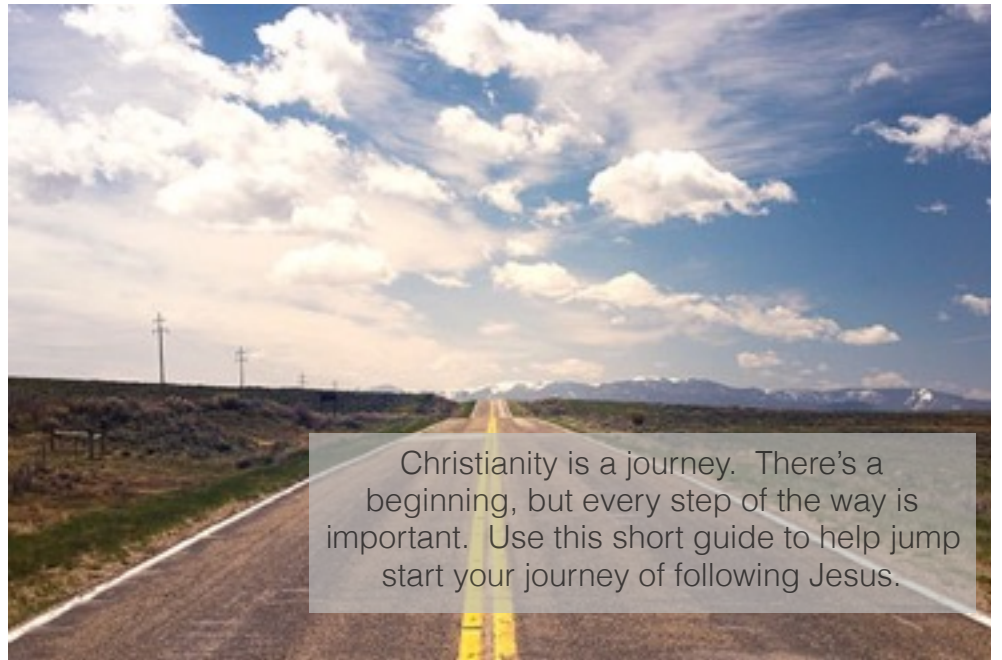




WHAT'S NEXT?



Christianity is a journey. There's a beginning, but every step of the way is important. Use this short guide to help jump start your journey of following Jesus.

A decision to live life with Christ and follow Him is the most important commitment a person can make in life. If you have placed your faith in Jesus, and decided to follow him, you have experienced what the Bible calls a "new birth." And just like you have a physical birthday, you have a spiritual birthday - the day you became a Christian and began your walk with God.

One of your questions may be, "What do I do now?" Here's some information to help jump start your journey.

As a Christian, your life should change. It's a process of transformation. You may not feel like a Christian every day, but following Jesus is not based on feelings. It's based on the fact that Jesus died on the cross for your sins and that you have a relationship with him.

Prayer:

Prayer is a conversation with God. It's an opportunity for you to talk to God about your needs. Matthew 7:7 says that we should always ask God about our needs. John 15:7 and Philippians 4:6-7 talk about bringing your needs to God. If He can take care of the birds, He can take care of our needs. Here some thoughts to help you in your prayer life.

Ask Him for forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 says that if we confess our sins, God will forgive our sins. In your prayer time, ask God to forgive you where you messed up. Ask Him for strength. Even though you are a Christian, you will probably still sin. You need to confess sin to God.

Listen for His response. Nobody likes a one-way conversation. In fact, one person talking is not a conversation. When you talk to God, give Him a chance to answer you. He may not speak with an audible voice or write letters on your wall, but He will answer you if you are listening and walking with Him.

Keep it going. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 says to pray all the time. You don't have to be in church with your eyes closed to pray. You can pray in your heart to God wherever you are.

Invest some time in other people. God is not Santa Claus! If all you ever do is give God a shopping list of your needs, then you are being selfish in your prayers. Pray for others. Pray for your church. Pray for those who don't know God. Pray for your family.

Never quit being thankful. Thanksgiving is expressing gratitude to God for specific things. When God answers a prayer, thank Him. Thank Him for spiritual blessings, people, gifts, etc. You can thank God not only for what He has done, but for who He is.

