



CONNECTING WITH CHINESE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS
WITH CULTURAL WISDOM

APPENDICES

These appendices provide additional information and practical tools to accompany the paperback booklet: *Connecting with Chinese International Students: Sharing the Good News with Cultural Wisdom*. It can be ordered from the InterVarsity Store at tiny.cc/cwccis. The full-color booklet focuses on the youngest generation of Chinese university students studying abroad and is divided into four sections: (1) Building Relationships, (2) Gaining Historical and Cultural Understanding, (3) Sharing Jesus, and (4) Making Disciples and Preparing Students for Return.

Appendices 3 and 4, which contain Chinese translations of material on how to study the Bible, were designed to be given to Chinese students and scholars to take home with them. *Additionally, since the publication of the print booklet, we have learned that paperback Bibles may be hard to find in China, so it would be a good idea for Chinese friends to obtain one here. They may be purchased inexpensively from Ambassadors for Christ and would make a good present for returning Christian students.*

These appendices can be found at tiny.cc/cwc-online along with a map of China and links to related resources.

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1 CONFUCIAN IDEALS AND THE GOSPEL

Honor-shame manifests itself differently across the global cultural landscape, varying significantly enough that what is honorable or shameful in one culture may not be so in another. It would therefore be wise to treat each variation as distinct. Furthermore, a deeper understanding of the honor-shame variant can provide a helpful window into *how* the gospel is good news for a specific culture, thereby making the manner in which eternal truths are lived out more culturally relatable, relevant, and impactful.¹

Confucianism finds honor in the preservation of a Confucian identity and in the maintenance of a status-quo that is considered most favorable for all parties. This can be observed in how a wrong is perceived and the restoration that follows.

In honor-shame–based cultures, including many of the communities described in the biblical narrative, wrongdoing is generally marked by disruption of collective community life and the harming of relationships. The problem is not what the person did, but who was hurt because of it. In other words, Confucian societies do see community and relational disruption as a problem, but so too is the breaking of Confucian codes of relational obligations. Wrongdoing does not merely disrupt relationships; wrongdoers reject who they are supposed to be and act against their very nature and purpose in life. They do not simply do dishonorable things; they become dishonorable. Shame and dishonor are not positional statuses like guilt or innocence. They are reflections of relational realities.



Dacheng Rites Performance at Temple of Confucius in Beijing

This means that restoration in Confucian societies is much more complex than a one-time declaration of reconciled status. It necessarily involves an acknowledged return and restoration to a Confucian identity. However, the shame of the wrong is never fully expunged, as the offense was against the ideal of Confucianism itself. A person therefore cannot fully “fix” the transgression because Confucian principles and the ideal of Confucian identity cannot relate, cannot restore, cannot forgive. It simply *is*. This makes the mark of transgression indelible.

It is possible just from this single strand of Confucianism to see how the gospel can address Confucian societies. In fact, the biblical narrative already addresses matters and concerns specific to Confucian cultures. Therefore, an increased familiarity with the Confucian cultural lens will help reveal how the biblical narrative speaks most powerfully into this context.

► CONFUCIAN CONCERNS

Confucianism is a complex ethical and philosophical system. However, contemporary East Asian cultures practically emphasize a subset of Confucian principles on a day-to-day basis. These form the cultural lens through which ethical concerns and practical issues of life are viewed.

PRIMACY OF FAMILY The family unit is considered the ideal social structure, the pattern upon which wider society is constructed. Therefore, anything that disrupts or severs family ties is seen as bad or evil. As a person acknowledges Christ as Lord, the primacy of the family may be seen to have been usurped, which in turn affects the family’s and the wider community’s opinion of Christians and the gospel.



A Family Picnic in Zhouzhuang

COMMUNITY HARMONY Maintenance of harmony within the community is essential. Conflicts are approached on win-win or lose-lose terms. Both sides either “win” by coming to a mutually beneficial compromise or “lose” by having unresolved tension. Win-lose conditions are only acceptable for those who are not considered part of the “us” of the local Confucian society. The more distant the perceived relationship, the more acceptable it is to have them “lose.”

Furthermore, all relational status is intertwined within the community. Having unresolved relational tension complicates community life. Shaming someone else by exposing or highlighting a shortcoming brings shame to both parties, revealing the presence of shame within the community. Thus, conflict tends to be handled by withdrawal, escape, self-suppression, or the use of an intermediary or advocate. Interestingly, part of an advocate's role is to take upon themselves the shame evoked by surfacing the conflict. Yet because they did not personally cause the situation, the resultant shame does not "stick" to them.

RECIPROcity Reciprocal obligations provide a balance in relationships. Favors are exchanged as a form of social currency or as part of a patron-client dynamic. The patron honors the client by providing a needed resource, extending help, or using relational capital for the benefit of the client. The client who receives the benefit honors the patron and reciprocates by stewarding well what is given, and by building up the reputation and honor of the patron within the community. Becoming too heavily indebted to anyone destabilizes this dynamic and is therefore avoided.²

FILIAL PIETY This is the one notable exception to reciprocal obligations. Since there is no way to repay the relational debt of having received life from your parents, there is no way to fulfill reciprocal obligations to them. The child is therefore perpetually in the parents' debt and bound to uphold the family name. In their conduct and secular achievement, children promote the good reputation of the family. Rendering honor, loyalty, and gratitude to their parents is their primary relational obligation.

FIVE BONDS There are five relational archetypes, each with associated relational obligations, that are widely accepted aspects of Confucian thought.

- 君惠臣忠 (Jūn huì chén zhōng)—*Gracious/benevolent king, loyal subjects (ruler to ruled)*: Rulers are to be fair, just, noble, and generously benevolent toward their subjects. Subjects are to reciprocate this treatment by being loyal to their king, patron, or hierarchical superior.
- 父慈子孝 (fù cí zǐ xiào)—*Loving/compassionate parents, filial children (parent to child)*: Fathers are to treat their children with loving-kindness and compassion. Children respond with filial piety.
- 兄友弟恭 (xiōng yǒu dì gōng)—*Cordial older siblings, respectful younger siblings (elder to younger)*: This is extended beyond biological siblings and generally applied to any relationship where there is a seniority

component. The elder is obliged to extend friendship to the younger, who in turn displays due reverence and respect to the elder.

- 夫義婦順 (fū yì fù shùn)—*Righteous husband, submissive wife (husband to wife)*: The husband is to be a righteous and honorable man, which requires a good public reputation. The wife is to submit to his headship, and to work toward enabling his success.
- 朋友有信 (péng yǒu yǒu xìn)—*Trustworthiness and loyalty among friends (friend to friend)*: This is the only bond between equals. It stresses mutual trust and loyalty within a group or community identity.

