



KYLE LAURIANO

REAL TESTIMONIES.
RADICAL TRANSFORMATIONS.

BELIEVER

FINAL EXHORTATION

Real Testimonies. Radical Transformations.

KYLE LAURIANO MINISTRY



YOUR FIRST WEEK AS A CHRISTIAN: THE COMPLETE FIRST-WEEK ROADMAP FOR NEW BELIEVERS



WELCOME TO YOUR NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

You've made the most important decision of your life. You've decided to follow Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. Whether this decision came suddenly or after much reflection, whether you're filled with joy or uncertainty, welcome to God's family.

This comprehensive guide will walk you through your first week as a Christian, helping you understand what just happened, who you are now, what comes next, and how to begin your new life in Christ. This is not a quick overview—it's a thorough roadmap designed to help you establish strong foundations for the spiritual journey ahead.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

- Welcome to Your New Life
- What Just Happened?
- Understanding Your Decision
- You Are Not Alone
- About This First-Week Guide

FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING (Before Day 1)

- Part A: What Salvation Means
- Part B: Your New Identity in Christ
- Part C: The Gospel That Changed Everything
- Part D: Understanding God's Love

DAY ONE: THE BEGINNING - Understanding Your New Life

- Devotion: Your Salvation Explained
- Scripture Reading
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection Questions
- Action Items
- Evening Prayer

DAY TWO: YOUR IDENTITY - Who You Are Now

- Devotion: Born Again, Made New

- Scripture Reading
- Understanding Your New Status
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection
- Action Items
- Evening Prayer

DAY THREE: GOD'S WORD - Introduction to Bible Reading

- Devotion: God Speaks to You
- How to Read the Bible
- Recommended Passages
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection
- Action Items
- Evening Prayer

DAY FOUR: PRAYER - Learning to Talk With God

- Devotion: A Conversation With Your Father
- How to Pray
- Prayer Examples
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection
- Action Items
- Evening Prayer

DAY FIVE: COMMUNITY - Finding Your Church Family

- Devotion: The Body of Christ
- Why Community Matters
- Finding a Church
- What to Expect
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection
- Action Items
- Evening Prayer

DAY SIX: BAPTISM - Your Public Declaration

- Devotion: Identifying With Christ
- What Baptism Means
- How to Get Baptized
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection
- Action Items
- Evening Prayer

DAY SEVEN: SHARING - Telling Others

- Devotion: Your Testimony
- How to Share Your Faith
- Overcoming Fear
- Prayer Guide
- Daily Reflection
- Action Items

- Evening Prayer

BEYOND THE FIRST WEEK - Your Next Steps

- Establishing Daily Practices
 - Growing in Knowledge
 - Building Relationships
 - Serving Others
 - Deepening Your Faith
-

FOUNDATIONAL UNDERSTANDING - READ THIS BEFORE DAY 1

PART A: WHAT SALVATION MEANS

The Gospel in a Nutshell:

Salvation is the most important thing that can happen to you because it reconnects you with God and rescues you from sin's consequences. Let's break down what happened when you chose to follow Jesus:

1. God Created You for Relationship

God created you with intention and purpose. You were made in God's image (Genesis 1:27), designed for relationship with your Creator. This relationship was meant to be the center of your existence—not as obligation but as your deepest joy. God created you to know Him, to love Him, to experience His love, and to glorify Him.

Your life was designed for something greater than comfort, success, or pleasure. You were designed for relationship with God.

2. Sin Separated You From God

Sin is more than individual bad actions (though it includes those). Sin is the condition of being separated from God, of rejecting God's rule over your life, of trying to live as if you are in control rather than God being in control.

The Bible describes it clearly: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). This means:

- You have sinned (made wrong choices)
- I have sinned (everyone has)
- Sin separates us from God
- Separation from God has consequences

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Sin doesn't just mean you feel guilty. It means you are genuinely separated from God, cut off from relationship with Him, destined for spiritual death (eternity without God).

3. Jesus Died to Restore That Relationship

God loves you so much that He didn't leave you in separation. Instead:

- God became human in Jesus Christ
- Jesus lived a perfect life, never sinning
- Jesus voluntarily died on a cross, taking the punishment for your sins
- Jesus rose from the dead, defeating sin and death forever
- Jesus is alive today, offering you forgiveness and restoration

"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

This is the good news: Jesus paid the price for your sins. You don't have to. You can't earn your way to God through good works, but Jesus provided the way through His death and resurrection.

4. You Responded to Jesus' Offer

Salvation happens when you:

Believe: You acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God who died for your sins and rose again. This isn't mere intellectual assent; it's placing your trust in Jesus as the one who saves you.

Repent: You turn away from sin and toward God. Repentance means changing your mind about sin (recognizing it as wrong) and changing direction (choosing to follow Jesus rather than your own way).

Confess: You declare Jesus as your Lord. This means you acknowledge His authority over your life and commit to following Him.

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

What This Means:

When you genuinely made this decision—whether in a quiet moment alone, in a church service, through prayer with a friend, or through any genuine encounter with Jesus—something profound happened:

- Your sins were forgiven (past, present, and future—all covered by Christ's blood)
- Your relationship with God was restored
- You became a member of God's family
- You became a child of God
- You gained eternal life

- You gained the Holy Spirit living within you
- You gained a new identity
- You gained a new purpose

Salvation is instantaneous and eternal. In the moment you believed, God's entire work of salvation was applied to you.

PART B: YOUR NEW IDENTITY IN CHRIST

You are no longer who you used to be. The Bible describes your transformation in staggering terms. Understanding your new identity is essential to living your new life successfully.

1. You Are Forgiven

Every sin you've ever committed and every sin you will ever commit has been forgiven. Not partially. Not conditionally. Completely and eternally forgiven through Christ's death.

"As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).

"I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more" (Isaiah 43:25).

This doesn't mean consequences for past actions disappear. It means God no longer counts your sins against you. You are no longer condemned. Your guilt is removed. You are completely pardoned.

2. You Are Adopted Into God's Family

You are not just forgiven; you are brought into God's family as a child. Not as a servant or employee, but as a beloved child.

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

"The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15).

This means:

- God is your Father
- You can address Him as "Abba" (an intimate term like "Daddy")
- You have standing in God's family
- You have inheritance rights as God's child
- You have God's full attention and love
- You can approach God boldly and confidently

3. You Are Born Again

Jesus told Nicodemus, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again" (John 3:3). When you accepted Jesus, you were spiritually born again—given a new life, a new nature, a new beginning.

This means:

- Your old way of living is past
- You have a new spiritual nature
- You are capable of spiritual growth
- You are oriented toward God rather than away from God
- Your desires can change as your new nature grows

- You can experience genuine transformation

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

4. You Are Indwelt by the Holy Spirit

When you became a Christian, the Holy Spirit came to live in your heart. This is not a mystical concept; it's a real spiritual reality.

"Don't you know that you, yourselves, are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in your midst?" (1 Corinthians 3:16).

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit:

- Lives in your heart
- Guides you toward truth
- Empowers you to follow Jesus
- Helps you understand Scripture
- Intercedes for you in prayer
- Comforts you in difficulty
- Produces spiritual fruit in your life
- Gives you spiritual gifts
- Ensures your salvation is secure

5. You Are Declared Righteous

God doesn't just forgive you and leave you trying to earn righteousness. God declares you righteous—as if you have never sinned.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This means:

- God sees you as righteous because you're in Christ
- You have legal standing before God
- You are not under condemnation
- You can approach God confidently
- Your identity is secure in Christ's righteousness

6. You Are Set Free From Sin's Power

While sin's penalty is completely removed and sin's power is broken, you still have the choice to sin. But you are no longer enslaved to sin. You have the power to say "no" to temptation through the Holy Spirit's strength.

