

# background: read this stuff before you begin

## WELCOME TO ROOTWORKS

This guide is my gift to you to help you study the Bible. This may not seem like an expensive gift, but the treasures you will learn from studying God's Word will be priceless. I'm thrilled that you want to study the Bible! One of my greatest joys is to see students reading and learning from God's Word. Thank you for bringing me joy!

### What does RootWorks mean?

I made up the name RootWorks from one of my favorite passages. It's Colossians 2:6-7 (NLT) which reads:

*And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to live in obedience to him. **Let your roots grow down into him and draw up nourishment from him, so you will grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught. Let your lives overflow with thanksgiving for all he has done.***

As you can read from the passage, maturity in one's relationship with God requires nourishment. The imagery in this passage suggests that our spiritual roots must grow deep so that we'll continue in our vital relationship with God. This type of growth requires putting our ROOTS to WORK. Get it?

### Why do RootWorks? Why not just attend another Bible Study?

The reason I've put this notebook together is because I want you to learn how to study the Bible through reading and asking questions. It would be easy for you to find a weekly Bible study where you become comfortable attending and digging into God's Word. Chances are, you would go to Bible study, sit, and listen to someone else teach. While this is good, it's definitely not best for long-term maturity. You need to learn to study the Bible on your own. I want you to develop the habit of studying God's Word.

### How long will RootWorks take to finish?

The answer to this question depends on how much thought you give to answering the questions. The questions are not intended to be "raced through." Your goal shouldn't be speed; it should be comprehension and personal application. As a general rule, each lesson should take thirty to forty-five minutes.

### How often should I complete a lesson?

This depends upon you . . . upon how often you decide to sit down and work through this material. The idea would be to keep consistent. You don't want to do too much too fast and get burned out or tired. At the same time, you don't want to answer one question a month—this will break up the continuity and the cohesiveness of the lesson, and you'll be 35 years old by the time you finish.



**What do I do when I finish all five lessons?**

Celebrate! You will have worked hard to reach this goal. Chances are you'll have some questions. If you're not in a small group I'd love to meet with you for a few minutes to hear those questions as well as what you learned as a result of your study (if you're in a small group, get together with your leader). When you're ready for the next RootWorks notebook let me know.

**What if I don't know an answer for a specific question?**

Keep going. Don't let it discourage you. I would be surprised if you didn't have some questions that "stump" you. Give it some good thought and then skip it if you don't know the answer.

**What Bible translation should I use?**

You can use just about any translation Bible and still be able to figure out the questions. When I wrote the questions I was using the NIV translation, but I've worked the questions so you can use almost any Bible and make it through. (I prefer the New Living Translation, but I realize most people have the NIV).

If this translation talk is confusing, don't worry about it. Basically, when the Bible was written 2,000 plus years ago, it was written in (mostly) Hebrew. The Bible you own has been translated from its original language into English so you can read and understand it. (If you think economics is tough, you should try Hebrew.) Have you ever noticed that you use some words differently than the ways your parents use those same words? After a time, words simply change their meaning; therefore, we have different translations of the Greek and Hebrew. Imagine the change that would happen over 400 years! That was when the King James Version was written—and that is why some of the language sounds so weird.

**Should I also write in my own Bible during this study?**

Yes! I hope you will write notes in the margin of your Bible, underline key verses, and watch your Bible become a friend that is waiting to tell you more about God and His desires for your life.