

FIRST STEPS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



UNDERSTANDING MY NEW LIFE IN CHRIST



WHAT GOD IS LIKE

The following passages are several of many that describe what God is like:

📖 Isaiah 40:25 – No one else is _____ to the _____.

📖 Isaiah 40:26 – He is the one who _____ the stars, and by the _____ of His _____ and the _____ of His _____ not one is missing.

📖 Isaiah 40:28 – He is the _____, the _____, the _____ of the ends of the earth. He neither _____ nor is _____, and His _____ is _____.

📖 Psalm 5:4 – He does not take _____ in _____, nor shall _____ with Him.

📖 Psalm 5:5 – The _____ shall not _____ in His sight. He _____ all _____ of _____.

📖 Psalm 5:6 – He will _____ those who _____. He _____ the _____ and _____ man.

WHAT I WAS LIKE BEFORE I WAS SAVED

A number of Bible verses describe your spiritual condition **before** salvation:

📖 Isaiah 53:6 – I was like a sheep going _____.

📖 Isaiah 59:2 – My iniquities (sins) had _____ me from God.

📖 Isaiah 64:6 – All my _____ were like filthy rags in God's sight.

📖 Romans 5:6 – I was without _____ and I was _____.

📖 Romans 5:8 – I was a _____.

📖 Romans 5:10 – I was the _____ of God.

📖 Romans 6:23 – I deserved _____.

📖 Ephesians 2:1 – I was _____ in trespasses and sins.

📖 Ephesians 2:2 – I was walking according to:

a. _____

b. _____

WHAT CHRIST DID FOR ME

The "gospel" is the good news of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for me.

📖 Isaiah 53:5 – The Lord Jesus Christ was _____ for my
_____; He was _____ for my
_____.

📖 Isaiah 53:6 – The Lord laid my _____ on Him.

📖 Romans 5:8 – Although I was a sinner, Christ _____ for me.

📖 Romans 5:10 – Although I was God’s enemy, I was _____ to Him through the _____ of His Son.

📖 1 Corinthians 15:3 – Christ died for my _____.

📖 1 Corinthians 15:4 – He _____ again the third day.

📖 1 Corinthians 15:17 – If Christ is not risen, then I am still in my _____!

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME WHEN I TRUSTED CHRIST

The Bible also describes what God does in the heart and life of a person who becomes saved.

📖 Ephesians 1:13 – I _____ in Christ after I heard the _____ of _____, the gospel of my _____.

📖 Ephesians 2:4-5 – God made me _____ together with Christ.

📖 Ephesians 2:8-9 – I was saved by _____ through _____ -- not by my own _____!

📖 John 1:12 – I have become a _____ of _____.

📖 John 3:5-7 – I have been _____ again.

📖 John 3:16 – Now I will not _____, but have _____ life.

📖 John 5:24 – I have passed from _____ into _____.

📖 John 10:28 – The Lord Jesus Christ has given me _____, and no one can _____ me out of His hand.

📖 2 Corinthians 5:17 – I am now a _____ in Christ.

In the space below, briefly write the story of your life using the following outline:

1. My life before I was saved:

2. How I heard the good news about Jesus Christ and trusted Him as my Savior:

3. What Jesus Christ did for me when I trusted Him as my Savior:

LIVING A TRANSFORMED LIFE



📖 Read 2 Corinthians 5:17 again.

What does this verse say about a Christian?

When does this change take place?

📖 Read Romans 12:2

We are not to be _____.

Instead, we are to be _____

_____.

What do you think this means?

📖 Read Ephesians 4:17-24

How is a Christian supposed to walk?

What do verses 18 & 19 say about an unsaved person?

What three commands are given in verses 22-24:

1. "put off _____"

2. "be renewed _____"

3. "put on _____"

Study the passages listed below. In the chart write down everything you read that describes the old man in the first column. Write down everything you read that describes the new man in the second column.

