

Congratulations!

There's a good chance that you're reading this letter because you have recently made a decision to give your life to Jesus Christ. This is exciting and we believe it is the greatest decision you will ever make, and we are thrilled you have decided to live God's way! We want to help you understand the commitment you have made, so we have put together a booklet of information that might help you understand your faith as a new Christian.

Take the Next Step...

We're thrilled to help you grow closer to God. We have created this packet to help you begin the first steps in your faith. There's a lot of stuff in here, but here is a quick look at what is inside:

- Steps to a relationship with Christ (page 2)
 - This is a quick snapshot of God's plan for us
- Starting Out Right (page 4)
 - A Bible Study covering some foundational Truths from the Bible
- Ten Promises every Believer Should know (page 15)
 - Ten solid Truths from the Bible for you to rely on
- A Personal Spiritual Journal (page 17)
 - Some questions to help you reflect on your new life in Christ

Our Desire...

Is to be here for you and help you grow. We urge you to read through the material in this packet and if there are any questions you have, please don't hesitate to contact us!

Another great way to help you grow is to get involved with our Student Ministry. Come back next weekend to the weekend worship service. We would love to see you. We'd also love to get you connected in a SMALL GROUP with other believers. Small groups are designed to provide the support you need to build your Christian Faith.

Praying for your Growth,

Student Ministry Staff

Steps to a Relationship With Christ

A step by step guide to accept Christ as your Lord and Savior

Step 1: Understand WHY God created us

God created us because He LOVES us and wants us to ENJOY a personal relationship with him.

"Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ . . . because of His love, God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us His children - this was God's pleasure and purpose." Ephesians 1:4-5

Step 2: See the benefits of shifting into real LIFE

When we KNOW and LOVE God, and LIVE according to God's purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our lives.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

Step 3: Admit you're not perfect

HOWEVER, there is a problem! You already know what that problem is, no one is perfect! And the Bible calls that imperfection "sin." Sin means we are separate from God. Imperfection results in a consequence; and that consequence is eternal separation from God.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" Romans 3:23

Step 4: Know that a relationship with God requires perfection

God is perfect and we are imperfect. The only way for us to enjoy a relationship is for us to be perfect ourselves--but nobody is perfect!

Step 5: Believe that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead

HOWEVER, God came to earth as Jesus to lead a perfect life and to PAY the price of OUR imperfection! Why did God do this? Why did God send His son to die in our place? Because He loves us so much He did EVERYTHING to restore the relationship with imperfect people. Jesus freely offers this gift through faith in him.

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

"Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures..." 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

Step 6: Publicly confess Christ as your Lord and Savior

Once you believe in Jesus Christ and what He has done for you. It is time to shout it from the rooftops. Come and stand before you church family and share your confession that Christ is your Lord and Savior.

"Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven." Matthew 10:32

Step 7: Become a new creation in Christ through baptism

Now that you have publicly confessed Christ as your Lord and Savior, follow Jesus' example and be baptized by a believer. The water is not Holy, but through the act of obedience Christ gives us the gift of the Holy Spirit and forgiveness of our sins. Our old self is washed away and we are made into new creations in Christ.

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" Acts 2:38

"What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

Step 8: Begin living your new life in Christ to the fullest

After your have accepted Jesus' free gift of salvation, setting him apart as Lord and Savior of your life, it's now time to celebrate your new live in Christ. Throw away the old and celebrate the new

"What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?" Romans 6:1-2

Step 9: Remain Faithful

Now that you have experienced the new life Christ offers, stay close to him. Know that temptation will still come, but take refuge in the hope of Christ

"Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:10

Starting Out Right . . .

A Bible Study Covering Some Foundational Truths From the Bible

What is the Christian Life Like?

What's So Great About This Relationship?

Forgiveness: Can't Leave Home Without It

Direction: Which Way is God's Way?

Hope: How the Future Is Secure

What Do I Do Now?

What is the Christian Life Like?

