

# Starter Kit

## 2017: WEEK 2

*This quarter we will study Luther and other reformers, but most importantly we will study all the varying meanings of this word, what it meant to many people throughout the Bible, and what it means to us.*



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## INTRO: Using the Starter Kit

We have provided twenty-five sessions that can be used for youth meetings or for whatever you need them for. Besides that, there are five group Bible studies. We recommend you use the Habakkuk Bible study very early in your series—even the last week of 2016 if you can.

If you use all the starter kits (you don't have to; you can pick and choose the ones that are best for your situation), you will have twenty-two more weeks in the year. You may create whatever programs you wish for those weeks. Or you could choose to make these starter kits last for two sessions, choosing certain parts for the first week and the rest for the second week.

Twelve of the Starter Kits are based on twelve principles of Luther's reformation, delineated by Thomas F. Fischer, M.Div., M.S.A., found here:

[http://www.ministryhealth.net/mh\\_articles/263\\_luther\\_principles\\_reformation.html](http://www.ministryhealth.net/mh_articles/263_luther_principles_reformation.html)  
[http://www.ministryhealth.net/mh\\_articles/263\\_luther\\_principles\\_reformation.html](http://www.ministryhealth.net/mh_articles/263_luther_principles_reformation.html)

In between these twelve principles you will find kits based on Bible characters whose lives exemplify the principles.

Here is what we provide in each session:

1. **A brief reading on the topic.** This can be read, but of course should be shared instead in the leader's own words, adding or subtracting details that fit your group. Usually, there are Bible readings and questions worked into the text.
2. **A short devotion** that brings home the principles of the topic of the week. This is intended to be shared with the whole group.
3. **An activity suggestion.** These are simple, requiring few, if any, materials, but we all learn and retain better if we do something physical with what we've heard and seen.
4. **A short skit.** If you have time to rehearse and learn, these can be done on different weeks, or even for other meetings such as church services. But they can also be and done in impromptu fashion, each person reading his/her part expressively. Always allow time to discuss people's reactions after skits.
5. **Very important:** Each week's starter kit includes a page called "**Seven Days of Soul Food.**" Print these out and give copies to each person, or give each person the link if they have online access. These are personal applications that will carry the devotion through the whole week. It is highly recommended that each person begin some sort of prayer journal and use it all year. We generally think of journals as being full of writing, but if you don't like to write, you can draw, doodle, paste in pictures that bring the lessons of the week to mind—anything that helps you draw closer to God.

## The Whole Soul

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is one of the foundational texts of faith. It reads, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Jesus enlarges slightly on this text in Matthew 22:37 (capitals show that He is quoting from the Old Testament). And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." Mark 12:29-30 reports Him as saying, "HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH."

Luke 10:27 tells a slightly different story: Jesus asks a lawyer how he reads the Law, and the lawyer says, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."

From all this, we can learn that there are four ways we can express our love for God: heart, mind, soul, and strength, which we can apply to physical strength, or using our bodies to love God.

Each page of the "**Seven Days of Soul Food**" includes suggestions for showing love to God and others in all these ways.



## WEEK 2: The Five Sola's

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In this session, we'll be looking at some of the most important Biblical principles which had been lost to most people, and which Martin Luther and the other reformers brought back into public notice. Perhaps the top five principles are sometimes called the five sola's, because Luther originally only wrote about these in Latin, since it was the language of church, business, and educated people at the time. So he preached, "Solus Christus (only Christ); soli deo gratia (glory only to God), sola scriptura (only Scripture), sola gratia (only grace), and sola fide (only faith). Luther also believed people should have access to the Word of God in their own languages, so he also taught in German and translated the whole Bible into German.

#### Glory to God Only

The church of Luther's time was all about glory. They spent lifetimes building glorious churches and cathedrals, with towering, sculpted spires, breathtaking stained glass windows, and gold-encrusted images within. They carried out ostentatious ceremonies and festivals. The pope, cardinals, and higher level priests amassed wealth and lived lives of luxury while the people starved.

Well...that's one kind of glory! But it's not the kind God is interested in. Luther brought back the ancient wisdom, well known to Adam and Eve and those of their descendants who accepted it, that only God deserves glory and praise from humans, and that people and organizations on earth who try to steal that glory are not doing right. Throughout history, humans have tried to steal the glory that belongs to God alone, from the people building the tower of Babel to Nebuchadnezzar bragging about his kingdom to politicians to this day who try to dictate their own ideas and opinions to the rest of the world.

But we agree with Luther—*glory only to God!*

And how did Luther learn all this?

