



living
CHRISTIANITY

**following Jesus in
every area of life**

leader's guide

Welcome to Living Christianity

a series of studies about God's calling for his people in the world

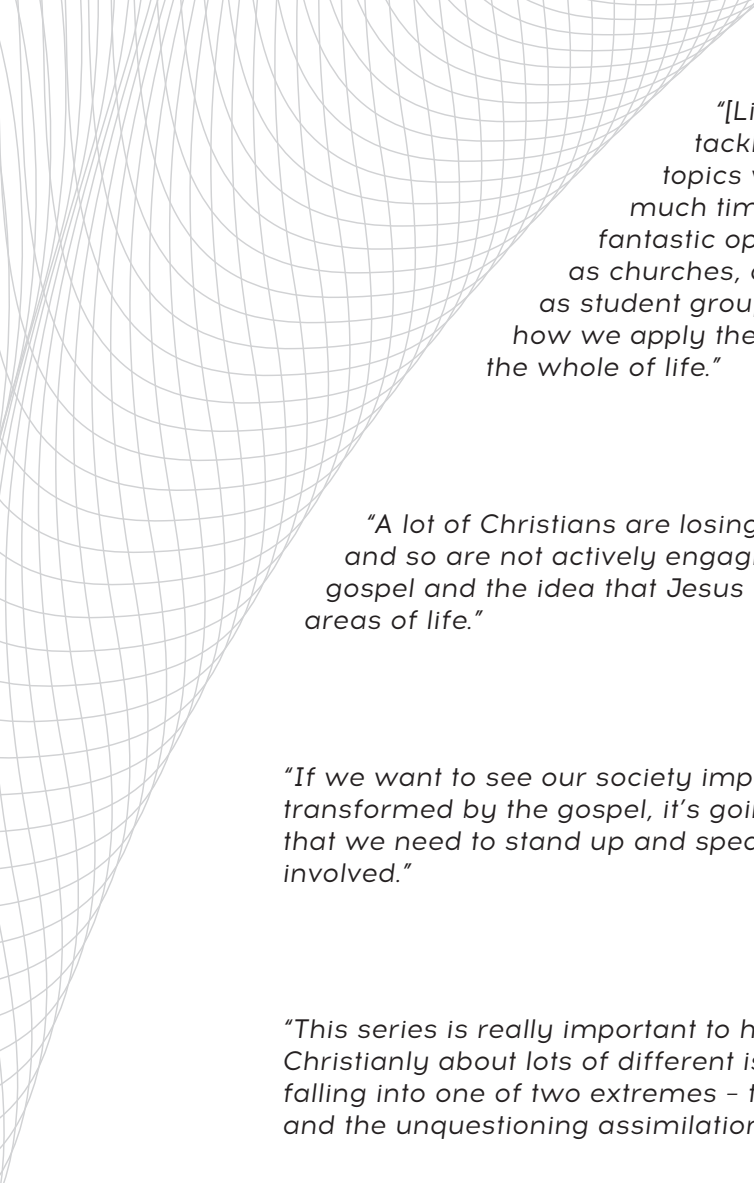
Over these 5 sessions we hope to get you to value the truth that following Christ **transforms** all aspects of our lives.

Christians are **new people** in Christ, with a new status and a new purpose. No longer under the power of sin, we have been transferred into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. In him we have **redemption** and **forgiveness** of sin. As followers of Christ we are called to **grow** in our love for him and for our fellow believers.

Christ is Lord in our family life, when we are at work, in our responsibilities as citizens, and much more besides. The Bible guides believers to seek a healthy church life, to spread the good news, and directs us to **live faithfully** in everything we do.

If we want to be faithful and effective Christian citizens, we need to pay particular attention to what it means to truly **engage** with wider society.

Our prayer is that through the course, you and your group recognise the implications of living as a Christian in today's world and become better equipped to live out your faith in **all areas of life**.



