

Making Every Believer A

STRONG BELIEVER!

THE MOST IMPORTANT
DECISION OF YOUR LIFE IS TO RECEIVE
JESUS CHRIST
AS YOUR LORD AND SAVIOUR!

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO NEXT?

MATTHEW G. NEEDHAM

FORWARD STEPS FOR NEW BELIEVERS

The person who has become a Christian needs a better understanding of God's plan and purposes so they can grow quickly in their relationship with the Lord. There is much for you to learn, but through faith in Jesus you are on the right path. Walking with God is a daily walk. Continue to draw near to God and He will draw near to you. God will always be with you through the storms of life. Never let go of His love, joy and peace. I hope you will go far in your spiritual journey.

We will look at ten simple steps you should take as a new believer. These are suggestions for your help and encouragement, and should enable you to develop an intimate walk with God.

- 1) Have An Assurance Of Salvation
- 2) Let The Love Of God Fill Your Heart
- 3) Become Strong In Prayer
- 4) Study God's Holy Word
- 5) Know The Essential Teachings Of Christianity
- 6) Fellowship With Other Believers
- 7) Be Baptized In Water And With The Holy Spirit
- 8) Share The Good News Of Salvation With Others
- 9) Beware Of Wolves In Sheep's Clothing
- 10) Learn To Walk In God's Power

We will now go through these steps so you can apply them to your life:

1) HAVE AN ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

I was an eight year old boy when I first went forward publicly to take Jesus as my Saviour and to experience forgiveness of sins. A person was preaching a simple message for the children and it was about how sin (the wrong things we do) makes our hearts unclean, but Jesus died on the cross so that by His precious blood He can wash away our sins. If we pray to Jesus He will come and forgive us. Then God will give us a beautiful place in Heaven. Even a child can understand the true way of salvation (Luke 18:17), yet a person won't experience the reality of forgiveness of sins unless they open their heart to receive. With child-like faith I said, "Yes, I believe."

Small children often know when they have done wrong and I felt there was darkness in my heart. I acknowledged that I needed to

make peace with God. The person said that if you want to receive Jesus, you can pray a simple prayer to Him right now. When I prayed that prayer I felt wonderfully clean in my heart. From a young age I knew the reality of salvation and that receiving forgiveness of sins is real. The problem is that as we get older sin can have a more hardening affect, making people unwilling to have child-like faith.

If a person does not have an assurance of eternal life, even though they have responded to a gospel message, I would encourage them to go through the following list of sins and see if there are any areas where they still need repentance, forgiveness and cleansing. After that I would simply encourage them to put their faith in Jesus. The Lord Jesus is the Saviour and it is through faith in Him that we are saved. Many believers still have areas of darkness in their lives, holding them back from a full conversion experience. Please consider if you need to repent in any of the following areas:

Sexual immorality, which includes fornication (having a sexual relationship before marriage), adultery, prostitution, homosexuality, sodomy (the act of homosexuality), lesbianism, impurity, lust, pornography and lewdness. Sin includes drunkenness, debauchery, wild parties, depravity, idolatry (worshipping man-made gods), greed, stealing, swindling people of their money, hatred, murder (includes deliberate unnecessary abortion), jealousy, fits of rage, causing fights, malice, causing unnecessary divisions and quarrels, strife, deceit, filthy language, coarse joking, foolish talk, slander, gossip, lying, selfish ambition, arrogance and folly.

Sin also includes evil thoughts, disobedience to parents, bitterness, envy, being faithless, heartless, ruthless, ungrateful and unforgiving. The sin of witchcraft, which includes divination, sorcery, interpreting omens, lucky charms, horoscopes, hypnosis, casting spells, the wrong use of drugs, voodoo, white and black magic, being a medium or spiritist and consulting the dead. Sin includes being cowardly about following Jesus, denying the Sovereign Lordship of Christ, heresies and falsehoods (such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons, which are false cults), false religions (such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam), atheism, Freemasonry and the sin of backsliding.

(Scripture references: Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Mark 7:20-23; Acts 19:18-20; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 6:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 3:5-10; Revelation 21:8; 22:15).

