would bring salvation for the repentant and God's judgment for the unrepentant. Jesus willingly accepted that role and demonstrated this by being baptized by John. His baptism would "fulfill" God's righteous plan to bring salvation to sinful humanity. God's Spirit descended and anointed Jesus for the task, and God the Father encouraged Jesus with his blessing. In his words of blessing God reminded Jesus of his role and task, to be God's Messiah who would usher in God's reign on earth, to be God's obedient Servant to suffer for people's sins and bring God's salvation to all, and be God's beloved Son who would willingly be sacrificed.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***Challenged to Change***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

**Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.**

#### **Focal Text**

Matthew 3:1-17

#### **Background Text**

Matthew 3:1-4:16

#### **Main Idea**

The gospel calls all people to a new direction in life that is demonstrated through actions.

#### **Question to Explore**

What kind of change should Jesus make in my life?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To lead participants to respond fully to God's call to change their lives.

#### **Connect with Life:**

As the group gathers, ask them who does most of the driving in the family.

Gain attention with this question: “How does the driver respond when they discover they are headed in the wrong direction?”

Explain that there is only one solution to the problem—to turn around. Explain that the biblical term for that is “repent.”

Seek responses to this: “What should our response be when we find that our lives are headed in the wrong direction?”

Then ask: “Does God expect people to make any changes in order to follow him?”

More specifically: “What kind of change should Jesus make in my life?”

## **Guide the Study:**

### **Background:**

Explain the significance of John the Baptist’s ministry (Teacher notes “Background”).

#### **1. A change of heart and mind – from living for self to living for the King (vv. 1-6).**

Have a volunteer read vv. 1-6.

Look for an answer: “If you could sum up John’s message in one word, what would it be?” (“repent”).

Encourage several responses: “What pops into your mind when you hear the word ‘kingdom’?”

Discuss the concept of “the kingdom of heaven” (from the teacher notes).

Seek answers to these thoughts:

“Who is the king in this kingdom?”

“Where is it located?”

“How were people to ‘prepare the way of the Lord’?”

Have the group look specifically at vv. 5-6.

Now search for an answer to this: How did John’s audience respond to his message? (confessed their sins, were baptized).

Explain the meaning of the term “baptize” (from the Teacher notes).

Ask: “What did these actions demonstrate?”

Again: What if someone was not willing to change after they had surrendered their life to the King?

Explain that a willingness to live for the King is an indication of a change of a person’s heart and mind.

## **2. A change of actions – from a religion of words to deeds (vv. 7-10).**

Have someone read vv. 7-10.

Inquire of the group what they know of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Be ready to correct any misperceptions or add any relevant information (from the Teacher notes).

Check for an answer: “What did John call these religious leaders?” (vipers)

Now question the group: “What was he inferring?” (they were scheming like snakes)

Explain that they were seeking to escape God’s judgment through their religious activity and religious heritage.

Have the group look at verse 8.

Ask: “What did John demand of them?” (fruit of repentance)

Have the group discuss what this means (actions).

Have the group look at verse 9, and ask, “Could they rely upon their religious heritage for their salvation?”

Say: “According to verse 10, what does God look for in someone’s life?”

What will happen to those who do not have what God requires?”

## **3. A change of destiny – from God's wrath to His blessing (vv. 11-12).**

Have someone read vv. 11-12.

Inquire: “To whom is John referring with ‘one who will come after me’?”

Request opinions on how John’s baptism differs from Jesus’ baptism.

Ask: “Who will receive baptism ‘with the Holy Spirit’?” (the repentant)

Add: “Who will receive baptism ‘with fire’?” (the unrepentant)

Explain how God will separate the two.

Present this question: “What is the destiny of the wheat?” (gathered into his barn)

Call for an answer: “What is the destiny of the chaff?” (burned ‘with unquenchable fire’).

Ask the group to skim back over verses 7-12.

Encourage the group to help with these answers:

What kind of God is presented in these verses?

Is it God's desire to destroy anyone?

Why would God send John in the first place?

What is God's greatest desire for sinners?

What will be the eternal destiny of those who refuse to repent of their sins?"

#### **4. A change of identity – from sinful humanity to Jesus and His followers (vv. 13-17).**

Have someone read vv. 13-17.

Ask: "What did Jesus mean that his baptism would 'fulfill all righteousness'?" (Be ready to help explain from the Teacher notes)

Point out the three persons of the Trinity present.

Have someone read Isaiah 61:1-2 then someone else read Luke 4:16-21.

Ask: "What did the descent of the Holy Spirit signify?" (Jesus was anointed for his task)

From the "Teacher Preparation" notes, explain the Old Testament significance of God's statement, ***"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."***

Seek an answer: "Was Jesus willing to take on that task?"

Are people today willing to identify themselves with such as Saviour?"

#### **Encourage Application:**

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Ask the group, "In light of what we have studied today in God's word:

What does God want me to believe?

What does God want me to do?

Is there a promise I need to claim?

Is there an example I need to follow? Or to avoid?

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### ***Challenged to Change*** **Matthew 3:1-17**

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **This Is the Way; Walk in It!**

On a large poster board or piece of white paper or newsprint, write the words, "This is the Way; Walk in it." Beneath the heading write helpful advice to finding the way and walking in it. You will want to include "Repenting of sins and turning life over to Jesus" as the primary guide. But you may also include things like:

Choosing good friends  
Obeying parental guidelines  
Taking studies seriously  
Using money wisely  
Staying sexually pure.