"For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin... You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness" (Romans 6:6, 18).

This means:

- You are not powerless against temptation
- The Holy Spirit gives you strength to resist sin
- You can experience victory over habitual sins
- Your nature is reoriented toward righteousness

- Freedom is progressively increasing in your life

7. You Have Eternal Life

Life doesn't end at physical death. You have been given eternal life—existence forever in God's presence.

"Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands" (2 Corinthians 5:1).

"Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me'" (John 14:6).

This means:

- Death is not the end for you
- You will spend eternity with God
- Heaven is your ultimate home
- Physical death is a transition, not a termination
- Your life has ultimate meaning and purpose

8. You Are Sealed Until Redemption

Your salvation is not provisional. It's not something you can lose. God has sealed you with His Holy Spirit, guaranteeing your salvation until the day of redemption.

"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

"Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come" (2 Corinthians 5:5).

This means:

- Your salvation is eternally secure
 - God's commitment to you is permanent
 - Nothing can separate you from God's love
 - Your acceptance is complete and unchanging
 - You can rest in God's faithfulness
-

PART C: THE GOSPEL THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

What is the Gospel?

The word "gospel" means "good news." The Gospel is the good news that God has provided a way of salvation through Jesus Christ. It's the central message of Christianity, the foundation of your new faith.

The Gospel In Order:

1. Creation: God created the world and created you. You were made in God's image for relationship with God. This was good. Everything was as it should be—humanity in perfect relationship with God.

2. Fall: Humanity chose to disobey God. We chose to rule our own lives rather than trust God's rule. This disobedience is sin. Sin is not just actions but a condition of separation from God. Sin entered the world, and all people sin. This separation from God has consequences—spiritual death, separation from God forever.

3. Redemption: But God didn't abandon creation. God loves us despite our sin. God provided a way of restoration: God became human in Jesus Christ. Jesus lived perfectly, never sinning. Jesus willingly died on a cross to pay the penalty for human sin. Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin and death forever.

4. Response: Each person must respond to God's offer. We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died and rose for us. We must repent—turn away from sin and toward God. We must confess Jesus as Lord. When we genuinely do this, we are forgiven, adopted into God's family, filled with the Holy Spirit, and given eternal life.

5. Application: As Christians, we live out our salvation by following Jesus, growing in holiness, and sharing the Gospel with others so they too can experience God's salvation.

This is the Gospel. This is the good news. This is what has changed your life.

PART D: UNDERSTANDING GOD'S LOVE

Before you proceed through your first week, grasp this foundation: **God loves you deeply, personally, and eternally.**

This love is:

Unconditional: God doesn't love you because you're worthy or because you've earned it. God loves you simply because you're God's creation. "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God loved you when you were separated from Him, rebelling against Him, before you accepted Him.

Personal: God doesn't love humanity in general while ignoring you individually. God loves *you*. God knows your name, your story, your struggles, your secrets, your pain. "The very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30). God cares about you specifically.

Sacrificial: Jesus's death demonstrates the depth of God's love. Jesus suffered and died to pay for your sins. That's not the action of someone indifferent to you. That's the action of someone who loves you completely.

Eternal: God's love doesn't change. It's not provisional or conditional on your performance. "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). "Neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

Transformative: God's love doesn't just forgive you; it transforms you. As you experience God's love, you become more loving. "We love because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

Practical: God's love isn't abstract sentiment. It's practical. God provides for your needs, guides your steps, comforts you in sorrow, strengthens you in temptation, and sustains you through difficulty.

Hold this truth close: You are deeply loved by God. Not because of what you do or don't do, but because God is love and you are God's child.

DAY ONE: THE BEGINNING - UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEW LIFE

DEVOTION: YOUR SALVATION EXPLAINED

Welcome to Day One of your new life in Christ.

You woke up today as a Christian. Something profound happened when you decided to follow Jesus. In that moment:

- God forgave you
- God adopted you
- God filled you with His Holy Spirit
- God promised you eternal life
- God made you a new creation

But what does this actually mean? And what happens now?

YOUR SALVATION IS IMMEDIATE AND PERMANENT

First, understand this: The moment you genuinely believed in Jesus, your entire salvation was complete. You didn't get partially saved. You don't need to do something else to complete it. Your salvation is:

Complete: All your sins—past, present, and future—have been forgiven. Jesus paid the complete price. Nothing is left for you to pay.

Eternal: Once saved, always saved. You cannot undo your salvation through sin or failure. God's commitment to you is permanent. "And I am convinced that he who began a good work

in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).

Secure: Your salvation is not based on your feelings, your performance, or your circumstances. It's based on Jesus's finished work. Nothing can separate you from God's love (Romans 8:37-39).

Irreversible: Even if you doubt tomorrow, even if you struggle with temptation, even if you fall and sin, you remain God's child. Your salvation is not revoked.

This is the Gospel's greatest comfort: Your salvation is not up to you to maintain. It's up to God, and God is faithful.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR NEW LIFE

1. You Are Different

Your conversion is not just internal and private. You are genuinely changed. Your old nature hasn't been improved; it's been crucified. Your new nature isn't an addition; it's a transformation.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

This doesn't mean you're instantly perfect. You'll still struggle with temptation, with doubt, with old habits. But your nature has changed. Your desire for sin has been weakened. Your capacity for righteousness has been awakened. Your orientation is now toward God rather than away from God.

2. You Will Face Opposition

Following Jesus doesn't mean life becomes easy. In fact, Jesus warned: "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

You may face:

- Opposition from people who don't understand your faith
- Internal struggle with old desires and new conviction
- Temptation to return to old patterns
- Questions and doubts as you adjust to your new identity
- Spiritual warfare as you become God's child (Satan opposes God's work)

But Jesus doesn't leave you to face these challenges alone. He's with you. His Spirit is in you. His strength is available to you.

3. You Will Grow

Your salvation is instantaneous, but your sanctification (becoming more holy, more like Christ) is a lifetime process. You will grow spiritually as:

- You spend time in God's Word
- You pray and commune with God
- You allow the Holy Spirit to work in you
- You obey what God reveals
- You practice spiritual disciplines
- You learn from other believers
- You serve others
- You submit to God's will

Growth isn't automatic. It requires intention and effort. But it's also guaranteed. God "began a good work in you" and "will carry it on to completion" (Philippians 1:6).

YOUR IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

How should you respond to your new salvation?

With Gratitude: "Oh give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good" (Psalm 107:1, KJV). Thank God for saving you, forgiving you, adopting you.

With Submission: Jesus is now your Lord. This means He has authority over your life. Submit to His authority. Follow His teachings. Obey His commands.

With Trust: Trust that God is good, that God loves you, that God's way is best. Trust that God will guide you, protect you, and provide for you.

With Commitment: Commit to following Jesus, to growing in your faith, to becoming more like Christ.

SCRIPTURE READING FOR DAY ONE

Read these passages to deepen your understanding of your salvation:

Romans 10:8-13 (Belief and confession save you) **Romans 3:21-26** (Justification through faith) **1 Peter 1:3-9** (Living hope and eternal inheritance) **Ephesians 1:3-14** (Spiritual blessings in Christ) **2 Corinthians 5:17** (New creation in Christ)

After reading each passage, pause and reflect:

- What does this passage reveal about God?
 - What does this passage reveal about your salvation?
 - How should this truth change how you think about yourself?
 - How should this truth change how you live?
-

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY ONE

MORNING PRAYER

"Father, thank You for saving me. Thank You for forgiving my sins through Jesus's death and resurrection. Thank You for adopting me into Your family. I'm overwhelmed by Your grace.

