

HERE'S YOUR NEXT STEPS WITH JESUS...



Dear new follower of Jesus,

I am so excited to hear of your recent decision to give your life to Jesus!!

This truly is the best decision you will ever make in your lifetime. Jesus comes in and changes EVERYTHING and it's so wonderful. He has saved us and now we get to live for Him!!!

In the Bible, Jesus says that He wants to make us disciples (Matt. 28:19, Luke 9:23). A disciple goes much deeper than just a one-day decision. It starts with this 'yes', but it's a decision we must make every day to give all to Jesus!! In the Jewish customs, 'disciples' were students of rabbis (teachers). They lived with the rabbi, and learned from Him, and their sole desire was to be just like them. In the same manner, Jesus has called us to be disciples, where we walk with Him, talk with Him, and begin to live and look like Him.

The Christian life is not easy. After you give your life to Jesus, not all your problems will be solved. You'll still go through difficulties, but NOW, you get to do it all with Jesus! It is not a get-out-of-jail-free card. Even just going to church on a Sunday is not enough. James 2:19 even says that belief is not enough because even the demons believe!!

TRUE salvation is not saying a prayer. It's not mere belief. It's not going to church on a Sunday. TRUE salvation is belief along with repentance (to turn from sin and turn to Jesus). This does not mean you will not fail- for all fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). We are not perfect. HOWEVER, we will NOT make a practice of sinning (1 John 3:9). It's a heart change (Ezekiel 36:26). He has made us a NEW creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). Your desires will begin to change and align with Jesus' desires. You will long to please Him because you love Him. And why do we love Him? Because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). His love for us is undeniable and in return, we can't help but love Him back. In doing so, we can't help but long to please Him in all we are and in all we do.

So, what does it mean to have faith and to live that faith out?

Read the booklet below to find out!

With love,

Another lover of Jesus

Now that you have received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, this booklet has been written just for you. This booklet will help you learn what your faith is, what it looks like to live that out, and why we, as Christians, do what we do! Read along and apply these steps to your new Christian life.

What's happened to me?

So what really happened to you when you said YES to Jesus?

Let's look at what exactly this means...

ONCE YOU GIVE YOUR LIFE TO JESUS, THE BIBLE SAYS....

- **You have been born again!!** –
 - Jesus wants to emphasize the importance of your new life in and with Him that He describes it as being 'born again' in John 3:3. Your life has been changed forever. Now the Holy Spirit has come to live WITHIN you for 1 Corinthians 6:19 reads, *"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you.."* You are no longer the same!! 2 Corinthians 5:17 reads, *"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."*
- **You have been wiped clean!! You are forgiven.** –
 - Jesus paid the penalty for ALL of our sin. The Bible says that *"the wages of sin is death"*(Romans 6:23). Hebrews 7:27 says that *"He died once for all when He offered up Himself."* Jesus set us free to be forgiven by God. We are no longer condemned for our sin. Romans 8:1 says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus."*
- **You have become a son or daughter of God!!** –
 - John 1:12 reads, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name"* Ephesians 1:4-5 reads, *"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will"*. 1 John 3:1 reads, *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! ..."* As a son or daughter of God, begin to see God as your Father! He's not some distant slave master in the sky telling you what to do and not to do. He is a Father in Heaven that loves you SO much and is so near!! For James 4:8 reads, *"Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."* You can talk to Him personally, as your Father.
- **You no longer live for yourself but live for Jesus!!**

- 2 Corinthians 5:15 reads, *“and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.”* Jesus died so that we may live WITH Him and FOR Him. Jesus says in John 14:15, *“If you love me, you’ll obey my commandments.”* Because we love Him, we long to please Him. His grace and forgiveness are not an excuse to sin. His grace cannot be abused. Jude 1:4 reads, *“I say this because some ungodly people have wormed their way into your churches, saying that God’s marvelous grace allows us to live immoral lives. The condemnation of such people was recorded long ago, for they have denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”* Yes, Jesus forgives, but He forgives those who REPENT, which means to turn from that sin and no longer live in it. 1 John 3:9 reads, *“Those who have been born into God’s family do not make a practice of sinning, because God’s life is in them. So they can’t keep on sinning, because they are children of God.”* The Holy Spirit lives within you!! Galatians 5:17 says, *“...And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires...”*

