

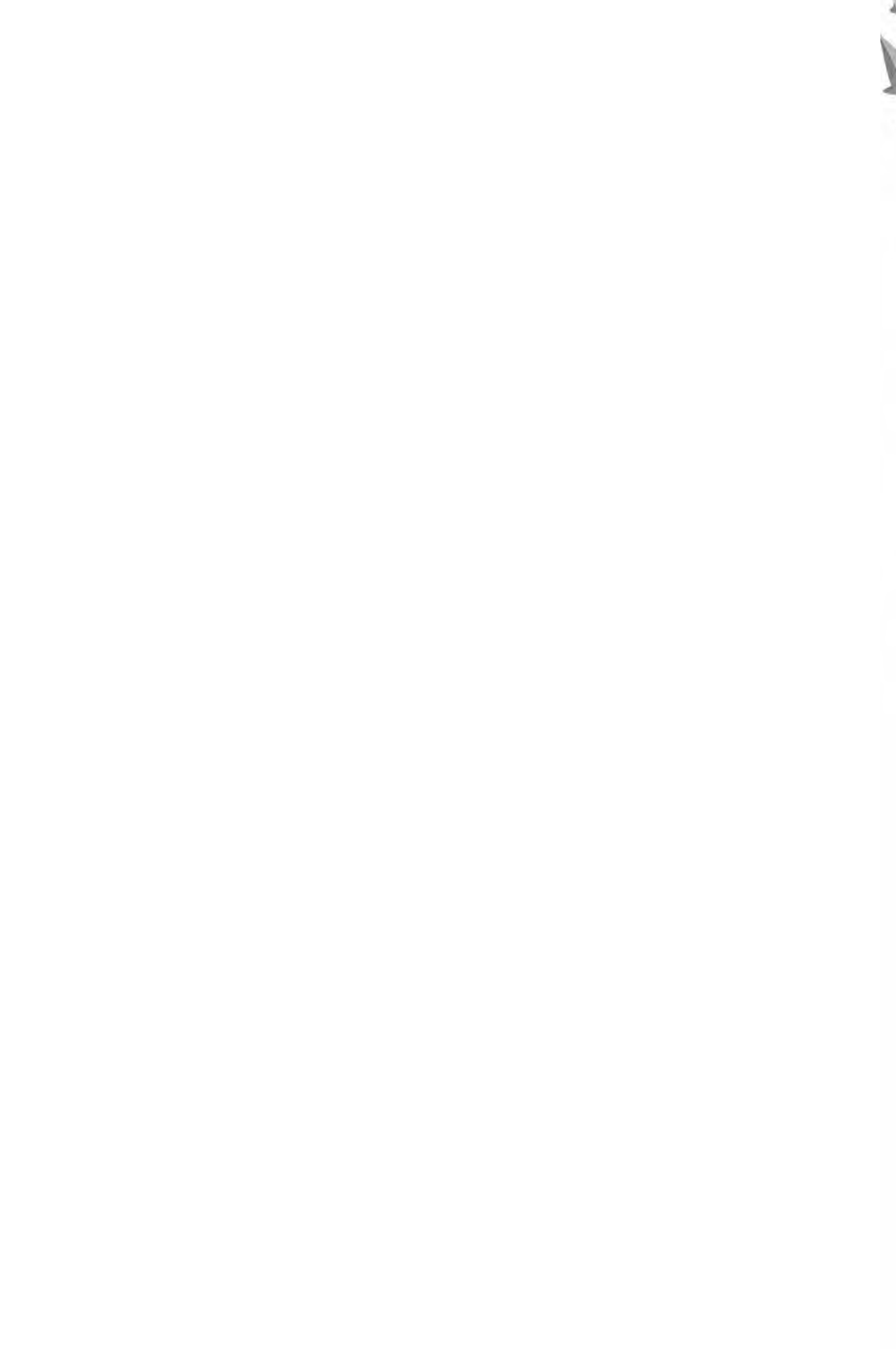


# LET'S GO DEEPER

A practical guide to  
following Jesus

**J. LEE GRADY**

Award-winning journalist and author of *Follow Me*





**LET'S GO  
DEEPER**

**J. LEE GRADY**



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## INTRODUCTION

# How to Use This Study

**W**HETHER YOU RECENTLY decided to follow Jesus Christ or have been a Christian for a while and you want to reacquaint yourself with the basic truths of your faith, I'm excited you are making the journey to study this book.

*Let's Go Deeper* is designed to equip and inspire you in your relationship with God. It's divided into thirty short lessons covering all the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. You can read this book alone if you prefer, but it will be more meaningful if you study it with a small group of other believers.

