

So You're A Christian...Now What?

Congratulations on choosing a saving and personal relationship with Jesus Christ! This is the most important decision you will ever make. As a new Christian, you will have a lot of questions about what to do next so we've put together this short guide to help you get started growing in your relationship with Jesus. This guide will not answer all of your questions and is not intended to do so. We encourage you to find a pastor, Christian mentor, or some other mature Christian you trust that is willing to help guide you in your growth and answer some of the questions you might have. Our church offers a "Foundations" class that has been designed especially for the new Christian, it would be the perfect place for you start!!!

Here are some things you should know and begin doing right away:

When You Sin After Becoming a Christian

Being a Christian doesn't mean that you won't sin anymore, and when you do, you do not need to go through the process of becoming a Christian all over again. Many times when you have sinned, you will feel bad until you ask God to forgive you for those sins. This bad feeling is called conviction or guilt. When you sin and feel conviction, this shows you that the Holy Spirit is living within you and is in a sense calling you back to a right relationship with God. To do this, you need to tell God that you are sorry for sinning and ask Him for His forgiveness. Once you have told God that you are sorry for your sin and have asked for His forgiveness, you should pray for His help and commit to never sinning in the same way again.

Spend Time with God Every Day

Start reading your Bible and praying every day. As you pray and read your Bible, God can communicate with you. Listen to Him! The lessons and encouragement in the Bible give you strength to live a life pleasing to God each and every day. It's also a good idea to participate in a Bible study with other Christians so that you have a place to ask questions and share what you are learning with others as well as hear what God is teaching those around you. There is no special time or reason to pray. You can and should pray whenever you feel tempted to sin, troubled about a problem or when you recognize something you should be thankful for or even just to tell God how much you love and appreciate the part He plays in your everyday life. Be sure to listen and look for how God is answering your prayers.

Develop Relationships With Other Christians

Living life as a Christian is not to be experienced secretly or on your own. You will desire and need the companionship of others living the same kind of life dedicated to following Christ. Because Jesus died for you, you are already part of His church, and you should seek out and attend a local church that teaches God's Word and will help you grow in your relationship with Christ. Other good places to find Christian friendship are bible studies, small groups and youth groups. You can learn a lot from others living the same kind of life as you. Their experiences will help you grow and your experiences may help someone else grow too.

Take Communion

Now that you are a Christian you will be amazed at how powerful and impacting observing Communion will be. What is Communion (1 Corinthians 11:24-26)? It is a time for believers in Jesus to remember His death on the cross for us and the price Jesus paid to save us from sin and death. The bread is symbolic of His broken body. The juice is symbolic of His shed blood. Our church observes a Communion service monthly.

Get Baptized

The first thing to know about baptism is that there is nothing "magical" or special about the water, or even the practice of baptism. It is simply a symbol, much like the wearing of a wedding ring. There is nothing "magical" about the ring itself. The ring does not make you married, the commitment does, and the ring is just a symbol of that commitment.

We believe that the kind of baptism practiced in the Bible, and the example offered by Jesus Christ in His own baptism, is having your whole body put under water. Baptism shows others around you that you have a saving and personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ and that you want to live in a way that is led by, and is pleasing to, God. Baptism shows that you believe in the DEATH (being lowered into the water), BURIAL (under the water) and RESURRECTION (raised out of the water) of Jesus Christ. Then, as you walk from the water you are showing those around you, that you now want to live your life in a way that is different than before. Just speak to the pastor about your desire to be included in the next baptism service.

Develop Friendships To Lead People To Christ

Start your new relationship with God not only by making friends with those who are Christians but also with those who do not have a saving and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Some of these people may be your old friends, family members or coworkers who need help in meeting God and developing a relationship with Him. Tell them how God has changed your life and how He continues to help you each day. As you begin to grow in your relationship with Christ and that growth begins to change the way you live your life, your old friends, your family and others around you will begin to see how you have changed and are an example of what it is like to have a relationship with God. If you live a changed life before them, God will help you tell them what that can mean for their lives too.

Give of Your Time, Talent, and Money

The Bible teaches that you should give of your time, talent and money to help others learn more about and have the opportunity to choose a saving and personal relationship with Jesus Christ. As you give, you will learn that God will bless you for your generous and giving spirit. Volunteer to serve other Christians in your local church or through other Christian and service organizations. You can serve others in numerous ways both "big" and "small", from helping a home bound senior take care of their yard, to watching a few toddlers in the church preschool, to going on a foreign mission trip to help tell others about Jesus Christ. Your local church will have people and information that will help you decide what kind of service you will be most happy and effective participating in. God will place people in your life that will need your help. God wants you to use every skill and ability you have to help Him relate to others.

The Bible also teaches us to be generous with our money and to give a portion of what we earn to the local church. This is called tithing, and most people give at least ten percent of their money to help the local church continue to share the message of a saving and personal relationship with Jesus Christ throughout the community, and remember, it is a blessing to give as God has given to you.

Don't Give Up!

There will be times of discouragement and disappointment in life, but do not give up. Keep going! The Bible tells us in Jeremiah 29:11 that God has a plan for our lives and He always has your best interest in mind, even though you may not be able to see the results immediately. Talk with God about your problems and then find a mentor or partner to help you get through the rough times. Remember, God is always with you! He will never leave you!