- **You will bear the FRUIT of the Spirit!!-**

- Galatians 5:22-24 reads, *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.”* The Fruit of the Spirit is simply who Jesus is. Think of it this way: Fruit is the product of a seed. Fruit can not be created without the seed and nourishment of the soil, water, and sunlight. In the same way, the Holy Spirit within you is the seed, and time with Jesus by reading the Word, prayer, or at church is the nourishment. Notice the scripture says “fruit of the Spirit”- it’s not YOUR fruit, but the SPIRIT’S. It’s not something we can produce on our own, but it is produced by the Holy Spirit living within us and nourished by time with Jesus.

- **You have freedom in Jesus!! –**

- Everyone deals with darkness or something that has weighed them down. It’s different for everyone, but all have it without Jesus. Whether that be fear, depression, hopelessness, guilt, anxiety, shame, addiction, bitterness, unforgiveness, etc. Jesus has saved you from it all and has brought you into the light. 1 Peter 2:9 says, *“...Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.”* In Him, there is freedom from darkness. For John 8:36 reads, *“Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.”* You no longer have to deal with these things that weigh you down and hold you captive for Jesus says, *“My yoke is easy and My burden is light”* (Matthew 11:30).

- **You have joined the family of God!!**

- Just as you joined a relationship with Jesus, you have become apart of the people of God as well. You need other fellow believers to stand with you, grow with you, and support you, and they need you as well! 1 Peter 2:10 reads, *“who once were not a people but are now the people of God”*.

What do I do now?

READ THE BIBLE:

The Bible is an ESSENTIAL part of your growth with Jesus. It is not merely ink and pages but it is the VERY BREATH OF GOD. 2 Timothy 3:16 reads, *“All Scripture is breathed out by God...”*

To fully understand the extent of the authority and life-giving power of the Word of God, we must understand God’s authority and sovereignty.

- Colossians 1:16-17 reads, *“For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”*
- John 1:1 reads, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*

ALL things were created IN Him, THROUGH Him, and FOR Him. He IS the Word that was there from the beginning of all eternity. Truly sit and think about this. How crazy is that?!

Think of it this way: When we breathe, the carbon dioxide inside of us that circulates through our blood stream comes out. In the same way when God breathes whatever is circulating inside of Him, comes out. His NATURE, His CHARACTER, His very BEING, and His LIFE comes out when He breathes. Therefore, since we know the Bible is the breath of God, the words found within it are His very nature, character, being, and life.

When we see God’s authority in this light- that He is ABOVE ALL, that He is EVERYTHING, that IN HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST, and that ALL THINGS WERE CREATED THROUGH HIM AND FOR HIM. When we understand this, we can then understand the authority and life-giving power of the Word of God. We can also understand the essential need of the Word of God. All because it is the VERY BREATH of God.

The rest of 2 Timothy 1:16-17 reads, *“...and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”* The Bible teaches, reproofs, corrects, trains, and equips the believer.

The Bible is our road map of instruction for life- leading and guiding us! Psalm 119:105 reads, *“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”*

The Bible encourages us and gives us hope! Romans 15:4 reads, *“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”* There are THOUSANDS of promises found within the Bible, such *‘as by His stripes we are healed’* (Isaiah 53:5), *‘nothing can separate us from the love of God’* (Romans 8:38-39), He will *‘supply all your needs’* (Philippians 4:19), etc. For Numbers 23:19 reads, *“God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?”* Therefore, we can cling to the promises of God as encouragement and hope because God is a man of His word!