#### Only Scripture

It was when he was at Wittenberg University that Luther first encountered the whole Bible. It was Latin, of course, but as an educated man, he could read it. He began to discover that many of the things his church taught went counter to Biblical teachings, such as giving too much power to earthly priests (Matt. 23:9, 1 Pet. 2:9, 1 John 2:27, and many others), or were

## WEEK 2: The Five Sola's

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not in the Bible at all, such as purgatory itself, or even mass, which had grown from the simple form of Jesus' last supper with His disciples to a high, mysterious ceremony which was more about the priest than the common people. (You may have volunteers read the above texts and briefly discuss what they teach about the limits of human authority.)

Luther also found 2 Tim. 3:14-17. (Read or have someone read this.) Luther began to teach that the Word of God was above all human authority. He said, "The true rule is this: God's Word shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel can do so." He taught that the Scriptures didn't have any lack, or need any help from human tradition.

This does not mean that human traditions are wrong in themselves. Your family no doubt has some traditional ways of doing things, perhaps especially around holidays. As a church, we (all churches) have developed traditions, some of which we value greatly. The issue is, *no church can say its traditions have ANYTHING to do with salvation!*

The Bible is all we need.

But even that can be misunderstood. It's not the Bible that saves us. It's Christ.

### Only Christ

In the church at that time, they certainly believed in Christ and in His death on the cross to save humans. However, like the Old Testament Jews after the Babylonian captivity, they had added so many rules (intended to maintain purity of faith) that Christ Himself, the center, the be-all and end-all of life, the whole reason we *have* church, was getting lost in the details.

Not only that, but Christ's position as advocate and intercessor was completely swallowed up in the concept that the priests, bishops, archbishops, cardinals, and pope stood between the people and God. Your priest was your intercessor.

Luther taught that Christ was the only mediator humans have, and the only one we need. No human can or should get between that relationship. And His salvation was a completely free gift!

### Only Grace

In Luther's time, it was strongly believed that the pope had final say over who went to heaven and who went to hell (the kind of hell where you are tortured forever). One had to deserve and earn salvation. By going to enough masses, saying enough of the correct prayers, giving enough money to the church, doing enough good works, and even by buying indulgences which declared all sins forgiven, people could hope to be saved, although they were still likely



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to suffer for some time in purgatory to pay for the rest of their sins before actually entering heaven.

In studying his Bible, Luther learned that Christ had already paid for all the sins of the whole earth! Read or have someone read Hebrews 7:26, 27. How many times does it say Jesus offered Himself? And for how many? For all! Jesus' death was enough to pay for all the sins of all the people, even those who *won't* accept it! Isn't that tragic? The blood of the Lamb is enough to cover all their sins, but they say no, and in so doing, they turn down salvation.

There is nothing we can do to "pay for" our sins.

**Read Romans 11:6.** What happens to grace in our lives if we depend on works?

In 1528, in a writing called *On Faith and Coming to Christ*, Luther wrote, "Should one imagine he is able to do anything good of his own strength he does no less than make Christ the Lord a liar."

### Only Faith

In a women's Bible study group I led some years ago, there were women of several different Christian denominations. One day we were reading James 2:18: "But someone may well say, 'You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works'" (NASB).

My best friend said, "This is where we Catholics get nervous with you Evangelical Christians. You always say 'faith alone,' but we believe it's faith *and* works that save you."

We tried to explain (carefully and prayerfully, without arguing) that we don't believe this passage is saying works can save you. James clearly states that his works *will show his faith*. In other words, if you have faith, it will show in how you live, but faith comes first. And in many other passages, such as Eph. 2:8-9, the teaching is clear that we are saved only by faith in God's gift of grace.

The Biblical meaning of faith is much richer than some of our modern languages can show. For one thing, all too often we use faith as a synonym for "believe" and we tend to think that is just mental assent. I believe the sun is 93 million miles from earth, but I have no personal knowledge of that, and no heart connection to such a fact. If I only believe that God exists but have no personal knowledge of Him and no heart connection to Him, what good is that?





## WEEK 2: The Five Sola's

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The Amplified Bible tries to include all the meanings inherent in the Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic words in the original Bible. The editors put square brackets around the added words to make it clear they are not adding to the Word of God—merely showing how much is present in the original languages that we can miss today. For example, in nearly every verse which includes an injunction to believe, the Amplified puts in “[trust in, adhere to, rely on.]” Isn’t that a great description of the life of living faith?

### **In conclusion**

*Only God* is deserving of *glory*. *Only Christ* saves us and intercedes for us. *Only the Bible* gives us the knowledge we need to be saved. That knowledge is not a list of facts—it is personal, intimate knowledge of God Almighty, who saves us *only by grace*. That grace is enough for every single person, but to save us it has to be grasped *only by faith*, which reaches up to God’s outstretched hand and clings for dear life, trusting in, relying on, and adhering to God forever.



