

**FRESH  
START**

**where faith and life meet**

**Study Guide**



# How to Use this Study

Welcome to Fresh Start: Where Faith and Life Meet

## **The Big Idea**

A Fresh Start isn't about fixing yourself.

It's about discovering how grace has already been at work—and learning how to live in response.

God moves first.

We respond.

We are changed.

We think faithfully.

We grow together.

We love the world.

And we live with assurance instead of anxiety.

This study guide is built around a simple but life-changing conviction: faith is meant to matter in everyday life—not just on Sundays, not just in theory, and not just when life is easy.

Each week of this guide is designed to help you connect faith to real life—your work, your relationships, your doubts, your habits, and your hopes.

## **Every session includes:**

### Scripture Readings

- Carefully chosen passages that ground each week's theme in the story of God's grace.

### Guided Questions

- Questions that help you explore what the Scripture is saying and what it means for your daily life—without requiring all the answers.

### Group Discussion (“Take It Further”)

- Space to reflect honestly, listen to others, and discover how faith is formed in community.

### Why This Matters

- A short reflection that connects theology to the realities of everyday life—stress, decisions, relationships, and purpose.

### A Practical Takeaway

- One simple, doable practice each week to help you live out your faith between gatherings.
- (No overwhelm. No perfection required.)

### A Closing Prayer

- A prayer to center your heart, invite God's grace, and send you back into the week with intention.

## How to Use This Guide

- Come as you are—questions, doubts, and all.
- Read the Scriptures slowly and honestly.
- Answer what you can. Sit with what you can't.
- Try the weekly takeaway, not as a test, but as an invitation.

This isn't about becoming more religious.

It's about discovering a faith that actually works—  
because it begins with grace, grows in community, and  
shows up in the world.

Welcome to a fresh start.

# Week 1: Grace Comes First

## Main Idea

God is already at work in your life before you even know it.

## Wesleyan Theological Idea

Prevenient Grace – God’s grace goes before belief, repentance, or effort.

## Icebreakers

1. When you hear the phrase “fresh start,” does it feel hopeful or exhausting?
2. When have you noticed—looking back—that something good was already unfolding?

## Scripture Readings + Questions

- John 1:9  
How does this verse challenge the idea that some people are outside God’s reach?
- Ephesians 2:8–10  
What changes when grace is the starting point instead of the reward?
- Romans 5:8  
What does it mean that God acts before we are “worthy”?

## Take It Further – Discussion

- Why do people feel pressure to “get their life together” before approaching God?
- How does starting with grace change how we see ourselves and others?
- Where might God already be at work in your story right now?

# Week 1: Grace Comes First

## Why This Matters

When faith starts with grace, everyday life shifts from striving to trusting. Grace-first faith changes how we deal with failure, comparison, shame, and burnout.

## Why This Matters Question

- How would your week feel different if you truly believed God was already for you?

## Practical Takeaway

Notice one moment this week where grace showed up first—before effort or intention.

## Closing Prayer

Gracious God,

Before we searched for You, You were already here.

Help us begin not with striving, but with trust.

Teach us to notice the grace that surrounds us every day.

Amen.

# Week 2: Faith in Action

## Main Idea

Faith isn't belief alone—it's trusting God enough to act.

## Wesleyan Theological Idea

Cooperating Grace – God works in us, and we respond with real choices.

## Icebreakers

1. What's something you know is good for you but still resist?
2. What's the difference between agreeing with something and trusting it?

## Scripture Readings + Questions

- James 2:14–18  
What does James say faith looks like when it's alive?
- Philippians 2:12–13  
How do God's work and our effort fit together here?
- Matthew 7:24–27  
What's the difference between hearing Jesus and building your life on him?

## Take It Further – Discussion

- Why do people prefer faith as belief rather than action?
- Where do fear, comfort, or busyness block obedience?
- What would a small, faithful step look like this week?

# Week 2: Faith in Action

## Why This Matters

Faith that stays theoretical rarely changes real life. Faith in action shapes daily decisions, relationships, habits, and priorities.

## Why This Matters Question

- Where do you sense a gap between what you believe and how you live?

## Practical Takeaway

Take one intentional step of obedience this week.

## Closing Prayer

Faithful God,

You are already at work within us.

Give us courage to respond—not perfectly, but faithfully.

Help us trust You enough to take the next step.

Amen.

# Week 3: A Life That Changes

## Main Idea

God loves you as you are—but too much to leave you there.

## Wesleyan Theological Idea

Sanctifying Grace – The Spirit forms us into Christlike love over time.

## Icebreakers

1. What's something in life that took longer to change than expected?
2. Why do we crave instant transformation?

## Scripture Readings + Questions

- Galatians 5:22–23  
Which fruit of the Spirit feels most needed right now?
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23  
What does wholeness look like in everyday life?
- 2 Corinthians 3:18  
Why might God choose gradual change over instant perfection?

## Take It Further – Discussion

- How do people confuse grace with staying the same?
- Why is spiritual growth often uneven and slow?
- How does focusing on formation reshape expectations?