The Bible cleanses us. Ephesians 5:25 reads, *“He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”* John 17:17 reads, *“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”*

The Bible nourishes us. We are built up and strengthened by the Word of God. Matthew 4:4 reads, *“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*

The Bible gives life. Jesus also says in John 6:63, *“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.”*

The creator of the universe, God of all, in which ALL things consist, created you and me and gave US His very breath- the Word of God, to lead us, guide us, direct us, nourish us, strengthen us, encourage us, and train us in the way we should go!

PRAY:

Prayer is simple. It’s a conversation between you and Jesus. We talk to Him and He will talk back to us. By the finished work of the cross and resurrection, Jesus removed the separation of sin so that we can have a relationship with Him and talk with Him in this way (Ephesians 2:13 Revelation 3:20, John 17:3)!

Prayer is not merely about making requests- although that is part of it and the Bible tells us to make our requests known to God (Philippians 4:6-7). But, prayer is also about expressing your gratitude in praise/worship (Colossians 3:17), confessing your sins (1 John 1:9), and just simply spending time with Jesus (Matthew 6:6).

Prayer does not have a secret formula. It is not about the amount of time you spend or the amount of words you use. Nowhere in the Bible does it say, “Thou shall pray for this long....” Jesus shows

His disciples how to pray in Matthew 6:9-15. Jesus prefaced these verses with the words in Matthew 6:7, *“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”* It's here that Jesus shows that the quality of the prayer is much more important than the quantity or repetition. Just have a conversation with Jesus like you would your best friend! Jesus cares more about your heart than fancy words or a performance.

So why should we pray? -

Because Jesus did! - As Christians, we are to be disciples right?- to walk with, talk with, sit with, and learn from the Rabbi (teacher)? So, let's look at the life of our teacher- Jesus. Mark 1:35 reads, *“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, He departed and went out to a desolate place, and there He prayed.”* It was not uncommon for Jesus to go away for uninterrupted time with the Father. If it was important for Jesus to spend time in prayer with the Father, how much more important is it for us?

Prayer transforms you! - Think of it this way: the more you spend time with someone, the more you begin to act like them and talk like them. In the same way, time in prayer with Jesus will shape you into His image. Romans 8:29 reads, *“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son...”* After giving our hearts and lives ONLY to Jesus, He will begin to transform us into His likeness! He will give us a NEW heart (Ezekiel 36:26). As we spend time with Him in prayer and conversation, we will begin to look more like Him. We'll never be perfect as He is, of course, but over time, He slowly transforms us into His likeness. Samuel M. Shoemaker says it like this, “Prayer may not always change things, but it will for sure change you for things.”

Because God hears your prayers! 1 John 5:14-15 reads, *“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him.”*

There is power in prayer! James 5:16, *“The effective prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”* The Greek word used for 'availeth' means to have power. Our prayer has power! Matthew 17:20 reads, *“So Jesus said to them, ‘Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.’”*- Prayer + Faith= Power

Because you love Him! - Matthew 6:6 reads, *“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”* Spend time with Him in prayer alone, not just in a corporate (church) setting. You spend time with those you love, right? Exactly! Spend time in conversation (prayer) with the One that loves you above all else!

GET BAPTIZED:

After giving your life to Jesus, some important next steps are baptism in water and by the Spirit.

Water baptism nor baptism of the Holy Spirit are requirements of salvation. They are simply next steps for growth in your relationship with Jesus. They allow for greater depth with Him.

Water Baptism:

Water baptism represents coming to life in Christ. The water is the ‘watery grave’. You are plunged into this ‘watery grave’ and raised to life with Christ. Romans 6:4 reads, *“Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”*

Water baptism is a response. It’s mere obedience because it’s what Jesus tells us to do. Acts 2:38 reads, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins;”* After repentance (turning from sin and turning to Jesus), the response is baptism!! Baptism without repentance is just getting wet- it’s ineffective. You can’t receive Jesus without repentance (James 2:19, 1 John 3:9), and you can not be water baptized without receiving Jesus. It is not “magic water” that saves you. It’s a response to your salvation. 1 Peter 3:21 reads, *“There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ”*. Water baptism is NOT salvation- it’s just a response to it. It’s “the answer of a good conscience toward God”. It is a declaration of the inward change that has occurred in your heart.