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN IS LIKE A WEDDING

A wedding is a great celebration of life where everyone is happy and excited. As great as it is, a wedding ceremony is only the beginning of the marriage. A marriage is based on the commitment two people make to serve one another in love. In the Christian life, a person commits to serve God in love.

"In that day," declares the LORD, "you will call me 'my husband.' Hosea 2:16

"For the Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth." Isaiah 54:5

LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS MEANT TO BE LIKE A PARTY

The Christian life isn't boring or uninteresting; it's filled with challenges and excitement and should be characterized with excitement for life.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son." Matthew 22:2

BEING A CHRISTIAN MEANS ENTERING INTO GOD'S FAMILY

Without God we're orphans, in Christ, we've been adopted into God's very family.

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. John 1:12-13

What's So Great About This Relationship?

(Jesus speaking) "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." John 15:15

Being in God's family means he gives us:

1. FORGIVENESS FOR OUR PAST

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:19

2. DIRECTION FOR OUR PRESENT

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalms 119:105

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

3. HOPE FOR OUR FUTURE

"...faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time." Titus 1:2

"This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:9-10

The next few pages, we're going to explore some details of what God's forgiveness, direction, and hope means for our lives.

Forgiveness: Can't Leave Home Without It

1. NO ONE IS PERFECT, WE'VE ALL FELT GUILTY OVER SOMETHING WE'VE DONE

"...for all have sinned (imperfect) and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

2. GOD IS PERFECT, AND OUR IMPERFECTION CAN'T SURVIVE IN HIS PRESENCE

God's forgiveness washes away our imperfection and ALLOWS us to have a relationship with God.

3. FORGIVENESS IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE GOD LOVES US AND SENT HIS SON, JESUS, TO PAY THE PRICE OF OUR IMPERFECTION.

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

4. BECAUSE OUR FORGIVENESS COMES FROM GOD, OUR SALVATION IS SECURE AND UNSHAKABLE.

There's nothing anyone can do to keep us from God's forgiveness.

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 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 8:38-39

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:13

For Personal Reflection . . .

1. Why do you think we have to be forgiven in order to have a relationship with God?

2. How does receiving God's forgiveness help you in your daily life?

3. Do you need to ask God for forgiveness over something in your life that's keeping you from him? If so, use the space below to write a prayer to God asking him for his forgiveness.

Direction: Which Way is God's Way?

1. GOD HAS A PLAN HE CUSTOM TAILORED FOR EVERYONE

Every believer has a special part to play, that God has designed for us before we were born.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart..." Jeremiah 1:5

2. GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF LIFE AND THE CREATOR OF THIS PLAYGROUND WE CALL EARTH AND HE WANTS TO GIVE US LIFE TO THE FULLEST.

*"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. Now choose life..."
Deuteronomy 30:15, 19*

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the fullest." John 10:10

3. WHEN FACED WITH DIFFICULT DECISIONS, GOD WANTS US TO RUN TO HIM FOR HIS ANSWERS.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." James 1:5

4. OUR PRESENT SITUATIONS ARE NEVER TOO DIFFICULT FOR US TO HANDLE.

God is in control, and he won't let us face anything that's more than we can deal with. When we're faced with temptation, he'll always provide a way out of that temptation.

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:30-31

For Personal Reflection . . .

1. What are some things you think God wants to do through you to help others?

2. What are some areas in your life where you feel like you really need God's strength and direction?

Hope: How the Future Is Secure

1. HOPE: OUR PERCEPTION OF HOW THE FUTURE WILL TURN OUT.

What we hope for in the future determines how we'll live today. Without any kind of hope, life is meaningless.

"Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold." 2 Corinthians 3:12

2. THE HOPE WE BELIEVER'S HAVE IS SIGNIFICANTLY DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING NON-BELIEVERS CAN HOPE IN.

*"In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from God's people, Israel, and you did not know the promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope."
Ephesians 2:12*

"And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope." 1 Thessalonians 4:13

3. THE HOPE GOD OFFERS CAN'T BE CHANGED OR ALTERED

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:3-5

4. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIAN HOPE IS ETERNAL LIFE WITH OUR CREATOR.