People will lack a true assurance of salvation if they are deliberately walking in darkness or if they are failing to put their faith in Jesus

Christ. The way of salvation is a narrow path, a difficult path and there are few that really find it (Matthew 7:13-14). Having recognized any sin you need to deal with before God, please look to the Lord Jesus and the price He has paid in taking your sins upon Himself to the cross. Jesus shed His holy, righteous blood to make atonement for your sin. To have a powerful, life-changing encounter with God you need to be completely honest and humble yourself before the Lord. You have got to deny yourself, take up your cross, which means you crucify sinful desires, and follow Jesus. Always remember:

Repentance From Sin + Faith In Jesus = Salvation

If you are unsure where you stand with God, repeat the following prayer and confess your sins to Him:

THE PRAYER OF A LOST SINNER FOR SALVATION

“Lord Jesus, I need You to save me. I know that I have sinned, but I don’t want to be lost. Thank You for dying on the cross and paying the penalty for my wicked ways. I confess these sins to You now..... (name those sins).

I turn from them and I look for You to help me to walk the path of righteousness. I realize that my evil deeds are to blame for Your painful crucifixion, so I am truly sorry and I ask You to forgive me.

I believe the good news that You rose from the dead and that You are alive forever. I believe that You are watching me at this very moment, so I open the door of my life to receive You as my Lord and Saviour.

Come into my heart, take away my sins, and make me the kind of person You want me to be. I want to be Your friend. Fill me with the power of the Holy Spirit and let me overcome all the works of the devil. Come Holy Spirit.

Thank You for saving me and giving me assurance of a place in Heaven. I give all praise, honour and glory to Your holy name. Amen.”

‘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).

**I have decided to follow Jesus
all the days of my life!**

Yes

No

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever (your name) _____ believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

Date of birthday into God's family: _____
(The day you accepted Jesus as your Saviour)

2) LET THE LOVE OF GOD FILL YOUR HEART

God is perfect and pure love (1 John 4:8). 'Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails' (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Whenever you find yourself getting impatient, unkind, envious, boastful, proud, rude, self-seeking, easily angered, unforgiving or having other wrong attitudes, come back to the Lord and ask Him to forgive you of your sins and to give you the right attitude by filling your heart with His love.

We need to know the love of God the Father (1 John 3:1), the love of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:17-19) and the love of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:30). God is a Trinity (tri-unity) of three eternal and distinct persons and the Holy Trinity reveals the perfect love of God (Matthew 28:19). First and foremost God the Father has revealed His love by sending His Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins (John 3:16; 1 John 4:8-10). We are to rely on the love that God has for us (1 John 4:16). If you understand what Jesus has done for you in dying upon the cross you will not doubt the love of God. Rather you will be compelled by the love of Christ to live for God, being convinced that He died to save you (2 Corinthians 5:14-15). I know that God's love is faithful and true.

We will all face the storms of life, yet no difficulty, hardship or problem can separate a true believer from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:35-39). People turn away from God because they do not remain in His love to build an intimate friendship with Him (John 15:9-14). True faith must express itself by love (Galatians 5:6). If you are unsure of God's love you should lay hold of these Scriptures: 'And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us... But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us' (Romans 5:5,8). Focus on the fact that Jesus gave His life for you and allow the Spirit of God to pour His incredible love into your heart. Pray this kind of prayer often:

“Lord God, fill me with Your love. Let me understand the depths of love that Jesus has in dying for me. I open my heart for the Holy Spirit to pour God’s love into my life. Let me know the perfect love of my heavenly Father and help me to remain in Your love forever.”

3) BECOME STRONG IN PRAYER

Prayer is simply talking to God. You can’t get to know someone unless you communicate with them. In prayer we are building a unique friendship with God as our heavenly Father, with Jesus as our best friend, and with the Holy Spirit who is present with us now. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him (Psalm 145:18). Pray with childlike faith from your heart, expressing your thoughts and feelings to the Lord. As you pray, have an awareness that God is with you, watching you and listening to your every word.

