

Next Steps for New Believers

Week 1: Your First Steps with Jesus

First off, you don't need to attempt perfection before you come to Jesus, for there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus Romans 8:1. There is nothing you can do to earn salvation! It is a free gift! Your role is to choose to accept God's free gift of salvation. God gives it freely because he loves you right where you are at!

Remember that salvation is just the beginning of your journey. Be aware that the enemy will want to bring discouragement and distraction -- don't let him.

You are beginning a new lifestyle and a new way of thinking. The moment those old patterns of thinking and dealing with life creep in, cut them off and remind yourself of who you are in Christ! 2 Corinthians 10: 3-5.

Also take time to pray every morning. It doesn't have to sound fancy or spiritual, just talk to God like he is a friend sitting next to you. Dedicate your day to him. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you power and fill you with His presence.

Week 2: You've Got to Eat to Grow

Without spiritual food your spirit will starve to death. Just like the physical body needs physical food, your spirit needs spiritual food (God's word). Take time to eat so that your spirit may grow strong. Your ability to grow in your spirit and mind is directly related to how much you allow God's word, will, and work to capture your thoughts and actions. So how do we take in God's word? Below is the "word hand" illustration to help us;

- a. HEARING the Word from pastors and teachers provides fresh insight into the Scriptures. The weakest finger—the pinkie—represents hearing, because we retain only 5 percent of what we hear. Romans 10:17, in this Scripture, "word" is the Greek word rhema. It means "the living voice of God" or "the now word of God." Faith is born in us when God's word comes alive to us and He speaks it to us in a personal manner.
- b. READING gives us an overview of the Bible and is the foundation of a daily quiet time. This is represented by the ring finger. We generally retain 15 percent of what we read. Revelation 1:3. As you read your Bible daily, you are giving God an opportunity to speak a rhema word to you. Those nuggets of truth will transform your life as you receive them and obey them.

- c. STUDYING the Scriptures deepens our convictions. It requires greater time and effort but results in increased Bible knowledge. Most people retain 35 percent of what they study. This is represented by the middle finger. Acts 17:11.
- d. MEMORIZING God's Word enables us to use the Sword of the Spirit to overcome temptations and to have verses readily available for ministering to others. The index finger, our strongest finger, represents memorization. We remember 100 percent of what we memorize if we consistently review it. Psalm 119:9-11
- e. MEDITATION is the inward process that accompanies each of the other four methods of Scripture intake. This is why meditation is assigned to the thumb. Only the thumb can touch all the other four fingers. By meditating on God's Word as we hear, read, study, and memorize, we discover its transforming power at work in us. Psalm 1:2,3

This week be aware of what you are watching and allowing through the "eye gate." What you see and hear will filter into your soul and God's best is his Word - scripture. Filter what you hear through God's word and remind yourself of the truth of who you are now - a new creation with a new mind and new way of looking at life!

Challenge yourself this week to begin reading the Gospel of John - just one chapter every day. If you have a notebook or journal begin to use the three parts of journaling: Scripture, Your Thoughts About It, A Prayer, and why not add some action to what you read. What will you do with what you read?

Week 3: Learning to Talk/Prayer

Prayer is a two-way conversation between God and an individual or group of individuals. It is communication with God. 1 John 5:14-15

Jesus often went to a quiet place to pray to his Father. He placed great importance on Prayer and so should you. The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-13, Matthew 7:7-11, 6:5-13) is an outline. Every sentence in the prayer is a heading that allows us to pray particular prayers. When you use the model of the Lord's Prayer as your guide, you will find that when you are finished, you have completely unburdened your heart and have prayed for every area of your life.

Part 1: Thanksgiving, praise, and worship

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

Part 2: Surrender and direction

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Part 3: Daily provision

Give us this day our daily bread.

Part 4: Forgiveness

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

Part 5: Guidance and protection

And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Part 6: Acknowledgment of divine right

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

This part of the prayer is simple but profound. We must first of all refuse for ourselves three things that human beings love to claim as their own: a kingdom, power, and glory.

The Bible also reveals that prayer or communication with God can be hindered. Faith is an important aspect in effective prayer. *“So, Jesus answered and said to them, Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, ‘Be removed and be cast into the sea,’ it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive”* (Matthew 21:21-22). We should learn to identify and avoid hindrances to prayer as revealed in the Scriptures. Isaiah 1:10-20, Psalm 66:18, 2 Chronicles 7:14.

Also, Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us to NOT be anxious about anything, but in everything we need to pray, petition God, and be thankful. God wants to hear from you and He wants to speak to you.

What is a burden in your mind and emotions? Take it all to God in prayer. We know that He knows what’s going on, but there is something powerful about speaking our heart to our creator and surrendering our burdens before him. Ask God to comfort you, direct you, encourage you - He certainly will!

Finally, the Christian life is a life of faith. This week will require faith; every week does. Faith means trusting God even when you can’t see what’s coming next. As Martin Luther King Jr. said, “faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.” Beware that people will question your faith and your decision, but hold on to your faith. This week, stand on God’s love and promises - He has got you in His capable hands!

Week 4: Family Time, Understanding My New Family

Your personal family is far from perfect, and so is your church/christian family. We are all in this because we need God and we need each other. Don't look at another member of the family as better or more important. We are all at a different point on our spiritual journey and that is exciting. Don't try to be spiritual, just be real.

Take some time to think about the "Umbrella Effect." Who is your spiritual covering, and who do you cover? God is first, then you, then your legacy. You have influence and those whom you influence need to hear what God is doing in your life. Share your testimony and invite others to join your new family! Also, think about reaching out and making some new friends - brothers and sisters in Christ. This is an amazing family all moving closer to our Father in Heaven.

Week 5: Stewardship

God is the creator of everything; therefore, he owns all things. Thankfully, God has chosen to share the goodness of his creation with us. But we must maintain a proper appreciation of our possessions by ultimately recognizing that everything we own belongs to God. Psalm 24:1-2, Haggai 2:8, Deuteronomy 8:18, 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.

Just like when you borrow a tool from your neighbor, even when it is in your possession, you must respect your neighbor's ownership. If we accept that everything belongs to God, then we must submit all we possess to his mastery/control. If Christ is truly Lord of our lives, He must be Lord of everything. Luke 6:46, 18:18-30.

Stewardship means that one recognizes God's ownership and submits to Christ's Lordship, producing great joy. When we practice biblical stewardship, we recognize that God has given us everything we "own" for his purpose rather than for ours. Biblical stewardship is an act of honor and obedience. Matthew 25:14-30. We are to also recognize the needs of others and give generously as God has given to us. 2 Corinthians 8:1-15.

In a similar manner, a tithe (10 percent) is a biblical pattern for believers to follow as they fulfill their responsibility to return to God a portion of those blessings He has given to them. Malachi 3:6-10, Genesis 14:17-20. Tithes should go to your local church, "the storehouse." Give ten percent of your income faithfully to your local church, and

not only will you get the blessing of giving; you will also see God move powerfully in your finances. Also remember that “it is more blessed to give than to receive” Acts 20:35.

Recommendations:

Watch “What You Need to Know” videos

Find a daily devotional (Also see recommended resources under discipleship resources page)

Join a Community group

Attend Freedom Class

Attend Holy Spirit Community Group