## DEVOTION

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### DEVOTION

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As Luther learned these things, they transformed first his heart, then his life, then how he communicated with others, first in his own community and later throughout Germany. Ultimately, his personal reformation, along with the personal reformations of other reformers (some we know about and many whom only God knows) changed the whole world in ways that are still in force today.

Can such a revolution happen in our own lives? It begins with *only the Bible*, so long as we understand that the Bible itself is not of prime importance and cannot save us; it is the vehicle through which God chooses to teach us of what *is* of primary importance—Himself. We choose to read it and soak ourselves in it, not as a textbook, like studying for a test (though we can learn a great deal from it), but more like a box of love letters from God to us.

The best thing about the Bible is that it is the *living* word. The Bible itself does not change, yet in its eternal principles we find help and encouragement that are relevant to our daily lives and which change depending on our needs. Think about a Bible passage you loved as a child. Try to bring back the feelings you had then; what that passage meant to you. Now think about what the same passage means to you today. How have the emphases changed as you have changed and matured, even though the inner message of the passage has not changed at all?

Once we have begun to live with the Bible, we begin to truly *know* God. That word “know” doesn’t mean know as you know how to spell or do algebra or work on computers. It means know deeply, inwardly, as you know yourself. As you know your closest, dearest friend or family member. It really means love. And we finally realize that it’s true: *God loves ME as much as if I were the only person who ever lived. He loves me so much that if I were the only one who had sinned, He would have died just for me!*

We begin to “hear” God’s voice in our lives; feel the Holy Spirit’s guidance deep in our own hearts. We know—truly *know* down inside our secret selves, that God’s grace is bigger than the whole universe, more beautiful than all the gorgeous pictures of the physical cosmos that come back from Hubble’s telescope. And we know that we do not—can never—deserve it.

The choice at that point is simple. Are we going to let go and give ourselves over to that *grace alone*? Are we really going to live our whole lives on *only faith* in the *only God that deserves glory*, loving and following *only Christ*, learning more and more about Him through all avenues possible, but letting *only the Scriptures* be the final word?



## **DEVOTION**

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### **Activity Suggestion**

Create a collage or poster illustrating the five sola's. If you have access to a copier, make it only 8½ x 11 and make lots of copies to give away. Alternatively, have individuals create their own to give away. Or both—that way you'll get lots of variety.

## JOURNAL TIME: 7 days of soul food

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**Luke 10:27**

### JOURNAL TIME: 7 days of soul food

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You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind (Luke 10:27). To put it another way, body+heart+mind=one living soul.

We can't really divide ourselves into different sections, but it's useful to look at these different aspects of ourselves and be sure we have a well-balanced faith that uses all the avenues of a soul. Each of these starter kits will include a week's worth of food for your soul in each of these four methods of understanding and expression.

Write about each of the following in your prayer journal this week. Strive to use language of emotion, thought, physical health and strength, or spirit on the given days.

1. **Day 1:** Write the five sola's into your prayer journal, each with a line or two of description in your own words. Consider which of these principles are working strongly in your life and which need to be strengthened. (If you've forgotten, the five are: only God gets glory, only Christ is central, only the Scriptures are the rule of faith and practice, we are saved by only grace, and we accept that by only faith.)

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2. **Day 2:** Heart: Which of the five appeals most directly to your emotional self? If you discuss this with friends, you will find that different people are emotionally moved by different ones. That's the way God made us. You may even find that different ones move you at different times. Prayerfully connect with these emotional themes and consider how God wants to work in and through your heart this week.

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## JOURNAL TIME: 7 days of soul food

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3. **Day 3:** Mind: Which of the five appeals to your intellect and makes you think? How does God want to work in your mind this week? Are there ways you can share what you think with others and find out what they think?

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4. **Day 4:** Strength/body: This one may not be easy to figure out, but what are the ways your physical strength and health intersect with these five principles? Are there ways you could improve your faith by improving your health? What are the ways you could use your body for God and others this week?

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5. **Day 5: Soul/spirit:** As you prayerfully ponder the heart/mind/body insights God has given you so far this week, you may find that your soul feels more whole and settled. Consider those of the five principles which you have not addressed in heart, mind, or body, and ponder how they affect your whole self—your soul.

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6. **Day 6:** Consider your family, community, church, school, etc.—all the different “neighborhoods” you are part of. Whenever and wherever you see evidence of one or more of these principles at work, make a note of it, and mention it if it is practical to do so.



