ROOTED IN CHRIST · SEVEN-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Your honest questions are welcome.

Explore who Jesus is, read the Bible carefully and make space for a thoughtful response.

Full Bible passages · Guided prayer · A practical step each day

A little encouragement before you begin. Start with the question you actually have. You can read at your own pace and make room to learn.

Can I come to church if I have questions or doubts?

Yes. You can visit ANCC while you are still deciding what you believe. Listening to a service does not require you to join, give money, share your story publicly or say words you do not believe. ANCC is a Christian, Pentecostal church, so you will encounter worship, prayer and teaching about Jesus; you are free to listen and ask what unfamiliar language means.

Five steps for exploring faith honestly

1. **Write your actual question.** Replace a general worry such as “I do not understand religion” with something specific: “What do Christians mean by grace?” or “Why do Christians believe Jesus rose?” Keep questions about evidence separate from a hurtful experience; both matter, but they need different kinds of attention.
2. **Read a complete passage.** Begin with Day 1 below. Its full Bible reading is printed here. Notice what the text claims before deciding whether you agree with it. Write down anything you cannot yet explain.
3. **Try a question journal.** Use four headings: my question; what this passage says; what remains unclear; what I will investigate next. Leave a question open rather than manufacturing an answer.
4. **Choose a conversation, not a confrontation.** Ask whether someone can explain their understanding and listen to yours. A thoughtful discussion allows disagreement, time to think and an honest “I need to look into that”.
5. **Decide your own next step.** Continue reading, visit a gathering or ask about a Bible-study conversation. A genuine response cannot be forced by a deadline or by comparing yourself with someone else.

What if I am unsure about prayer?

You can read the reflections without praying the suggested words. If you want to try, a simple “God, help me seek truth honestly” is enough to begin. The seven-day journey below includes full passages, reflection questions and optional prayers; it is not a test you

have to pass.

What if I have been hurt by church?

You do not owe a public explanation. You can set boundaries and take time to assess how people respond to questions. A concern involving harm should be handled through an appropriate safeguarding or independent support route, not dismissed as a lack of faith.

Read what ANCC believes · Explore returning to church · See what a first visit involves

Explore Christianity · Rooted in Christ · 7-day journey

For people exploring Christianity, returning to unanswered questions, or wanting to understand Jesus before deciding what they believe. Examine what the Gospels claim, distinguish evidence from assumption, and make room for a thoughtful personal response.

Begin the study · Begin Day 1 · Ask a question

Go deeper: the Bible study and group discussion

Bring the real question

Luke 1:1–4, printed under Day 1, presents testimony to be considered, not merely a demand to feel certain. Your question might concern evidence, suffering, hypocrisy, other religions or a painful church experience. Those are not all the same question and should not receive a stock answer. Write yours plainly. Read a passage before deciding what it says, and distinguish the text from a Christian's opinion about it.

Consider Jesus, not only religion

Mark 2:1–12 and John 20:24–31, printed below, present Jesus as more than a helpful moral teacher: he forgives sins, receives faith and is proclaimed risen. Christianity stands or falls on who he is and what God has done through him. The resurrection claim deserves investigation, not an exaggerated promise that a brief course settles every objection. Let the accounts raise their own questions as well as answer yours.

Understand grace and response

Ephesians 2:1–10, under Day 6, describes salvation as God's gift through faith in Jesus, not a reward for church attendance, giving or moral success. Repentance means turning towards God and away from sin; it is not buying acceptance through self-improvement. Prayer can express a genuine response, but particular words are not a magic formula. You may continue reading and asking, or freely express trust in Christ when that is your own decision. Read ANCC's beliefs to understand our Christian and Pentecostal perspective.

Discuss and apply

1. What question do you most want to explore, and why does it matter?
2. What does a Gospel passage actually claim about Jesus?
3. Which question concerns evidence, and which concerns an experience of hurt?
4. How is grace different from earning religious approval?
5. What would an honest next step look like, even with questions still open?