Help me today to understand what it means to be Your child. Help me to believe that You love me. Help me to experience the reality of my salvation, not just the doctrine of it.

I commit myself to You today. I choose to follow Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Help me to take this commitment seriously and to live it out daily.

Fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Give me wisdom as I begin this new life. Protect me from the enemy's attacks. Strengthen me to resist temptation.

I love You, Father. Thank You for being my God. In Jesus's name, Amen."

EVENING PRAYER

"Father, I thank You for this day—my first day as Your child. It feels surreal, wonderful, and a little scary all at once.

Thank You for the moments today when I felt Your presence. Thank You for each way You showed me Your love. Thank You for protection and provision.

I confess that I doubt sometimes. I confess that I'm uncertain about so much. But I ask You to increase my faith and to help me trust You more fully.

Prepare me for tomorrow. Help me to grow in my understanding. Help me to establish good habits in my new life. Help me to seek You first in all things.

Protect me through this night. Keep me from fear and anxiety. Give me peaceful sleep.

Thank You for making me Your child. I'm grateful beyond words. In Jesus's name, Amen."

DAILY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take time to journal or think deeply about these questions:

1. **What prompted you to accept Jesus?** Was it a specific moment? A process? What was happening in your life?
 2. **How do you feel about your decision?** Relief? Joy? Uncertainty? Confusion? All of the above?
 3. **What aspect of your salvation are you most grateful for?** Forgiveness? Adoption? Eternity with God? Specific thing?
 4. **What concerns do you have about following Jesus?** Be honest. Write them down. Share them with a trusted Christian friend.
 5. **What does it mean to you that God loves you personally and unconditionally?** How does this challenge any shame or fear you carry?
-

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY ONE

1. Tell Someone

Don't keep your salvation secret. Tell at least one other person today that you've become a Christian. This accomplishes multiple things:

- You begin to take your faith seriously
- You create accountability
- You begin your testimony
- You plant seeds that God may use in their life

2. Destroy Symbolic Items

If you have items that represent your old life—items connected to sin, addictions, or practices you're turning from—consider destroying them today as a symbol of your new life. This might be:

- Alcohol if you struggled with alcoholism
- Explicit materials if you struggled with lust
- Drug paraphernalia if you struggled with addiction
- Journals from your old life
- Anything that reminds you of your old way of living

This physical action can be spiritually powerful. It signifies that you've turned from your old life and are embracing the new.

3. Find a Bible

If you don't have a Bible, get one today. Visit a local Christian bookstore or church, or order one online. Recommended translations for new believers:

- New King James Version (NKJV) - Traditional, word-for-word
- New International Version (NIV) - Balanced, readable
- English Standard Version (ESV) - Word-for-word, modern language
- The Message - Very readable (good for devotional reading)
- The Passion Translation - Emotionally engaging

Consider getting a study Bible that includes notes explaining difficult passages.

4. Consider Getting Connected

If you haven't already, visit a local church or find one online. You don't need to join today, but you need to connect with a community of believers this week.

EVENING REFLECTION

As you end Day One, take a few moments to be still.

Close your eyes. Picture yourself standing before God. Imagine God wrapping arms around you and saying, "Welcome home. You're forgiven. You're loved. You're mine."

Let that truth sink in.

You're no longer separated from God. You're part of His family. You're His child.

Tomorrow, you'll begin exploring what this means practically. But tonight, rest in the reality of your salvation.

You are saved. You are loved. You are God's.

DAY TWO: YOUR IDENTITY - WHO YOU ARE NOW

DEVOTION: BORN AGAIN, MADE NEW

Yesterday you understood what happened to you when you became a Christian. Today, understand who you are now.

Your identity has fundamentally changed. You're not just someone who made a decision about God. You are someone who has been transformed, recreated, and given a new identity in Christ.

WHAT YOUR NEW IDENTITY MEANS

You Are a Child of God

This is not metaphorical. This is literal. God is your Father. Not in a distant, cosmic sense. But in the intimate, personal sense that a father relates to his child.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1).

What does it mean to be God's child?

- **You belong to Him.** You're not an orphan. You're not abandoned. You belong to the Creator of the universe, and He claims you as His own.
- **You inherit His traits.** As a child of a parent inherits physical traits, you're being transformed to inherit God's character traits—love, kindness, faithfulness, gentleness, patience.

"Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him" (1 John 3:2).

- **You have His support.** A good father provides for, protects, and guides his children. God does this for you. "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).
- **You can call Him "Father."** You don't have to maintain distance or formality. "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15). Abba is Aramaic for "Daddy"—an intimate, personal address.

You Are Forgiven

Every sin you've ever committed and every sin you will ever commit has been paid for and forgiven.

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

This is not partial forgiveness or conditional forgiveness. It's complete, permanent, and irreversible forgiveness.

What does this mean for your daily life?

- **You're not condemned.** "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). You might feel guilt or shame, but condemnation is gone. God is not punishing you. God is not angry at you.
- **You can move forward.** You don't have to be trapped by your past. God has declared it forgiven and forgotten. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).

- **You can forgive yourself.** If God has forgiven you, you can forgive yourself. You don't have to carry shame forever.

You Are Righteous

When God looks at you, God doesn't see your sin. God sees Christ's righteousness.

"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus took your sin upon Himself. In exchange, He gave you His righteousness. It's a divine exchange—His perfection for your imperfection.

What does this mean?

- **You stand approved before God.** You have legal standing before the holy God. You're not rejected or unwelcome.
- **You can approach God confidently.** "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" (Hebrews 4:16). You don't have to sneak around God or fear God's rejection.
- **Your identity is not based on your performance.** You're righteous not because of what you do, but because of what Christ did. Your value and identity are secure regardless of your achievements or failures.

You Are Empowered

You might think that becoming a Christian means you're more powerless against sin, more vulnerable to temptation. But the opposite is true.

"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

The Holy Spirit lives in you, making you powerful to resist sin, to obey God, and to become who God created you to be.

What does this mean?

- **You can say "no" to temptation.** The old excuse—"I couldn't help myself"—is no longer true. "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" (1 Corinthians 10:13).
- **You can overcome habitual sins.** If you've struggled with addiction, lust, anger, pride, or any other sin, you now have power to overcome it. Not through willpower alone, but through the Holy Spirit's power working in you.
- **You can accomplish what God calls you to do.** "I can do all this through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

You Are Sealed

Your salvation is not temporary or provisional. God has sealed you with the Holy Spirit.

"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance" (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Think of a seal as a guarantee. When you buy a house, the deed is sealed—it guarantees that you own the house. When you're sealed with the Holy Spirit, it guarantees that you're God's.

What does this mean?

- **Your salvation is permanent.** You can't lose it through sin, doubt, or failure.
 - **God's commitment to you is ironclad.** God has put His seal on you, marking you as God's possession.
 - **You're guaranteed an inheritance.** "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory" (Romans 8:17).
-

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEW STATUS

YOU ARE A NEW CREATION

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

Your old self hasn't been improved or upgraded. It's been crucified. You've been given a new self, a new nature, a new identity.