When I was a young evangelist, I had the blessing of spending some months at a prayer school, which was a bit like a Bible College, but it was specifically devoted to prayer and intercession. There were a few young men and a few old ladies and we had a 24 hour a day prayer chain. Each person would be given 2 hours alone as their time slot to pray, as well as having times when we would pray together. Being committed to spending 2 hours alone sitting in a room each day forced us to become disciplined and to learn how to pray. We cannot become legalistic about set times of prayer, but we are called to be faithful (Romans 12:12). Spending time alone with God develops a love relationship. Many people need to give up time watching TV to pray.

You need to develop your own personal times of prayer. Jesus said, “When you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you” (Matthew 6:6). The true strength of your Christian life will be measured by these times of intimacy with God. The prophet Daniel had set for himself three times of private prayer each day (Daniel 6:10). This might not be so practical for your lifestyle, but if you learn to make prayer a priority and develop a godly habit you will make more progress in your spiritual growth. Often the best time to pray is to get up a little earlier in the morning. Each day is a gift to be opened with prayer.

I encourage all believers to attend a weekly church prayer meeting. The early Christians continually met together to pray and we must do the same (Acts 1:14). Learning to pray with others is very important. In

times of seriously seeking God, prayer meetings increase and can be aided with fasting. Mighty moves of God come in answer to prayer. Pour out your heart to God and pray for the salvation of friends, relatives and neighbours who don't know the Lord. The Lord will assist you in making right choices as you seek Him for the proper guidance. Always remember that prayer is powerful and effective (James 5:16).

4) STUDY GOD'S HOLY WORD

The Bible is our training manual. It was written for the purpose of revealing Christ, to give knowledge of eternal life and to warn us through the successes and failings of the Bible characters. 'For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us' (Romans 15:4). We are commanded to study God's word, search out for the truth and grow in our understanding (Acts 17:11). Set aside a time each day to learn from God's word and ask God to speak to you as you read the Scriptures. It is a guide to your feet and a light for your path.

The Bible is a collection of 66 books, written by over 40 authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. Divided into the Old and New Testaments it consists of law, history, poetry, stories, parables, letters and prophecy. Each book of the Bible is divided into chapters and each chapter into verses. For example, John 3:16 means the book of John, chapter 3 and verse 16. If you read about 4 chapters a day you will have read the whole Bible in one year. As you study the Bible, it will make you wise for salvation (2 Timothy 3:15).

As a new believer I suggest you begin by reading the New Testament, for that deals with the coming of Christ and the training of His disciples. The gospel of Mark is the shortest of the gospels and gives you a good overview of the life of Jesus Christ. The gospel of John is also highly recommended. After you have read all four of the gospels, read the book of Acts to know the history of how Christianity started and spread so powerfully throughout the world. New Christians should be taught the main doctrines that are important to understanding the Bible, so they can get closer to God.

In English, there are many translations or 'versions'. Choose a modern one that you can clearly understand, such as the New International Version, Good News Bible (for simple English) New King James, or the Amplified Bible can be helpful. Bibles are also available today on CD, DVD, on the internet and computer software. It is also handy to have a smaller sized Bible that you can easily take with you wherever you go. It is wise to have a notebook to record any

Scriptures the Holy Spirit highlights by causing a particular truth to jump out at you.

Expect God to speak to you as you read His word. Revelation comes from relationship. Building a closer relationship with God and receiving deeper revelation by the Holy Spirit through God's word go hand in hand. If you want to build a closer relationship with God, you must read your Bible. Ask the Lord to show you what it actually says, what it really means and how it applies to your life. What is God saying to you today? To become a strong Christian you must be disciplined in reading, seeking and studying God's Holy Word.

WHAT DO THESE TERMS MEAN?

The Holy Trinity – The one true God has eternally existed as three divine, distinct and simultaneous persons; the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2). The word "Trinity" is simply a doctrinal word used to explain one God in three persons; three persons in one God. In His supreme majesty, sovereign ability and glorious nature, God is a Trinity.

The Divinity Of Christ – Jesus, while being eternally at His Father's side, become a man. Jesus is the one and only incarnation of God (John 1:1,14,18). He is a divine being, for in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form (Colossians 2:9). He is called the Son of God because He is God (Matthew 14:33) and the Son of Man because He is man (Matthew 26:2).