"[Living Christianity] tackles many of the topics we don't invest much time in. This is a fantastic opportunity for us as churches, as small groups, as student groups to think about how we apply the Christian faith to the whole of life."

Chris Sinkinson

"A lot of Christians are losing their confidence and so are not actively engaging with the gospel and the idea that Jesus is Lord of all areas of life."

Pete Nicholas

"If we want to see our society impacted and transformed by the gospel, it's going to mean that we need to stand up and speak out and be involved."

Michael Ots

"This series is really important to help us think Christianly about lots of different issues without falling into one of two extremes - the 'holy huddle', and the unquestioning assimilation of our culture."

Caz Dodds

"The key purpose of this study series is to equip the Church, to help its young people, its students, all of us taking our place in wider society, to live the whole of life for God and to his glory."

Richard Cunningham



Living Christianity

at a glance

Living Christianity consists of 5 studies, each lasting just over an hour. Each session has a video, Bible discussion and some time for prayer. It's aimed at groups and individuals who want to be equipped to engage our contemporary world.



episode 1 concern for society **SG9** **p13**
engaging with today's world as disciples of Jesus



episode 2 christians and the world **SG15** **p29**
holding a biblical view of the world and our role in it



episode 3 christians and work **SG21** **p45**
getting clear on our calling to live as Christians at work



episode 4 life, gender, marriage and family **SG27** **p61**
valuing God's good design for all areas of life



episode 5 christians as citizens **SG35** **p79**
embracing our Christian citizenship in society today

Your group will be using the Living Christianity study guides.
'SG' numbers show the page corresponding to the leader's guide.




Living Christianity


how it works

1. introduce the topic (~10 mins)


 **introduction** and  **session focus** set the scene.


 **getting started** is designed to get people thinking (and talking) about a key aspect of the study.

2. watch the video (~15 mins)


 **watch** the video together. **This will be the basis for most of the discussion to follow.** Sessions 1 and 2 provide the foundation for sessions 3 to 5.

3. discuss the Bible passage (~40 mins)


 **read** the passage together. We have selected passages which best address the *main* points raised in the video. They will not deal with every issue.

Use the  **discuss** questions to understand and apply the teaching.

4. pray (~10 mins)

Sum up the lessons learnt from the discussion and  **pray** about how to put them into practice.

5. before leaving

Let the group know the topic for next time and encourage them to take some time to look at the  **going further...** section.

Total time: 1h 15m approx.



Living Christianity

leader's guide

Leading any Bible study requires a prayerful commitment to helping the group benefit from God's word.

the Bible

The Bible is our ultimate authority.

The writer to the Hebrews tells us that "the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb 4:12).

Paul tells us in 2 Timothy 3:16-17 that "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." Hardly surprising then that the apostle exhorts Timothy to be a leader "rightly handling the word of truth" (2 Tim 2:15).

Correct handling of God's word requires a leader to commit to study each of the Bible passages themselves, before seeking to lead their group. A good leader will also encourage and show others in the group how to do this themselves rather than simply spoon-feed the 'answers'.

prayer

Prayer is essential, before you meet, while you meet and after you meet! Pray that God would help you and your group to understand his word more fully. Encourage your group to pray that they would apply what they've learned to their everyday Christian life. Pray for one another as issues are raised that some may find difficult to deal with. A number of areas for prayer are suggested each week.

your group

Every Bible study group is different. Even with the same people it will be slightly different from one week to the next. But the Bible is relevant to everyone. Everyone in your group should leave knowing how what they've read and heard is relevant to them and what changes they may need to make as a result.

when you meet

Before your first meeting, send round a link to the series trailer at livingchristianity.org.uk and ask everyone to watch it.

Each member of your group needs their own study guide. Remind them to look at the material before each session. You, and they, will find it makes for a much better study.