Baptism of the Holy Spirit:

To preface, there is a difference between the person of the Holy Spirit and the gift (or baptism) of the Holy Spirit. The person of the Holy Spirit comes to live inside you at time of salvation.

Ephesians 1:13-14 reads, *“...the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance...”* The person of the Holy Spirit inside you is the guarantee of your salvation!

Now, the gift/baptism of the Holy Spirit is a secondary experience to salvation and is not the same as the person of the Holy Spirit coming to live within you. We know this because John 20:22 reads, *“And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”* Jesus breathed on His disciples directly after His resurrection to receive the person of the Holy Spirit. They had not yet received the Holy Spirit within them priorly because Jesus had not yet died and risen. His death and resurrection removed sin and separation, giving us access to salvation and to have the Holy Spirit within us. Before Jesus’ death and resurrection, the Holy Spirit would “come upon”(i.e 1 Samuel 10:10) people but then would leave. The Holy Spirit could

not reside in them because the work of the cross had not yet been completed. Jesus breathed on His disciples to receive the person of the Holy Spirit after His resurrection. Then, weeks later before His ascension, Jesus tells His disciples in Acts 1:4-5, which reads, “*you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.*” This is how we know it is a SECONDARY experience because they received the person of the Holy Spirit when Jesus breathed on them in John 20:22, but then tells them to wait to be baptized by the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-5. Jesus clearly distinguishes the difference between the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the person of the Holy Spirit. However, remember, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is NOT a requirement for salvation.

So, how are we filled with the Holy Spirit? - The first time we see the infilling of the Holy Spirit is in Acts 2 in the upperroom. Let’s look to Acts 1 to see how they got there. Acts 1:13-14 reads, “*And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*” The first thing the disciples did was pray! They sought the Lord. Then, only 16 verses later going into the next chapter, they were filled. Jesus says that the hungry shall be filled (Matthew 5:6) and that if you seek you will find (Matthew 7:7). He desires to fill you if you so desire. Just seek Him and ask Him!!

So, what is the result of the infilling of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?- Jesus says in Acts 1:8, “*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*” The evidence of the Holy Spirit in our lives is POWER to be a witness-to tell others about Jesus- how He saved us and how He can save them! There also other giftings of the Holy Spirit that are given when we are baptized with the Holy Spirit, that you can read more about in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

FIND A CHURCH:

One of the best first steps you can take now that you have become a Christian is to find a church where you can feel at home, meet fellow believers, and grow in your faith.

Church does NOT save anyone. Jesus saves! Salvation is through belief in Jesus and Jesus alone (Romans 10:9) and repentance (1 John 3:9).

Some would ask: Do I need to go to church to be saved? - The technical answer is no.

- However, look at it like this: Does a wife need to live in the same house as her husband in order for them to be married? - No, but it definitely grows their marriage if they do. And, how likely is it that their marriage lasts without living together?
- In the same way, you don't need to go to church to be saved, but through church, you grow, are encouraged, taught, and strengthened.

Look at what the Bible says about those who isolate themselves:

- Proverbs 18:1 - *"A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; he rages against all wise judgment."*
- Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 - *"Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up."*

Why do you need church?

- **Because Jesus said so!**- Hebrews 10:25 states, *"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."*
- **Because Jesus did it-** Jesus surrounded Himself with the twelve disciples, therefore we too need to be with other followers of Jesus.
- **Encouragement-** Paul says in Romans 1:12, *"that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me."* The fellowship with other believers encourages and exhorts.
- **Growth-** Proverbs 27:17 states, *"As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."* In fellowship with another follower of Jesus, your faith will be sharpened and will produce growth.
- **Teaching-** Matthew 18:19-20 - *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;"*. - Jesus' last words before His ascension was a command for Christians to multiply and make more disciples. How are we made disciples? By "observing all things He has commanded"- by teaching. How are we to be taught? - Church.