The Holy Spirit – He is the eternal Spirit of God (Hebrews 9:14); a divine person who speaks (John 16:13; Acts 10:19-20), loves (Romans 15:30) and wants to have fellowship with us (2 Corinthians 13:14). The Holy Spirit has a mind (Romans 8:27), feelings (Ephesians 4:30) and a will (1 Corinthians 12:11). It is the Holy Spirit who convicts us of our guilt in regard to sin, righteousness and judgment, and draws us to Christ (John 16:8).

Satan – He is the ancient serpent known as the devil (Revelation 20:2); a spiritual being who fell from Heaven and is the leader of rebellion towards God (John 8:44). He is the tempter (Matthew 4:1-11) and the enemy of mankind (1 Peter 5:8). Unfortunately he is leading the whole world astray (Revelation 12:9).

Demons – Angelic beings who disobeyed God and were cast out of Heaven along with the devil. They seek to afflict, torment and curse the human race (Luke 8:27-39). Demons are often associated with the false worship of idols (Deuteronomy 32:17; Revelation 9:20). We are commanded to cast them out by the power of Jesus' name (Mark 16:17).

Angels – Having refused to side with the devil, they are holy and faithful to Christ (Mark 8:39). They are spiritual beings sent by God to serve those who will inherit salvation (Hebrews 1:14). All of God’s angels worship Jesus (Hebrews 1:6).

Heaven – The dwelling place of God and of those who are permitted to behold His glory forever (Revelation 4-5,7). After Christ’s death and resurrection, Jesus returned to Heaven to prepare a place for those who will follow Him (John 14:2-3). We are commanded as believers to store our treasures in Heaven (Matthew 6:19-21), knowing that we are citizens of that place (Philippians 3:20). A true Christian is escorted to Heaven after they physically die (Acts 7:55-60; 2 Corinthians 5:8). Jesus will reward those who live for Him (Colossians 3:24).

Hell – A prison for lost souls (2 Peter 2:4-9), where unbelievers are separated from the love and majesty of God (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). It is an eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). Many people deny the existence of Hell or think they are too good to deserve such horror, torment and shame (Daniel 12:2), yet people need to realize that if they die in their sins they are lost forever (Luke 16:19-31). You cannot reject God and not go to Hell (Luke 12:4-5). This is why salvation is so important.

The Second Coming – The Lord Jesus Christ will return from Heaven in all His glory and power to judge the world and separate the righteous from the wicked (Revelation 19:11-21). This is not a secret coming, for it will be visible from the east to the west and the nations will mourn because of Him (Matthew 24:27,30). Do not get caught up in date-setting or unsound end-times speculations (Matthew 24:36-39). Yet we must long for His appearing and hasten that day by preaching the gospel to all nations (2 Timothy 4:1-2,8).

5) KNOW THE ESSENTIAL TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

A good understanding of the following doctrines will enable you to stand upon the rock of Christ. People need a solid grounding in the Christian faith. Often what happens is that believers get caught up with side issues and forget the basics. Focus on that which is most important:

a) There Is Only One True God – There has always been and always will be the one and only true God. No other god was formed before Him and apart from Him there is no God (Isaiah 43:10-11; 44:6). God is eternal, without beginning and without end (Psalm 90:2; 93:2; 1 Timothy 1:17). The first commandment allows no excuse for worshipping a false god. “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

The second commandment allows no excuse for making idols (Exodus 20:4-5). People are led astray by false gods (Jeremiah 13:25; 16:19-20; Amos 2:4). Those who are worshipping other gods need to renounce them in order to be saved.

b) The One True God Is Three Divine, Distinct Persons – Right from the beginning God has revealed that He is a plurality of persons. God alone created all things (Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 44:24), yet God said, “Let us make man in our image” (Genesis 1:26-27). God created man in His own image by a combined act of the Father (Deuteronomy 32:6) and the Son (Colossians 1:16-17) and the Holy Spirit (Job 33:4). The Father is God, the Son is God, the Holy Spirit is God, yet there are not three gods, for they are of one substance or essence and have eternally existed together as God.