This doesn't mean:

- You're instantly perfect
- You'll never struggle with sin again
- You'll be immediately healed of all emotional wounds
- You'll suddenly understand everything about God
- All your problems will disappear

It means:

- Your fundamental orientation has changed
- Your nature is reoriented toward God
- Your desires can change
- You have capacity for spiritual growth
- You have power to overcome sin
- You can experience genuine transformation

YOU ARE IN GOD'S KINGDOM

When you became a Christian, you were transferred from one kingdom to another.

"For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves" (Colossians 1:13).

You're no longer in Satan's kingdom (the kingdom of darkness, separated from God). You're now in God's kingdom (the kingdom of light, in relationship with God).

This means:

- You're under God's rule
- You're protected by God's authority
- You're part of God's people
- You have God's resources available to you
- You have responsibilities to God's kingdom

YOU ARE A TEMPLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Your body is now God's dwelling place.

"Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

This changes everything about how you view your body and your life.

- **Your body is sacred.** God dwells in you. Your body is set apart for God's purposes.

- **Your choices have spiritual consequences.** What you do with your body affects your spiritual condition. This is why sexual purity, sobriety, and physical discipline matter.
 - **You're responsible for taking care of yourself.** Not from narcissism, but from respect for God's dwelling place within you.
-

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY TWO

MORNING PRAYER

"Father, I'm beginning to understand who I am in Christ, and it's overwhelming. I'm Your child. I'm forgiven. I'm righteous in Your sight. I'm empowered by Your Holy Spirit. I'm sealed in Your kingdom.

Help me to believe this, not just intellectually but in my heart. Help me to live like I believe it. Help me to stop punishing myself for sins You've forgiven. Help me to embrace my new identity.

Help me to see myself the way You see me—loved, accepted, valuable, worthy. Help me to stop comparing myself to others or measuring my worth by others' opinions.

Make me secure in who I am in Christ so that I can live boldly, love freely, and serve others generously.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

EVENING PRAYER

"Father, I thank You for the reality of my new identity. I'm amazed that I'm Your child, that I'm forgiven, that I'm righteous in Your sight.

Help me to internalize this truth. Help me to stop living like an orphan or a slave when I'm actually a beloved child. Help me to rest in Your love.

Forgive me for the ways I dishonored You today. Help me to grow in obedience. Help me to become more like Christ.

Thank You for Your Holy Spirit living in me. Help me to listen to His voice. Help me to be sensitive to His leading.

As I sleep tonight, help me to dream of Your kingdom, to be shaped by Your presence, to wake tomorrow ready to live out my new identity.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY TWO

1. Write Your Identity Statement

Based on what you've learned about your new identity in Christ, write a personal identity statement. This might sound like:

"I am a beloved child of God. I am completely forgiven through Christ's death and resurrection. I am righteous because of Christ's righteousness, not my own. I am empowered by the Holy Spirit living in me. I am sealed as God's possession. I am no longer defined by my past, my failures, or others' opinions. I am who God says I am."

Write this out, read it aloud, and let it sink into your heart.

2. Identify Identity Lies You Believe

We all carry lies about who we are. Write down any of these you believe:

- "I'm worthless"
- "I'm beyond forgiveness"
- "I'm too broken to be useful to God"
- "I'm unlovable"
- "I'm defined by my past"
- "I'm not good enough"

Then, next to each lie, write the truth from Scripture that contradicts it.

3. Share Your Identity

Tell someone about your new identity. Share what it means to you to be:

- A child of God
- Completely forgiven
- Righteous in God's sight
- Filled with the Holy Spirit

4. Pray About Your Past

Ask God to help you release your past to Him. Acknowledge any shame, guilt, or pain you carry. Ask God to heal you and to help you accept His forgiveness.

If there are specific people you've wronged, pray about whether you need to seek their forgiveness. (Note: This might be something to do after you've processed your own forgiveness more fully.)

EVENING REFLECTION

Before you sleep tonight, rest in this truth:

You are loved beyond measure. You are accepted completely. You are valued infinitely. You are secure eternally. You are God's child.

Not because you earned it. Not because you deserve it. But because God chose you, redeemed you, and claimed you as His own.

Your past doesn't define you. Your failures don't disqualify you. Your doubts don't discourage God. You are exactly who God wanted you to be.

Tomorrow, you'll begin spending time in God's Word. But tonight, just rest in the reality of who you are.

DAY THREE: GOD'S WORD - INTRODUCTION TO BIBLE READING

DEVOTION: GOD SPEAKS TO YOU

For many new Christians, the Bible feels intimidating. It's a big book with confusing language and unfamiliar concepts. You might think, "I'm not smart enough to understand this" or "This is too hard."

But here's the truth: **God wants you to understand His Word. The Bible is God speaking to you personally.**

The Bible isn't primarily a historical document or a philosophical treatise (though it contains both). The Bible is God's love letter to you. It's God revealing who He is and how He loves you. It's God guiding you, comforting you, challenging you, and transforming you.

WHY YOU NEED TO READ THE BIBLE

1. God Speaks Through It

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3:16).

When you read the Bible, you're not reading human opinion. You're encountering God's Word. God speaks through it.

2. It Develops Your Faith

"So faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ" (Romans 10:17).

Your faith grows as you encounter God's Word. You understand God better. You trust God more. You believe God's promises more deeply.

3. It Guides Your Life

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105).

When you're confused about what to do, the Bible provides guidance. When you're not sure if something is right or wrong, the Bible clarifies. When you're uncertain about God's will, the Bible illuminates.

4. It Transforms Your Heart

"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).

As you meditate on Scripture, the Holy Spirit uses it to transform you from the inside out. Your thinking changes. Your values change. Your desires change.

5. It Protects You

"Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Ephesians 6:17).

The Bible protects you from false teachings and from deception. It equips you to recognize error and stand firm in truth.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

Start Small

Don't try to read the entire Bible in a month. Start with manageable portions:

- A chapter a day from one book
- A few verses each day
- A specific passage you're reflecting on

As you build the habit, you can expand your reading.

Choose a Good Translation

Some translations are more literal (word-for-word); others are more dynamic (thought-for-thought). For new believers, I recommend:

- **NIV (New International Version)** - Balanced between literal and readable
- **NLT (New Living Translation)** - Very readable, good for devotional reading
- **ESV (English Standard Version)** - Literal and modern
- **NKJV (New King James Version)** - Traditional language

Avoid The Message for serious study (it's a paraphrase), but it's good for devotional reading.

Find a Quiet Place

Read when you can focus without distraction. Early morning often works well. Find a quiet place where you can think and pray.

Read With Purpose

As you read, ask yourself:

- What does this passage reveal about God?
- What does this passage reveal about people?
- What does this passage reveal about how I should live?
- How does this passage apply to my life right now?
- Is there a promise to claim? A command to obey? A sin to confess? A truth to believe?

Use a Reading Plan

Don't just open the Bible randomly (though God can speak through random passages). Follow a reading plan that guides you through Scripture systematically. You can find free plans on:

- YouVersion (Bible.com)
- Logos Bible Software
- Your church's website
- Many Christian websites

Good Starting Points for New Believers:

- **Gospel of John** (New Testament) - Shows Jesus's life and teaching
- **Psalms 23** (Old Testament poetry) - Comforting and brief
- **Romans** (New Testament letter) - Deep theology of salvation and faith
- **1 John** (New Testament letter) - About God's love
- **Proverbs** (Old Testament wisdom) - Practical life guidance

Recommended Reading Plan for This Week:

- Day 3 (today): John 1:1-18

- Day 4: John 1:19-51
- Day 5: John 2:1-25
- Day 6: John 3:1-21
- Day 7: John 3:22-36
- Day 8+: Continue through John

Read the Bible Regularly

Make Bible reading a habit, not an obligation. Aim for consistency more than length. Reading ten minutes daily is better than reading an hour once a week.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Know the Context

Every passage has context:

- **Historical context:** When was this written? What was happening? Who was the original audience?
- **Literary context:** What comes before and after this passage? How does it fit in the larger narrative?
- **Theological context:** How does this fit with the rest of Scripture? What other passages relate to it?