To sum it up plainly, the church is needed for **ANY** follower of Jesus because:

- To get to know other followers of Jesus and build friendships that will encourage you in your faith
- To grow deeper in your faith and learn- you will hear teaching from the Bible that will help you to understand your faith better and enable growth
- To be in Jesus' presence with others- as Jesus states in Matthew 18:20, *"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them."*
- To serve- the church will give you opportunities to serve within in the church as well as in outreach outside of the church to be a blessing to your community because Jesus tells us in Matthew 25:35-40, *"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was*

sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me. Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

How to find the right church?

Try to find a church where you can really belong. There are many different types of churches. Take your time to find the right one for you. The most important things to look for in the church you choose are:

- Churches that teach the FULL Word of God- ALL scripture
 - Teach that Jesus is the ONLY way.
 - Teach the GOSPEL- the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus
 - Teach repentance (turning from sin and turning to Jesus).
 - Teach about the power of the Holy Spirit (Baptism/giftings- Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11).
- Churches that allow you and enable you to encounter God through the Word and through worship by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Churches that have people who are friendly and encourage you to grow in your faith

Also, simply pray for direction as to where the Lord desires you to go! He will make it clear to you.

Once you find the right church:

Once you find the right church that teaches the FULL word of God, where you are able to encounter Jesus' presence, and where you feel at home, then begin to get plugged in!

- Meet new people and build relationships
- Get plugged into small groups and/or Bible studies
- Go to any events hosted by that church
- Once you feel rooted, begin to serve in any areas they need help in within the church and also in their outreach ministries

NOW, TELL OTHERS ABOUT JESUS:

As briefly discussed in the section on the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we are now to tell others about Jesus! Jesus' last words to His disciples before He left Earth and ascended to the right hand of God is what we know as "The Great Commission". Matthew 28:18-20 reads, *"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.'* Amen." Someone's last words are going to be pretty

important right? Jesus' last words on earth were this- to preach the Gospel (the birth, life, death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus) to all people and make disciples!

Think of it this way: if a blind man is walking towards a cliff, you're going to stop them and warn them about what's ahead right? They can't see the cliff, but you can. In the same way, non-believers (people who do not have a relationship with Jesus) are blinded by the devil and can not see the eternal damnation and eternal separation from God that is ahead of them if they continue in the way that they are going. How much would you have to hate that blind man if didn't tell him about the cliff ahead of them? In the same way, how much would you have to hate someone to NOT tell them about Jesus and the free gift of salvation? Jesus has sent us into the world (John 17:18). Now, let's go!

So, what do you tell people? Tell people about what Jesus did for you!! Tell them about how He saved you!! Tell them the Gospel: That Jesus came from heaven to earth, was born of a virgin, lived a perfect and sinless life, died on the cross for the sins that separated us from Him, was buried, and 3 days later rose again- ALL to have a relationship with us! Emphasize the two requirements of salvation: belief, but not merely belief because even the demons believe (James 2:19), but repentance, which means to turn from sin and turn to Jesus.

Go and be a witness. Preach the Gospel. Tell others about Jesus. Do as Jesus has told us to do!!

JUST SEEK AFTER JESUS...

Each of these steps: *reading the Word, prayer, baptism in water and in the Spirit, church, and telling people about Jesus* can all be summed up in one phrase: SEEKING AFTER JESUS.

Jesus WILL respond to your seeking (Matt. 6:33, Songs of Solomon 2:4, James 4:8, etc.)!! He invites us to come and know Him. He loves it. It's what He died for- that relationship with you.

Sin separated us from Him and He died to remove that. Seek Him and spend time with Him. He is the epitome of true love.

Now go love Him in return.