



LOOKING FOR JOY IN YOUR LIFE?

A healthy and robust bank account. A nice house full of valued possessions. A long list of family and friends. These are the things we often strive for to give our lives the happiness we crave. But money comes and goes. Things get broken. People disappoint us. It seems the more we chase happiness, the more it eludes us.

God wants our lives to be full of joy, but the source of unending joy has nothing to do with the things we often desire. It comes from giving our lives to Jesus Christ. When Jesus died on the cross, He took upon Himself the sin that keeps us from life and a relationship with God. Because Jesus rose from the dead, He made it possible for us to have eternal life—an eternal life full of joy.

If you would like to be free from your sin and the broken life sin brings, turn to Christ. Repent of your sins and put your faith in Him. Admit to God you are a sinner and ask Him to forgive you. Turn from the sin that has kept you from Jesus, and accept His gift of forgiveness. Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Express your repentance and faith by praying something like this:

“Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins. I’m sorry for all the wrong I’ve done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in your faith. Be baptized as an expression of your faith.

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Welcome Home: Connecting and Engaging People in Your Church

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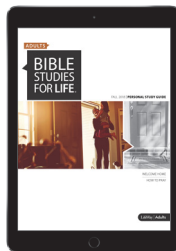
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Commentary

Dig deeper into Scripture with the *Bible Studies for Life: Advanced Bible Study*. This resource features in-depth Bible exposition on the passages studied in this book.



One Conversation

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A Word from Our Team

The Bible Studies for Life Team



Aging parents. Cancer. Dementia. Children's marriages. The births of children and grandchildren. These are just some of the life issues that our *Bible Studies for Life* team has faced recently. With the Lord's help, we do our best to handle life's circumstances—both favorable and difficult—in ways that honor Christ. I can only imagine some of the things that you and others in your group have faced recently. I'm thankful that we all have Bible study groups that love us, support us, pray for us, and encourage us as we journey through life together.

I'm excited that you're joining us for the study *Welcome Home: Connecting and Engaging People in Your Church*. *Welcome Home* is a six-session Bible study that complements the book, *Becoming a Welcoming Church*, by Dr. Thom S. Rainer. We'll learn biblical principles for welcoming people into the church who are seeking Christ and seeking a home among other believers. Wouldn't it be wonderful to say, "Welcome home!" as you help them belong to your church family?

May the Lord bless you and your group members as you help others find a church home right where you are.

Ken Braddy—Manager

 @kenbraddy | kenbraddy.com



My group's prayer requests

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing prayer requests.

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WELCOME HOME



There's no place like home.

The most powerful communication tools we have at our disposal are often not our words. Experts in communication consistently tell us that much of our communication is presented in a non-verbal way.

- ▶ The teenager who says, "Yes, Sir," yet rolls her eyes.
- ▶ The teacher who says he values interaction but lectures in a monotone voice without ever pausing for questions.
- ▶ The job candidate who claims confidence in her ability to do the job but fidgets in her seat with the only break being nervous laughter.

These people are all saying *something*, but what they are *communicating* is quite different from what they are saying.

What are we communicating to those who come to our church or Bible study group for the very first time? What are we *really* saying? We might be verbalizing words of welcome, but we might also be presenting a message that says just the opposite.

In this study, we will examine what we are *really* saying. We will look deeply into the posture and attitude that exemplifies the right kind of invitation. We will look at what we need to do so that, when we encounter those who are just beginning to come around to the truth of God and His church, they don't just hear, but also *feel* the same welcome God has given us in Christ.

"You are welcome. We're glad you are here."



Michael Kelley

Michael is a husband, dad, author, and speaker. He serves as the Director of Groups Ministry at LifeWay Christian Resources, and in all those arenas is trying to help people have a holistic view of what it means to be formed in Jesus. Michael is also the author of *Boring, Wednesdays Were Pretty Normal*, which tells the story of his ten-year-old son's battle with leukemia, and recently released a new book, *Growing Down*.



This study complements the book, *Becoming a Welcoming Church*, by Dr. Thom S. Rainer.

Welcome Home: Connecting and Engaging People in Your Church

Session 1 **Reality Check** *Titus 3:3-11*

Session 2 **Open Arms** *James 2:1-10*

Session 3 **Gracious Hospitality** *1 Peter 4:7-11*

Session 4 **Intentional Love** *Luke 10:25-37*

Session 5 **Authentic Joy** *1 Thessalonians 1:1-10*

Session 6 **Going Out** *Acts 16:6-15*