These principles generally determine what is right and wrong and what is acceptable within Confucian societies. *Fulfilling these relational obligations at all costs is therefore seen as the right and good thing to do.* Other virtues and ideals, including some typically regarded as good in the West, are considered secondary in importance. For example, truth telling is not an essential principle, so lying, hiding the truth, or carefully controlling knowledge and information are simply tools used for what is considered the morally greater goal of fulfilling relational obligations and preserving your own reputation as well as that of another or the community.

These principles feed into the maintenance and expansion of the network of mutual relational obligations known as *guanxi* (connections), which is key in navigating Confucian societies. It is the “I know a guy” dynamic on steroids, where a skillful navigator may draw upon relational capital to call in favors, regardless of legality. It should be noted that in Confucian ethics, fulfilling *guanxi* obligations is seen as a greater good than obeying the letter of the law. This is partly because the law is impersonal and cannot become offended, while personal relationships (and the *guanxi* related to them) can deteriorate if a person does not fulfill the necessary obligations.



Family Celebrating Chinese New Year at Home

► SCRIPTURAL SALVE: HIGHER ALTERNATIVES TO CONFUCIAN IDEALS

For each of these ideals, the Bible presents a magnificently higher alternative that not only fills in what Confucianism lacks, but also goes beyond its obligations to the rich abundance of God's unlimited grace, favor, and fullness in Christ.

PRIMACY OF FAMILY The Bible shows that God not only prizes the family but works out his grand plan of salvation through families, specifically through that of Abraham. Furthermore, God bestows incredible honor to marriage by giving it prominence throughout the biblical narrative. For example, marriage is implicit in the Adamic mandate to go forth and multiply, and it is the first institution explicitly decreed by God in Genesis 2:24. God also calls himself Israel's husband in Isaiah 54:5 and beyond. And marriage is the very image of Christ's relationship to the Church in Ephesians 5:31-32.

Most significantly, *the Bible speaks of salvation in the language of family*. Jesus talks about doing God's will as a mark of family kinship (Matthew 12:46-50; Mark 3:31-35; Luke 8:19-21). Redemption and reconciliation with God are described in terms of adoption into Abraham's family line (Galatians 3:7-9), meaning Abraham is our honored ancestor. We carry on the line as his faith-family, heirs of the same blessing and promise. And we who believe are children of our heavenly Father (Romans 8:15). *The Gospel invitation is, at its heart, an invitation to return home to God's family*.

COMMUNITY HARMONY There are significant similarities between the Confucian ideal of harmony and the biblical concept of shalom. Both speak of all things being in their rightful place, and all relationships in their rightful states. Confucius rightly observed that achieving this would require more than adherence to laws, and that relationships are the key to changing people's hearts. However, where Confucius advocated right relationships among humankind, the Bible speaks of humankind's right relationship with God being the catalyst for true and lasting transformation. In other words, it is a right relationship between God and people, enabled through



Hall of Supreme Harmony at the Forbidden City in Beijing

the blood of the Son and the quickening of the Spirit, that transforms humankind, enabling right relationships with God, with others, and with ourselves. That is what makes lasting shalom possible, in part now and then fully in the new heaven and new earth.

*The Gospel invitation is,
at its heart, an invitation to
return home to God's family.*

In the honor-shame worldview, sin is not breaking an impersonal law but rather committing an offense against a community. Simply put, it destroys the shalom or harmony of our *relationship* with the trinitarian community, thereby bringing shame upon ourselves. And every human attempt to rectify the situation makes things worse because the efforts do not restore our relationship with our heavenly Father, which is the crucial thing that needs to be done.

This underscores the centrality of the work of Christ. While we failed to fulfill our relational obligations, Jesus has done so perfectly. Now he uses his relational capital to extend the covering of his honor and righteousness over us. In this understanding, to be justified is to be placed in proper relationship to God and restored as a full participant in the community of God's people. Justification does not mean simply being declared not guilty; it means being fully restored to our place of belonging within God's family community.

RECIPROCITY Confucian reciprocity is effectively mutual patronage. A similar dynamic is found within a healthy church,³ where believers are co-patrons of each other. They lift each other's burdens and gratefully reciprocate, not by burdensome obligations, but by actively seeking the other's highest good in Christ. The whole church does this by displaying and praising the goodness of God, the over-patron of the whole community.

On a wider scale, adoption into the family of Abraham brings the believer into the same patron-promise. By faith, children of Abraham become co-patrons and co-benefactors with God to be a blessing to the nations. The honor God gave to Abraham by becoming his patron is given to us by

adoption into the family of God through the blood of Christ. God becomes our patron as well, giving us eternal life and providing all that is needed for relationship with him through Jesus. We become his clients, receiving power and regeneration through the Holy Spirit.

As the Church demonstrates transformed and transforming lives empowered by the Spirit, the goodness, grace, glory, and greatness of God are published to the nations. In other words, *the relational obligation of the believer is to reciprocate God's gracious redemption through obedience, faithfulness, and proclamation.*

FILIAL PIETY God is Father-King as well as Creator and Life-Giver, to whom is owed first loyalty and highest obligation. He is the source of all life, the first and greatest Ancestor to whom ultimate filial piety is owed.

Kinship with God is not based on blood, but on faith in Christ. Thus, the obligation of the child is not to fulfill their duty (do what God says), but to represent family interests (be who you are). It is this relationship with God that forms the principal cornerstone from which all other relationships now flow. This is an elevated filial piety directed at God, secured by his grace and love.

FIVE BONDS Where Confucianism prescribes duty-bound relational obligations, the Bible speaks of relational obligations as a joyous fulfillment of our created purpose. We are created to have bonds of relationship with God and with each other, and we only experience the fullness of our created purpose in the context of those relational obligations—right relationships, rightly lived out:

- *Ruler to ruled:* God is honored and glorified as supreme King. Respect and honor are rendered to leaders and elders.
- *Parent to child:* Children honor their parents and parents do not exasperate their children.
- *Elder to younger:* Young and mature siblings in Christ each have their roles and obligations within the Church and the world, as outlined in 1 John 2:12-14.
- *Husband to wife:* Husbands lead their wives and shepherd their families as a picture of Christ and the Church.
- *Friend to friend:* Friends radically love one another, seeking the other's highest good in Christ, who himself is the friend who sticks closer than a brother and the firstborn of many brothers and sisters.



The Temple of Confucius in Beijing

These common biblical themes are dimly mirrored in Confucianism's Five Bonds and their obligations. But the Bible's love, grace, and hope fuel relational obligations that are deeper and more binding than Confucianism's duty-bound bonds. We owe each other a debt of love. We consider others better than ourselves.

It is also within the context of the Five Bonds that the incarnation takes on a unique significance. *Christ is our perfect elder brother, who goes before the Father on our behalf, winning the King's favor to restore family honor.* Where Confucianism—as principle, ideal, or identity—cannot relate, forgive, or reconcile, God the living King can and does. Furthermore, in Christ, the invisible God becomes visible, honoring humanity by taking on our nature, elevating and emphasizing the expectation and obligation for us to more fully live out our purpose as bearers of the *imago Dei*.