My goal is that this book will build a strong spiritual foundation in your life and help you grow in your relationship with Jesus. The Bible compares new Christians to infants, who need nourishment and care. The apostle Peter told his disciples: "Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation" (1 Peter 2:2).

If you want to grow as a disciple of Jesus you must have spiritual hunger. You must "long for the pure milk of the word." If you approach this study with intense passion, God will satisfy your desire and reveal His truth to you. Read each lesson carefully, study the Bible verses, and respond to the questions at the end of each lesson. Also, if you are doing this study with a small group, you can use the "Let's Talk About It" question at the end of each lesson as a springboard for conversation.

Make sure you also read the short biographies of Bible characters at the beginning of each lesson. These are called "Heroes of Our Faith." The Bible is full of stories of ordinary people who were transformed because they met the Lord and followed Him. They lived long ago, but their lives are still examples to us. Their experiences will inspire you and give you some helpful background on the main characters of Scripture.

The process of spiritual growth is called discipleship. Welcome to the process! As you study, pray, and discuss what you are learning in *Let's Go Deeper*, you are going to gain a deeper knowledge of Jesus, and He is going to change you from the inside out. To make your journey more successful, I have a few suggestions:

**Find a good study Bible.** You will understand the Scriptures better if you have a modern translation, such as the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version, or the New Living Translation. Older translations, such as the King James Version, are helpful in Bible study, but they are difficult for modern readers to understand. Consider purchasing a study Bible that contains helpful notes at the bottom of each page so you can dig deeper into the Scriptures.

**Ask a mentor to help you.** Don't try to figure everything out by yourself. The Lord will provide mature Christians who can offer guidance, instruction, and prayer. They will also share the wisdom they've learned over their years of following Jesus. If you have a mentor, ask him or her to do this Bible study with you, and ask for help whenever you have questions.

**Join a healthy church.** Jesus never intended for us to follow Him in isolation. He invites us into a community where we love and encourage one another. The Bible compares the church to a family. You will grow faster when you allow your Christian fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters to walk in close fellowship with you. Find a church where the Bible is taught faithfully and where you feel a strong sense of love among the members. This love will provide a healthy place for you to grow.

**Make sure you have put your faith in Jesus before you begin.** Perhaps as you begin this study you realize you haven't yet made the initial step to follow Jesus. Don't delay that important decision. You can actually make it right now. I encourage you to embrace God's amazing love today and receive the salvation that only Jesus gives. Here are four steps you can take to begin your relationship with God.

1. **Recognize your need.** The Bible tells us that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). All of us are sinners, and we must admit our need for the Savior.
2. **Repent of your sins.** Because God is completely holy and we are sinners, our sins create a wall that separates us from God. By confessing your sins and turning from them, you will find forgiveness. Repent means to make a 180-degree turnaround. The Bible promises, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

3. **Believe in Jesus.** God worked a miracle when He sent His only Son to die so that He could pay for all our sins. Put your faith in Him and believe in His power to save you. The Bible says, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16).
4. **Receive His salvation.** God has given us this free gift, but we still must accept it. Thank Him for sending Jesus to die on the cross for you. Thank Him for His amazing love, mercy, and forgiveness. Then ask Him to live in your heart. His promise to us is clear: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).

If you have walked through these four steps, you can say this prayer:

*Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for me. I recognize that You are the true Son of God, sent to earth to pay the full price for all our sins. I believe You were raised from the dead and that You live forever in heaven. You are God Almighty, and I submit to Your lordship. I'm sorry that I've lived my life apart from You. Please forgive me for thinking that my life could have true meaning without You, my Creator and Lord.*

*I turn from my sins and choose to follow You. Please wash me clean and come into my heart. I give You all my hurts, my fears, my unforgiveness, my pride, my greed, and all the garbage of my past. Thank You that I can start my life over again with You. Amen.*

The Bible assures us, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). If you prayed that prayer, you can have confidence that you have been born again and are now part of God’s family. Tell someone else what Jesus has done in your life—and join me in this journey to go deeper in your relationship with Christ!

# HEROES OF OUR FAITH



## ABRAHAM

He Saw Jesus From Afar

Abraham lived thousands of years ago during a dark time when people worshipped idols. Yet God sought a relationship with this man, who was known as Abram when God first called him to leave the land of Ur (in modern Iraq) to go to a strange land called Canaan—which is now Israel. God told Abram He would give him many descendants so that he would become the founder of a new nation that would honor the true and only God.

Abram struggled to believe God's promise—but ultimately God was pleased with His servant's faith. Abram became known as a "friend of God" (James 2:23). God even changed his name to Abraham, which means "father of a multitude of nations" (Genesis 17:5)—and his children became the pioneers of the Hebrew nation.