*"This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe."
1 Timothy 4:9-10*

What Do I Do Now?

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." 1 Peter 2:2

1. CELEBRATE YOUR NEW LIFE!

As a believer, you've got the greatest thing worth celebrating, a new life in Christ!

2. GET CONNECTED WITH OTHER BELIEVERS.

Get connected with other believers who can encourage you and support you.

Take an inventory of your current relationships: are the people you are connected to helping or hindering your faith?

3. COMMIT TO GROWING IN YOUR NEW FAITH.

Make it a habit to spend time with God so you can get to know him better.

4. BEGIN THINKING OF WAYS YOU CAN HELP OTHERS

At the center of what it means to be a Christian is servanthood. There's no better time than now to start helping other people.

5. BEGIN THINKING OF HOW YOU CAN SHARE THE TRUTH ABOUT JESUS WITH YOUR NON-BELIEVING FRIENDS

Accepting Christ has changed your life, and it can change the lives of your non-believing friends. YOU DON'T HAVE TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS to talk about Jesus. All you have to share is the life change you've experienced.

Ten Promises From The Bible Every Believer Should Know

1. YOU WERE UNIQUELY AND SPECIALLY MADE.

"Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ . . . because of His love, God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us His children - this was God's pleasure and purpose." Ephesians 1:4-5

2. BELIEVERS HAVE THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE

"And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." 1 John 5:11-12

3. NOTHING CAN SEPARATE BELIEVERS FROM GOD'S LOVE

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 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 8:38-39

4. GOD HAS A GREAT PLAN FOR EVERY BELIEVER'S LIFE

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

5. GOD ANSWERS THE PRAYERS OF BELIEVERS

"Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete." John 16:24

6. BELIEVERS AREN'T TEMPTED BEYOND WHAT THEY CAN HANDLE

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. 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 stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

7. BELIEVERS ARE A BRAND NEW CREATION

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" 2 Corinthians 5:17

8. GOD WILL COMPLETE THE WORK HE BEGINS IN BELIEVERS

"Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Philippians 1:6

9. BELIEVERS HAVE GOD'S PROTECTION

"Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." Ephesians 6:11

10. GOD'S LOVE IS UNCONDITIONAL, IT CAN'T BE EARNED OR LOST.

"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," Titus 3:4

For Personal Reflection . . .

Which one of these promises is the most comforting to know...and why?

A Personal Spiritual Journal

New Believer's Journal

The following journal pages are a tool designed to help you reflect on your decision to accept Jesus as Lord in your life.

The Bible teaches that becoming a believer is a deliberate step of faith, not a hasty decision that fades into a broken commitment. We want your decision to have some depth, and the roots of your choice grow when you reflect upon your experience.

Work through the following questions slowly, and at your own pace. It's not a race and you don't have to finish all of them in one sitting. Don't let the questions limit you, they're meant to serve as a springboard for your thoughts. If you run out of room, write on the back! If you want to reflect on something that isn't covered in a question, do so! This is your journal, and your thoughts and words are priceless.

After you finish this journal, you may want to pick up a Quiet Time Journal to continue the habit of spending time with God, thinking about your life and what God is trying to teach you.

Why have you decided to make Jesus the Lord and Savior of your Life? What factors went into your decision?

Who are some people who were most influential in your decision?

What attracted you to the people you just mentioned? What are some of the qualities you respect or admire about those people?

How would you describe your relationship with God right now?

What are five words you think best describes God? Next to them write why you chose those words.

What do you think are some good things to do to deepen your relationship with God? (If you're stuck, think about this: what would you do to deepen a relationship with a friend?)

Why do you think God wants you to be in his family?

Who are some Christians you know and respect and could talk to about your faith?

Write down some big time questions you or your friends have about God, Jesus, the Bible, life, etc.

What do you hope and expect your new life to look like now that you're a Christian?

The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) What are some of the "old things" in your life which you hope to leave behind?