To summarize, the story of redemption is full of terms and concepts that make perfect sense to a Confucian culture:

- Primacy of family: God is head of a supremely honored family, manifest in the Church.
- Community harmony: God made all things to be in shalom, a harmonious state where there is a place for everything, and everything is in its place.
- Reciprocity: God blesses and bestows honor, expecting reciprocity in worship rendered unto him.
- Filial piety: God is Father, to whom first and greatest filial piety is owed.

- Relational bonds: God instructs his honored image-bearers to fulfill their relational obligations to him, to each other, and to all creation.

GUANXI, GRACE, AND THE GOSPEL Because of *guanxi* and relational obligations inherent in Confucian principles, the concept of biblical grace is foreign to Confucian societies.⁴ Honor and reputation must be earned. The idea of someone simply being given what is not deserved is difficult to accept, and even distasteful. Yet, this is precisely what God does in Christ, establishing a relationship that is less like the weaker reciprocity of *guanxi*, but more akin to the stronger love-debt of filial piety.

Conversion within a Confucian context can therefore be seen as the acceptance of an invitation to become part of the honored family of God the supreme King. It is an elevation of honor status, made possible only by the grace of God in Christ as he restores relational harmony on a cosmic scale through his sacrifice at Calvary. There is a shift of identity and allegiance for the believer as filial piety and the bonds of ruler to ruled and parent to child now attach to God the Father. The husband-wife bond attaches to Christ via the Church, and the elder-younger and friendship bonds attach directly to Christ. As royal children, we have the honored obligation of being our Father-King's ambassadors to the world, declaring the goodness of God and inviting the world to become part of his family as well.

Participation in the global mission of God for the reconciliation of the world is not a result of the gospel, but an integral and mandatory part of it. We who believe have been adopted as his children and made honored ambassadors of the kingdom of God. We represent the family to the world, promoting the honor and fame of our Father by being a community of witnesses and living out the honored status accorded to us as children of the King through radical love and humble service. This is not optional. This is the family way, the family heritage, the family privilege. This is our honored obligation.⁵

As royal children, we have the honored obligation of being our Father-King's ambassadors to the world, declaring the goodness of God and inviting the world to become part of his family as well.

2

AN OVERVIEW OF “RELIGIOUS” BELIEF IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA

Summarizing religious perception and practice in China is a somewhat elusive task.⁶ Various religious and pseudo-religious movements have influenced the people groups of China over the ages, intertwining and evolving as they did so. As time went on, folk beliefs melded with Buddhist teachings, finding synergy with Confucian philosophy and Daoist thoughts. Even with decades of atheistic education, some studies suggest that as much as 85% of the population still hold some form of religious or spiritual belief.⁷ “Religious conviction,” however, is perhaps too strong a term for what is practiced in Chinese society. People may believe in many things, in “nothing,” or in “everything,” but what is believed (or claimed as belief) is often expedient to their personal and communal agendas.⁸

As a result, apart from the more systematized religions of Christianity and Islam, religious practice in China can be best described as a syncretistic soup. Nonetheless, the flavor profile of this complex broth is distinct and recognizable. The threefold strands of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism form the core of Chinese spirituality, with localized folk elements, family traditions, and personal preferences shaping its corporate expression.



The Temple of Heaven in Beijing

Confucianism is not a religion, but rather a philosophical system that addresses and shapes social behavior. Due to its more practical and principle-centered nature, it has been easier to understand and put into practice, and thus forms the foundation of much of the Chinese cultural identity. The other two major strands of thought, Daoism and Buddhism, are layered on this Confucian foundation. Since Confucianism is examined in more detail in appendix 1 and in the booklet to which these appendices belong, what follows are several snapshots of the other two streams of thought. While far from comprehensive, this chapter will provide a glimpse into the complex and ever-evolving spirituality of contemporary China.



The Hanging Temple in Shanxi Province
is shared by Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism

It should be noted though that contemporary religious expression in China is not primarily focused on rites and rituals. Rather, it takes a more generalized attitude and approach in day-to-day life while staying loosely in sync with the worldviews of various thought traditions. Most contemporary Chinese are not concerned with the specific doctrines of Buddhism or the philosophical considerations of Daoism. Common religious expression broadly boils down to being “good” people, with “good” being mostly defined by a subset of Confucian principles and values. It is more cultural than religious, more practical than doctrinal. Nonetheless, familiarity with the various faith traditions of China can aid in understanding the cultural identity of its people.

► DAOISM

Daoism is a primarily philosophical tradition that advocates living in harmony with the natural flow of the universe. *Dào*, or the Way, refers to the ever-changing flowing and progressing natural order of existence. It is simply the way things are. People achieve harmony, long life, and happiness by aligning themselves with this flow.

The origins of Daoism are uncertain. However, the *Dào Dé Jīng*, a central text, is attributed to Laozi (literally, “The Old One” or “Venerable Master”), whose historical existence is debated but who may have been a contemporary of Confucius (~500 BC). Daoism contributes several key elements to the general Chinese mindset, attitude, and worldview.

- *Dào* is the way things are and the way things are supposed to be—the natural ebb and flow of universal existence, from meteorology to

relationships. The human body is seen as a microcosm of this harmonious universal state, thriving as it operates in harmony with its design and purpose.

- *Dé* is actioned morality. Similar in concept to the Greek *dunamis*, it refers to power or energy employed in virtuous pursuit—the working out of life in sync with the flow of *Dào*. If the *Dào* is a universal river, *Dé* is what is done to be carried along in its flow.
- *Wú Wéi* is probably the most important contribution of Daoism to the Chinese psyche. It is the concept of effortlessness: going with the flow of the *Dào*, and not struggling against what is happening or striving for personal gain. Instead, a person leans into the cycles of change, yielding their will to the *Dào* to harmoniously coexist with its flow and making only minimal changes to maintain their place in the flow.
- *Zì Rán* can be translated as “naturalness” or “essential nature.” It speaks of the way things are in and of themselves—the essential “selfness” of things within the universe. Realization of this, which is a person’s true and pure state, requires identification with the *Dào*.
- *Sān Bǎo*, the Three Treasures, are basic virtues advocated by Daoism. They are *Cí* (compassion), *Jiǎn* (frugality or moderation), and *Bù Gǎn Wéi Tiān Xià Xiān* (not daring to get ahead of heaven). The first two virtues are self-explanatory. The third promotes a passive humility that forsakes the challenge or pursuit of authority and instead keeps in step with *Tiān* (heaven) and, by extension, with the *Dào* itself.

► BUDDHISM

Historically, Buddhism was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince from Uttar Pradesh or Nepal around 500 BC. Like Confucianism and Daoism, Buddhism is a philosophical worldview that attempts to make sense of the world as it is. It sees evil in the world and attempts to escape that evil.

The core of Buddhism is the Four Noble Truths.