The Bible tells us that God revealed to Abraham things that would happen thousands of years later. God commanded Abraham to take his only son, Isaac, and sacrifice him on top of a mountain. Abraham intended to obey the Lord, but God stopped him from killing his son and instead provided a ram for the needed sacrifice. Through this unusual situation, God revealed to Abraham that one day He would sacrifice His own Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sins.

Abraham was shown a preview of God's amazing plan of salvation. That's why Galatians 3:8 says, "God...preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham." He must have understood, at least partially, that God would one day forgive His people for their sins. In fact, Jesus said: "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" (John 8:56). This is why Abraham is called the father of our faith. He was the first person in history to believe that one day the Father would send Jesus to save us.

## LESSON 1



# Perfect and All-Powerful

## The Awesome Nature of the True God

"The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the work of the Creator."

—LOUIS PASTEUR (1822-1895)

FRENCH CHEMIST AND DISCOVERER OF VACCINES AND PASTEURIZATION

**I**F YOU SAY the word "God" to a group of people, you will elicit a range of emotions and responses. Some people are adamantly against the idea of any kind of God in the universe. They are *atheists*, and they insist that God is a fictional concept. Other people are *agnostics*, which means they may accept the idea of a God, but they don't believe He cares about people, and they don't think He wants to know us.

Still others believe God is more of a mysterious force that emanates from trees, rocks, animals, and even buildings. And there are *polytheists*—people who believe multiple gods are working behind the scenes to either help or harm people. They believe these gods work mysteriously through stone idols, charms, crystals, mountains, the moon, the stars, or the sun.

But Christians believe there is one true God who sits on the throne of the universe. Even though this God cannot be seen, His glory is obvious in the majesty of His creation, and He kindly invites people to know and worship Him. He shows His kindness to us by sending rain, sunshine, good harvests, and many other blessings. He shows us His beauty and creativity by giving us majestic eagles, fearsome tigers, silly monkeys, frisky puppies, golden leaves in the autumn, flowers in the spring, snowflakes, thunder, delicious fruits, stars in the night sky, more than a million species of insects, and the scents of roses, pine cones, gardenias, and spruce trees.

It's difficult to look at the baffling diversity of creation and not conclude that Someone much smarter than you and me made this earth. Yet there are those who refuse to believe in God because they can't see

Him. And many atheists believe that creation, with all its order, wonder, and beauty, just happened by accident.

When we choose to believe in God and serve Him, even though He is invisible, we exercise what the Bible calls *faith*. Hebrews 11:6 explains this by saying:

And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

This very personal God is also described as the Creator of the entire universe, and He is worthy of all the praise and honor of the world's people. Because He is our Creator and the sustainer of life, He has the right to rule over us and to expect obedience.

In the first chapter of the Bible we read the account of how God created the earth, the galaxies, the sun and moon, the oceans, the atmosphere, and all animal and plant life. We also read that God took special care to create the first people, and He breathed His own breath into them and made them “in His own image” (Genesis 1:27). The story of creation shows us that God desires a special relationship with human beings. He made us so that we could have close fellowship with Him.

The Bible describes God's nature in many other ways:

- He is “God Almighty,” which means He has all power (Genesis 17:1).
- He is “eternal,” meaning He has existed forever, without a beginning (1 Timothy 1:17).
- He is “immortal,” meaning He will have no end (1 Timothy 1:17).
- He is “invisible,” meaning He is a spirit (1 Timothy 1:17).
- He is “the only God,” which means any other “gods” are unequal to Him (1 Timothy 1:17).

The Bible also says God knows all things (1 John 3:20), He is the source of all wisdom (Proverbs 2:6, CEV), and He is omnipresent (Psalm 33:13–14; 139:7–10)—which means He can be everywhere at one time. God is so great that He has many names. In the Bible He is called “Father,” “King,”

“Most High God,” “Lord God Almighty,” “the Everlasting God,” “Judge of all the earth,” and many other titles. (See Romans 8:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Psalm 78:35; Revelation 4:8, MEV; Genesis 21:33; and Genesis 18:25.)

We might assume that extremely intelligent people, such as scientists, would never acknowledge that they believe in God. Yet if you study history you find that some of the most famous scientists were believers. For example, British mathematician Isaac Newton (1643–1727), who laid the foundations of modern physics, said this: “The true God is living, intelligent, and powerful;...he is supreme, or supremely perfect. He is eternal and infinite, omnipotent and omniscient, that is, he endures from eternity to eternity, and he is present from infinity to infinity; he rules all things, and he knows all things that happen or can happen.”<sup>1</sup>

We are invited to worship and honor this infinite God, but He doesn't force us to follow Him like robots. He gives us the freedom to choose if we will believe and trust Him. Even though He is lofty and all-powerful, He desires a close, loving relationship with each one of us. This is why 1 John 4:8 says: “God is love.”