 Ephesians 4:25-32

THE OLD MAN	THE NEW MAN

 Colossians 3:5-17

THE OLD MAN	THE NEW MAN

 Galatians 5:16-23

THE OLD MAN	THE NEW MAN

What things that were part of your former life do you still need to put off?

Commit these things to God in prayer and ask Him for strength to remove them from your life.

What things do you, as a Christian, need to add to your life?

Pray and ask God to build those things into your life.

FACING TEMPTATION



Being saved does not mean that you will never again face temptation! Throughout your earthly life you will experience the urge to do things God says are wrong. You need to know what the Bible teaches about how you can have victory over temptation.

 Read 1 Corinthians 10:13

What does this verse teach you about temptation?

1.

2.

 Read 1 John 2:16

What three things are said to be “in the world”?

A.

B.

C.

When we are tempted, the temptation comes through one of more of these avenues.

 Read Genesis 3:6

What three things did Eve notice about the tree from which they were forbidden to eat?

1.

2.

3.

Can you match the three things Eve noticed about the tree with the three things listed in 1 John 2:16?

 Read Matthew 4:1-11

WHAT JESUS WAS TEMPTED TO DO	HOW JESUS RESPONDED TO THE TEMPTATION

Can you match the three things Jesus was tempted to do with the three things listed in 1 John 2:16?

Read the verses given below and make a list of things you should do to overcome temptation:

📖 Matthew 4:1-11

📖 Ephesians 6:10-18

📖 2 Timothy 2:22
(also read Genesis 39:7-12)

📖 Hebrews 12:1-2

📖 James 4:7

📖 1 Peter 5:8-9

What do I do when I have given in to temptation?

📖 Read 1 John 1:9

What must we do when we have sinned?

What does God promise to do?

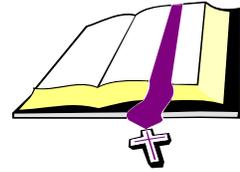
 Read Psalm 37:23-24

Do these verses encourage you? If so, how?

List some serious temptations that you face, and with each one list some practical things you can do to overcome it.

THE ROLE OF THE BIBLE IN MY LIFE

It is vital that you learn to do things that will help you to grow as a Christian. One of the most important things that will help you grow is the Bible.



 Read 2 Peter 1:20-21

1. *Who directed these men as they wrote?*
2. *What does that tell you about the things that they wrote?*

 Read 2 Timothy 3:16

3. *“All Scripture is given by _____ of God”.*
4. *What does the word “inspiration” mean?*

 Read Matthew 24:35

5. *What did Jesus say about His words? What did He mean?*

Questions to consider:

6. *Does the Bible contain the thoughts and ideas of men?*
7. *Can you believe everything the Bible teaches to be true?*
8. *Will the Bible ever become out-of-date?*
9. *How important is it for you to obey what the Bible teaches you to do?*

 Read Deuteronomy 17:18-20

1. *What was the king of Israel supposed to do with the Bible?*

 Read Joshua 1:8

2. *What was Joshua supposed to do with the Bible?*

 Read Psalm 1:1-3

3. *What does the godly man do with the Bible?*

4. *How does it affect his life?*

 Read 1 Peter 2:2

5. *What does God want you to do with the Bible?*

6. *How often do you think He wants you to do it?*

 Read James 1:22

7. *What else does God want you to do with the Bible?*

A SIMPLE BIBLE STUDY METHOD

A simple Bible study method is called the SPECS Bible study. As you read the Bible, look for the following things in the verses that you read:

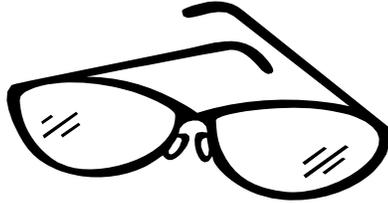
Sins to forsake

Promises to claim

Examples to follow

Commands to obey

Stumbling blocks to avoid



(It's also a good idea to record in a notebook the things you discover as you study the Bible each day.)