- *Dukkha*: Life in this world is incapable of satisfying and is filled with suffering and pain.
- *Samudaya*: Suffering is caused by desire, craving, or thirst. We desire comfort, so we strive to attain power and possessions and in so doing bring hardship for our fellow man. We suffer when we lack what we believe gives us comfort.



Chinese Buddhist Art

- *Niroda*: Craving can be stopped by extinguishing all desire, leading to nirvana. When achieved, nirvana enables the physical body to be released and become one with the universe—without desire, individual personhood, suffering, or feeling.
- *Magga*: The path of escape from *dukkha* through the practice and mastery of the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Noble Path consists of eight principles separated into three Divisions:

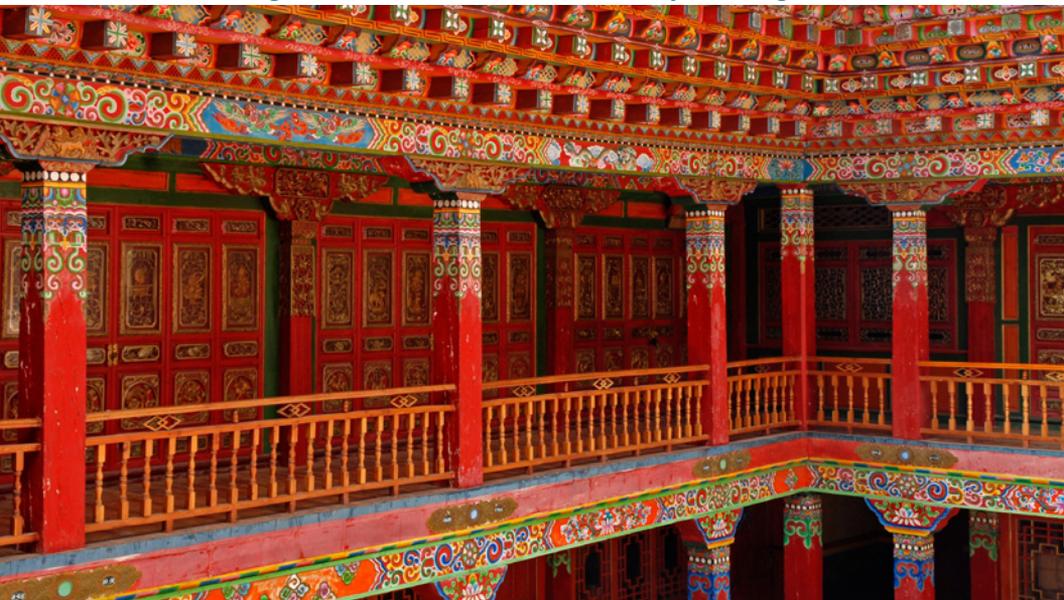
WISDOM DIVISION

- *Right View* – Belief in an afterlife and that Gautama Buddha taught the way to Nirvana.
- *Right Resolve* – Renunciation of home and the world, embracing monkhood in an environment as free from temptations and stress as possible.

MORAL VIRTUE DIVISION

- *Right Speech* – Avoiding lies, rude words, or gossip. Gracious speech leads to “salvation”.
- *Right Conduct/Action* – No killing, harming others, stealing, demanding, sex and sexual misconduct.
- *Right Livelihood* – Begging to feed oneself and possessing only what is necessary for life.

Songzanlin Tibetan Buddhist Monastery in Shangri-La



MEDITATION DIVISION

- *Right Effort* – Willful defense and rejection of sensual thoughts, doubt about the Path, ill will, and other temptations or distractions.
- *Right Mindfulness* – Being constantly mindful of one’s actions and state, and constant awareness of the impermanence of reality.
- *Right Concentration* – Four incremental levels of concentration where adherents progressively detach themselves from: 1) sense-desires, 2) applied and sustained thinking, 3) joy, 4) pleasure and pain.

▶ OTHER INFLUENCES ON CHINESE LIFE AND THOUGHT

FOLK RELIGIONS While Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism form significant foundational parts of the spiritual psyche of contemporary Chinese, they are not religions per se but philosophical systems that possess spiritual elements.

In general, contemporary Chinese religious practice is an eclectic combination of animistic and folk rituals, incorporating segments of Buddhist teachings, ancestral traditions, and other practical elements that have been added over the years. The resulting religious practice, if present at all, bears little resemblance to the practice of the monks and priests, who are generally well respected but not well understood.



Dragon Parade by Bai People in Dali

In accordance with Confucius’s Doctrine of the Mean, the general attitude toward folk religion in China is respectful deference. In Confucian thought, the spiritual world is acknowledged but mostly not pursued; moderation in all things—never becoming radical or extreme—is a high value. This thinking, along with government pressure to reject religious belief over the last century or so, tempers the contemporary Chinese approach to religious practice and pursuit. This is very much in contrast to the Bible’s call to wholehearted submission to God.

Some Chinese will make offerings to appease spiritual powers and petition spiritual entities for highly mundane and practical matters like academic

success, prosperity in business, and general wealth and health or healing. The younger generation's attitude toward these practices is generally a respectful apathy. They will go along with them out of respect for their elders, upholding family tradition and tolerating it in case there might be some incidental benefit. But practically speaking, the philosophical aspects of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism have a much greater impact on the Chinese cultural psyche than any specific religious practice.

ISLAM Islam first arrived in China with Silk Road traders around AD 1000. Despite its long history in the country, China's approximately 20 million Muslims are predominantly among two people groups, the Hui and the Uighur. Modern-day Hui are descendants of Middle Eastern traders, historically called *Huí Huí*, who married Chinese women and settled in the land. The Hui have relatively greater freedom to practice Islam than the Uighur, who currently face serious governmental restrictions.

THE CULTS OF CHINA Numerous cults have sprung up across China over the years. Some stem from Christian roots, like Eastern Lightning, which believes that Jesus has returned and is presently living as a Chinese woman. Others arise from different sources. For example, Fǎ Lún Gōng and its performance arts extension, Shen Yun, has religious and cultic elements related to Daoism.

In Confucian thought, the spiritual world is acknowledged but mostly not pursued; moderation in all things—never becoming radical or extreme—is a high value.

The Chinese government has moved to demonize and stamp out what they see as harmful deviations of religious practice, using media and propaganda to paint both cults and established religions with the same brush. As a result, cults and legitimate religions are commonly conflated, producing a confused and guarded wariness toward anything that might be considered cultic, superstitious, or foolish.

► SYNCRETISM IN PRACTICE

It should be noted that most of the younger generation does not have a thorough knowledge of these religious traditions, so most will know less than what has been discussed here. Generally, they would know only what they have gleaned from casual observation of family traditions and practices.

