

*Your
New Life
in Christ*

A practical guide
for the new Christian

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Welcome to the family of God!

You are wanted and cared for by your new brothers and sisters. You have responded to an invitation to follow Christ. You have made a decision that, if followed up, will change the rest of your life. *What do you do now?*

You have just accepted the greatest gift that could have ever been given to you, eternal life! This is only the beginning. Jesus is your best friend, and prayer is how you talk to Him. Jesus is ready to listen to you any time you are willing to talk.

By asking Jesus Christ into your life you have ensured both a definite future and present enjoyment! So long as you continue in a day by day walk with God, you can be assured of a future life in heaven, but, equally important, a life now marked by the presence of God. This means Christ brings peace into your life and fills the void we all feel without Him.

The people who prayed with you at the altar are there to help you grow in *Your New Life in Christ*. They can answer questions and pray with you.

These three activities will help you to live and grow as a Christian:

1. Read the Bible
2. Pray
3. Attend church regularly

FOUR THINGS TO KNOW

1. Know beyond any doubt that God has saved you

God created man to have perfect and uninterrupted fellowship with Him. God gave man a free will to make his own choices. Man chose sin. Man tried to reestablish the relationship, but failed. God demonstrated His love by sending His only son to reestablish (redeem) that relationship with God.

“Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...” John 1:12

“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”
Romans 10:13

2. Surrender all guilt and condemnation of the past; Jesus has taken all of that away

Depend totally on God and be willing to do His will. The essential components of faith are: trust or acceptance that Jesus is Lord, and the acknowledgment of His resurrection.

“Whosoever believes in Him is not condemned.” John 3:18

“Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Romans 8:1

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” 2
Corinthians 5:17

3. Keep trusting in God’s forgiveness

When you fall into sin don’t be discouraged. Confess sin at once and believe it is forgiven because God said so. Then, get up and go on with God!

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

“But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on.”
Philippians 3:13, 14

4. Tell someone what has happened to you

Always confess Christ openly before others at every opportunity you get!

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 10:9, 10

“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in Heaven.”
Matthew 10:32

THE BIBLE

One of the most important things you can do as a Christian is to read your Bible daily. By so doing, you allow God to speak to you through His Word.

"Thy Word have I hid in mine heart ..." Psalm 119:11

"...were written for our learning ..." Romans 15:3

"All scripture ...is profitable ..." II Timothy 3:16, 17

"Study to show thyself approved ..." II Timothy 2:15

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet...and path." Psalm 119:105

"Delight is in the law of the Lord." Psalm 1:1, 2

What is the Bible

1. The Bible is a collection of books

The Bible is comprised of 66 books, written by at least 40 different authors. It is a collection of stories, wise sayings, songs (called Psalms) and includes teachings by Jesus Christ and His followers.

2. The Bible is a covenant between God and man

The Bible is divided into two parts: Old Testament and New Testament. A testament means covenant or agreement. The Old Testament is the agreement God made with man about his salvation before Jesus' birth. The New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament agreement, from the birth of Jesus through the beginning of His church, for all time.

Reasons why God gave us the Bible

1. To reveal Jesus Christ to us

"But these are written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." John 20:31

2. To reveal God's plan of salvation

"...the Holy Scriptures...are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15

3. To help us grow spiritually

"Like babies that were just born, you should long for the pure milk of God's word. It will help you grow up as believers." I Peter 2:2

4. To cleanse us from sin

"He made [us] clean by washing [us] with water and the word." Ephesians 5:26

5. To provide guidance

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
Psalm 119:105

6. To enable us to share Jesus with others

"Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have." I Peter 3:15

Daily Bible reading chart

Here is a chart to assist you as you establish a habit of daily Bible reading.

Week 1

Day 1 John chapter 1
Day 2 John chapter 2
Day 3 John chapter 3
Day 4 John chapter 4
Day 5 John chapter 5
Day 6 John chapter 6
Day 7 John chapter 7

Week 2

Day 1 John chapter 8
Day 2 John chapter 9
Day 3 John chapter 10
Day 4 John chapter 11
Day 5 John chapter 12
Day 6 John chapter 13
Day 7 John chapter 14

Week 3

Day 1 John chapter 15
Day 2 John chapter 16
Day 3 John chapter 17
Day 4 John chapter 18
Day 5 John chapter 19
Day 6 John chapter 20
Day 7 John chapter 21

PRAYER

How do I pray

Prayer is simply a conversation with God. By talking to God you will grow intimate with Him and walk in His plan for your life.

