

YOU'VE COMMITTED TO
FOLLOW CHRIST.

WHAT'S
YOUR
NEXT
STEP?



CONGRATULATIONS!

In the Bible, Jesus said, "...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." That abundant life began the moment you stepped over the line of faith and into a relationship with Jesus Christ. But that is just the beginning. **You've taken the first step; now what?**

This book will give you an idea of what the Bible, God's Word, says about your next step in your relationship with Jesus.

You probably still have questions about your decision. You may even have doubts. That's okay! But don't let those questions or doubts stop you from moving forward. Doubt your doubts and feed your faith by working through the things in this book.

And continue to experience the abundant life - one step at a time!

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DECISION TO FOLLOW CHRIST

Step 1: Commit Your Life to Jesus

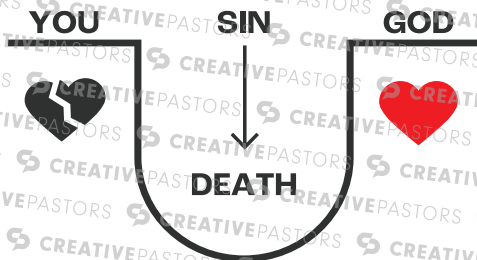
The greatest day of your life is when you commit yourself to Jesus! The Bible tells us that Jesus has the power to "make all things new."

Jesus desires for you to experience new purpose, new joy, new peace and new life greater than you can imagine.

Why Do I Need Jesus?

We begin life separated from God because of sin, which is falling short of God's perfect standard. Sin leads to death and eternal isolation from God.

There is nothing we can do to bridge the gap between us and God—not even being more religious or good. Only Jesus can rescue us by bridging the gap.



"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."

Romans 3:23

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 6:23

What Did Jesus Do for Me?

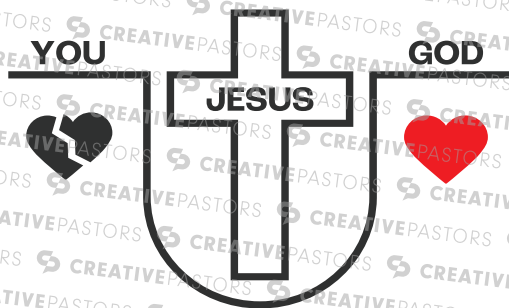
Good news! God loved us too much to leave us hopeless in our sins, so he sent his only Son, Jesus, to this earth.

Jesus lived a perfect life and willfully chose death on a cross to pay the price for our sin. Three days later he rose from the grave, defeating death to bridge the gap between God and us!

"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners." **Romans 5:8**

How Do I Cross the Bridge Jesus Made?

The Bible says we need to believe that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave. Also, we must choose to surrender to Jesus, fully committing our lives to follow him.



"God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done..." **Ephesians 2:8-9**

Committing your life to Jesus starts with the ABC's:

Admit you need Jesus.

Believe that Jesus died and rose from the grave for you.

Commit to follow Jesus the rest of your life.

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It's Time To Cross The Bridge.

*"...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." **Romans 10:9***

Make Jesus Your Bridge Today!

Pray: God, I believe you love me and want a relationship with me. I admit I've sinned, separating me from you. I believe you sent Jesus to die on the cross for my sins and he rose again to be the bridge to you. Today, I turn from my sins and surrender my life entirely to you and ask you to save me. Amen!

Step 2: Get Baptized Like Jesus

After you have made the decision to commit your life to Jesus, baptism is your next step! Baptism is an outward display of your inward decision to trust Christ with your life. When you step into the water, you are letting the world know of your new commitment of faith in Jesus.

*"You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on his name." **Acts 22:15-16***



What Is Believer's Baptism?

Every baptism in the Bible was done by immersion. *Baptism* comes from the Greek word *baptizo*, which means "to immerse." That means going under the water briefly, and then coming back out. It's that simple!

When we go under the water, it symbolizes Christ's death and the surrender of our old sinful ways. When we come back out of the water, it symbolizes Christ's resurrection and our new life in him! Baptism itself does not wash away sin; it's only Christ's sacrifice on the cross and our surrendering to him that saves us.

"We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." **Romans 6:4**

Why Is Baptism So Important?