Encourage your group to commit to all 5 sessions.

additional study resources for leaders

The study guides used by your group have largely the same content as this leader's guide. However, we have provided a few additional materials which we think you will find helpful:

- an outline of the key points of each episode
- some additional notes providing some helpful background to one or more of the discussion questions
- a transcript of the videos for easy reference
- a list of the Bible texts used in the video

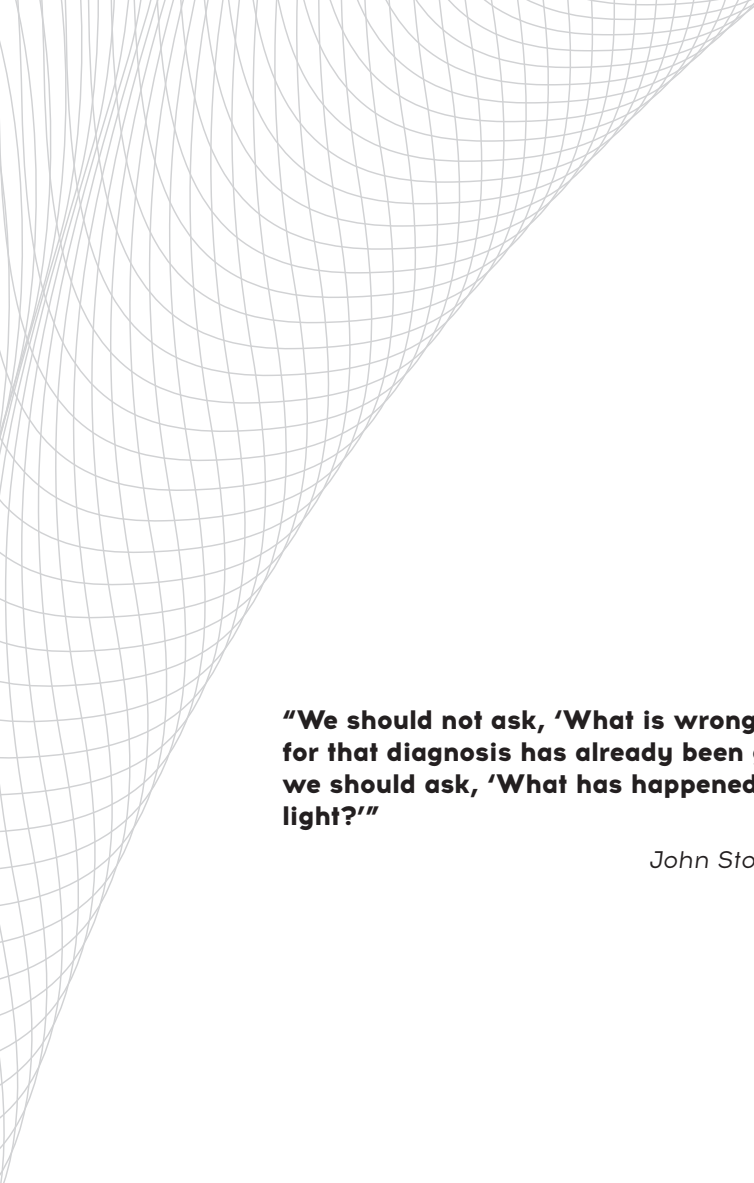


Living Christianity

advice for new leaders

If you've never led a Bible study group before, or even if you have, these practical tips might help.

- 1. Studying the Bible shouldn't feel like a chore to be endured.** Do your best to be the most enthusiastic member of your group.
- 2. When another person is talking, give them your full attention.** Show approval wherever possible and draw out applications.
- 3. At some point someone will say something that is wrong.** This could be because they have a wrong view of Scripture but may also be because they genuinely don't understand the topic. Consider rephrasing the question or ask if anyone else has a different view. But do not let something wrong go unchallenged.
- 4. Personal illustration can help communicate truth in a memorable way.** But watch out that sharing personal experience doesn't replace studying the Bible.
- 5. Don't be afraid of silence.** If people have time to think, they are likely to be more insightful.
- 6. You may need to moderate difference of opinion.** But remember that debate can be a sign of good engagement! You can welcome differing views, but seek to bring the group towards resolution by clarifying the teaching.
- 7. If you don't know the answer, just say so.** Say you'll look into it for next week or have someone in the group research it.
- 8. Keep the group moving through the study.** Avoid getting bogged down in details or going off on tangents. 'Park it', offer to come back to it later if there's time, and move on.
- 9. Give everyone a chance to speak.** If someone is doing all the talking, ask what others think.