Reasons to pray

1. Jesus prayed

“Very early the next morning, Jesus got up and went to a place where he could be alone and pray.”
Mark 1:35

2. Jesus commanded us to pray

“Jesus told His disciples a story about how they should keep on praying...” Luke 18:1

3. Jesus taught us to pray

“Our father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.”
Matthew 6:7-14

4. To give glory to God

“Praise the lord for the glory that belongs to Him. Worship the Lord because of His beauty and holiness.”
Psalm 29:2

5. To get direction from God

“Lord, show me your ways. Teach me how to follow you.” Psalm 25:4

6. To grow to be more like God

“God’s power has given us everything we need to lead a godly life. All of that has come to us because we know the One who chose us. He chose us because of His own glory and goodness. He has also given us his very great and valuable promises. He did it so you could share in His nature. He also did it so you could escape from the evil in the world. That evil is caused by sinful longings.” 2 Peter 1:3, 4

7. Prayer is exciting and rewarding

Prayer is one of the most exciting and rewarding parts of our Christian walk. Prayer is our open line of communication with our creator. It is by prayer that we enter into the full measure of Christ’s blessing. It is by prayer that God has chosen to do much of His mighty work in our lives.

8. Prayer is to become our life-style

“Pray without ceasing.” I Thessalonians 5:17

It is God’s nature to hear and answer prayer. Psalm 65:2; Hebrews 11:6; Malachi 3:6

We are to literally pray about everything.

I Timothy 2:1; I Thessalonians 5:17; Matthew 26:41;

Luke 18:1; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 6:18, 19

9. God knows your heart

Be in communion with God and He will teach you how to have a prayer life. Don’t be afraid to turn to the Father in prayer. You can do so because of what Christ did on the cross for you. You have been given access to the throne of your heavenly Father. How sad it is if you don’t pray. You deny your Father the joy of your attention.

10. When we pray we must expect God to answer

The answer may not be what we want, but God will answer. His answer may be *yes, no, wait* or just peace in knowing the prayer was heard and the answer is on the way.

How to pray

Use your hand as a guide. Each finger represents an important part of prayer. Begin with your thumb, worshiping God. Then end with your pinky finger praying for yourself. (Note: A 15 minute prayer and the amount of minutes provided for each finger are only suggestions to get you started.)

The Hand Prayer

1. Worship (5 minutes)

Your thumb is the biggest finger and worship should be the biggest part of your prayer life.

“Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.” Matthew 4:10

There are two kinds of worship:

Praise—for who God is.

Thanksgiving—for what God has done.

“Give thanks to Him and praise His name.” Psalm 100:4

2. Repentance (2 minutes)

Your pointer finger represents God pointing out areas in your life needing His forgiveness.

“Wash away all of the evil things I’ve done. Make me pure from my sin.” Psalm 51:2

3. Leaders (2 minutes)

Your middle finger is the tallest finger, representing individuals who have authority over you. Pray for your parents, pastor, officers, prison officials, and government officials.

“Pray for all who are in authority.” I Timothy 2:2

4. Others’ needs and relatives (3 minutes)

Your next-to-last (ring) finger serves a twofold purpose:

a. Pray for individuals who have specific needs.