When people first accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, often they don't understand the full nature of God as a Trinity. They need to be shown this doctrine because it is the Biblical revelation that accurately describes who the true God is. A lack of basic understanding of this has caused many to be led astray.

c) Jesus Is Both God And Man – Jesus was with God, being at His Father's side, and was God from the beginning (John 1:1-3,14,18). To become a man He was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 1:20; Luke 1:35). It is wrong to deny the humanity of Christ (1 John 4:1-3) and it is wrong to deny the deity of Christ (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). Like the apostle Thomas, we must be able to say of Jesus, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28) Jesus is the perfect mediator between God and man because He is man and He is God. By proclaiming Jesus as Lord and Saviour, we are declaring that Jesus is God, the Second person of the Holy Trinity (Isaiah 43:11; 45:21; Hosea 13:4; Jude 4).

d) The Gospel Is The Death, Burial And Resurrection Of Jesus Christ – God will give eternal life only to those who believe the gospel of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:13). Therefore you need to know what the true gospel is. The gospel we are to preach and by which we are saved, is that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried and that He was raised from the dead on the third day (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). The gospel is the good news of salvation that Jesus has paid the price for our sins by dying for us and has conquered the power of death by rising from the dead (Romans 8:3; Philippians 3:10-11). Those who pervert this simple message are eternally condemned (Galatians 1:6-9).

e) Jesus Rose From The Dead Physically – When Jesus died His spirit left His body and His body was placed inside a tomb (Luke 23:46). His body did not see decay (Acts 2:26-31). When Jesus rose from the dead His spirit entered His same body that had died (John 2:19-22). The same nail marks were in His hands and there were scars from where the spear had been plunged into His side (John 20:24-27). Having conquered death, His body was no longer a mortal body but a resurrection body, which is immortal (2 Timothy 1:10). To receive eternal life you must confess that “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in His resurrection (Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 15:17-20).

f) Salvation Is By Grace Through Faith In Jesus – Jesus is the Saviour of the world and we are saved from the punishment of sin by putting our faith in Him (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14). Righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ and His precious blood (Romans 3:22-26; Romans 5:1-2). Our own good works do not save us. ‘For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast’ (Ephesians 2:8-9). Salvation is a gift which we receive by faith. As you believe and trust in Christ, His blood purifies your heart. When a person has sinned, they cannot remove or atone for that sin by trying harder or by doing some extra good works. They must check to see if their faith is really in Jesus.

g) Jesus Is The Only Way To God – Jesus made it clear: “I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved” (John 10:9). “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). ‘Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved’ (Acts 4:12). ‘For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ’ (1 Corinthians 3:11). ‘Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God’ (2 John 9). Those who turn aside from the teachings of Christ will not enter the kingdom of Heaven.

Many Churches have not equipped their congregations with a basic knowledge of Christianity and that is why so many people fall away. Jesus said, “If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned” (John 15:6). Through the sin of unbelief people do not remain in Christ (Hebrews 3:19). The Bible clearly shows that a Christian will lose their salvation if they drift away from Jesus and begin to deny Him (John 8:24; Romans 11:17-22; Hebrews 2:1-3; 10:26-31).

6) FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER BELIEVERS

Meet with other Christians who are on fire for Jesus and are passionate about what God has done in their lives. Go to a Bible believing church that loves the Lord and has a vision for spiritual growth. New Christians need careful guidance and direction to get well-grounded in the faith. Belonging to a strong church enables you to pray with those who are strong in prayer and study the word of God with those who can open up the Scriptures with great insight and revelation. Join a weekly Bible study group and ask them to help answer any questions you may have. The local church is God's instrument for revival.

It is written: '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 10:25). Believers must constantly encourage one another. Having good Christian friends will help you to overcome the temptations of the world. This kind of fellowship is very important; otherwise the devil will come along and cut you off. The devil is very successful in stopping people from going to church. Christians have to learn to put aside minor issues and get along with one another. Learn from those who have strong faith.

Belonging to a local church has to come out of conviction and not just religious habit, but you also need godly habits to make you strong, otherwise you will develop ungodly habits. Those who don't keep moving on with God will fall short of their high calling. If you start to find church boring, you need to pray doubly hard or look for a new church. To grow in the Lord you need to learn from those who are seeking maturity and fullness in Christ. You've got to fellowship with godly men and women; otherwise you may soon become lukewarm and die spiritually. Find a church that is on fire for God and you will add to the brightness of that flame.