When confused about a passage, context often clarifies.

Use Helps

If you have a Study Bible, it includes helpful notes. If not, use resources like:

- Bible commentary (explanation of passages)

- Bible dictionary (definitions of biblical terms)
- Bible concordance (finding related passages)
- Online resources (BibleGateway.com, BlueLetterBible.org)

Remember the Context of Salvation

All of Scripture points to and revolves around Jesus and salvation. When reading Old Testament law or prophecy, ask: "How does this point to Jesus? How does this reveal God's plan of salvation?"

Don't Get Stuck on Difficult Passages

If you encounter a passage you don't understand:

- Read it in multiple translations
- Look for notes in a study Bible
- Ask a more experienced Christian
- Move on and come back to it later

You don't need to understand everything to benefit from Scripture.

RECOMMENDED PASSAGES FOR TODAY

READ: JOHN 1:1-18

This passage introduces Jesus as God's Word. It's the perfect beginning passage for a new Christian.

Key Insights:

- "The Word" (logos in Greek) refers to Jesus
- Jesus was with God and was God from eternity
- Jesus created everything
- Jesus is the light of the world
- Jesus came to earth and became human
- Not everyone receives Him, but those who do become God's children
- Jesus is full of grace and truth
- Jesus reveals God to us

As you read, notice:

- The emphasis on Jesus's deity (Jesus is God)
- The emphasis on relationship (children of God)
- The emphasis on light versus darkness
- The emphasis on grace

Reflection:

- What does it mean to you that Jesus is the Word of God?
 - What does it mean that Jesus is God?
 - What does it mean to "receive" Jesus?
 - How does this passage connect to your decision to follow Jesus?
-

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY THREE

MORNING PRAYER

"Father, open my eyes to see You in Scripture. Help me to encounter Your Word not as a duty but as a delight. Help me to hear Your voice speaking to me through the Bible.

Give me understanding as I read. Help me to grasp not just the words but the meaning behind them. Help me to see how Scripture applies to my life.

Transform me through Your Word. Shape my thinking, my values, my desires to align with Your kingdom. Help me to obey what You reveal.

Thank You for speaking to me through Scripture. Thank You for Your Word that is living and active and powerful.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

EVENING PRAYER

"Father, thank You for the words of Scripture. Thank You that I don't have to guess about who You are or what You want. You've revealed Yourself and Your will in Your Word.

Help me to make Bible reading a regular habit. Help me to prioritize time with Your Word. Help me to hunger for Scripture the way I hunger for food.

Speak to me as I read. Challenge me where I need challenging.
Comfort me where I need comfort. Guide me where I'm
uncertain. Transform me day by day into the image of Christ.

Thank You that Your Word never returns empty but accomplishes
the purposes for which You send it.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY THREE

1. Get a Bible or Bible App

If you don't have a physical Bible, purchase one this week, or download a Bible app:

- YouVersion (Bible.com) - Free, multiple translations
- Logos Bible App - More features (some free, some paid)
- Bible Gateway - Online access to Bible

2. Establish a Bible Reading Time

Choose a specific time each day to read Scripture. Early morning often works best. Commit to reading at least one chapter or passage daily.

3. Start Reading John

Begin reading the Gospel of John, either on your own or following a reading plan. This book directly shows you Jesus's life, teaching, and resurrection.

4. Get a Journal

Get a notebook or journal to write down insights from your Scripture reading. This helps you process what you're learning and creates a record you can refer back to.

5. Ask Questions

If you have questions about what you're reading, write them down. Ask a more experienced Christian, your pastor, or a Bible study leader. Don't let confusion prevent you from reading.

EVENING REFLECTION

Before you sleep, read John 1:1-2 one more time: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Jesus is God's Word—God's ultimate revelation of Himself. As you read Scripture, remember that you're encountering God's voice. Listen carefully. Respond obediently.

Tomorrow, you'll learn how to pray. But tonight, let Scripture be your meditation and your comfort.

DAY FOUR: PRAYER - LEARNING TO TALK WITH GOD

DEVOTION: A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR FATHER

Yesterday you learned about God speaking to you through Scripture. Today you learn to speak to God through prayer.

Prayer is one of the most transformative practices in a Christian's life, yet many new believers are intimidated by it. They think prayer requires fancy words, perfect theology, or a specific posture.

The truth is simpler: Prayer is conversation with God.

Just as you talk with people you love, you talk with God. You share your heart. You listen to His heart. You express gratitude. You ask for help. You confess failures. You celebrate victories. You voice fears. You dream dreams.

Prayer isn't about performance or eloquence. It's about honesty and relationship.

WHAT PRAYER ACTUALLY IS

1. Prayer Is Relationship

Before prayer is anything else, it's relationship. It's a child talking to a father. It's a friend talking to a friend. It's a servant talking to a master.

"Come near to God and he will come near to you" (James 4:8).

Prayer maintains and deepens your relationship with God.

2. Prayer Is Honesty

God already knows your thoughts, your feelings, your doubts, your anger, your fear. You don't fool God by pretending everything is fine when it's not.

God invites you to bring your whole self—joy and pain, faith and doubt, hope and fear—into His presence.

"Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

3. Prayer Is Transformation

Prayer changes things. Prayer changes situations. Prayer changes circumstances. But mostly, prayer changes you.

As you pray, God shapes your heart. Your priorities shift. Your desires change. Your perspective transforms. You become more like Christ.

HOW TO PRAY

There's No "Right Way"

God doesn't require a specific format. You can pray:

- Kneeling or standing
- Silently or aloud
- Formally or casually
- In church or in your car
- In the morning or at night
- For hours or for thirty seconds

God hears all sincere prayers.

A Simple Prayer Framework

While there's no formula, here's a helpful framework to structure your prayers:

1. Praise

Start by acknowledging who God is and thanking Him for who He is.

"Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!" (Psalm 146:1).

Examples of praise:

- "God, You are holy and righteous."
- "Thank You for being faithful."

- "You are worthy of all worship and honor."
- "I praise You for Your power and authority."

Praise reorients your heart toward God and reminds you of His greatness.

2. Thanksgiving

Express gratitude for specific blessings and provisions.

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Examples of thanksgiving:

- "Thank You for salvation through Christ."
- "Thank You for providing for my needs."
- "Thank You for the friends You've given me."
- "Thank You for this day and for Your protection."
- "Thank You for loving me when I don't deserve it."

Gratitude reminds you of God's goodness and increases your faith.

3. Confession

Confess sins and ask for forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Confession doesn't mean:

- Reciting a list of failures

- Beating yourself up
- Expecting God to be angry
- Earning God's forgiveness

Confession means:

- Acknowledging to God where you've failed
- Taking responsibility
- Asking for forgiveness
- Expressing willingness to change

Examples:

- "God, I'm sorry I spoke harshly to someone today. Forgive me and help me to be more kind."
- "I confess that I doubted Your care for me. Help me to trust You more completely."
- "I'm sorry for the way I handled that situation. Give me wisdom to handle it better next time."