On the whole, religious practice in China is less a matter of religious expression and more about pragmatism in daily life. Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism mention *Tiān* (heaven) and *Shén* (deities), but these traditions primarily affect the Chinese cultural psyche as attitudes that inform social behavior. People tend to be concerned with how these traditions guide daily endeavors and not any spiritual state. Spiritual considerations are left for when a person becomes a spirit upon death. While Chinese are alive, they are generally more concerned with the business of living. To this end, Chinese draw upon the rich tapestry of ideas old and new to see which will best sustain them in the here and now.⁹

Amne Machen Sacred Buddhist Mountain in Qinghai Province



3 HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE INDUCTIVELY 如何研读圣经

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.¹⁰
2 Timothy 3:16

圣经都是上帝所默示的，于教训、督责、使人归正、教导人学义都是有益的，
提摩太后书 3:16

Pray for the Holy Spirit to be your teacher and guide. Then read the passage.

祷告恳求圣灵成为你的老师和引导者。阅读那篇经文¹¹

1. OBSERVATION QUESTIONS: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?

1. 观察的问题：这经文在说什么？

Are there any words that need to be defined?

有没有哪些词需要澄清它的定义？

Place yourself in the story.

参与到经文的故事场景中。

What would the words have meant to those who first heard them?

对当时的听众来说，这些话具有什么含义？

Observe facts: Who? Where? What? When?

观察事实：谁？哪里？什么？何时？

Look for repetitions to see what is important.

找出重复的词语来发现重点。

You will find things in passages that you did not see before.

你将会发现在这段经文里你以前没有注意到的重点。

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the word of God is alive and active."¹²

希伯来书 4:12: 上帝的道是活泼的，是有功效的。

2. INTERPRETATION QUESTIONS: WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN? 2. 诠释的问题: 这段文字的含义是什么?

What kind of literature is this passage?
这段经文是什么文体?

- History? (Is it a narrative that tells about God and people?)
- 历史? 一段讲述关于神和人的历史
- Poetry? (Hebrew poetry often repeats ideas for emphasis.)
- 诗词? 希伯来的诗经常以重复的手法来强调重点
- A proverb? (Is it short but powerful statements that help you gain wisdom?)
- 箴言? 一些使人得智慧的短语
- A parable? (Is it simple stories that convey deep messages?)
- 比喻? 以简短的故事来阐述深奥的道理
- A letter? (Does it contain greetings, compact arguments, encouragement to live new lives, etc.?)
- 书信? 问候, 精简的论述, 鼓励人过新的生活, 等等。
- Prophecy? What did it mean to the original hearers?
- 预言? 对当时的听众来说具有什么含义?

What is the author trying to convey? Why is this said? Why is this said here?
作者想要表达什么? 为什么要这样表达? 为什么要在此处如此说?

What does this passage say about:

- God?
- people?
- sin?
- salvation?
- Christ?
- the church?
- the Bible?

(Not all questions will apply to each passage.)

这段经文说了什么? (不是所有的问题都适用于所有的章节中)



Li River in Guangxi Province



Red Beach in Liaoning Province

- 有关神?有关人?有关罪?有关救恩?
- 有关基督?有关教会?有关圣经?

How does this passage relate to other passages in the Bible?
这段经文与圣经其他的经文如何相连?

3. APPLICATION QUESTIONS: WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY TO ME? 3. 应用的问题: (这段经文对我说了什么?)

We allow the Bible to change our thinking and our actions. What is God's word to me?
我们要让圣经来改变我们的思想和行为。神对我说了什么?

Which question below fits this passage? (Choose one.)
下面的问题哪些适用于这段经文?(选一个)

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to claim?
- Is there something to give thanks for?
- Is there a temptation to recognize?
- Are there new values and goals to live for?

有什么要我顺服的吩咐吗?我可以支取哪些应许呢?有什么我可以感恩的?
我需要注意什么试探?有没有什么新目标我可以朝着生活?

4. PRAY 4. 祷告

Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you apply this word to your life and remind you through the day.
恳求圣灵来帮助我将这些话应用在我生命中,并在一整天中来提醒我。

4

SUGGESTIONS FOR PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY 些个人研经的建议

▶ HOW TO APPROACH THE BIBLE

该用什么态度来面对圣经

Come with an expectation of hearing God speak to your heart.
以一颗期待的心来听神对你说的话

Ask the Holy Spirit to teach you. Read short passages slowly, soaking up nourishment for your soul.
恳求圣灵教导你。慢慢地读短篇的经文，吸收经文里的养分来喂养你的灵魂。

Alternate between Old and New Testament passages to learn about the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27).
轮流交替读旧约和新约来学习整本圣经中上帝的旨意 (使徒行传 20:27)

▶ GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

花时间认识耶稣

Gospel of Matthew: more quotes from the Old Testament
马太福音：引用许多旧约的经文

Gospel of Mark: shortest, written for the Gentiles, active
马可福音：简洁有力，写给外邦人

Gospel of Luke: interactions with many types of people
路加福音：与社会中各种不同类型的人打交道

Gospel of John: more philosophical (look for the seven “I am” statements)
约翰福音：比较哲学性。当中注意有7句“我是”的经文。

▶ BIOGRAPHIES OF BIBLE CHARACTERS

查考圣经人物的生平

Abraham: Genesis 12:1—25:11
亚伯拉罕：创世记 12:1—25:11

Joseph: Genesis 37—50
约瑟：创世记 37—50

Moses: Exodus 1—34; Deuteronomy 32—34
摩西:出埃及记 1—34;申命记 32—34

Deborah: Judges 4—5
底波拉:士师记 4—5

Ruth and Naomi: Ruth 1—4
路得和拿俄米:路得记 1—4

Hannah: 1 Samuel 1:1—2:11
哈拿:撒母耳记上 1:1—2:11

King Solomon: 1 Kings 1—11
所罗门王:列王记上 1—11



Hongcun Ancient Village
in Anhui Province

King Saul and King David: 1 Samuel 8—31; 2 Samuel 1—24; 1 Kings 1—2
扫罗王和大卫王:撒母耳记上 8—31; 撒母耳记下 1—24, 列王记上 1—2

Daniel: Daniel 1—12
但以理:但以理书 1—12

Jonah: Jonah 1—4
约拿:约拿书 1—4

Mary: Luke 1:26-56; 2; 8:19-21; John 2:1-11; 19:25-27; Acts 1:13-14
马利亚:路加福音 1:26-56; 2; 8:19-21; 约翰福音 2:1-11; 19:25-27; 使徒行传 1:13-14

► TOPICS AND THEMES IN THE BIBLE 圣经里的主题

Who is God? Genesis 1—3; Job 38—41; Isaiah 6; Revelation 4—6
神是谁? 创世记 1—3; 约伯记 38—41; 以赛亚书 6; 启示录 4—6

God's covenants: Genesis 12; 17; Exodus 6:1-8; Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 7—8; 2 Samuel 7; Jeremiah 7; 29; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Hebrews 8; Revelation 21
神的约: 创世记 12; 创世记 17; 出埃及记 6:1-8; 利未记 26; 申命记 7—8; 撒母耳记下 7; 耶利米书 7; 耶利米书 29; 哥林多后书 6:14-18; 希伯来书 8; 启示录 21