**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Challenged to Change***  
**Matthew 3:1-17****Beginning the Service:****Sing Footsteps of Jesus**

As an opening call to worship, have printed copies of the following verses of Scripture. The leader should read one verse and the congregation should respond with the following verse.

***“O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more, with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’” Isaiah 30:19-21***

***“Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,  
Who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.” Psalm 89: 15***

***“Come, O house of Jacob,  
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.” Isaiah 2:5***

***“This is what the Lord says;  
‘Stand at the crossroads and look;  
Ask for the ancient paths,  
Ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
And you will find rest for your souls.’” Jeremiah 6:16***

***“He has showed you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
And to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8***

***“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7***

***“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” 2 John, verse 6.***

**Offering:**

## **Praying for the World:**

Spanish serves as the primary language across much of Central and South America. Many missionaries study Spanish in Costa Rica. Pray for protection from evil and for discipline and perseverance over the months of language learning. Pray for children of language school students as they adapt to a new culture and language as well. Students have left positions of ministry and/or influence and it is difficult to wait to again make a contribution to Kingdom work. Patience is needed by almost every language student.

## **Sharing Guide:**

**This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.**

**This is the way; Walk in it.  
Isaiah 30:21**

## **Introduction:**

The beautiful verse from Isaiah is set in the midst of verses which describe Israel’s disobedience to God. The heading for Chapter 30 says, “Woe to the obstinate nation.” Yet in verses 19 through 21 we read, ***“O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more, with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”*** (Isaiah 30:19-21)

Walk is used in many Bible verses to describe the way of life in the Lord which brings honor and glory to Him and peace and contentment to us. We have heard these verses read as a Call to Worship. Let us attend to them again.

***“Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,  
Who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.” Psalm 89: 15***

***“Come, O house of Jacob,  
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.” Isaiah 2:5***

***“This is what the Lord says;  
‘Stand at the crossroads and look;  
Ask for the ancient paths,  
Ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
And you will find rest for your souls.’” Jeremiah 6:16***

***“He has showed you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
And to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8***

***“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7***

***“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” 2 John: 6***

The concept of “walk” was clearly displayed in a letter received at Christmas time from a man writing about the care he and his wife had given during the year to their elderly mother and father as well as an elderly aunt and uncle. The elderly loved ones had lost spouses and homes and churches where they had worshipped for many years. Yet in making those changes, there was an expression of deep appreciation for God’s goodness to them through the years. It was expressed in a spontaneous prayer as one of the elder men left his house for the last time. The writer said, “We realized that kind of prayer reflected a lifetime of growing in his relationship with our Lord since he became a believer as a young man.” He had walked with the Lord.

Our Bible study today caused us to examine the beginning of that walk – the changes to be made if one is to walk with the Lord. The Bible study author indicated there needs to be four areas of change.

## **1. A change of heart and mind – from living for self to living for the King**

The verse from 1 John 1:7 speaks to this. ***“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son,***

***purifies us from all sin.***” Walking in the light with Jesus leads to happy fellowship with others and is the means of forgiveness of sin. It is the beginning step of our walk.

## **2. A change of actions – from a religion of words to deeds**

2 John, verse 6 speaks of the kind of religious expression we will have in Christ. ***“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.”*** A walk in love leads not to laws about right living, but to right living expressed in caring relationships with others.

## **3. A change of destiny – from God's wrath to His blessing**

***“This is what the Lord says;***

***‘Stand at the crossroads and look;  
Ask for the ancient paths,  
Ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
And you will find rest for your souls.’”*** Jeremiah 6:16

You will find rest for your souls. What a beautiful promise – eternal rest and constant and daily rest. As we watch the news around the world, our hearts cry out for rest from the ongoing war and pain and greed and materialism. Only God’s blessing of rest for our souls can bring us that freedom.

## **4. A change of identity – from sinful humanity to Jesus and His followers**

***“Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,  
Who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.”*** Psalm 89: 15

Our identity rests in the reality that we have learned to acclaim the Lord. We walk in the light of His presence. We are followers of the King.

### **Call to Commitment:**

We read in Isaiah that our cry to the Lord for help will be answered by his guiding presence. Sometimes we think the changes we make when we accept Christ as Saviour are dependent upon our ability to stay faithful, to put away sinful living, to be done with pride and desire. Isaiah 30:21 describes our relationship to a faithful God. ***“Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’”*** The Holy Spirit is our guide. When we invite him to do so, he will tenderly say to us, ***“This is the way; walk in it.”***

### **Concluding the Service:**

Use the following verses to open and/or close the Worship Time. The leader should read one verse and the congregation should read the following verse.

***“O people of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more, with your own eyes you will see them. Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, ‘This is the way; walk in it.’” (Isaiah 30:19-21)***

***“Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,  
Who walk in the light of your presence, O Lord.” Psalm 89: 15***

***“Come, O house of Jacob,  
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.” Isaiah 2:5***

***“This is what the Lord says;  
‘Stand at the crossroads and look;  
Ask for the ancient paths,  
Ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
And you will find rest for your souls.’” Jeremiah 6:16***

***“He has showed you, O man, what is good.  
And what does the Lord require of you?  
To act justly and to love mercy  
And to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8***

***“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7***

***“And this is love: that we walk in obedience to his commands. As you have heard from the beginning, his command is that you walk in love.” 2 John: 6***