“I would never sin against the Lord by failing to pray for you.”
I Samuel 12:23

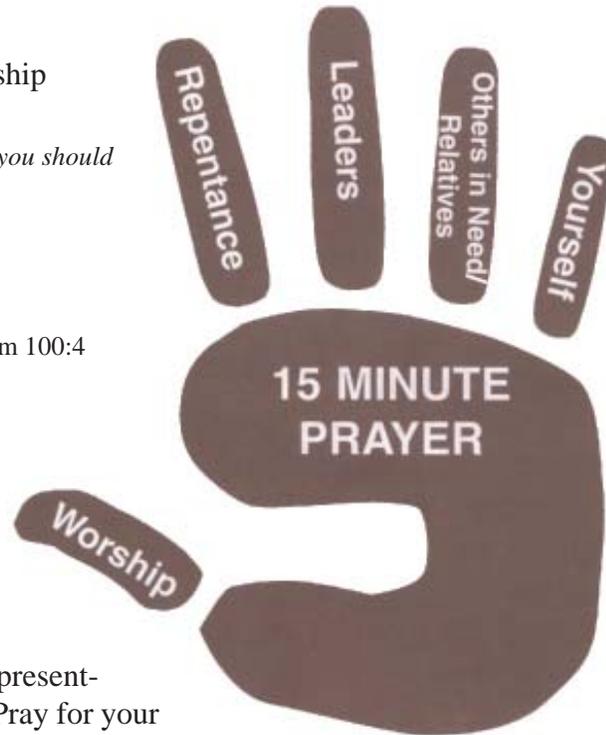
b. Pray for your family

“...as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.” Joshua 24:15

5. Yourself (3 minutes)

The pinky, the smallest finger, is also the last finger. This part of your prayer time should be devoted to praying for your own needs.

“Pray that you will not fall into temptation.” Luke 22:40



ATTEND CHURCH

Belonging to a family is important to the maturing of a person. Jesus established the church to be a spiritual family where His followers could come together for instruction, worship, fellowship and service.

Why attend a church

1. To obey God's Word

The Bible tells how important it is to faithfully attend church.

"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another."
Hebrews 10:25

2. To receive instruction

Through attending church services, Christian education classes and other church groups, you will learn more about the Bible and God's principles for your life.

"The Scriptures train God's servants to do all kinds of good deeds."
2 Timothy 3:17 (Contemporary English Version)

3. To worship God with others

There is authority and power when believers join together to worship God.

"Where two or three people meet together in my name, I am there with them." Matthew 18:20

4. To have fellowship with other Christians

There is strength when Christians share and encourage one another.

"Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." Ecclesiastes 4:12

5. To serve others

The Bible says that God has given us abilities for the purpose of serving others. The church is a tremendous avenue to serve God and others.

"Each of you has been blessed with one of God's many wonderful gifts to be used in the service of others."
1 Peter 4:10

CHURCH ORDINANCES

1. Water Baptism

Baptism is an open demonstration and declaration to the world of our acceptance of Christ as Lord. I Peter 3:21

Baptism represents our death, burial and resurrection with Christ, His atonement for our sins.

“For sin’s power over us was broken when we became Christians and were baptized to become a part of Jesus Christ; through his death the power of your sinful nature was shattered. Your old sin-loving nature was buried with him by baptism when he died, and when God the Father, with glorious power, brought him back to life again, you were given his wonderful new life to enjoy. For you have become a part of him and so you died with him, so to speak, when he died; and now you share his new life, and shall rise as he did.”
Romans 6:3-5

Jesus commanded water baptism

“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.”
Matthew 28:18,20

Jesus serves as a example

Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him...”
Matthew 3:13-17

2. Communion

This is a meal shared because of common faith and discipline. It is a Christian ordinance in which bread and wine (grape juice) are partaken as a commemoration of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying, ‘This is the new covenant in my blood: Do this whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.”

I Corinthians 11:23-26

See also: Luke 22:14-20; Mark 14:22-26

GLOSSARY OF WORD USAGE

Angels—Heavenly beings used by God as messengers, protectors of man, and to glorify God.
Luke 2

Body—Mostly referred to as the collective mass of believers or a particular group of believers in Jesus Christ (i.e. the local church). *Ephesians 4:4; I Corinthians 12*

Born again—Someone who has been born twice, once of human parents and once of the Holy Spirit when he or she accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Christian—One who believes in Jesus and accepts Him as Savior and Lord.

Confess—Acknowledging one's sin and asking God's forgiveness. *Psalm 32:5; I John 1:9*

Devil—Also referred to as Satan, Lucifer, or Beelzebub. The devil was an angel of God, but because he aspired to be greater than God, he was cast from heaven to earth. The devil exists to lure man away from his Creator.
Matthew 12:24; Luke 10:18; John 13:2; I Peter 4:8; 2 Corinthians 11:13-14

Disciple—A learner, implies a personal adherence, a living out of, the Master Teacher.

Eternal life—God's promise to all who receive Him. The Bible says, "*It is appointed unto man once to die but thereafter he will be judged.*" Those receiving Christ's salvation will live with Christ in heaven forever. *John 3:16; Titus 1:2; I John 2:25*

Faith—Firm persuasion, a conscious mental desire to do the will of God.