Jesus, the great teacher: Matthew 5—7; John 14—16
耶稣, 最伟大的老师: 马太福音 5—7; 约翰福音 14—16



Zhangjiajie National Forest Park

Leadership: Joshua 1—24; 2 Kings 1—25; Nehemiah 1—13
领袖的特质: 约书亚记 1—24; 列王记上下 1—25; 尼西米记 1—13

Prayer: Psalms 51; 73; 96; 100; 103; 139; Luke 11:1-13; John 17
祷告: 诗篇 51; 73; 96; 100; 103; 139; 路加福音 11:1-13; 约翰福音 17

Love: Leviticus 19:18, 33-34; Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27-36; 10:25-37;
John 13:34-35; 15:9-17; 1 Corinthians 13; 1 Peter 4:8
爱: 利未记 19:18, 33-34; 马太福音 5:44; 路加福音 6:27-36; 10:25-37;
约翰福音 13:34-35; 15:9-17; 哥林多前书 13; 彼得前书 4:8

Spiritual gifts: Joel 2:28-29; Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, 28;
Ephesians 4:11; 1 Peter 4:11
属灵恩赐: 约珥书 2:28-29; 罗马书 12:6-8; 哥林多前书 12:8-10, 28; 以弗所书
4:11; 彼得前书 4:11

Life in the Spirit: Psalm 51:10-12; Ezekiel 36:26-27; Galatians 5:16-18,
22-25; Romans 8:1-17, 26-27
在圣灵中生活: 诗篇 51:10-12; 以西结书 36:26-27; 加拉太书 5:16-18, 22-25;
罗马书 8:1-17, 26-27

Being the light of the world: Genesis 12:1-3; 1 Kings 8—10; Isaiah 9:1-7;
42; 49; 60; Luke 2; John 1:1-18; 8:12-30; Acts 13:44-52; Ephesians 5:8-20;
Revelation 21

做万国的光: 创世记 12:1-3; 列王记上 8—10; 以赛亚书 9:1-7; 42; 49; 60; 路加
福音 2; 约翰福音 1:1-18; 约翰福音 8:12-30; 使徒行传 13:44-52; 以弗所书 5:8-
20; 启示录 21

Comfort in suffering: Psalm 23; 62:1-2; Isaiah 30:15-18; 64:4; Zephaniah 3:17; Matthew 11:28-30; John 15; Romans 5:3-5; Ephesians 3:16-20; Philippians 4:6-7, 11-15

痛苦中的安慰: 诗篇 23; 诗篇 62:1-2; 以赛亚书 30:15-18; 64:4; 西番雅书 3:17; 马太福音 11:28-30; 约翰福音 15; 罗马书 5:3-5; 以弗所书 3:16-20; 腓立比书 4:6-7, 11-15



Humble Administrator's Garden
in Suzhou

How God established the early church: Acts 1—28

上帝如何建立早期的教会: 使徒行传 1—28

Gaining wisdom: Proverbs 1—31

我们该如何得智慧: 箴言 1—31

The meaning of life:

Ecclesiastes 1—12

生命的意义为何: 传道书 1—12

God saving his people:

Judges 1—21

神拯救祂的百姓: 士师记 1—21

▶ LETTERS TO THE EARLY CHURCHES

给早期教会的书信

Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians: These letters are divided into two parts: a new relationship with God and a new community

加拉太书, 以弗所书, 腓立比书, 歌罗西书: 这些书信都分为两个部份: 与神有一个新的关系 & 新的群体

1 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians: Joys and troubles in the church

哥林多前书, 帖撒罗尼迦前书: 教会里的喜乐和困难

1 Peter: Reminds suffering Christians of their true identity

彼得前书: 提醒在困难中挣扎的基督徒他们真实的身份

Revelation 1—3: God's words to the seven early churches

启示录 1—3: 神对早期七个教会的话

▶ NEXT STEPS

更进一步

Jeremiah: “The crying prophet”; tried to change his country so that they would not perish

耶利米：“哭泣的先知”；他试着要改变他的国家，免得他们灭亡

Isaiah 40—55: The prophet foretold the coming Messiah

以赛亚书 40—55: 先知预言要来的弥赛亚

Romans: “The purest gospel”

罗马书：是“最纯净的福音”

Hebrews: Explains the Old Testament

希伯来书：解释旧约

2 Timothy: How to pastor the church

提摩太后书：如何牧养教会



Jade Dragon Snow Mountain
in Yunnan Province

▶ PRAYERS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

附录三：新约中的祷告

Jesus’s Prayers: Luke 11:2-4, John 17:6-26, Matthew 26:39, 42

耶稣的祷告：路加福音 11:2-4，约翰福音 17: 6-26，马太福音 26:39，42

Paul’s Prayers (often part of his letters’ introductions or conclusions)

Romans 15:5-6; 13; 16:25-27, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, 2 Corinthians 1:2-4; 13:7-10, Galatians 1:3-5, Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21, Philippians 1:9-11, Colossians 1:9-12, 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5; 2:13; 3:10-13, 2 Thessalonians 1:2-4, 11-12; 2:13-14, 16-17; 3:5, 1 Timothy 1:17, Philemon 3-6

保罗的祷告：(通常在他书信的开头或结尾)

罗马书 15:5-6; 13; 16:25-27, 哥林多前书 1:3-9, 哥林多后书 1:2-4; 13:7-10, 加拉太书 1:3-5, 以弗所书 1:15-23; 3:14-21, 腓立比书 1: 9-11, 歌罗西书 1:9-12, 帖撒罗尼迦前书 1:1-5; 2:13; 3:10-13, 帖撒罗尼迦后书 1:2-4, 11-12; 2:13-14, 16-17; 3:5, 提摩太前书 1:17, 腓利门书 3-6

Other Prayers: Hebrews 13:20-21, Jude 24-25, Revelation 1:4-7; 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-13; 7:10, 12; 22:20

其他的祷告：希伯来书 13:20-21, 犹大书 24-25, 启示录 1:4-7; 4:8, 11; 5:9-10, 12-13; 7:10, 12; 22:20

5 INTERACTING WITH THE OLD TESTAMENT

When a new Chinese Christian was invited to study the Old Testament, she was surprised to find it was mostly a narrative of God's interactions with people rather than a discussion about rules. She could see how God made a covenant and kept his covenant even though his chosen followers often lacked faith and disobeyed. The Old Testament is a celebration of God's faithfulness to people rather than a celebration of the triumphs of people and their desire to control the seasons and the future. The experience made her realize that she always needed to come to the Bible with a willingness to be surprised by what she read rather than doubt.

An overview of the Old Testament encourages a discussion of the existence of evil and how it could even begin in a perfect world, walking with God in the cool of the day (Genesis 3). How does Satan continue to use lies and fear to cause us to doubt God today? How do we respond to temptations? Why would God allow us to make bad choices when he would like for us to love him and obey him. A survey of the Old Testament creates a growing desire to break from these patterns of disobedience. Is there anyone who can help us out of our predicament? Jesus's death and resurrection allow us to live in the presence of a perfect loving God.