Baptism is commanded in Scripture for those who have made a personal decision to receive Christ. Going public with your faith through baptism is the first step of obedience after committing your life to Jesus. It identifies you as a Christ-follower.

"Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day." **Acts 2:41**

Was Jesus Baptized?

Yes! Jesus is our guide in every area of life, including baptism! He was immersed in the Jordan River in obedience to God and as an example to us.

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John... 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John consented." **Matthew 3:13-15**

What If I Was Baptized As An Infant?

In Scripture, a believer's baptism is reserved for those who are old enough to make their own faith decision to become a Christ-follower. Every baptism in the Bible came after a person's decision to follow Jesus.

Step 3: Grow Daily With Jesus

Like any healthy relationship, your relationship with Christ needs intentionality, communication, trust, and time. As you grow closer to Jesus, you will begin to understand who you are in him and discover more of what he wants for you. You can strengthen your relationship with Christ by praying, reading your Bible daily, and attending church regularly.

Bible

The Bible is the most important book you will ever read. It is God's very own words spoken to you. The Bible is true, timeless, and able to equip you for every step in your journey with God. If you're not sure how to get started, you can read the book of John in the New Testament, or download the YouVersion Bible App to find a Bible reading plan.

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path."

Psalms 119:105





Church

The only thing Jesus ever established was the local church. This journey of faith isn't meant to be traveled alone. At church each week, we unite to worship God, discover his plan for our lives, learn to live out his priorities, and build relationships with others who have a commitment to Christ.

*"...not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." **Hebrews 10:24-25***

Pray

Prayer is one of the most crucial aspects to a vibrant and growing relationship with Jesus. Prayer is simply having a conversation with Jesus - something everyone can do. There's no one way to pray, but here is a template that will help you as you begin to connect with Jesus through conversation:

PRAISE - Begin your prayer with PRAISE. Praise is thanking God for who he is, what he can do, and what he has done.

REPENT - Take a moment to REPENT. Recognize your shortcomings and turn away from them. God isn't surprised by anything you bring to him, so don't be afraid to admit the things that fall short of his standard for your life.

ASK - Be willing to ASK. God wants us to ask him for things in our lives. He wants his children (that's us) to come to him with our requests.

YIELD - Finally, YIELD. Prayer is not just asking God for what you want; it is putting yourself in a position to want what God wants. When we yield to his plan and his purpose above all, we show that we trust in his goodness.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Philippians 4:6





SERVE

Jesus himself said that he did not come to be served, but to serve others. When you volunteer your time and talent in the local church, **you discover the key to unlocking a life of influence and change.**

As a new Christ-follower, one of the most powerful steps you can take is serving in the church; it's stepping outside of your comfort zone and stepping up to be used by God.

"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

SHARE

God has already placed people in your life - family, friends, co-workers, casual acquaintances - who are just one invitation to church away from experiencing all that God has for them. Begin to pray for opportunities to share your story with others and you'll be amazed at how God will use you to bring life-change to the world, one person at a time!



CREATIVE PASTORS

REACH UP
REACH OUT
REACH IN



SOW

There is no greater investment than contributing to the only thing Jesus ever built, the local church. With God's favor and the faithful support of so many people, this church is making an incredible impact by offering the hope and purpose found in Jesus Christ.

Together, we equip families and leaders, empower the next generation, and support those who are less fortunate. In short, when you give back to God financially through the local church, you are helping us extend the reach and build God's Church. And by God's grace we will continue to expand the borders of his Church and reach one life at a time.

"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it." **Malachi 3:10**

12-DAY READING PLAN

When we read the Bible, we aren't just trying to gather information, we want to experience transformation. The Bible is the only book where the author is present when you read it! Here are a few simple questions you can ask to help you live out what you're learning:

- What can I learn about God and people from this Scripture?
- How can I live this out in my life?
- What do I need to pray for?

Ask these questions as you read these passages of Scripture from the life of Jesus:

DAY 1 - Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-21)

Jesus' miraculous birth was a fulfillment of prophecy and a reminder that God loved us enough to come to us so we could have a relationship with him.

DAY 2 - Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus was baptized to mark the beginning of his ministry and it can be the beginning of your ministry too. When we are baptized, it represents the beginning of our relationship with Jesus. It's our first step of obedience and a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that made our relationship possible.