## JOURNAL TIME: 7 days of soul food

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7. **Day 7:** Use day 7 to create something beautiful that reflects what you have learned. Write a poem or song or story. Create a poster. Write a letter. Paint or draw a picture. Make a sign. Do some sidewalk chalk art or writings. Build something. Create a podcast or blog post or Twitter post(s). Use whatever creativity God has given *you*. We all have something. Share the love!

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## **DRAMA: role play**

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This time around we have not so much a skit as a set of role plays. It is important that we be able to share the truths of the five sola's in ways that will appeal to people and not drive them away. So here are five "situations" which can be taken on by ten people, if you have them, by fewer if some do more than one role, or by more if you simply take turns doing skits each AY session. You don't have to do all five. You can pick and choose, especially if you want to spend more than a few minutes on each one.

The point of this exercise is to learn the best ways to share, so be sure that at least the person defending the principles uses non-confrontational language and respectfully listens to the other person. If you want to practice what to do when you face a person who is argumentative or confrontational, you could do that, but the best thing to do if the discussion becomes heated is simply to listen lovingly. Sometimes the angry person only needs a listening ear, and if you pray as you listen, you may realize their anger comes from an entirely different source than this doctrinal (or whatever) issue. You can also say that you will have to agree to disagree and respectfully bow out of the conversation. God is not honored when His people try to make others believe the way we think they should. He is all about love, not coercion.

#### **NOTE TO THOSE DEFENDING OPPOSING VIEWS**

Do your best to present these other beliefs as if you really believe them. You will be helped in your ability to talk to others who do believe these things if you try to identify with them and understand at least a little bit why they feel as they do.

#### **NOTE TO THOSE DEFENDING THE SOLA PRINCIPLES**

Remember to use personal stories whenever possible. If we share our open hearts, people are more likely to be moved. Remember that Jesus sent out the healed demoniac (Mark 5) to be His evangelist knowing nothing at all except that he had been made whole.



## DRAMA: role play

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### GLORY TO GOD ONLY

#### PERSON 1

Take the role of someone who believes that earthly church leaders represent God on earth and are so important that we should give them reverence. You might talk about what we call leaders, or say that we should bow to them, or that every word they say should be treated as final. (You could even touch on the role of Ellen White in our church. She is very important to us. But should she get glory?)

#### PERSON 2

You will defend the idea that only God receives glory. Give some of the reasons you believe this. You could also discuss what the difference is between respect and glory. Agree that we should respect earthly leaders and ask the other person what they believe defines how much respect a person should get as opposed to God, and why.

### ONLY SCRIPTURE

#### PERSON 1

Take the role of someone who believes that there are many holy books, or that God speaks through each one's heart and tells different truths to different people. You could also defend the idea that the Bible is only an old book of fables, if you wish. You can decide whether to agree that it has good lessons in it, or whether you think it's completely irrelevant today.



## DRAMA: role play

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### PERSON 2

You will have to tailor your responses to which point of view your friend decides to defend. Does God speak through other means than the Bible? If so how, and what are the limits on that kind of revelation? If the other person thinks the Bible is fables, or is irrelevant, share why you personally believe that it is more than that.

### ONLY CHRIST

#### PERSON 1

Take the role of a person who believes that there have been many great teachers throughout history, and Jesus is only one of them. Or you could believe that His is a child of God, but that He was not sinless and did not rise from the dead.

#### PERSON 2

This might be one of the easiest to defend. Why do you believe Jesus is the only one who can save us and is absolutely central to our lives and faith? I hope you have more reasons than simply that it's what the Bible says (true as that is!) or that it's what you have been taught.

### ONLY GRACE

#### PERSON 1

Defend why God needs more than just His great grace to save us, or why we need to strive to deserve or merit this grace. Or you could take the role of someone who feels he/she has sinned too greatly to be forgiven and argue that God's grace is not enough in your case.

## DRAMA: role play

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### PERSON 2

This can be a hard one to defend. Sometimes people fear that if we really believe it's only grace, we will teach "cheap grace." Explain to your friend the difference between cheap grace and God's immense, illimitable, immeasurable grace. Why can this one thing save us? What is your personal experience of it? If the person thinks he/she has sinned too much to be forgiven, find Biblical reasons to explain that this is not true. You could share your own forgiveness stories, too.

### ONLY FAITH

#### PERSON 1

Take the role of a person who believes that your good works play a role in your salvation. This one may be all too easy to defend; we still have many among us who believe we are saved by faith and works. Give all the most convincing reasons you can think of: that you are obeying to show God you are worthy to live in heaven, or that you are obeying out of gratitude, or whatever reasons you can think of. You could even try bringing in Bible verses to support your view.

#### PERSON 2

Stand by faith alone as strongly as you can. Show that the godly life we all want can only be achieved through complete, simple, submissive faith and trust. Give personal stories.

The End