Your practical exercise: Use a four-column question journal: My question; What the passage says; What remains unclear; My next investigation. Read the John 20 passages below and complete one row. Avoid filling the last column with a conclusion you do not yet hold. Discuss it with a thoughtful Christian who is willing to say when an answer needs more work.

For leaders: Welcome disagreement without ridicule or pressure. Do not equate doubt with rebellion or distress with spiritual failure. Explain unfamiliar words. Distinguish ANCC belief from the beliefs of other organisations. Offer prayer only with consent; an enquirer may use the questions without saying the declarations.

Seven days of reading, reflection and prayer

The Bible readings are printed in full. The prayers and declarations are optional: read and investigate honestly without saying words you do not believe. Declarations are responses to Scripture, not new revelation or predictions.

A conversation can be a first step

Talk about life or faith, ask for prayer, or ask about a welcome at Thursday's service. Jessy coordinates our listening team: Jessy, Kusiyo, Kate, Edgar, Mutende and Micheal.

Prayer and listening · Thursday connection at 7pm

Day 1: Permission to investigate

Read Luke 1:1–4.

> [1] Since many have undertaken to set in order a narrative concerning those matters
> which have been fulfilled amongst us, [2] even as those who from the beginning were
> eyewitnesses and servants of the word delivered them to us, [3] it seemed good to me
> also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write to you in
> order, most excellent Theophilus; [4] that you might know the certainty concerning the
> things in which you were instructed.

Reflect: Luke introduces an account concerned with testimony and careful ordering. Faith exploration need not begin with pretending all questions are solved. Read to discover what is being claimed, who is involved and why the writer thinks it matters. Separate an objection to Christianity from an objection to an unkind Christian. Both deserve attention.

Consider: What would you need to investigate rather than assume?

Pray: God, if you are there, help me seek truth honestly. Give me patience to read carefully and courage to name what I do not understand. Amen.

Declare / decree: I will pursue truth honestly and will not manufacture certainty.

Practise: Write your most important question in one clear sentence.

Day 2: Who is Jesus claiming to be?

Read Mark 2:1–12.

> [1] When he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was heard that he was at
> home. [2] Immediately many were gathered together, so that there was no more room,
> not even around the door; and he spoke the word to them. [3] Four people came, carrying
> a paralytic to him. [4] When they could not come near to him for the crowd, they removed
> the roof where he was. When they had broken it up, they let down the mat that the
> paralytic was lying on.
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> [5] Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven you.”
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> [6] But there were some of the scribes sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, [7] “Why
> does this man speak blasphemies like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”
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> [8] Immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves,
> said to them, “Why do you reason these things in your hearts? [9] Which is easier, to tell
> the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven;’ or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your bed, and
> walk’? [10] But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive
> sins”—he said to the paralytic—[11] “I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your
> house.”
>
> [12] He arose, and immediately took up the mat and went out in front of them all, so that
> they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, “We never saw anything like this!”

Reflect: In this account the controversy is not merely about healing but about authority to forgive sins. Read the responses of Jesus, the teachers and the crowd. Ask whether your picture of Jesus has room for the claims made about him. You can examine those claims

seriously without being pushed into a public response.

Consider: Which claim in the passage most challenges your assumptions?

Pray: Jesus, help me understand who you are. Bring clarity where I have relied only on fragments, stereotypes or other people's opinions. Amen.

Declare / decree: I will consider Jesus' words and actions before settling for an inherited label.

Practise: List two claims the passage makes and one question they raise.

Day 3: When suffering makes faith difficult

Read John 11:17–37.

