

FIRST STEPS

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Your personal guide to understanding the essentials of following Jesus.

1 | NEW LIFE



FIRST STEPS | Book One – “New Life”

Congratulations! If you recently said “Yes” to Jesus, turning away from your old life and turning to Him for forgiveness and leadership Welcome to the Family! If you’ve done that in the past but are recommitting your life to Jesus then Welcome Home! This is the first of six small books designed to help you take your first steps as a Christian. You can find the entire series at our Welcome Center.

The ideal way to go through these books is with someone who might be a step or two ahead of you in their Christian journey. If you don’t have anyone in mind, we would love to help you connect with someone who would go through them with you. Usually people meet for an hour, once a week, to explore the book together. Just think, in six short weeks, you can be well on your way in your walk with Jesus!

We are here to answer your questions or help in any way we can. Give us a call at (253) 531-7162. Let’s begin the adventure of following Jesus!

Matthew 6:33, *Pastor Dan*

The Beginning Is A Good Place To Start

The Bible is God’s Word to us so that we can know him better and live an amazing life. It is more than just a book (more about that later), but a library containing 66 books. You may not have much experience with the Bible so don’t worry if you don’t know where things are or have questions. *That is completely normal.* There is a table of contents at the front of your Bible to help you find the different books.

Try and use a Bible that is easy to read and understand. If you don't have a Bible, we have free Bibles at our Next Steps table or you can download a free Bible to your phone/tablet at Bible.com. Also, in the first 4 books in this series, we have included the Bible verses in the back of the book!

The Bible shows us how everything got started. When God created the world (Genesis 1-2), He created everything good and perfect. The first humans he created were named Adam and Eve. They enjoyed a perfect world, with perfect relationships with each other and with God. But God didn't create them to be robots that had to obey him. **God loved and respected them so much that he gave them the choice to obey him or rebel against him and go their own separate way.** Unfortunately, they chose to go their own way and rebel against God which the Bible calls sin.

Sin is a condition of the heart that reveals itself in specific thoughts, motives, attitudes, words and actions. We aren't sinners because we sin - we sin because at the core of our being we are sinners. Prior to sin entering the world everything was perfect and nothing died. Now because of sin, everything is far from perfect and is broken. **Sin separates us from God,** and it kills us spiritually so that we are spiritually "dead." It damages all living creatures so they are subject to disease, suffering and physical death. Sin corrupts the weather, enslaves us to bad habits, triggers addictions, loads us with guilt, and poisons all human relationships.

What a mess mankind has made out of everything that God created! It is human nature to want to compare ourselves to others in an attempt to try and feel better about ourselves. But that is like one pig being proud that it is a little bit cleaner than another pig. **God is the standard, not other people.** We all are stained by sin. We all have strayed away from God. No one is good enough to go to Heaven. We all deserve to pay the price that our sins deserve, which is death.

—> When we begin to grasp the problem of sin in our life we might feel like Paul, the writer of Romans 7:24-25a. In your Bible find the book of Romans, chapter 7 & then the verses 24-25a. (The little “a” means to focus on the very first part of verse 25) What did Paul feel like at times? What did he say is the answer to our sin problem?

—> According to Titus 3:4-5, why did Jesus, the Son of God, come to this earth to save us from our sin?

The bad news is that sin is the root cause of every problem but the good news is that Jesus is the answer! **Jesus lived the perfect life that we couldn't live and then died on a cross to pay the price our sins deserved.** He then rose from the dead 3 days later to prove that he was God and that what he did on the cross was enough to forgive us & free us from sin. Finally, his motive for doing all of this wasn't because you and I were so good or worthy. What is amazing is that God did all of this, not because of our performance, but because of his crazy love for us! The Bible says in Romans 5:8, “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Are You A Christian?

So what makes a person a Christian or follower of Jesus? Is it going to church? Is it being baptized? Is it growing up in a “Christian family or nation”? Is it wearing a cross around your neck? Those things can be important but *none* of those things *make* a person a Christian.

→ In your Bible find the Gospel of John, chapter 3. Jesus is going to explain to a “religious” man what makes a person a Christian. Although this man was religious, he wasn’t a Christian yet. He was looking for new ideas but he didn’t know what he really needed was a new heart. Read verses 1-6.

→ According to the verses you just read, there are two ways that we come alive or are born. What are those two ways?

Physical birth makes us alive physically but in order to know God and experience new life from him we must be born spiritually. It’s not just a matter of trying harder or trying to clean up our act. There is nothing we can do to get rid of our sin. We need a fresh start. We need Jesus to take away our sin and make us come alive spiritually (born again). **This requires the most important decision that you could ever make:** Saying “Yes” to Jesus to forgive your sins, to give you new life, and to be the owner and leader of your life.

→ Now turn to John 1:12. The Bible says that anyone who has said “Yes” to Jesus (or received him) is born spiritually & now can be called “A Child or Children Of _____!”