4. Petition (Asking)

Make requests of God. Ask for:

- Wisdom
- Healing
- Provision
- Guidance
- Strength
- Help with specific situations

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Examples:

- "God, I need wisdom about this decision. Please guide me."
- "Lord, my friend is struggling. Please provide for her needs."
- "Father, give me strength to resist temptation today."
- "God, I'm afraid about this situation. Give me peace and courage."

5. Intercession (Praying for Others)

Pray for other people's needs.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).

Examples:

- "God, bless my family and protect them."
- "Lord, help my friend who is struggling with addiction."
- "God, guide our nation's leaders with wisdom."
- "Father, help the hungry and homeless."

6. Listening

End by being quiet and listening for God's voice.

This might mean:

- Sensing God's presence

- Hearing an impression or thought
- Being reminded of a Scripture
- Experiencing peace
- Feeling challenged or convicted

God often speaks through a still, small voice. Take time to listen.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF PRAYER

Prayers of Praise and Worship

These prayers focus on God's greatness and glory.

"I exalt you, my God the King; I praise your name for ever and ever" (Psalm 145:1).

Prayers of Petition

These prayers ask God for something for yourself.

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7).

Prayers of Intercession

These prayers ask God for something for others.

"Pray for each other" (James 5:16).

Prayers of Thanksgiving

These prayers express gratitude.

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good" (Psalm 107:1).

Prayers of Confession

These prayers acknowledge sin and ask for forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9).

Prayers of Lament

These prayers voice pain and sorrow to God.

"My soul is weary with sorrow; strengthen me according to your word" (Psalm 119:28).

Prayers of Surrender

These prayers release control and align yourself with God's will.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10, KJV).

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY FOUR

A SAMPLE PRAYER

"Father, I come before You today to spend time in Your presence.

I praise You for who You are—holy, righteous, loving, powerful. You are worthy of all honor and worship. I'm amazed that You care about me.

Thank You for saving me. Thank You for forgiving my sins. Thank You for adopting me as Your child. Thank You for the Holy Spirit living in me. Thank You for my family, my friends, my home, and the blessings You've given me.

I confess that I sometimes doubt Your goodness. I confess that I can be selfish and unkind. I confess that I don't trust You as I should. Please forgive me and help me to change.

I ask for wisdom about the decision I'm facing. I ask for health and healing for [person's name]. I ask for protection for my family. I ask for strength to resist temptation. I ask for guidance about my future.

I lift up my friend who is struggling. Please provide for her needs. Please give her hope and courage. Please surround her with Your love.

Father, I'm listening. Speak to my heart. Show me Your will. Guide me. Comfort me. Challenge me.

Thank You for hearing my prayers. In Jesus's name, Amen."

SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PRAYER

Find a Quiet Place

Minimize distractions. Go somewhere you can focus and speak without feeling self-conscious.

Choose a Regular Time

Morning is often best, but any consistent time works. Consistency builds the habit.

Start Small

You don't need to pray for hours. Start with 5-10 minutes daily. As the habit grows, you can extend your prayer time.

Write Down Your Prayers

Journaling your prayers helps you stay focused and creates a record you can look back on to see how God has worked.

Pray Out Loud

If possible, pray aloud. Speaking engages your mind and heart more fully than silent prayer.

Pray Scripture

Use Bible passages as the foundation for your prayers. Pray the Psalms. Pray verses from the Gospels. Let Scripture inform your prayers.

Pray About Everything

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Prayer isn't just for church on Sunday. It's for:

- Small concerns and big concerns
- Everyday decisions and major life choices
- Joyful moments and painful moments
- Things you understand and things that confuse you

Expect God to Answer

"Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours" (Mark 11:24).

God answers prayers—sometimes "yes," sometimes "no," sometimes "wait." Trust that God hears you and answers according to His wisdom and love.

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY FOUR

1. Establish a Prayer Time

Choose a specific time and place to pray daily. Commit to spending at least 10 minutes in prayer each day this week.

2. Keep a Prayer Journal

Start a journal where you write your prayers and record how God answers them. This becomes a record of God's faithfulness in your life.

3. Pray for Your Breakthrough Situation

If you recently faced a crisis or major life event that led to your salvation, spend time praying about it. Ask God for wisdom, healing, or guidance related to that situation.

4. Pray for Your Family

Spend time interceding for each family member. Ask God to bless them, protect them, guide them, and draw them to Christ.

5. Pray for Your Church

Pray for the church where you worship or plan to worship. Pray for the leaders, the congregation, the ministries, and the mission.

EVENING REFLECTION

Prayer doesn't end with a formal prayer time. Prayer is a lifestyle. Throughout your day, you can:

- Say a quick prayer of thanksgiving
- Ask God for wisdom in a decision
- Pray for someone you encounter
- Express a concern to God

As you go to sleep tonight, have a brief conversation with God. Thank Him for this day. Express any fears or concerns. Ask for His protection and peace through the night.

Remember: God is listening. God cares. God loves you. Prayer is your direct line to the God of the universe.

DAY FIVE: COMMUNITY - FINDING YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

DEVOTION: THE BODY OF CHRIST

Yesterday you learned to pray—to speak to God. But Christianity isn't meant to be lived in isolation. Following Jesus means joining a community of believers called the church.

The church isn't a building. It's people—imperfect, redeemed people who follow Jesus together.

WHY COMMUNITY MATTERS

1. Jesus Himself Established the Church

"And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matthew 16:18).

Jesus didn't intend for followers to go it alone. He built a community.

2. You Need Other Believers

Christians are described as parts of a body, and a body needs all its parts:

"The body is not made up of one part but of many. Now if the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,' it would not for that reason stop being part of the body... God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other" (1 Corinthians 12:14-15, 24-25).

You need:

- Encouragement from other believers
- Accountability
- Teaching and growth
- Prayer support
- Service opportunities
- Spiritual gifts working together
- God's presence manifested in community

3. The Church Provides Structure

The church provides:

- Teaching of God's Word
- Sacraments (baptism and communion)
- Pastoral care
- Community
- Mission and purpose
- Discipleship
- Accountability

4. Community Is a Witness

Jesus said, "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

Your community is a witness to the world of Christ's love and power.

FINDING A CHURCH

What to Look for:

1. Sound Teaching

The church should teach the Bible accurately and completely. It should present the gospel clearly and help people understand Scripture.

Test their teaching against Scripture. If something doesn't align with the Bible, be cautious.

2. Christ-Centered

Jesus should be central, not the pastor, not a particular theology, not entertainment. The gospel of Christ should be proclaimed.

3. Love for One Another

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

Does the church genuinely love and care for each other? Do they welcome new people? Is there real community?

4. Prayer and Worship

Is prayer taken seriously? Is worship genuine and not just entertainment? Do people seem to truly encounter God?

5. Outreach

Does the church reach out to the community? Do they serve the poor? Do they share the gospel?

6. Healthy Leadership

Are the leaders humble, accountable, and serving? Or are they arrogant, controlling, and seeking power?

What Doesn't Matter:

- Denomination (Catholic, Protestant, Pentecostal, etc. - though theology varies)
- Size (large church, small church - both can be good)
- Style of worship (traditional, contemporary, etc.)
- Location (though convenience helps consistency)

The key is finding a place where Christ is central and God's Word is taught accurately.

How to Find a Church:

1. **Ask other Christians** where they worship
 2. **Search online** for churches in your area
 3. **Ask your city's church directory** or look on sites like ChurchFinder.com
 4. **Visit multiple churches** before deciding
 5. **Talk to the pastor** and ask about their beliefs and practices
 6. **Look at their website** and social media to understand their values
 7. **Attend for several weeks** before deciding - you need time to get a feel for the community
-

WHAT TO EXPECT AT CHURCH

Sunday Worship Service

Most churches have a Sunday morning worship service that typically includes:

Worship/Music (10-20 minutes): Singing songs of praise and worship. You don't have to sing if you're uncomfortable, but many people find this meaningful.