> [17] So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already. [18] Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia away. [19] Many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. [20] Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house. [21] Therefore Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died. [22] Even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."
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> [23] Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."
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> [24] Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."
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> [25] Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies. [26] Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"
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> [27] She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, God's Son, he who comes into the world."
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> [28] When she had said this, she went away and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here and is calling you." [29] When she heard this, she arose quickly and went to him. [30] Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha met him. [31] Then the Jews who were with her in the house and were consoling her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there."
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> [32] Therefore when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died."
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> [33] When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping who came with her, he

> groaned in the spirit and was troubled, [34] and said, “Where have you laid him?” They told him, “Lord, come and see.”
>
> [35] Jesus wept.
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> [36] The Jews therefore said, “See how much affection he had for him!” [37] Some of them said, “Couldn’t this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have also kept this man from dying?”

Reflect: Jesus encounters grief through conversation and tears. The passage does not make loss trivial or provide a timetable for every answer. Christian hope does not require pretending suffering is good. Notice both Martha’s questions and Jesus’ presence. Your personal story deserves compassion alongside discussion of the larger question of suffering.

Consider: What answer do you need, and what companionship do you need?

Pray: God, meet me in the questions that carry pain. Send people who will listen without slogans, and help me understand Jesus more deeply. Amen.

Declare / decree: My difficult questions deserve honest attention, not shame or easy slogans.

Practise: Distinguish one intellectual question from one personal hurt.

Day 4: The meaning of the cross

Read Luke 23:32–49.

> [32] There were also others, two criminals, led with him to be put to death. [33] When they came to the place that is called “The Skull”, they crucified him there with the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left.
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> [34] Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” Dividing his garments amongst them, they cast lots. [35] The people stood watching. The rulers with them also scoffed at him, saying, “He saved others. Let him save himself, if this is the Christ of God, his chosen one!”
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> [36] The soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him vinegar, [37] and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” [38] An inscription was also written over him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”
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> [39] One of the criminals who was hanged insulted him, saying, “If you are the Christ, save yourself and us!”

> [40] But the other answered, and rebuking him said, “Don’t you even fear God, seeing you
> are under the same condemnation? [41] And we indeed justly, for we receive the due
> reward for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” [42] He said to Jesus, “Lord,
> remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”
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> [43] Jesus said to him, “Assuredly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”
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> [44] It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the
> ninth hour. [45] The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. [46] Jesus,
> crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” Having said
> this, he breathed his last.
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> [47] When the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, “Certainly this was
> a righteous man.” [48] All the multitudes that came together to see this, when they saw
> the things that were done, returned home beating their chests. [49] All his acquaintances
> and the women who followed with him from Galilee stood at a distance, watching these
> things.

Reflect: Luke places mercy, innocence, suffering and trust beside the death of Jesus. Christians understand the cross as God’s saving action, not merely a tragic example. The criminal who turns to Jesus brings no record of religious achievement. Consider what grace would mean if acceptance depended on Christ rather than your ability to repair your past first.

Consider: What surprises you about Jesus’ response to the criminal?

Pray: Lord Jesus, help me understand your cross and the mercy Christians find there. Show me what receiving grace might mean in my own life. Amen.

Declare / decree: God’s grace cannot be purchased by my performance or my money.

Practise: Write the difference between receiving mercy and earning approval.

Day 5: A resurrection claim worth examining

Read John 20:1–18 and 24–31 (World English Bible Classic).

> [1] Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene went early, while it was still dark, to
> the tomb, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. [2] Therefore she
> ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to
> them, “They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they
> have laid him!”

[3] Therefore Peter and the other disciple went out, and they went toward the tomb. [4] They both ran together. The other disciple outran Peter and came to the tomb first. [5] Stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths lying there; yet he didn't enter in. [6] Then Simon Peter came, following him, and entered into the tomb. He saw the linen cloths lying, [7] and the cloth that had been on his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but rolled up in a place by itself. [8] So then the other disciple who came first to the tomb also entered in, and he saw and believed. [9] For as yet they didn't know the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. [10] So the disciples went away again to their own homes.