DAY 3 - Temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13)

Jesus faced the same temptations we face, but stood up against them by focusing on the truth of Scripture and relying on the strength of the Holy Spirit within him. A relationship with Jesus gives us access to the same resources.

DAY 4 - Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

When God speaks to our heart, it's like a seed planted in soil. The condition of our heart determines how much growth will happen.

DAY 5 – Jesus Prays (Luke 11:1-13)

Prayer is one of the primary ways we communicate with God. It helps us to align our plans and perspective with his. Don't be afraid to share your needs and concerns because he cares for you.

DAY 6 – Woman at the Well (John 4:1-30)

When Jesus encountered the woman at the well, her thirst was satisfied, her life was changed, and she immediately began to invite others to come meet Jesus. Be willing to share your story and invite others to experience what you have experienced.

DAY 7 – Holy Spirit (John 14:16-27)

When we receive Christ and our relationship with him begins, the Holy Spirit comes to be our counselor and teacher.

DAY 8 – Ultimate Servant (Matthew 20:20-28)

If we want to follow Christ's example, then we need to serve as he served. Find a place to serve within the church and watch how God uses your gifts to impact the lives of others!

DAY 9 – The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-35)

Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples. Even he, the perfect leader, had people who turned against him. Don't be discouraged if some people don't understand your relationship with Christ!

DAY 10 – The Crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:26-56)

Jesus' death was the ultimate expression of his love. His sacrifice provided forgiveness for our sin and paved the way for us to have a relationship with him.

DAY 11 – The Resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-49)

Jesus' resurrection was final evidence that he was truly the Savior of the world. The power of God that raised him from the dead is the same power that is at work in you.

DAY 12 – The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

Jesus' last recorded words to his disciples were a challenge to go throughout the world and share their story. This small group of people changed the world with their boldness and commitment to tell others about Christ. God calls you to do the same!

WHO YOU ARE!

Understanding what God says about you is one of the most crucial aspects in continuing to grow in your relationship with him. Throughout the Bible, God makes it clear who we are, whose we are, and what he thinks of us. As his children, we are precious, purposed, and filled with potential. Here are just a few of the things God says about you in his Word the Bible:

1. YOU ARE CREATED BY GOD

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." Psalm 139:13

You are not an afterthought or an accident. God, the ultimate Creator, created you on purpose and for a purpose. When God sees you, he doesn't see a person who has no reason for being; he sees someone he intentionally put here for a reason. Your identity is found in WHO created you.

2. YOU ARE CLOTHED BY GOD

"For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness..." Isaiah 61:10

The Bible says that we all fall short of the glory of God. If left to our own, we are stitched in sin, ripped by rebellion, torn and tarnished. But when we step over the line of faith, Jesus trades our sin for his salvation, our fallenness for his forgiveness. No longer does he see you as a sinner; now he sees you as clothed by Christ's righteousness!

3. YOU ARE CHANGED BY GOD

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" **2 Corinthians 5:17**

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will." **Romans 12:2**

You are not defined by your past. Scripture says that you become a new creation when Jesus infiltrates your life. Jesus wipes the slate clean. This instantaneous change starts a process that continues throughout our lives. God will continue to transform our thoughts, attitudes, and actions so that they match the new person that he has made us to be.

4. YOU ARE CELEBRATED BY GOD

"Long before he laid down the earth's foundations he had us in mind. He would settle on us as the focus of his love to be made whole and holy by his love." **Ephesians 1:4**

Love has to have an object. You are the object of God's love. When he created you, he created someone he celebrates! When you receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ, you become a child of God and gain access to all the rights and privileges of a child of the King. You are loved, accepted, and valued not because of what you've done, but because of who your Father is.

5. YOU ARE COMPLETED BY GOD

"So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority." **Colossians 2:10**

On our best days, we still fall short of God's glory. To put it another way, we are incomplete because good isn't good enough. However, God is God enough! If we have a relationship with Christ, if we've received him, then we are complete. Jesus completed the incomplete.

MORE QUESTIONS?

**IF YOU HAVE MORE SPECIFIC QUESTIONS
OR ARE READY TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP
AS A CHRIST-FOLLOWER, CONTACT YOUR
CHURCH OFFICE TODAY.**