7) BE BAPTIZED IN WATER AND WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Water baptism is a step of obedience to Jesus and you should be baptized immediately upon confession of faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 8:26-40). Through baptism you are declaring that you will follow Jesus all the days of your life and you are trusting in Him alone for your salvation (Acts 4:12; Mark 16:15-16). You are identifying yourself with His death and resurrection by making a public declaration of following Him (Romans 6:3-5). This is another reason why you should be involved with

the local church fellowship. Have a talk with your pastor about being water baptized.

John the Baptist was anointed to prepare the people for the coming of Christ, causing them to come under conviction and to repent when they heard his preaching. Water baptism was a sign of their repentance (Mark 1:4). In times of revival there is tremendous conviction of sin. Those who repent and put their faith in Jesus are ready to be baptized. We encourage everyone to do so because it is an act of righteousness and is an important part of following in the footsteps of Jesus (Matthew 3:15).

New Christians also need to receive power to live for God by receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit (Luke 24:49). This will give you a greater anointing and awareness of God's presence for the purpose of living for Christ. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is an anointing of power to be a witness for Christ (Acts 1:8). This power is available for us today, so that we will reach out with boldness to others. Every Christian should eagerly desire spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues, prophecy and healing (1 Corinthians 12:1,7-10; 14:1). Praying in tongues allows you to edify and build up your spirit (1 Corinthians 14:4; Jude 20).

Being baptized in water and baptized with the Holy Spirit were extremely significant life-changing events in my life. God's power went through my body like a wave of electricity. When I prayed to receive the gift of speaking in tongues, words appeared in my mind and I could actually read out those words. As I did this the words vanished, but I have been speaking in tongues ever since. Some people have been put off tongues or have found it difficult to come into this. Be at peace. We are saved by faith in Jesus, not by speaking in tongues, yet we should continue to press into the spiritual gifts. Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and keep pressing on in your walk with Him.

If you are seeking the baptism with the Holy Spirit, talk to a Spirit-filled pastor to get more advice and teaching on this. You should then have a time where believers lay hands and pray for you to be baptized with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:1-7). When this happened to me it gave me such a hunger for God and a desire to preach the gospel. That spiritual fire is still burning in my heart today.

8) SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS

Ask God to give you wisdom in sharing your faith. I find it helpful to carry suitable material, such as good testimonies, tracts or booklets, Christian DVD's, etc, that I can give away as opportunities arise.

When you have something good to give someone, it is not hard to witness. It is beneficial to memorize some Bible verses and a simple salvation presentation that is effective when speaking with other people, but most importantly you have to learn how to share your testimony. Your testimony is simply sharing what Christ has done and what He is doing in your life (Mark 5:19).

Telling others of your decision to follow Jesus might not be easy at times, but the more you live it and walk it, the more natural it becomes. I suggest that you first of all write down what God has done in your life, what drew you to the Lord and how you have seen God's hand at work in your circumstances. You can add any favourite Scripture to it and any wisdom you have seen in Christ. Now try sharing this with a neighbour or friend, either by giving them a written copy or by using it in conversation. As you continue working on your testimony you can make it into a small booklet, make some photocopies and post it to relatives or friends. You can email your testimony around the world.

Sharing your faith with others allows you to go deeper in your walk with God (Philemon 6). It may be possible for you to join with some other Christians who do evangelism and learn from them. Get further training and become better equipped for the work of God. Studying the lives of some great missionaries or evangelists can inspire you to go further in your walk with Jesus. God has given us time in this world to bring as many as possible into His kingdom. There's only one way to Heaven and that is through Jesus. Therefore every believer must be pointing others to Christ.

We must cultivate a desire for the salvation of others. Looking into the fires of Hell and the glories of Heaven should give you a strong desire to save other people. Do not be discouraged or give up if you are ignored, ridiculed or don't seem to be making much progress at first. Ask God for more wisdom and He may show you another approach that might be better (Proverbs 11:30). Let your light shine before men, for you can save someone's life. I was blessed that almost immediately after God's power touched my life when I was 16 years old, I actively became involved with evangelism and sharing the gospel with unbelievers. In the next 20 years I was able to share the gospel with more than half-a-million people.