When studying the Old Testament with others, never miss an opportunity to emphasize God's love for all nations. When God called Abraham, he closed with "all peoples on earth / will be blessed through you" (Genesis 12:3). God's commands often include caring for the sojourners (Leviticus

Traditional Lanterns at a Temple for Chinese New Year



19:33-34, Deuteronomy 10:18-19), and the laws in the Pentateuch commonly refer to treating foreigners as if they were part of their own tribe (Numbers 9:14; Deuteronomy 1:16; 10:18-19). We see Rahab and Ruth become part of the ancestry of the great King David. When Solomon prays at the dedication of the temple, he asks God to hear and “do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you” (1 Kings 8:43). Notice too how the prophet Isaiah reminds Israel of God’s promise that they will be a light to the nations. Isaiah foreshadows how Gentiles from around the world will be grafted in and share in the nourishing sap from the root of God’s believing people, the olive tree (Romans 11:17).



Dujiangyan Panda Valley near Chengdu

When you’re studying with Chinese friends, occasionally ask them to review the scope of the story of the Old Testament. What did the Israelites have to help them know more about God (covenants, judges, kings, prophets, etc.)? This will help our friends gain a sense of the history of God’s care and actions and then begin to see how their lives fit into God’s larger story of blessing the whole world.

► WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

1. God made covenants or agreements/promises with Noah, Abraham, Moses at Mt. Sinai, and King David (see Genesis 9: 8-17; Genesis 12: 1-3; Genesis 15; Exodus 5:22-6:8; 2 Samuel 7:4-16) The Old Testament is the story of God’s faithfulness in keeping his covenants even when his people are not faithful in following Him. Themes: salvation, community, knowledge of God, and land
2. The Old Testament is the Bible Jesus had.
 - Matthew 5:17: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”
 - Luke 24:27: “And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”

3. The New Testament writers quoted the Old Testament.

NEW TESTAMENT BOOK	OLD TESTAMENT QUOTES
Matthew	96
Luke	58
Acts	57
Romans	74
Hebrews	86

4. We meet models of faith who encourage us to have faith as we walk with God.

- Hebrews 11:39: "These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised."

5. We understand who the Israelites were waiting for, and why Jesus is good news.

- Themes: sin, law, sacrifices, Lamb of God, servant of the Lord, mission to the Gentiles
- Galatians 3:24: "So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith."
- 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are 'Yes' in Christ."

6. We need to know all of Scripture so we can love and serve God.

- 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

7. We see how we, the church, fulfill the calling of Israel.

- Acts 3:25: "And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers."
- 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him . . ."

► SUGGESTED OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

Genesis 1—3

Genesis 4—11 (read with Hebrews 11 from the New Testament)

Genesis 12—25

Genesis 37—50

Exodus 1—12

Exodus 13—20; 24; 32; 40

Leviticus 1—8; 16; 23—26

Numbers 9—14; 20; 21; 27; 32; 35

Deuteronomy 1—4; 10—11; 17; 19; 28—32; 34

Joshua 1—11; 21:43-45; 23—24

Judges 1—8; 21:25; Ruth 1—4

1 Samuel 1—12

1 Samuel 13—20; 31

Psalms 1; 2; 18; 19; 22; 23; 32; 73; 86; 100; 103; 139

2 Samuel 1—12; Psalm 51

2 Samuel 22—24; 1 Kings 1—12

Proverbs 1—3; 10—15; 31

Ecclesiastes 1—12

1 Kings 16:29—19:21; 2 Kings 1—6; 11—12

Jonah 1—4; Amos 1—3; 5

2 Kings 13—14; 16—25

Isaiah 2; 6; 9; 11; 40; 49—53; 55; 58

Jeremiah 1; 7; 18; 23; 25; 29—31; 36—39; 40:1-6; 43:1-7

Daniel 1—9

Ezra 1—10

Nehemiah 1—13

Satellite Image of Poyang Lake



6 FOLLOWING JESUS IN THE GOSPEL OF MARK: SUFFERING AND GLORY

The Gospel of Mark reveals two aspects of the life of Jesus: suffering and glory. As Chinese students count the cost of believing in Jesus, they should know that the Christian life involves glory as well as suffering, joy as well as challenges. The Gospel of Mark is a great starting point to help them consider the price of following Jesus.

Eugene Peterson, a pastor, author, and professor of spiritual theology, believed that the Gospel of Mark was “the basic text for Christian spirituality.”¹³ He notes that for the first eight chapters of the book the disciples follow Jesus as he brings life to people. The last eight chapters focus on Jesus’s death. He dies willingly and sacrificially, and his death is followed by resurrection.



Mount Everest in Tibet

Peterson also observes that Mark 8:27—9:9 is set at the center of the Gospel. In the first story of these verses, Jesus calls his disciples to deny themselves. In the second story, Jesus’s transfiguration, the Father affirms that Jesus is his Son and should be listened to. Peterson insists that readers note the connection between the two stories and their context in this Gospel, which depicts both the life and death of Jesus.

Peterson further notes that though the phrases “deny yourself” and “take up your cross” speak of dying to self, Jesus also calls us to follow him. In other words, he invites us to come with him. For Peterson, remaining in Jesus’s company involves meditating on his glory as revealed in the transfiguration. In that event, the law and prophets, symbolized by Moses and Elijah, and the Father’s voice all confirm his identity and bring him glory.¹⁴

The Gospel of Mark provides many natural opportunities to discuss counting the cost of following Jesus, the risen Messiah. But as we point out the indications of suffering, it’s also critical to note the many glimpses



Hangzhou

of Jesus's authority, power, deity, and resurrection. Here is a basic overview of these themes.

Mark 1:12-13

After Jesus was led out into the desert by the Spirit, he was tempted by Satan.

Mark 2:6-7

While Jesus was healing the paralytic, the teachers of the law thought he was blaspheming because he said he could forgive sins.

Mark 2:23-28

The Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking the law when he and his disciples picked grain on the Sabbath.

Mark 3:1-6

"Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus" (v. 6).

Mark 3:20-22

Jesus's family thinks he is "out of his mind" (v. 21). The teachers of the law accuse him of being possessed by the devil.

Mark 4:1-20

Jesus tells the parable of the four soils. The seed (word) is sown on the path, the rocky ground, the thorns, and the good soil. In verse 17, Jesus explained that the seed (word) on the rocky ground is first received with joy, but because it has no root, it only lasts a short time: "When trouble or persecution comes . . . they quickly fall away."

Mark 6:14-29

After 400 years of silence, John the Baptist came as a prophet to prepare the people for the coming Lord by calling them to repent. He baptized them in the Jordan River (Mark 1:2-5). After John told King Herod that his new wife was unlawful, Herod arrested him and put him into prison. Under pressure, Herod had John beheaded.