Get alone somewhere. Part of your daily time with God should be reading His Word and talking to Him. You probably can't do that with too many distractions, so get alone somewhere and begin spending time with God.

Tell Someone:

People love to tell good news. If you get a new job, have a new baby, or get married, that's probably news that you want to share. People don't keep good news to themselves.

In that same way, becoming a Christian is exciting news, and you should be excited to tell others right away. Your life has been changed by God. Think about how important that is, and think about how many people need to hear about it.

God wants to use you to help others know about Him. In John 1:40-42, a man named Andrew met Jesus. His first reaction was to run and tell his brother. He didn't know a lot about Jesus...he didn't have all the facts or all of the answers, he just told others that his life had been changed.

Right now, you can tell others about Jesus. You don't have to be a pastor or a missionary. In fact, God wants all Christians to be active in sharing their faith. This is called evangelism or witnessing.

A witness just tells the judge and jury what he heard or saw. A Christian is called to tell others what God has done in their life. You can do this by sharing your testimony. Your testimony is your unique story of how you became a Christian. The apostle Paul shared his testimony with others - you can read about that in Acts 22:3-21.

A testimony has three basic parts:

- Your life before becoming a Christian
- How you became a Christian
- What God has done or is doing in your life now.

Take a moment and think through those three areas. You may even want to take out a sheet of paper or open up a blank document on the computer and write out your story.

One the best ways to tell people about your new faith is to invite them to church. So much of what we do on Sunday morning is designed for guests. We want everyone in our area to know about the grace and forgiveness that comes from God, and how He can transform their life. You can partner with us to lead people from where they are to where God wants them to be by simply inviting them to church.

Thirty Days with Jesus Bible Reading Plan:

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|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Jesus Foretold | Isaiah 53 |
| 2. The Birth of Jesus | Matthew 1:18-25 |
| 3. John the Baptist | Matthew 3:1-4:11 |
| 4. Water to Wine & the Samaritan | John 2:1-11; John 4:1-26 |
| 5. Jesus Rejected in his Hometown | Luke 4:14-30 |
| 6. Jesus Calls his Disciples | Luke 5:1-11 |
| 7. Sermon on the Mount | Luke 6:17-46 |
| 8. Three Stories | Matthew 8:1-13 |
| 9. Encounters With the Pharisees | Matthew 12:1-13; 22-45 |
| 10. Parable of the Sower and the Seed | Matthew 13:1-43 |
| 11. Jesus Calms the Storm | Mark 6:45-56 |
| 12. Jesus Heals a Man, Woman and Girl | Mark 5:1-43 |
| 13. Feeding of the 5000 | John 6:1-14 |
| 14. Peter Identifies the Christ | Luke 9:18-27; Luke 17:1-8 |
| 15. Healing by Faith | Mark 9:14-32 |
| 16. Teachings and Parables | Matthew 17:24-18:20 |
| 17. Teachings and Parables | Matthew 18:21-19:15 |
| 18. The Rich Young Ruler | Mark 10:17-31 |
| 19. Disciples Sent Out | Luke 10:1-24 |
| 20. The Good Samaritan | Luke 10:25-37 |
| 21. Jesus Teaches how to Pray | Luke 11:1-13 |
| 22. Jesus Revives Lazarus | John 11:1-44 |
| 23. Jesus Comes to Jerusalem | Matthew 21:1-27 |
| 24. The Last Supper | John 13:1-17 |
| 25. Comfort for the Disciples | John 14-15 |
| 26. Jesus Arrested and Disowned | Matthew 26:36-75 |
| 27. Jesus' Trial | John 18:19-19:16 |
| 28. Jesus' Crucifixion and Death | John 19:17-42 |
| 29. Jesus' Resurrection and Appearances | John 20-21 |
| 30. The Great Commission and Ascension | Matthew 28:16-20 |

Online Tools:

- Bible with the ability to share thoughts on social media, record notes, personalize, find Bible plans and devotions, etc. Also in an app for your smart phone - www.youversion.com
- Bible Reading Plans - www.zondervan.com/Cultures/en-US/Product/Bible/Plans.htm
- Online Bible Teaching, Devotionals and other resources - www.oneplace.com
- Daily Devotionals - www.crosswalk.com/devotionals or www.rbc.org/odb
- Online Bible in multiple translations, with search capabilities - www.biblegateway.com