9) BEWARE OF WOLVES IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

It is very unfortunate, but the reality of this world is that Satan prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour (1 Peter

5:8). His prime targets are the weak Christians and the new-born spiritual babies. The apostle Paul gave this warning to the believers: 'I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ' (2 Corinthians 11:2-3). The work of Satan is to lead you away from pure and sincere devotion towards Jesus Christ.

Throughout the writings of the apostles there are warnings about false apostles, false prophets, false teachers and those who deny the Sovereign Lordship of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; 2 Peter 2:1; Jude 4). Jesus refers to them as being wolves in sheep's clothing (Matthew 7:15-23). I also have to give you a clear warning about some of the false prophets who have deceived many and have drawn away disciples after their own particular heresies and false doctrines (Acts 19:28-31). Many cults reinterpreted the Bible in order to deny the fundamental teachings of the Christian faith.

COUNTERFEIT CHURCHES

Jehovah's Witnesses – In denying the deity of Christ, a Jehovah's Witness cannot worship Jesus (Revelation 5:11-14), pray to Jesus (Acts 7:59-60) or have Jesus living in their heart (2 Corinthians 13:5), which are all necessities for being a true Christian. It is by believing in Jesus that we have eternal life and it is by His name we are saved (John 20:31; Acts 4:12). They claim that only 144,000 JW's can go to Heaven, which is a misinterpretation of the Scriptures (Revelation 7).

Mormons (Latter-Day Saints) – Joseph Smith taught that God was once a man just like us, who earned his exaltation to Godhood, and that we can also become gods. This is blasphemy (Acts 8:21-23). He claimed that Jesus was literally the spirit-brother of Lucifer (John 1:1-3), and that Jesus was a son of God, not the one and only Son of God (John 3:16). Joseph Smith was heavily involved in the occult and polygamy when he founded Mormonism on the claim that all the Christian churches were false (Jude 4).

Christian Science – This false cult is not Christian and it is not science. They claim there is no Trinity (Matthew 28:19), Jesus was not the Christ (John 11:27), Jesus did not die (Romans 8:34), there is no devil (Ephesians 4:27), there is no sin (1 John 1:8) and evil and good are not real (3 John 11).

Christadelphians – They deny that Jesus is divine or that He existed prior to His incarnation (John 1:1-3; 8:24,58). They deny the personhood and deity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4). They deny the existence of Hell and eternal punishment for sin, and they deny the existence of a spirit being who fell from Heaven and became the devil (Matthew 25:41,46; Revelation 20:10).

Moonies (Unification Church) – Sun Myung Moon, the founder of this cult, called himself, “Lord of the Second Advent,” “Father of the Universe,” and “Visible God.” He is a totally deluded false prophet (Matthew 24:4-5,23-25). Sun Moon taught that Jesus was just a man who attained deity and that Jesus’ death on the cross was not an essential part of God’s plan for redeeming sinful man (John 1:1; 1 Corinthians 1:18).

CHURCHES WITH MAJOR DOCTRINAL PROBLEMS

Romans Catholics – A major error within this church is the exaltation of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Many people are deceived into praying to her, bowing before statues or images and looking to Mary as the mediator between them and God, in direct disobedience to Scripture (Matthew 4:10; 1 Timothy 2:5). Mary was a humble woman who looked to God for salvation (Luke 1:47). She is not some kind of goddess. Those who look to Mary for salvation or for answers to their prayers have been led astray. We must not bow or pray towards idols (Exodus 20:3-5). Renounce the spirit of Mary worship.

Seventh Day Adventists – SDA’s have failed to understand the fulfilment of the Old Covenant by the New Covenant (Luke 22:20). Under the New Covenant dietary laws are of no value and the Sabbath Day has been broken by Jesus Christ (Mark 7:19; John 5:18). No one can be justified before God by obeying the law (Galatians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:16-17). We are not called to preach the Sabbath; we are called to preach the Gospel.

