

How Do I Get Started?

Find a Christian who can answer your questions and offer suggestions as you begin growing in the Christian life. You are now a member of the same spiritual family of God!

{John 1:12}

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ increasingly with every detail of your life. This kind of trust (or faith) comes from studying and applying God's Word to your life and communicating with Him in prayer.

Becoming involved in a Bible study group with others like yourself will provide a good atmosphere for your growth. Don't feel you have to know and understand everything about the Christian life in order to participate.

Tell someone else what you have done. The Bible encourages us at this point: "For it is by believing in his heart that a man becomes right with God: and with his mouth he tells others of his faith, confirming his salvation." (Romans 10: 10. Living)

Beginning Your New Life!

Knowing Jesus Christ in a personal way is the most intimate, exciting relationship a person can have. It is the beginning of a life of tremendous adventure with an all-loving, all-powerful God.

Whether you have just received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord, or have just begun to desire to grow in your relationship with Him, clearly understanding the following principles of Christian growth should help you get started.

First, a brief review of the Four Spiritual Laws would be good preparation for thinking about these principles . . .

Four Spiritual Laws

Law One

God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life.

Law Two

Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.

Law Three

Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.

Law Four

We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord: then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

Knowing That Christ Is In Your Life

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.

(Revelations 3:20)

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."

(Hebrews 13:5)

1. Have you sincerely asked Jesus Christ into your life?

2. According to Revelation 3:20, how do you know Christ is in your life?

3. What do you think Hebrews 13:5 means in your own words?

4. On the basis of that promise, how many times do you need to invite Jesus into your life? Why?

(Similar promises are found in
Romans 8:39 and John 6 :37-39)

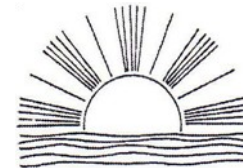
** Answers to these questions and others on the following pages are found on page 8.

4. We Talk to Those Who Don't Know Christ by Sharing Our Faith.

This verbal expression of what Jesus Christ means to us comes about as a natural result of growing in the other areas we've considered. Here are two interesting questions: What is the greatest thing that ever happened to you?

What is the greatest thing you can do for someone else?

You will want to share with others this good news of God's love and forgiveness that is available to all men through Jesus Christ.



2. God Talks to Us Through the Bible. The Bible is our spiritual food and the guide to living a healthy Christian life.

A. Growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ is closely linked to knowing and obeying God's Word. as I Peter 2:2 points out: "Like new-born babes. long for the pure milk of the Word. that by it you may grow in respect to salvation."

B. In one of the books of the New Testament — the Gospel of John 14:21, how does Jesus say that we can get to know Him better?

Jesus says that He will reveal Himself to us as we obey Him, and we can only obey Him as we study His commands in God's Word. Why not start letting God talk to you by reading on(; chapter of this book of the Bible each day?

3. We Talk to Other Christians During Times of Fellowship. One of the things that encourages us is hearing how Christ is working in the lives of others. The Scriptures tell us not to forget to get together with others who have found a genuine, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We can experience this fellowship by getting involved in a local church and perhaps a Bible study group.

Claiming God's Promise of Eternal Life

"And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life."

(I John 5:11-13)

1. Who is the **Son**?

2. What kind of life does God's Son give?

3. Since you have the Son, what else do you have?

4. When does eternal life end?

5. When did it begin for you?

6. The scripture above indicates that those who have received can _____ that they have eternal life. (Choose one: KNOW, HOPE, FEEL)

7. How do you know you have the Son?

Knowing the Basis of Your Salvation

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

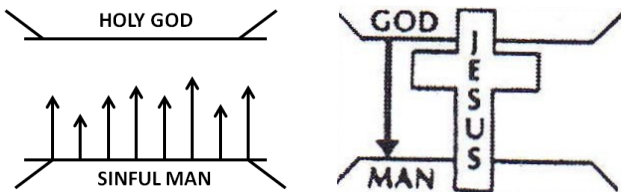
(Romans 3:23)

"For the wages of sin is death" (spiritual separation from God).

(Romans 6:23)

1. What problem do all people have?

2. According to Romans 6:23, what is the payment, or wages, for sin?



Where Do I Go From Here?

You met Jesus Christ when you received Him into your life. Now it's important to get to know Him. in order to trust Him with all areas of your life. How do you get to know another person?