Thousands of years ago God called a Jewish man named Moses to go to Egypt and liberate the Hebrew slaves from captivity. Moses knew God was real, but he did not know how to identify Him. Moses asked God: “Now they may say to me, ‘What is His name?’ What shall I say to them?” (Exodus 3:13). God answered: “I AM WHO I AM...thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you’” (v. 14). This name, I AM WHO I AM, reveals the nature of our great God. He is all-powerful and eternal; He has always existed, and He always will.

The name I AM WHO I AM is translated “Yahweh” in Hebrew, and later it was sometimes pronounced “Jehovah” in English. It is translated in English as “LORD” more than six thousand times in the Bible. The Hebrew letters used to spell the word Yahweh, YHWH, are three forms of the word meaning “to be.” So the word can actually be translated “He was; He is; He will be.” So we see that God's name describes His eternal nature. Yahweh also denotes His continuous presence with His people.<sup>2</sup> He is not detached from us. He is not a God who is far away. He is near!

God desires to live among His people in a close relationship. Even though He is almighty and enthroned in the glory of heaven, He makes Himself accessible and available to those who love Him. This all-powerful God stoops low, in amazing humility, so He can help us, save us, forgive us of our sins, comfort us, deliver us, speak to us, and be with us.

In all other religions of the world, God is usually described as detached and uninterested in people; a strict judge with no compassion; or an impersonal, magical force. The true God of the Bible is none of these things. He is a loving, personal Supreme Being who wants to show His incomprehensible love to the people He created in His image. First John 3:1 says God is a good Father who loves His children: “See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God.”

The purpose of life is to know and understand God’s love for us, and it will actually take eternity for us to comprehend it. God invites us to know Him. He says to us, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deuteronomy 6:5). He blesses all who respond to His invitation.



## LET'S GO **DEEPER**

What can you learn about God from the following verses?

1. Psalm 103:13

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2. Psalm 97:9

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3. Revelation 4:8

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4. Isaiah 40:28

---

5. Isaiah 33:22

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6. Read 1 Timothy 1:17. What adjectives did the apostle Paul use to describe the nature of God?

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### LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

What would you say to convince an atheist that there really is a God?

### Memory Verse

Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.

—REVELATION 4:11

# HEROES OF OUR FAITH



## MOSES

### He Handed Down the Law

Before the Father sent Jesus to save us, He had to show us that we could not save ourselves. He called a Jewish man named Moses to leave his comfortable life in Egypt so he could learn God's ways in the wilderness. Moses became closer to God than any person could during those Old Testament times. He saw the glory of God's presence, heard His awesome voice, and obeyed His commands. And God supernaturally used Moses to lead the Jewish people out of slavery in Egypt.

After Moses led the Jews into freedom in the wilderness of the Sinai desert, God gave him His holy Law, along with very detailed plans for how people could approach Him in worship. The Law, which included the Ten Commandments, was incredibly strict, and the regulations for worship required every person to bring animals for sacrifice. Yet these bloody rituals had no real power to cleanse anyone from sin. They were only prophetic previews of how Jesus would one day cleanse us from sin by the shedding of His own blood.

Moses was God's instrument to show people, so long ago, that we need a Savior. Even though Moses was a humble and godly man, he wasn't perfect. No person can be perfect on this side of heaven. Toward the end of his life, Moses got angry and disobeyed one of God's commands, and he was forbidden to enter the Promised Land. His failure reminds us that following a list of rules can't save us. The list simply reminds us of man's need for salvation from our sins.

John 1:17 says: "For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." Moses reminded us of our sin and God's holiness, but he also pointed us to the only solution—Jesus our Savior.

## Grow in your walk with Jesus!

Following Jesus doesn't have to be difficult; you just have to be willing to take the first step! This book provides a map to help you begin your spiritual adventure.

A companion to J. Lee Grady's *Follow Me*, this collection of thirty short lessons on the basics of the Christian faith will help you understand who Jesus Christ is, how He paid for our sins, why He was raised from the dead, why the Bible is such a special book, what the Holy Spirit does for us, how God guides us, and so much more.

You can study *Let's Go Deeper* on your own or use it as a tool to disciple others, either in a one-on-one setting or in a small group. Once you go deeper with Jesus, you'll never be satisfied with a shallow relationship with Him. Don't be afraid to dive in!



**J. LEE GRADY** is an author, award-winning journalist, ordained minister, missionary, and director of The Mordecai Project, an international ministry that confronts the marginalization of women globally. He is the author of several books, including *10 Lies the Church Tells Women*, *Set My Heart on Fire*, and *Follow Me*. He invests much of his time mentoring and discipling young Christians. He and his wife, Deborah, have four daughters and three grandchildren.