THE PLACE OF PRAYER IN MY LIFE

 Read Matthew 6:7-13

Look at verse 7. Does God want us to simply recite this prayer?



Although this is often called the Lord's Prayer, it should be called the Disciples' Prayer because it is a model for us to follow.

"Our Father in heaven"

What are we really doing when we pray?

"Hallowed be Your name,"

("Hallowed" means "holy") What does Jesus teach us to do first when we pray?

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

Read 1 John 5:14-15.

What requirement for prayer to be answered is stated in verse 14?

What promise is given in verse 15?

“Give us this day our daily bread”

Is it okay to ask God for things?

What should we ask Him for? (see also James 4:2-3)

“Forgive us our debts”

What “debts” do you think Jesus is talking about?

Read 1 John 1:9. What else should we ask for when we pray?

“As we forgive our debtors”

What is one thing that may keep our prayers from being answered?

Read Psalm 66:18. What is something else that may prevent our prayers from being answered?

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

What did Jesus tell Peter to do in Matthew 26:41?

Did Peter do what Jesus told him to do? (read verse 43)

What did Peter do in Matthew 26:69-75?

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

Compare this to the opening part of the prayer. What do you think is the main purpose of prayer?

IDENTIFYING WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM



THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

A great deal of confusion has existed for centuries regarding the purpose of baptism. Many churches have added their own tradition to this practice. It is important that we examine what the Bible teaches about baptism and then follow that teaching as closely as possible.

A. Baptism was commanded by Christ.

Read Matthew 28:16-20.

- 1. What mission did Jesus give to the eleven disciples?*
- 2. What were they to do with the disciples that they made?*

B. Baptism was practiced by the early church.

Read the following verses:

Acts 2:38

Acts 2:41

Acts 8:12-13

Acts 8:36-38

Acts 10:48

Acts 16:15

Acts 16:33

Acts 18:8

Acts 22:16

How common was the practice of baptism in the early church?

How important would you say baptism was in the Bible?

THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

A. The purpose of baptism is **not** to wash away your sins!

1. *According to Ephesians 2:8-9, how were you saved?*

2. *According to John 1:12, what did you have to do to become God's child?*

3. *In 1 John 1:9, what are you, as a Christian, told to do when you sin? What does God do?*

4. *Read Luke 23:39-43. What did the second criminal ask Jesus to do? What promise did Jesus make to him? Was he ever baptized?*

- B. The purpose of baptism is to publicly identify oneself as a follower of Jesus Christ and to obey the command of Jesus.

In the Bible, those who were baptized were publicly taking a stand for Jesus Christ, even though being known openly as a follower of Jesus often resulted in persecution. They were declaring their allegiance to Him.

Questions for discussion:

1. *Will being baptized help you to be more saved? Will it help you to “stay saved”?*
2. *If you don't have to be baptized to be saved, is it that important to be baptized? Why or why not?*

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

1. Read Acts 2:41 again.

What had these people done before they were baptized?

2. Read Matthew 28:19

Who was Jesus talking about when He said, “baptizing them...”

3. Read Acts 8:12

What had the men and women who were baptized in this verse done before they were baptized?

Question for discussion:

Who should be baptized? Why?

HOW SHOULD WE BE BAPTIZED?



A. The Example of the Bible

Read the following events in the Bible. Is there anything in these passages that indicates how these individuals were baptized?

Mark 1:9-11

John 3:23

Acts 8:36-39

B. The Meaning of “Baptize”

While the English word “baptize” is understood differently by different groups today, it’s original meaning was not that vague. The New Testament was originally written in Greek, and the Greek word “baptizo” meant “to dip, to immerse, to place into”.

(A different Greek word meant “to sprinkle”. If God had intended for believers to sprinkle water on an individual, He would have led the Bible writers to use that word.)

Also, it would not have been necessary for “much water” to be available (John 3:23) for people to have been sprinkled, nor would they have gone down “into the water”, and come “up from the water”.