Forgiveness—This can refer to God forgiving man of his sin or man forgiving man for some misdeed.
Psalm 130:4; Acts 26:16; Colossians 1:13-14

Gospel—God's story, Good news. The message of salvation offered by God to all who believe in His son, Jesus, as Lord and Savior. Also, the first four books of the New Testament, named thus because they recount the life and teaching of Jesus.

Grace—God's favor to us which we do not deserve. It is what God gives out of His unconditional love for mankind. Grace is a gift that cannot be earned, only received.
Ephesians 2:4; 2 Corinthians 12:9

Holiness—Usually refers to God's pure nature and the kind of life-style a believer should pursue.
I Chronicles 16:29; Psalm 29:2; Ephesians 4:24

Jesus—The Son of God, Messiah, Savior, Lord, Redeemer.
Isaiah 9:6-7; Matthew 1:21; Colossians 1:15-20

Kingdom of God—This can refer to God's rule over man in heaven and on earth.
Psalm 103:19; Daniel 7:27

Lordship—To call Jesus Lord is to claim He is Lord of all. Therefore, lordship is submitting your entire life to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Psalm 100:3; Luke 6:46; Philippians 2:11*

Mercy—Showing compassion towards a wrongdoer. *Proverbs 11:17; Psalm 4:26; Romans 12:8*

Ministry—To serve, to serve as a slave. Service to God and to other people in His name.

Prayer—Talking with God. *Matthew 6:5-13; Philippians 4:6*

Propitiation—The sacrifice of Christ, the atonement for sin, satisfies God's wrath and is the reparation for our sins.

Rapture—During the second coming of Christ, those dead and alive will be carried away with Christ to a heavenly place. *Matthew 24:44; I Thessalonians 5:2; 2 Peter 3:10*

Redemption—Meaning to buy back. Christ's death on the cross was the price needed to pay man's debt of sin (ransom) to return man unto Himself. *Psalm 103:4; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 1:7*

Repentance—Acknowledging your sin, asking God for forgiveness and determining not to repeat the sin. *I John 1:9*

Resurrection—Three days after Christ was crucified, He rose from the grave. In the same way, during the second coming of Christ (rapture), those who are dead will be resurrected. *Matthew 28:5, 6; John 5:25; I Peter 3:21*

Sacrifice—In the Old Testament, God's people performed many sacrifices out of obedience, to cover sin, and as an act of worship. In the New Testament, Christ became the ultimate sacrifice for our sins. *Leviticus 17:11; I Samuel 1:21; Hebrews 10:11-14*

Salvation—The result of Christ rescuing man from his sin and the penalty of death. *Zechariah 9:9*

Sanctification—To be set apart from the sins of the world; to serve Christ. *Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 6:17*

Scripture—The Bible, God's Word, given to mankind. *2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20, 21*

Sin—Anything that falls short of the holiness of God. *Isaiah 53:5, 6; Isaiah 59:2; Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 5:21*

Spirit—In the Bible, if the word is prefaced by "Holy" or a capital S, it refers to God's Spirit. If the word begins with a lower case s, it usually refers to man's human spirit. It is man's spirit which God breathes into man, giving him life. *Isaiah 26:9; Acts 7:59; Romans 1:9*

Testimony—The story of how a person became a Christian. *Psalm 119:46; 2 Timothy 1:8, 9*

Tithing—Giving a tenth of your income back to God. *Malachi 3:10; Luke 18:12; Hebrews 7:5*

Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three are one God, coeternal, coequal as in nature and purpose. *Deuteronomy 6:4; John 10:30; Colossians 1:15-19; 2:9; Acts 5:3, 4*

Thanksgiving—Thanking God for who He is and what He has done. *Psalm 69:30; Philippians 4:6*

Unbeliever—Any person who has not accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior and received forgiveness of sin. *2 Corinthians 4:4; Titus 1:5*

Worship—Adoring God for who He is. Man can publicly and privately worship God in prayer, praise, song and service. *I Chronicles 16:28, 29; Psalm 95:6; John 4:23*

CONGRATULATIONS!

Record your decision on the certificate below as a reminder of this very important time in your life. Ask a friend or minister to sign your certificate as a witness that you have made this choice.

SPIRITUAL BIRTH CERTIFICATE

I, _____
have made the decision to accept Jesus Christ
as my Savior and Lord.

Date of my decision _____

The place where I made my decision: _____

City/State _____

Witnessed by _____