Jichang Garden in Wuxi

Mark 8:10-12

A group of Pharisees test Jesus by asking him for a sign from heaven.

Mark 8:31

“He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.”

Mark 8:34-38

Jesus said, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit [lose] their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”



Tour Guide in Guilin

Mark 10:29-30

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus replied, “no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come, eternal life.”

Mark 10:43-45

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 11:15-18

After Jesus cleared the temple of the moneychangers who were selling animal sacrifices, “the chief priests and the teachers of the law heard . . . and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching” (v. 18).



Waterfalls in Jiuzhaigou Valley

Mark 12:1-12

Jesus told the parable of the tenants, where the tenants first kill the servants who are sent to pick up the rent, and then the son of the landowner. “Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away” (v. 12).

Mark 13:9-13

Jesus spoke to several close disciples: “You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

Mark 14:1

“Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him.”

Mark 14:10-11

“Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.”



Summer Palace near Beijing

Mark 14:53-65

Jesus is brought before the Sanhedrin, the high priest, and all the chief priests, elders, and teachers of the law. They looked for evidence so they could put him to death, but they did not find any. Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree. After Jesus said that the Son of Man would sit “at the right hand of the Mighty One” (v. 62), the high priest tore his clothes and said, “Why do we need any more witnesses?” (v. 63). “They all condemned him as worthy of death. Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, ‘Prophecy!’ And the guards took him and beat him” (vv. 64-65).

Mark 15:1-19

The Sanhedrin bound Jesus and brought him to Pilate, the governor of the Roman province of Judaea. Pilate knew the chief priests were envious of Jesus and tried to let him go. However, the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas, a murderer, rather than Jesus. Pilate asked, “Why? What crime has he committed?” (v. 14).

“Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified” (v. 15). The soldiers mocked Jesus by making him wear a purple robe and a crown of thorns. They strike him on the head and spit on him.

Mark 15:20-39

While Jesus was hanging from the cross, people hurled insults at him, and the chief priests and teachers of the law mocked him. Even those who were being crucified on each side of him heaped insults on him. After Jesus breathed his last breath, “the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (v. 38). A centurion who had watched him die said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” (v. 39).

Mark 16:1-8

When the women came to the tomb where Jesus was buried, early on Sunday morning, they found that the stone was rolled away. They were alarmed by a young man dressed in a white robe, who told them that Jesus had risen, and they would see him in Galilee.

7

**SUGGESTED PASSAGES FOR SCRIPTURE
MEMORY**

Psalms: 19; 23; 27; 100; 139

The New Covenant: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Beatitudes: Matthew 5:3-12

Lord's Prayer: Matthew 6:9-13

Seeking first the kingdom of God: Matthew 6:28-34

Jesus the good shepherd: John 10:7-18

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit: John 14:25-27

Remain in Jesus and bear fruit: John 15:9-17

More than conquerors: Romans 8:31-39

Love: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 13

The gospel and the resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15:3-8

Fruit of the Spirit: Galatians 5:22-26

Grace and good works: Ephesians 2:8-10

Unity in Christ: Ephesians 4:1-6

Weapons for spiritual warfare: Ephesians 6:10-18

Imitate Christ: Philippians 2:5-11

Made alive in Christ: Colossians 3:1-17

Joining Paul in suffering for the gospel: 2 Timothy 1:6-10

Keeping our eyes on Jesus: Hebrews 12:1-3

Our living hope: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Royal priesthood: 1 Peter 2:4-10

Humility and alertness: 1 Peter 5:8-11



Black Dragon Pool in Lijiang

NOTES

- ¹ The author is Chinese from East Asia and has been building friendships among Chinese students and scholars for the last 25 years. He has a graduate degree in theology and teaches on matters of multicultural and cross-cultural understanding. Additional perspectives on Confucianism with practical suggestions can be found in chapters 7 and 8 of the print booklet.
- ² Imbalance in the patron-client dynamic violates Confucius's Doctrine of the Mean, resulting in an imbalance in relational power or influence, which in turn causes destabilization in relational harmony between the patron-client and their surrounding community. This might result in the patron feeling used and disinclined to render future assistance, or the client becoming overly indebted and become "enslaved" by obligations and expectations to the point where they "lose" free agency and "have" to do whatever the patron may ask of them. The point at which this loss happens varies by individual and situation.
- ³ This can be observed in the early chapters of Acts.
- ⁴ In Mandarin, *grace* is typically rendered 恩典 (*Ēn Diǎn*). 恩 (*Ēn*) can be defined as kindness, mercy, charity, affection, tenderness, and compassion, whereas 典 (*Diǎn*) means law, canon, or standard. The biblical understanding of *grace*, which can rudimentarily be understood as being lavishly given what is wholly undeserved, is therefore not adequately represented by 恩典 (*Ēn Diǎn*), which carries the connotation of standards or expectations for something to be considered compassionate and kind. 恩典 (*Ēn Diǎn*) is something practiced, performed, and done according to expectation, not generously and freely given at great cost. It is almost unthinkable that the Father would lavish kindness upon the returning rebel without expecting, or even demanding, that they first meet his standards. The 典 (*Diǎn*) must come before the 恩 (*Ēn*). *Grace*—biblical *grace*—is so much greater, grander, and stronger than can be encompassed by 恩典 (*Ēn Diǎn*), and needs to be unpacked.
- ⁵ For further reading, see Jackson Wu, *Saving God's Face: A Chinese Contextualization of Salvation through Honor and Shame*, EMS Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2013) and I'Ching Thomas, *Jesus: The Path to Human Flourishing: The Gospel for the Cultural Chinese* (Singapore: Graceworks, 2018).
- ⁶ The author is Chinese from East Asia and has been building friendships among Chinese students and scholars for the last 25 years. He has a



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graduate degree in theology and teaches on matters of multicultural and cross-cultural understanding.

⁷ Steve Z., “National Religion Surveys of China,” *ChinaSource*, July 27, 2020, www.chinasource.org/resource-library/blog-entries/national-religion-surveys-of-china/.

⁸ This fluid attitude toward religion (and religious conviction in any form) is partly due to how the three major strands of thought (Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism) treat conflict, striving, and “going with the flow.” Some of this will be unpacked in appendix 2. However, this cultural attitude is highly complex and deep set, so a full exploration would require much more than can be reasonably covered in the scope of this resource.

⁹ For additional reading, see Ian Johnson, *The Souls of China: The Return of Religion after Mao* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2017). Note, however, that there have been rapid changes in China since the book’s publication.

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¹¹ The author of Appendices 3-6 is a White American who has been building friendships with Chinese students and scholars for many years. She has done graduate work in history and theology and has co-led a women’s Bible study for her church for the past 18 years.

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¹³ Eugene Peterson, “Saint Mark: The Basic Text for Christian Spirituality,” *Crux* 29 (1993).

¹⁴ Thoughts summarized from Peterson.



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