

I'VE RECEIVED CHRIST. . . NOW WHAT?

You may be asking yourself the question: *So what do I do now? What steps should I take, now that I've received Christ into my life?*

Read and Study the Bible

The first step every new believer should take is to begin digging into the Bible. Begin reading it, and then study it. The Bible is God's inspired word to us . . . every word was literally breathed by Him for our spiritual benefit (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Bible also tells us to study it, that we might be approved workmen who understand how to rightly divide its message (2 Timothy 2:15). By reading and studying the Bible, you will start to grow spiritually, just as newborn infants grow by drinking their mother's milk (1 Peter 2:2).

We would strongly recommend that you begin by reading the gospel of John. It's the fourth book in the New Testament. It presents a very clear message about Jesus Christ, and is written that we might know Him better, and experience the life that is in His name. After reading John, then just read right on through the rest of the New Testament! Then read the Old Testament. Then do it all over again! Don't worry about understanding everything at first. Everything will become clearer as time goes on.

After reading, then learn to study the Bible. Coming to Bible study is an important part of learning the Word, so do that frequently. Then take whatever classes you can to improve your study skills. There is no single step you can take that is more important than developing the lifetime habit of immersing yourself into the Scriptures.

Pray

Don't be intimidated by the idea of prayer. Prayer is simply talking with God, and having Him talk with you. You can pray at any time and anywhere, because prayer is not limited to being in church. You can pray on your knees, standing up, or with your eyes open or closed. The eloquence of your prayers is not important—all that matters is that you're sincere and that you trust God, as you pray in Jesus' authority.

The Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) is an excellent pattern for prayer, given to us by the Lord Jesus Himself. Many have used it as an outline for their own prayer life.

It may also be helpful to remember the following acronym as an aid to prayer:

- A:** Adoration (Worship)
- C:** Confession (Of Specific Sins)
- T:** Thanksgiving (Gratitude)
- S:** Supplication (Specific Requests)

Do not neglect this vital part of your Christian walk. As someone has said, "Prayer is the breath of the newborn soul, and there can be no Christian life without it."

Attend and Become Part of a Local Church

One of the keys to spiritual growth is to become part of a healthy local church. In its biblical form, the church should provide biblically-sound teaching, genuine worship, an atmosphere in which Christians are able to use their God-given gifts and abilities, and spiritual leadership that will help keep believers accountable.

There are those who might say, "I don't need to go to church. I like to spend my time alone with God, and I don't need to be around other Christians." The reality is that no Christian can endure or prosper long if he or she lives in isolation without the support of a church. No matter how many Christian books, magazines, movies, or podcasts you take-in, they can't replace the experience and fellowship you get from attending church and being with other believers.

In the book of Hebrews, it says, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:24-25, NKJV). This passage is as valid today as when it was first written.

A healthy church will focus upward (worship), inward (spiritual growth and edification), and outward (outreach). It will believe that the Bible is God's inspired, infallible Word, authoritative in all areas of faith and practice. It will also focus on the teaching of the Bible, Biblical fellowship, prayer, and breaking of bread together (Acts 2:42).

Witness

One of the greatest blessings of the Christian life is to tell others about Jesus Christ, and lead them to Him. It is a real joy to see someone else experience the same things you did when you became a Christian.

God tells us that it's important to share your faith with other people (see Matthew 28:20). In fact, it's not just something He wants you to do; He commands us to do it!

Sharing your faith can sound like a scary thing to do, but it doesn't have to be. One of the best ways you can do that is by telling them your story. When you share how God has changed your life, it lets people see that you were once in their shoes, but have now been changed by the power of Christ. A changed life is one of the best evidences of what Jesus can do.

Remember the actual message of the gospel as you share with others: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (NKJV).