Oneness Jesus Churches – There are a number of churches that hold to a second form of denying the Holy Trinity by claiming that the Father became Jesus and then Jesus became the Holy Spirit. Instead of three distinct persons, they claim there is only one. Many Scriptures show that Jesus is distinct from the Father and the Holy Spirit (Luke 22:42; John 14:23-24; Revelation 5:7). When Jesus was water baptized, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a dove and the voice of God the Father spoke from Heaven (Matthew 3:16-17). Right now Jesus is seated at the right hand of God the Father and the Holy Spirit is at

work throughout the earth (Acts 7:51-56). Those who deny the distinct persons of the Trinity need to repent.

Liberal Denominations – A number of churches have become spiritually dead and have then compromised with the sin of homosexuality. There are certain issues we have got to take a definite stand on. The word of God clearly shows that homosexuality is an abomination to God (Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-28). It is a dirty filthy practice and no homosexual will enter the kingdom of Heaven unless they repent (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Jude 7).

There are many cults and false churches around. The best way not to fall into error is to know the truth. If believers understood the basic teachings of Christ they would not have been so easily led astray. Christian leaders have to keep watch and give an account for their flock (Hebrews 13:17).

10) LEARN TO WALK IN GOD'S POWER

All Christians can learn to pray for the sick, drive out demons and believe for the power of God to be manifested through the wonderful gifts of the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:15-20; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). We need to know the reality of God. He is a mighty miracle worker and nothing is impossible for Him.

Pray For The Sick – Jesus was full of compassion for those who were suffering and He constantly reached out to heal them (Mark 1:41-42). Be encouraged to pray for anyone and believe God (Mark 16:18; James 5:14-16). I don't pretend that people are healed when they are not. Jesus said the sick do need a doctor (Matthew 9:12). Yet we should stand upon God's healing promises and look to Jesus as our Healer (Psalm 103:1-5; 107:20; 1 Peter 2:24). Believe in God's power and with child-like faith get praying for people.

Drive Out Demons – A high percentage of people need deliverance and this is a key factor in setting them free. The people of the world are governed by demonic powers and they need to break free from the grip of Satan (Ephesians 2:2; Colossians 1:13; 1 John 5:19). Throughout Christ's ministry He was constantly casting out demons (Matthew 8:16,28-34). Jesus has conquered the demonic forces and in His name He has sent us to drive them out (Mark 16:17; John 20:21; Colossians 2:15). Know your authority in Christ (Luke 10:17-19).

Minister In The Power Of The Holy Spirit – We are to be vessels of God's power. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit will speak to us (John 16:13). Look to God to speak to you and then speak out what He

puts on your heart. As you speak words of encouragement to people, the gift of prophecy will begin to flow (1 Corinthians 14:3,31). The Holy Spirit can then lead you into other spiritual gifts. By faith in Jesus the power of God is at work in our lives (Ephesians 1:18-21). People need to see the reality of the supernatural realm. We should pray that God will confirm His word with miraculous signs and wonders (Acts 4:29-31).

PRESS ON TO HIGHER GROUND

A decision to live for Jesus is a continuous learning and growing process. God's truths have to be worked out in our lives. Take every opportunity to see that the call of God upon your life matures. Heed the wise counsel of others who have walked intimately with the Lord and learn from those who have gone on with God. Let nothing stop you from entering Heaven. Many people claim to know God, yet they only let Him come into their lives so far and no further. What you need is wholehearted obedience, commitment and loving devotion towards Jesus. Keep growing in your knowledge of Him (2 Peter 3:18).

I hope you have a desire to press into all that God has for your life and that you will overcome the world, the flesh (sinful nature) and the devil. Many who succumb to the devil's lies and enticements forfeit their relationship with God. The apostle Peter warns the believers to add godly character to their faith and to 'be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if you do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ' (2 Peter 1:10-11).

It is unfortunate that some believers are lazy and careless about their walk with the Lord. It is as if spiritual things do not mean much to them. They are content with salvation and just scraping through the gates of Heaven. They are satisfied with remaining in the lower levels of God's truths, but they will not reap the greater rewards of those who go on in their spiritual walk. As you grow in the Lord, you are helping to prepare yourself to attain a position with God which is eternal.

Tell me of your decision to follow Jesus by contacting:

findsalvation@hotmail.com

or visit:

www.evangelistmatthew.com

God Bless You As You Grow In Your Relationship With Christ