Communication is important in all personal relationships — especially in your relationship with Jesus Christ. Let's see how "talking" applies to Christian growth.

1. **We Talk To God Through Prayer.** As we share our thoughts and our needs with God in prayer. there are some key things to remember:

A. **Pray about everything...** In Philippians 4:6-7. Paul says: *"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."*

B. **Pray specifically...** so that you can see God's specific answers.

C. **Pray honestly...** Share your real needs and desires. God will answer according to His will as you honestly communicate with Him.

What If I Sin?

First, let's recognize that God has given us tremendous promises. In **Romans 8:39**, Paul writes, *"(nothing) shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

Although God never rejects us, there are times when we turn our backs on Him. Then we need to confess our sins and thank Him for His forgiveness, secured by Christ's death for us.

1 John 1:9 shows how fellowship with God is re-established. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* When you know that you have sinned, admit your specific sins to God. Acknowledge that you have taken control of your life. Thank Him that Christ died on the cross to forgive you for your sins. Allow Him to once again direct and control your life.

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

(Romans 5:8)

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith, and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

3. What did Christ do for you so you would not have to make this payment for your sins?

4. What do you think says in your own words?

5. What do you have to do to deserve or earn Christ's payment for your sin?

6. On what basis then are you saved?

Beginning To Trust Jesus

"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"

(Matthew 6:26)

"And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 4:19)

1. If someone always keeps his promises to you, what are some of the things you can say about that person?

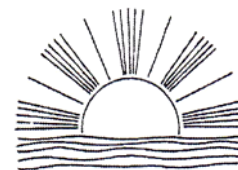
2. If you trusted Christ to come into your life, can you trust Him with the daily needs of your life?

3. What is one of the needs with which you can begin to trust **Christ**?

The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, as Christians, we do not place our faith in our feelings. Because feelings are often controlled by circumstances in our lives, they are unreliable. If we put our faith in our feelings, what will happen to our faith?

But if our faith or trust is placed in Jesus Christ and the promises of God's Word, which never change, what is the result?

Jesus says in **Matthew 24:35**: *"Heaven and earth will pass away. but My words shall not pass away."*



What If There Are Times When I Don't Feel Like a Christian

There will be times when you will not *feel* as if Christ is in your life. Receiving Jesus Christ as your Savior does not eliminate all your problems. If you face difficult circumstances, will Christ still be in your life?

How do you know?

Again, on the basis of Hebrews 13:5. Christ said He will never leave you. Christ can be trusted to keep His promises. The Christian lives by faith, not by feelings. He needs to put his trust in the trustworthiness of God Himself and the promises of His Word.

This train diagram illustrates the relationship

Between...

FACT [God and His Word]

FAITH (our trust in God and His Word)

FEELING (our response to circumstances).



Discovering the Importance of Fellowship

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:24-25)

1. What is the writer asking Christians to do?

2. According to the verses, why is it important to have fellowship with other Christians?

A. _____

B. _____

3. How would this fellowship be important in your own Christian life?

4. Where can you find this kind of fellowship on a consistent basis?

Principles of Christian Growth- Answers

PAGE 2—

2. On the basis of God's Word and His trustworthiness; 3. Jesus will never leave; 4. Only once, because He will never leave me.

PAGE 3—

1. I Jesus Christ; 2. Eternal life; 3. Eternal life with God; 4. Never; 5. When I asked Christ to come into my life; 6. Know; 7. Because I received Christ and He said He would never leave me.

PAGE 4,5—

1. All people are sinful; 2. Death or spiritual separation from God; 3. Christ died in our place. Jesus died for my sin, so I would have to; 4. Salvation is a gift of God. I can't earn my salvation. I am saved by faith, not by works; 5. Nothing, it is a gift; 6. Faith in that fact that that Christ made the payment for my sin. Faith, not works. Trusting that Christ has paid the penalty for sin.

PAGE 6—

1. That person is reliable, he can be trusted; 2. Yes; 3. Answers will vary according to personal concerns.

PAGE 7—

1. Meet other Christians for encouragement; 2A. To encourage each other. 2B. To stimulate one another, to love and, good deeds; 3. In a church and bible study group where Jesus Christ is honored and the bible is taught.

Now that you have considered these principles of Christian growth, here are some answers to questions you may have . . .