[11] But Mary was standing outside at the tomb weeping. So as she wept, she stooped and looked into the tomb, [12] and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. [13] They asked her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I don't know where they have laid him." [14] When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, and didn't know that it was Jesus.

[15] Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Who are you looking for?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." [16] Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him, "Rabboni!" which is to say, "Teacher!" [17] Jesus said to her, "Don't hold me, for I haven't yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" [18] Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had said these things to her.

Continue: John 20:24–31.

[24] But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, wasn't with them when Jesus came. [25] The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

[26] After eight days, again his disciples were inside and Thomas was with them. Jesus came, the doors being locked, and stood in the middle, and said, "Peace be to you." [27] Then he said to Thomas, "Reach here your finger, and see my hands. Reach here your hand, and put it into my side. Don't be unbelieving, but believing." [28] Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" [29] Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed."

[30] Therefore Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; [31] but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Reflect: John records confusion, discovery and Thomas's questions before stating his purpose. Resurrection is a central Christian claim, not a decorative ending to Jesus' story. Read it as a claim requiring consideration. Notice what the account says, where your questions remain, and what further reading would help rather than demanding an instant emotional experience.

Consider: What would change if Jesus truly rose from the dead?

Pray: God, guide my investigation with honesty and humility. Help me recognise both what I understand and what still needs thoughtful examination. Amen.

Declare / decree: I will examine the hope of resurrection without pretending my questions have vanished.

Practise: Put one resurrection question into your journal for discussion.

Day 6: Grace before good works

Read Ephesians 2:1–10.

> [1] You were made alive when you were dead in transgressions and sins, [2] in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience. [3] We also all once lived amongst them in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.
>
> [4] But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved us, [5] even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—[6] and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, [7] that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus; [8] for by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, [9] not of works, that no one would boast. [10] For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared before that we would walk in them.

Reflect: Paul puts God's mercy before the good works of a changed life. Christianity is not a ladder climbed by being better than others. Good works follow grace; they do not buy it. This matters when shame says you are beyond welcome or pride says you need no mercy. Consider both voices in the light of this passage.

Consider: Do you more often try to earn acceptance or assume you need no help?

Pray: Merciful God, help me understand salvation as a gift. Free me from religious bargaining and teach me the humility to receive your love. Amen.

Declare / decree: Grace is God's gift; religious performance cannot make God indebted to me.

Practise: Explain grace in your own words without using religious jargon.

Day 7: A response that is genuinely yours

Read Mark 1:14–20.

> [14] Now after John was taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Good
> News of God's Kingdom, [15] and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and God's Kingdom is at
> hand! Repent, and believe in the Good News."
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> [16] Passing along by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon,
> casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. [17] Jesus said to them, "Come after
> me, and I will make you into fishers for men." [18] Immediately they left their nets, and
> followed him. [19] Going on a little further from there, he saw James the son of Zebedee,
> and John his brother, who were also in the boat mending the nets. [20] Immediately he
> called them, and they left their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired servants,
> and went after him.

Reflect: Jesus calls people to repent, believe and follow. Such a response reaches beyond agreeing that religion is useful. It concerns trust and direction. You may be ready to respond, or you may need further conversation. Do not copy another person's certainty. A genuine next step can be a decision, a question or another careful reading.

Consider: What is the most truthful next step you can take?

Pray: Jesus, lead me in truth. As I understand your invitation, help me respond freely and honestly rather than from fear or pressure. Amen.

Declare / decree: I will respond to truth freely, thoughtfully and with integrity.

Practise: Choose to continue investigating or speak with someone about following Jesus.

Your next step

Continue with the beginner Gospel plan, first steps for new believers, or ask about a Bible-study conversation. You are welcome to visit ANCC while still exploring.

Original ANCC Rooted in Christ study. Scripture is from the World English Bible British Edition, except Day 5, which uses the World English Bible Classic. Both are public domain. Full daily passages are printed above. Use your browser’s Print menu to print or save this page as a PDF.