# Week 3: A Life That Changes

## Why This Matters

Most people want change but feel stuck. Sanctifying grace offers hope for real transformation—without shame or shortcuts.

## Why This Matters Question

- What area of your life needs patient transformation rather than quick fixes?

## Practical Takeaway

Choose one Fruit of the Spirit to pray for and practice this week.

## Closing Prayer

Transforming God,

Thank You for loving us where we are  
and shaping us toward who we can become.

Grow in us the fruit of Your Spirit, one faithful step at a time.  
Amen.

# Week 4: A Faith That Makes Sense

## Main Idea

You don't have to choose between faith and thinking.

## Wesleyan Theological Idea

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral – Scripture interpreted through tradition, reason, and experience.

## Icebreakers

1. Were questions welcomed or discouraged in your faith background?
2. What's one question you've carried for a long time?

## Scripture Readings + Questions

- 2 Timothy 3:14–17  
How does Scripture shape faith without shutting down thinking?
- Matthew 22:37  
What does loving God with your mind require?
- Acts 17:11  
Why are curiosity and examination praised here?

## Take It Further – Discussion

- Why do some Christians fear questions?
- How have reason or experience deepened your faith?
- What keeps Scripture central without becoming rigid?

# Week 4: A Faith That Makes Sense

## Why This Matters

Everyday faith must hold up at work, school, and home. Thoughtful faith allows honesty, curiosity, and depth in a complex world.

## Why This Matters Question

- Where do you feel tension between what you believe and what you experience?

## Practical Takeaway

Practice Lectio Divina or reflective Scripture reading once this week.

## Closing Prayer

God of wisdom,

Help us love You with heart, soul, and mind.

Ground us in Scripture and guide us with discernment.

May our faith be thoughtful, honest, and alive.

Amen.

# Week 5: We Grow Better Together

## **Main Idea**

You cannot grow into the fullness of Christ by yourself.

## **Wesleyan Theological Idea**

Connectionalism & Means of Grace

## **Icebreakers**

1. When do you tend to isolate?
2. What's something you do better with others?

## **Scripture Readings + Questions**

- Hebrews 10:24–25  
Why does growth require intentional community?
- Ephesians 4:11–16  
What happens when one part disengages?
- Acts 2:42–47  
Which shared practices sustain faith?

## **Take It Further – Discussion**

- Why does independence feel safer than connection?
- Which means of grace do you neglect?
- How might God use this group in your growth?

# Week 5: We Grow Better Together

## Why This Matters

Isolation weakens faith over time. Shared practices create resilience, accountability, and joy.

## Why This Matters Question

- How might your spiritual life change if you stopped trying to grow alone?

## Practical Takeaway

Practice one means of grace with another person this week.

## Closing Prayer

God who gathers,

Thank You for forming us through community.

Teach us to show up, listen well, and grow together in grace.

Amen.

# Week 6: Faith That Shows Up in the World

## Main Idea

Real faith always shows up in love that changes the world.

## Wesleyan Theological Idea

Personal & Social Holiness

## Icebreakers

1. Where do you see the most need around you?
2. When has someone's kindness changed your life?

## Scripture Readings + Questions

- Micah 6:8  
How does this redefine faithfulness?
- Matthew 5:14–16  
What does visible faith look like without showmanship?
- James 1:27  
Why is holiness tied to compassion?

## Take It Further – Discussion

- Why is private faith often more comfortable?
- Where do justice and mercy intersect in daily life?
- Where might God be sending you?

# Week 6: Faith That Shows Up in the World

## Why This Matters

If faith never shows up in how we treat people, it risks becoming irrelevant.

## Why This Matters Question

- Where is God inviting you to live your faith more visibly this week?

## Practical Takeaway

Take one tangible step of service or advocacy this week.

## Closing Prayer

God of justice and mercy,  
Open our eyes to the needs around us.  
Send us out as love with hands and feet.  
Amen.

# Week 7: Blessed Assurance

## Main Idea

God doesn't want you guessing whether you belong.

## Wesleyan Theological Idea

Assurance – The Inner Witness of the Spirit

## Icebreakers

1. What creates spiritual anxiety for people?
2. How is assurance different from arrogance?

## Scripture Readings + Questions

- Romans 8:14–17  
How does adoption reshape salvation?
- 1 John 3:1–2  
What changes when identity comes before behavior?
- Hebrews 10:22  
What keeps people from living with confidence?

## Take It Further – Discussion

- Why do many Christians live with fear instead of joy?
- How does assurance affect prayer, growth, and service?
- What voices compete with the Spirit's witness?

# Week 7: Blessed Assurance

## Why This Matters

Spiritual anxiety drains joy and courage. Assurance frees people to live generously and grow without fear.

## Why This Matters Question

- How would your daily life change if you truly trusted that you belong to God?

## Practical Takeaway

Pray daily:

“Holy Spirit, remind me that I belong to You.”

## Closing Prayer

Loving God,

Speak louder than our doubts.

Root us in confidence, joy, and peace.

Remind us that we are Your children, held by grace.

Amen.

# **Study Guide**