“We should not ask, ‘What is wrong with the world?’ for that diagnosis has already been given. Rather, we should ask, ‘What has happened to the salt and light?’”

John Stott, pastor and author



concern for society

engaging with today's
world as disciples of Jesus



introduction

Do some areas of your life seem very obviously 'Christian', while in others your faith seems a lot less relevant? If so, you're not alone. Many Christians find it hard to see the everyday relevance of their beliefs beyond personal devotions, church life and evangelism.

But God never intended us to compartmentalise our lives like this. As Christians, we're called to live out our faith in Jesus in everything we do.

In this study series we will see that the God who created this world and will one day restore it, sends us out to serve him in all areas of life. God calls his people to live Christianly; engaging positively with society as active citizens.

In this first session, we will begin to look at what it means to be a full-time disciple of Jesus.



session focus

Becoming a Christian transforms us; affecting *everything* we do.

1




getting started

A friend asks you: 'What is the gospel?' What do you say?



watch episode 1

 Use this space if you'd like to make notes



episode 1 outline

1. what is the gospel?

- Jesus is our Lord in all of life
- the Great Commission includes teaching everything Jesus taught

2. concern for society: the Bible's view

- God made everything and everyone, he is concerned with all of humanity
- God shows us how human society should operate for his glory
- the Bible commands us to love our neighbours and all people

3. concern for society: the Christian's role

- human life is the pinnacle of God's creation and extremely precious
- but the rest of creation is valuable too
- work is part of God's design and matters to God

4. how does God's law guide us?

- it teaches us to love God and our neighbour
- this works out in personal life and in public life
- this includes respectfully urging governments to fulfil their God-given role



session 1 notes

Most Christians will have little problem explaining the gospel message in terms of our redemption from sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. However many miss that God's great salvation plan includes all of creation and affects every area of life.

The passage in Matthew chapter 5 forms part of the Sermon on the Mount. In the famous section of the beatitudes, first Jesus talks of the character and blessings of the citizens of his kingdom (vv3-10) – including the hostility of 'the world' to his followers (vv11-12). He then describes the influence of his followers, i.e. those in the kingdom, on the world (vv13-16).

Salt is well known as a preservative, slowing down decay as well as bringing out flavour. Its very presence makes it effective even though we cannot see it at work. Of course, it must be both used, and remain salty, i.e. uncontaminated, otherwise it will have no effect.



read Matthew 5:13-16



discuss

1. Jesus is speaking to his disciples (vv1-2). Why does he describe them as 'salt' and 'light'? Is it possible to be a Christian and not be salt and light?

✎ Jesus doesn't tell them to become salt and light; he says they are salt and light and therefore distinct from 'the world'. Salt and light is our 'status' but we can fail to live out that status (see Q2). We need to be who we are.

2. What does this passage imply about the world in which we live? Why should Christians be concerned to have an impact on the world around us?

✎ The world needs Christians to act distinctively as salt and light to restrain moral and spiritual decay. Unused salt, which remains in the salt cellar, or 'tasteless' salt, full of impurities, will not preserve or add flavour to God's world. Likewise, hidden light is of little benefit. Our status as salt and light needs to be lived out in the public square (see Eph 4:1). This results in God being glorified (v16; 1 Peter 2:12).

3. Who benefits when Christians live out their lives as distinctive salt and light?