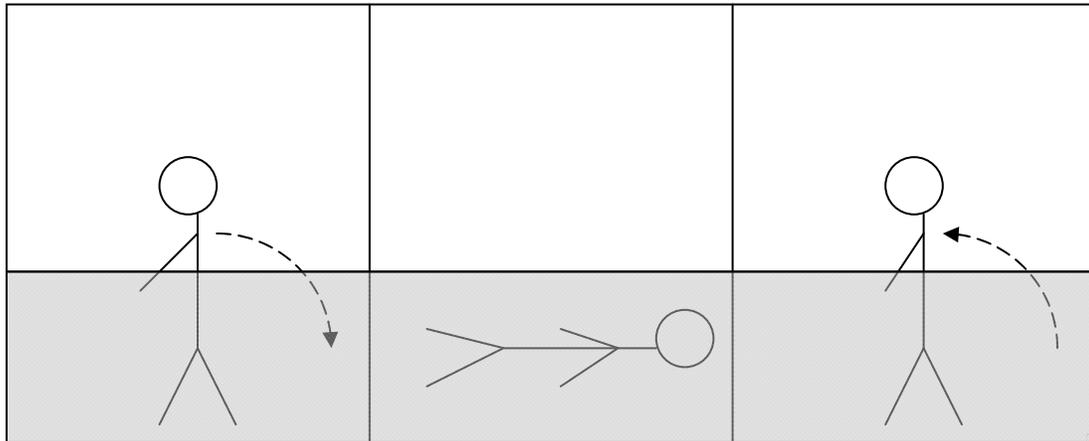
C. The Picture of Baptism

Immersion in water is a picture of what happens to a person when he accepts Christ as his Savior.

According to 1 Corinthians 12:13, the Holy Spirit places us into Christ.

According to Romans 6:3-5, when we were placed into Christ, we were united with His death and resurrection.

Baptism pictures the believer's death, burial, and resurrection with Christ.



**Immersion pictures the death & resurrection
of the believer with Christ**

Personal Application

- 1. Have you been baptized the way that the Bible teaches?*
- 2. Does God want you to be baptized? How do you know?*
- 3. Are you willing to follow Jesus Christ by being baptized?*

WHAT ABOUT THE CHURCH?



***“A Christ-centered life
is a church-centered life.”***

Joseph Miller

Read Acts 2:40-47

1. *List the things the people did in verse 41:*

2. *List the things you observe about this group of people in verses 42-47:*

3. *What was this group of people called in verse 47?*

4. *Note the use of the word “church” or “churches” in the following verses in the book of Acts, the history book of the New Testament:*

5:11

8:1, 3

9:31

11:22

11:26

12:1

12:5

13:1

14:23

16:5

5. *Notice that other books of the New Testament were addressed to local churches:*

1 Corinthians 1:1

2 Corinthians 1:1

Galatians 1:1-2

1 Thessalonians 1:1

2 Thessalonians 1:1

In the New Testament, it was normal for people who had been saved to become a part of a local church in their community.

[The New Testament word translated “church” (ekklesia) means a _____ - _____ “.”.]

- Acts 15:14
- Titus 2:14

Membership in New Testament Local Churches

Acts 2:41-47

- A. The members of New Testament local churches had been _____ and _____.
- B. The members of New Testament local churches shared common _____ based upon the _____.
- C. The members of New Testament local churches were _____ in the life of the group.
- D. The members of New Testament local churches _____ to _____.
- E. The members of New Testament local churches were _____ to the body for their _____. (see page 32 for answers)

Acts 5:1-11

Matthew 18:15-20

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15

1 Timothy 6:3-5

Leadership in New Testament Local Churches

As local churches were developed in the New Testament, certain leadership positions emerged:

I. Pastor

Acts 14:21-23 – Elders were appointed in the newly established churches

A. Their Titles

Several other terms are used interchangeably with “elder”:

Acts 20:17, 28 –

Titus 1:5, 7 –

1 Peter 5:1 –

B. Their Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:1-7 (*see also Titus 1:5-9*)

C. Their Responsibilities

Acts 20:28-31

Titus 1:9

1 Peter 5:1-5

Ephesians 4:11-16

II. Deacons

A. Their Title

Philippians 1:1

1 Timothy 3:8-13

B. Their Qualifications

1 Timothy 3:8-13

C. Their Responsibilities

Acts 6:1-7

Observances in New Testament Local Churches

Local churches in the New Testament seem to have observed two “ordinances”:

(We do not refer to them as “sacraments” because we do not believe that they “confer Grace, or Divine Life, on those who worthily receive it.” They are simply to be observed as memorials.)

These two ordinances meet the following criteria:

- commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ
- practiced by New Testament local churches
- instructed in the New Testament epistles

I. Baptism

(see the previous study in this discipleship course)

A. Commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ

Matthew 28:19

B. Practiced by New Testament local churches

Acts 2:41 et al

C. Taught in the New Testament epistles

Romans 6:1-5

II. The Lord’s Supper (Communion)

A. Commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ

Mark 14:22-26

B. Practiced by New Testament local churches

Acts 2:42

Acts 20:7

C. Taught in the New Testament epistles

1 Corinthians 11:23-34

The Mission of New Testament Local Churches

What purpose does God intend for a local church to accomplish?

The Lord Jesus Christ gave an assignment to the apostles just before He returned to heaven:

- Matthew 28:18-20
- Mark 16:15-16
- Luke 24:46-48
- John 20:21
- Acts 1:8

We believe that the assignment the Lord Jesus Christ gave to the apostles is the assignment He has given to each local church.

Therefore, we believe that things a local church does should result in the making of disciples, ***the developing of faithful and fruitful followers of Jesus Christ.***

Personal Application

1. Have you trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?
2. Have you been baptized by immersion after you trusted Christ as your Savior?
3. Are you a member of a Bible-believing local church that tries to follow the New Testament as closely as possible?

SHARING YOUR FAITH



Read Mark 1:17

What do you think Jesus meant by “fishers of men”?

Read 2 Corinthians 5:20

What are believers called in this verse?

What is an ambassador and what does he do?

Read Acts 1:8

What did Jesus say His followers would be?

Based on these verses, what do you think God wants you to do?

If someone asked you how to be saved, what would you do?

I. *Begin with your story*

(Do you remember this?)

A. My life before I was saved:

B. How I heard the gospel and trusted Christ:

C. My life after I was saved:

II. *Share the Gospel from God's Word*

(The word "gospel" means "good news".)

A. You are a sinner.

Romans 3:23

B. There is a penalty for your sin.

Romans 6:23

C. Jesus paid the penalty in your place.

Romans 5:8

D. You must believe the gospel and trust Christ as your Savior.

Romans 10:9-10

Some Suggested Guidelines

1. Ask their permission to share the gospel with them.
2. Read each verse slowly and repeat it.
3. Don't just talk at them—talk to them and involve them in the conversation.
4. Don't try to pick unripe fruit! If you sense that the Holy Spirit is not working in their heart, don't proceed through the entire outline. Ask them to think about the things you have shared, and ask their permission to speak to them about the subject again.
5. If you sense that the Holy Spirit is working in their heart and have presented the main points of the gospel:
 - a. Ask them to tell you what the Bible teaches about how a person can be saved.
 - b. Ask them if they have ever done that, and if they would like to do it now.
 - c. If possible, avoid having them repeat a prayer after you. Make certain that they understand that it is not magic words that saves them, but faith in Christ.

Membership in New Testament Local Churches

Acts 2:41-47

- A. The members of New Testament local churches had been saved and baptized.

- B. The members of New Testament local churches shared common beliefs based upon the Bible.

- C. The members of New Testament local churches were actively involved in the life of the group.

- D. The members of New Testament local churches organized to serve Christ.

- E. The members of New Testament local churches were accountable to the body for their actions.