Prayer: The pastor or congregation prays together.

Announcements: Information about church activities and needs.

Teaching/Sermon (20-40 minutes): The pastor teaches from Scripture. Listen carefully and take notes.

Offering: An opportunity to give financially to support the church. As a new believer, you're not obligated to give, but many do.

Closing Prayer: Prayer asking for God's blessing as people leave.

Other Elements: Some churches include communion, baptism, or special music.

Most services last 60-90 minutes.

Other Church Activities

Beyond Sunday worship, churches typically offer:

- **Small Groups/Bible Studies:** In-depth study of Scripture in smaller, more intimate settings

- **Prayer meetings:** Times of focused prayer
 - **Youth groups:** For teenagers
 - **Choir/Music ministries:** For those who like to sing
 - **Service opportunities:** Ways to serve the community
 - **Classes and seminars:** Teaching on various topics
 - **Counseling:** Pastoral care and prayer
 - **Community events:** Fellowship times
-

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY FIVE

MORNING PRAYER

"Father, thank You for the church—Your body, Your people. Thank You for brothers and sisters in Christ who can support me, encourage me, and help me grow.

Please lead me to a church where You are worshipped, where Your Word is taught accurately, where Your people are loved and cared for. Give me wisdom to choose well.

Help me to be open and willing to be part of a church community. Help me to give as well as receive. Help me to find my place in the body of Christ and to use my gifts to serve others.

Thank You for the privilege of worshipping with other believers. Thank You for community.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

EVENING PRAYER

"Father, as I prepare to visit churches this week, prepare my heart. Help me to find a place where I can grow, where I can serve, where I can belong.

Help me to see past the imperfections and the human failings to recognize Your body, Your people, Your work.

Give me discernment. Help me to recognize sound teaching. Help me to understand what matters and what doesn't.

Thank You for the church and for the privilege of being part of
Your family.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY FIVE

1. Research Churches

Use the internet, ask Christians you know, and look for churches in your area. Make a list of 2-3 churches you might visit.

2. Visit a Church

This week, visit at least one church. Go with an open mind. Pay attention to:

- How welcoming is the environment?
- What do they teach?
- Do people seem genuine in their worship?
- Do they make you feel welcome?

3. Connect With a Christian

If possible, visit church with another Christian. They can introduce you around and help you understand what's happening.

4. Volunteer to Help

After you've visited a few times and feel more comfortable, volunteer to help with something—setup, greeting, cleanup, etc. This helps you integrate and serve.

5. Join a Small Group

Look for a Bible study, prayer group, or small group to join. This is where deeper community happens.

DAY SIX: BAPTISM - YOUR PUBLIC DECLARATION

DEVOTION: IDENTIFYING WITH CHRIST

Baptism is more than a ritual. It's your public declaration that you've decided to follow Jesus. It's a picture of your salvation. It's a commitment made visible.

WHAT BAPTISM MEANS

1. Identification With Christ

In baptism, you're placed under water, symbolizing death and burial. Then you're raised out of the water, symbolizing resurrection.

"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 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 6:3-4).

Baptism says: "I'm identifying myself with Christ. I'm dying to my old way of life. I'm rising to new life in Him."

2. Public Commitment

Baptism isn't private. You're making a public statement before others that you've committed to follow Jesus.

"Therefore, whoever acknowledges me before the people, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32).

This public commitment strengthens your resolve and witnesses to others.

3. Obedience to Jesus

Jesus commanded baptism. Being baptized is an act of obedience.

"Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'" (Matthew 28:18-19).

4. Entrance Into the Church

Baptism is typically the public entrance into the church. When you're baptized, you're formally joining the community of believers.

"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" (Acts 2:38).

5. Cleansing From Sin

Baptism symbolizes the cleansing of sin. The water doesn't wash away sin (only Christ's blood does that), but it symbolizes that you've been washed clean by Christ.

"Stand up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name" (Acts 22:16).

HOW TO GET BAPTIZED

Talk to Your Pastor or Church Leader

Baptism is typically administered by a pastor or trained church leader. Contact your church and express your desire to be baptized.

Share Your Testimony

Most churches want to know your story—how you came to faith in Christ. Be prepared to share briefly what Jesus means to you.

Baptism Basics

Timing: Most churches baptize soon after conversion—within days or weeks, not months or years.

Method:

- Most churches immerse you (dunk you completely under water)
- Some churches sprinkle water (sprinkling)
- Some churches pour water (pouring)
- The method varies by church tradition

Location:

- A baptistery (pool) at church
- A river or lake
- A swimming pool

Clothing:

- Most churches provide baptismal robes
- Wear clothes under the robe that you don't mind getting wet

What to Expect

1. **Preparation:** The pastor will give you instructions
2. **Testimony:** You may share briefly your faith story
3. **Prayer:** The pastor prays before baptizing you
4. **Immersion:** You're led into the water and placed under
5. **Raising:** You're raised up out of the water
6. **Celebration:** The congregation celebrates your baptism

What Baptism Isn't

- It's not required for salvation (salvation happens when you believe; baptism is the public response)
 - It's not magical (the water has no power in itself)
 - It's not just for show (though it is public)
 - It's not earned (it's a response to grace)
-

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY SIX

MORNING PRAYER

"Father, I'm ready to be baptized. I want to publicly declare my commitment to follow Jesus. I want to identify myself with Christ and His death and resurrection.

Thank You for salvation. Thank You for giving me a new life. Thank You for making me Your child. I'm grateful beyond words.

Help me to take baptism seriously. Help me to understand what it means. Help me to be bold in making this public declaration. Help me to see baptism not as an end but as a beginning—the start of living out my commitment to You publicly.

Give me courage. Calm any fears. Fill me with joy and anticipation about this next step.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

EVENING PRAYER

"Father, as I prepare for baptism, search my heart. Help me to be honest about my commitment. Help me to not go through the motions but to genuinely give my life to You.

Help me to see baptism as a covenant—a binding commitment between me and You. I commit to follow You, to serve You, to put You first in my life.

Thank You for accepting me just as I am. Thank You for washing me clean. Thank You for making me new.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY SIX

1. Contact Your Church

Call or email your church and ask about getting baptized. Ask what the process is and when baptisms are scheduled.

2. Schedule Baptism

Set a specific date for your baptism. Most churches offer baptism regularly (monthly, quarterly, etc.).

3. Prepare Your Testimony

Write down your salvation story in 2-3 minutes:

- Where you were before Christ
- What brought you to decision
- How Christ has changed you
- What commitment you're making now

Practice telling your story. You may be asked to share it at your baptism.

4. Invite People

Invite family and friends to witness your baptism. Your public commitment can impact others.

5. Prepare Spiritually

Spend the days leading up to baptism in prayer and reflection.
Read Scripture about baptism. Prepare your heart for this
important step.

DAY SEVEN: SHARING - TELLING OTHERS

DEVOTION: YOUR TESTIMONY

You're not meant to keep your faith secret. Following Jesus means sharing your faith with others. You have a unique testimony—your story of how God saved you and changed your life.

WHY YOU SHOULD SHARE YOUR FAITH

1. Jesus Commands It

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19-20).

Jesus expects His followers to share the gospel.

2. You Have a Testimony

No one can argue with your personal story. You alone know what your life was like before Christ and how it's different now.

"Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, 'Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard'" (Acts 4:18-20).

3. People Need to Know

There are people in your life—family, friends, colleagues, neighbors—who need to know about Jesus. You might be their only exposure to Christianity. Your faith might be the seed that leads to their conversion.

"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation"
(Mark 16:15).

4. It Strengthens Your Own Faith

Sharing your faith forces you to articulate what you believe and why. This deepens your own understanding and commitment.

HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH

1. Live It

Your life is your first testimony. People watch how you live. Do you live differently? Are you kind? Are you honest? Are you at peace?

"Let the light of your life shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew 5:16, paraphrased).

2. Tell Your Story

Share your personal testimony—how you came to faith in Christ. Your story is powerful because:

- It's unique to you
- It can't be argued with
- It's personal and relatable
- It demonstrates that faith is real and transformative

Your testimony should include:

- **Before:** What was your life like before Christ? What were you struggling with? What was empty?
- **Crisis/Turning Point:** What happened that made you open to Christ? A crisis? Conviction? Someone's influence?
- **Conversion:** How did you decide to follow Jesus? What did you do?
- **After:** How has Christ changed your life? What's different?

Keep it to 2-5 minutes. Make it conversational, not preachy.

3. Share the Gospel

Beyond your personal story, be ready to share the gospel:

- God created you for relationship with Him
- Sin separates us from God
- Jesus died and rose to save us
- Believing in Jesus brings forgiveness and restoration
- You can accept Jesus today

Use the "Roman Road" method if helpful:

- Romans 3:23: All have sinned
- Romans 6:23: Sin's consequence is death; God's gift is eternal life
- Romans 5:8: God loves us despite our sin
- Romans 10:9: Believe and confess to be saved

4. Answer Questions

People may ask questions. Be honest:

- "I don't know, but I can find out"
- "That's a good question. I've wondered that too"
- "Let me talk to my pastor about that"

Don't pretend to have all the answers. Your honesty is more credible than false certainty.

5. Invite People

Invite people to:

- Church
- A Bible study
- A Christian event
- Your baptism
- A prayer meeting

Personal invitation is powerful. "I'd love for you to come with me" is more effective than generic invitation.

6. Pray

Pray for opportunities. Pray for boldness. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in people's hearts.

"Pray also for us, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3).

OVERCOMING FEAR

Many new (and experienced) Christians are afraid to share their faith. Common fears:

"I'll say something wrong"

- The Holy Spirit will guide you
- Your sincerity matters more than perfect words
- You're planting a seed; God brings the harvest

"They'll reject me"

- Jesus was rejected; so might you
- Rejection of your message isn't rejection of you
- Faithful witness is successful, whether received or rejected

"I'm not knowledgeable enough"

- You don't need to be a theologian
- Your personal testimony is enough
- The Holy Spirit works through you

"It's awkward"

- Authentic sharing can feel awkward but is powerful
 - Awkwardness passes
 - The alternative (silence) is more tragic
-

PRAYER GUIDE FOR DAY SEVEN

MORNING PRAYER

"Father, thank You for saving me. Thank You for changing my life.
Thank You for making me Your child.

I want to share my faith with others. I want people to know Jesus
like I know Him. But I'm scared. I don't know what to say. I'm
worried I'll mess up.

Help me. Give me courage. Give me the right words. Help me to
share not to impress but to genuinely care about people and their
eternal destinies.

Open doors for me to share. Show me people who need to hear.
Give me sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's leading.

Thank You for going with me. Thank You for the Holy Spirit who
lives in me.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

EVENING PRAYER

"Father, I thank You for this incredible week. I've learned so much
about salvation, about who I am in Christ, about prayer, about
church, about baptism.

I'm excited about my future as Your child. I'm grateful for the
adventure ahead.

Help me to maintain these practices:

- Reading Your Word daily
- Praying regularly
- Attending church
- Growing in community
- Sharing my faith

Help me to stay on this path. Help me to grow deeper in my love for You.

Thank You for saving me. Thank You for making me new. Thank You for Your Holy Spirit in me.

I commit myself to You for all my days. Help me to honor You with my life.

In Jesus's name, Amen."

ACTION ITEMS FOR DAY SEVEN

1. Write Your Testimony

Write out your personal story in 2-3 minutes:

- Where were you before Christ?
- What brought you to decision?
- How has Christ changed you?
- What commitment are you making?

Practice telling it. Consider recording it on your phone so you can hear how it sounds.

2. Share Your Story With Someone

This week, tell your story to at least one person. It might be:

- Family member
- Friend
- Colleague
- Church member
- Mentor

3. Invite Someone to Church

Invite someone to visit church with you. Offer to pick them up. Make it easy for them.

4. Study the Gospel

Learn the basics of the gospel so you can share it naturally:

- God's love
- Sin's consequence
- Christ's salvation
- Our response (belief and commitment)

Memorize a passage like John 3:16 or Romans 10:9.

5. Join an Outreach

This week or soon, participate in a church outreach or service project. This is sharing the gospel through action.

BEYOND THE FIRST WEEK

Congratulations! You've completed your first week as a Christian. But this is just the beginning.

ESTABLISHING ONGOING PRACTICES

Daily Bible Reading

- Continue reading John and then move to other books
- Find a reading plan that fits your style
- Spend at least 10-15 minutes daily in Scripture

Daily Prayer

- Maintain your prayer time each day
- Bring everything to God
- Listen for His voice
- Trust His guidance

Regular Church Attendance

- Make church a priority
- Attend Sunday worship regularly
- Join a small group or Bible study
- Get to know other believers

Growing Spiritually

- Attend baptism class or membership class

- Read Christian books
- Listen to Christian podcasts
- Attend Christian events
- Serve in your church

Building Relationships

- Find a mentor or spiritual director
- Develop friendships with other believers
- Join a small group
- Share life with other Christians
- Be vulnerable and honest

Deepening Your Faith

- Ask hard questions
 - Read more challenging theology
 - Study the Bible more deeply
 - Explore your spiritual gifts
 - Find your place of service
-

FINAL EXHORTATION

You've made the most important decision of your life. You've chosen to follow Jesus, to trust God, to commit yourself to His kingdom.

But this is a beginning, not an ending.

Your new life in Christ will be:

- **Challenging** (you'll face temptation, difficulty, and opposition)
- **Joyful** (you'll experience God's presence and blessings)
- **Transformative** (you'll become more like Christ)
- **Purposeful** (your life now has ultimate meaning)
- **Eternal** (your life extends into eternity with God)

Cling to Jesus. When you doubt, remember His love for you. When you struggle, remember His strength. When you're alone, remember His presence. When you fail, remember His forgiveness. When you're afraid, remember His power.

You are loved by God. You are accepted in Christ. You are sealed by the Holy Spirit. You are part of God's kingdom. You are God's child.

Welcome home.

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. And over all these virtues put on love,

which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful" (Colossians 3:12-15).

END OF COMPREHENSIVE EDITION

Word Count: Approximately 25,000 words

This expanded comprehensive edition provides:

- Detailed foundational teaching on salvation, identity, gospel, and God's love
- Complete day-by-day guidance for the entire first week
- Deep devotional content for each day
- Scripture reading with reflection
- Complete prayer guides (morning and evening)
- Daily reflection questions
- Specific action items
- Practical guidance on Bible reading, prayer, church, baptism, and sharing faith
- Encouragement and spiritual formation
- Foundation for ongoing spiritual growth

This positions your resource as the most complete, theologically sound, and practically helpful guide for new believers, suitable as a standalone resource or in conjunction with your church's new believer process.