

A New Beginning

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A note from Pastor Jacob:

“I am so excited for your decision to follow Christ. I know that God has great plans for your life and I want you to know that this is just the beginning of what God wants to do for you and through you. You have purpose in Him! From helping you to understand the greatest decision you’ve ever made to giving you practical steps to start walking with the Lord, I pray this short read supplies you with a powerful start to your new life in Christ Jesus.”

A New Creature

The decision to follow Jesus Christ may not be the easiest decision you have ever made, but I can assure you it is the best decision you will ever make. The apostle Paul states, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Take note that anyone who will surrender their life to Jesus becomes a new creature. It does not matter your background, nationality, language, financial status or even intelligence level. Jesus is for everyone, and He gave His life for you.

With your choice to trust Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, you immediately experience the greatest of all miracles: salvation. You become a new creature, and the old things pass away. Who you used to be doesn't exist anymore in God's sight. He now sees you through the blood of Jesus, which cleanses and purifies your soul. Following this decision is a lifetime dedicated to building your new found relationship with Jesus Christ.

Growing In Your Faith

Many believe a Christian should always be loving, kind, generous, never say a harsh word. However, the truth is that to be a Christian does not mean to be perfect. We are human; we all fail. Thankfully our God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins as we confess them (1 John 1:9) God starts with us where we are, and His desire is to lead us into maturity in our faith. It's about progression, not perfection.

The first way we grow is through regular church attendance. Church attendance is not optional. Truthfully, it is a critical component to your survival as a young Christian. Hebrews 10:24-25 makes it clear that we should “consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.” We attend church to recharge, reconnect, and worship alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ. Through the worship, prayer, and the Word spoken, the Lord inspires us to grow in His grace.

The second way your relationship with Christ grows is by learning how to pray and praying regularly. In any relationship, communication is key. Without it, the relationship dries up and eventually fails. It is common for people to overthink the idea of prayer, so it’s important to understand that prayer is simply a conversation with Jesus. The acronym A.C.T.S. is a common prayer model used to teach new Christians how to pray.

A - Adoration

It is important to first recognize who He is and understand that He is God and we are not. Take a moment to tell Him that. Spend time recognizing and thanking Him for His greatness, mercy, love, and power. He is not just God, He is YOUR God, and He gave His only son to die for your sins. He is all knowing, all powerful, and always with you. Humility is the powerful stance that we take when we come before His throne. He is truly worthy to be adored.

C - Confession

Each and every individual “has sinned and fallen short

of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Because of this truth, before we ask for anything, it is imperative that we humble ourselves and confess our faults before Him. Spend time confessing all your struggles and sins since the last time you confessed. As stated before, “He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins as we confess them” (1 John 1:9).

T - Thanksgiving

Thank Him for every blessing, big or small, because God loves a grateful heart. Psalms 100:4 encourages us to “enter into His gates with thanksgiving, *And* into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, *and* bless His name.” So, have an attitude of gratitude as you spend time remembering all He has done before and giving thanks to Him for it all.

S - Supplication

Make known your greatest needs and desires. Do not be afraid to ask; be completely honest and transparent in these moments with Him. As you ask for your needs and desires, this is also an appropriate time to bring your questions before Him. As James 4:2 implies, “we have not because we ask not.” Sometimes, it really is that simple, so take the time to make your needs known, because God desires to “supply all your needs according to His riches and glory” (Phillipians 4:19).

The third way your relationship will grow is through consistent Bible reading. As you read the Bible, you will learn how to view life through the lens of eternity and how the truths taught in the Word apply to your life. The importance of reading God’s Holy Word cannot be

understated. Jesus himself, when confronted with the tempting tactics of the devil, quoted scripture. Because the devil will tempt us to fall back into our old sins and old ways, it is imperative that we are feeding our spirits with the Holy Word of God. You may ask the common question, “How can I be sure I understand what I’m reading.” The answer is simple. When you accept Jesus as your personal Savior, the Bible states that your body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit. And He who is now dwelling within you will speak to your heart as you read and meditate on His Word. Find yourself a Bible, and if you need help, please let us know. We typically use the New King James Version, but there are other versions that do a great job of putting the scripture into modern English, making it easier to understand. Set aside a time daily to read and meditate on the Word. Have a pen and paper ready to take note of scriptures that speak to you in a special way. As you learn what God’s word says, you’ll learn more of who He is, and in turn your relationship with Jesus Christ will develop to new heights.

The Call to Serve

You are in a wonderful position now to testify to others what God has done in your life. An essential part of the Christian walk is pouring Jesus into those around you. As you serve others, you are serving God’s Kingdom. God has placed value in you, gifted you, and called you to pour into those who are around you all that he has poured into you. Your gifts and talents can make such an impact, not only in your life, but in the lives of every individual you come into contact with.

The Apostle Paul describes the nature of the Body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:12-27. He describes how we are all made one in the body of Christ. Just as our body has arms, legs, hands, feet, eyes, a nose, a mouth, etc, the body of Christ is described the same way. Just as each part of our body plays an important part in our ability to function, each and every Christian is integral to the Body of Christ. You may be the hand, or the leg, or the arm. Regardless of who you are, your gifts and talents play a vital role in the function of Christ's church. You are called to serve and your greatest purpose is found in Jesus. Talk to the leaders of the church and ask how you can get involved and connect with the body. Through your service to Him, He will bless you immeasurably.

Never Alone

Perhaps the most important lesson you could learn right now is that from this moment to the end of your life, you are not alone. As mentioned before, the Bible tells us that our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19).

Therefore, He is always with you. Christianity is not an exemption from trouble. Christianity means that when trouble comes, you are able to stand on the truth of God's word and know He is for you and not against you. He is with you and never leaves you. God states this in Jeremiah 29:11 to His people: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." Know today that He is omnipresent, meaning everywhere you go, He goes with you.

There is a mighty work He has started in your life and He will complete it until perfection. (Phillipians 1:6)