Have you said "YES" to Jesus? Yes No Unsure

If you checked “yes” then the day that you made that decision is now your spiritual birthday. If you know the day, write down your spiritual birthday._____. If you don’t know the day that is fine, what's important is you know that you have decided to follow Jesus.

If you’re unsure, write down any questions you have. We would be honored to discuss them with you! Reach out through a connect card on our website & we'll be in touch!

Every spiritual birth is a miracle! Now you are one of God's own kids. **Your past is forgiven, your present is full of potential and your future is secure.** Nothing stands between you and God because of what Jesus did for you on the cross. You may or may not feel any different, but the reality is that because of Jesus and your faith in Him, many wonderful things are now true about you.

What's True About You Now!

Look up the following scriptures and then draw a line to the appropriate thing that is true about you now. Remember: the Bible verses are in the back if you need them!

Deuteronomy 31:8

I don't have to be afraid because God is with me & will never leave me or forsake me!

John 3:16

I don't have to be anxious about anything but can pray to God. His peace will guard my heart and mind!

1 Corinthians 10:13

I can approach God's throne of grace with confidence & receive mercy & grace in my time of need!

1 Corinthians 5:17

I can resist temptation because God is faithful. He won't let me be tempted beyond what I can bear & will provide a way out!

Philippians 4:6-7

I know God loves me & gave his one and only Son so I can believe in Him & not perish but have eternal life!

Colossians 1:13-14

I know God didn't give me a spirit of fear but a spirit of power, love & self-discipline!

2 Timothy 1:7

I am in Christ & a new creation. The old things that defined me are gone & have been replaced by new things!

Hebrews 4:16

I have been rescued from darkness & now belong to God's Kingdom. My sins have been forgiven!

→ Which one of the truths just mentioned in the matching section is most meaningful to your life right now? Why?

The following is a true story shared by Dave Park in *Stomping Out the Darkness*. After a Bible study, about similar things in this lesson, a young lady wanted to talk to the leader. Gazing up to the sky, her eyes filled with tears. “I don’t think anybody loves me,” she said. Her words reflected her continuing struggle with her family, an eating disorder and an all-around poor self-image. The leader asked, “Do you remember the verses that we studied tonight?” “Yes,” she said softly. The leader replied, “Do you believe those verses are true about you?” “Oh, I don’t know, she said, the frustration obvious in her voice. The leader said, “Let me read them to you again. Better yet, why don’t you read them to me.” She agreed and began to read the statements. At first, her tone lacked enthusiasm. But gradually a change occurred. Her voice became more confident and a smile began to appear. By the time she finished the verses she was even laughing. Isn’t that incredible? Did any of her circumstances change as she read the verses? No, nothing changed except her understanding of what is true about her as a child of God.

Let’s Celebrate!

Every time a person says “Yes” to Jesus the angels in Heaven celebrate (Luke 15:10). When you were born into the world people celebrated your new life. As a child of God, you are now a member of a very large family. You are now related to every other Christian in the world. Your local Christian family (church) wants to celebrate your new spiritual life in a way that Jesus commanded. He celebrated this way himself, and wants to give you an opportunity to show that you are not ashamed of following him.

This celebration is called baptism. The word baptism means to be “immersed.” It is visual picture of what Jesus did for you: He died, was buried (going under the water) and rose from the dead (coming up out of the water). It is also a visual picture of what Jesus has done inside of you. The old you has died with Christ and was buried and the new you is raised up by Jesus to live a brand new life.

—> How does Romans 6:4 explain baptism?

—> Some people have been baptized as babies or as little children. That is different from the baptisms in the Bible. Baptism in the Bible was practiced by people old enough to understand their need for Jesus and put their faith in him. What stands out to you in the following verses: Acts 2:36-41?

—> Baptism doesn't save anyone, only our faith in Christ does that. Baptism is like a wedding ring. It is an outward symbol of love that is already in our hearts. Do you have any questions about baptism?

—> Are you ready to go public with your faith and be baptized?

Putting It All Together

- According to 1 John 5:11-13, how can a person know they are a Christian and have eternal life? (1 John is toward the back of your Bible.)

- What questions about being a Christian do you have that you would really like to get answered?

We want to resource you in any way we can!

Reach out to us at www.faithcommunity.church/connect or
give us a call at 253-531-7162

Bible Verses Used in this Lesson

Romans 7:24-25 | What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Titus 3:4-5 | But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

John 3:1-6 | Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again. “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.

John 1:12 | Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

Deuteronomy 31:8 | The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

John 3:16 | For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Corinthians 10:13 | No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

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

Philippians 4:6-7 | Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 1:13-14 | For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

2 Timothy 1:7 | For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

Hebrews 4:16 | Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Romans 6:4 | 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.

Luke 15:10 | In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Acts 2:36-41 | "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

1 John 5:11-13 | And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

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