

Your personal  
guidebook for the  
first few steps of your  
new life as a member  
of the family of God.



WEST SALEM

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CHURCH

*"Now I call you Friends"*

# new believer's guide



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# Congratulations!

## Five Steps on the Path of Your Christian Journey

Welcome to the family of God. We're excited because we know that God has good things ahead for you.

Jesus Christ made it clear that a person must be "born again" before he can enter into the kingdom of God (John 3:3). The words "born again" have been used to describe everything from love affairs to soap products in commercials. But what it really means is the Spirit of God now lives in your heart and has been given control of your life.

Life as a Christian is the most exciting and rewarding life a person can ever experience. God has plans for your life that are beyond your greatest expectations.

*"Now glory be to God who by His mighty power at work within us is able to do far more than we would ever dare to ask or even dream of - infinitely beyond our highest prayers, desires, thoughts, or hopes." - EPHESIANS 3:20*

As a new Christian, there are five steps that are important for you to take to help you to grow in the knowledge of Christ. Three of these steps are in the following scripture found in Matthew 11:28-30:

*"Come to Me and I will give you rest - all of you who work so hard beneath a heavy yoke. Wear my yoke - for it fits perfectly - and let Me teach you; for I am gentle and humble, and you shall find rest for your souls; for I give you only light burdens." - MATTHEW 11:28-30*

### **First Step – Accept Christ Into Your Life**

First of all, Jesus said, "Come to Me." You've done that by accepting Christ, and you are probably already experiencing the rest and peace that Jesus promised. It also means that each day we need to come to Him in "quiet time" of prayer and Bible reading. That way, we start each day on the right foot!

### **Second Step – Give Him Control Over Your Life**

Secondly, Jesus said, "wear My yoke." A yoke was what the farmer would use to steer the oxen to do his work. By pulling on the reins, he could steer the oxen from left to right, from one field to another. The ox knew that the farmer was in control of what he would be doing and where he would be going. Jesus wants the reins of your life. He wants the steering wheel.

Give Him control of your life. At first you might feel a little uncomfortable, but God knows everything. God is omniscient; that is, He knows everything. Wouldn't you rather have Him in control? Not only that, but God made you and gave you a unique personality. He knows how to use your particular talents in the best ways possible.

*"As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in Him ..."*  
– COLOSSIANS 2:6

### **Third Step – Learn God's Word**

After you have come to Jesus and willingly turn control over to Him by faith, we come to the third step.

Jesus said to let Him "teach you." Learning of and from Jesus Christ is a never-ending process. The Bible tells us that Christian growth happens as a result of our knowledge of Jesus Christ.

*"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him..."* – 2 PETER 1:3

The more I know Jesus, and the more I know about Jesus, the more that knowledge will change me to be more like Him.

*"But we all (with no veils on our face, behold Him as in a mirror the glory of the Lord), are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord"* – 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18 (PARAPHRASED)

You learn of Jesus Christ through Bible study. That is why at WSFC we put such a high emphasis on teaching the Word of God. As a new Christian, Peter said:

*"Like newborn babies you should crave the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may be nurtured and grow unto salvation, since you have tasted the goodness and kindness of the Lord."* – 1 PETER 2:2, 3

As we study God's Word, the Bible says we are actually feasting on the "bread of life" which enables us to grow. It is exciting to learn about God and to hear Him speaking to you through His Word.

We strongly recommend the Solid Foundation class for everyone that has just given or recommitted their life to Christ. New groups are scheduled throughout the year. Keep an eye on the bulletin or stop by Connecting (... *Continued*)

Point for a chance to sign up for the next group. Open Door Small Group is another opportunity for you to study God's word and get connected to WSFC. For more information contact Discipleship Pastor Dan Durbin at dan@wsfc.org or 503-881-9265

### **Fourth Step – Water Baptism**

The fourth step is water baptism. Baptism is an outward sign of an inward commitment. It's a public confession and symbolic of dying to the old sin nature, and being transformed and united in heart with Jesus, living a life of submission to Christ and a willingness to live God's way.

### **Fifth Step – Share the Good News With Others!**

To personally evangelize is the command of the Great Commission. For all who call Jesus "Lord," evangelism is not an option. Whether we witness to our families, go next door or across the country, we can fulfill God's command. Evangelism becomes a natural part of our lives as we tell others of our personal experiences, and as they see our changed life. People think the Bible is good advice, but as the people of God, we can tell them that it is more than just good advice; it is good news!

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." – MATTHEW 28:19*

# Beginning to Use the Bible

## Learning to Grow in Your Relationship With God

Now that you are a Christian, you will need to learn and grow in your relationship with God. Jesus Himself said that we need God's Word (the Bible) to really live. You might not know anything about the Bible at all, and you might be confused about how to use it. This has been written to give you a basic knowledge of the Bible as a whole and the New Testament in particular. Read this over carefully and use it to help you understand more about the Bible.

### *What is the Bible?*

The Bible is made up of a number of different accounts, letters and writings that we call the "books" of the Bible. These were written by different godly men at different times and places. The Bible is, however, more than just the words of men. As these men wrote, God was working through them to get the exact words that He wanted written so that what we have is actually the truths that came from God Himself.

### *Where did the Bible originate?*

The Old Testament books were originally written in the Hebrew language, and the New Testament books were written in Greek language. This took place many, many years ago. Since we don't speak ancient Hebrew or ancient Greek, educated men have translated the Bible into different English versions, so that we can read and understand God's Word.

### *How is the Bible arranged?*

The Old Testament books are the accounts of God's first dealings with men and how God has special dealings with a man (Abraham) and his descendants (the Jews) who were the ancestors of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament contains the story of Jesus' life and what happened among His followers after He arose and went back into heaven. It also contains letters written by His followers to explain Christ and Christian living.

The books themselves are broken into chapters (the big numbers on the pages) and verses (the small numbers on the pages). This is done so that we could find things easier. Special notation is used to indicate exactly where you can find things in the Bible. For example, "John 20:30-31" means "The Book of John, chapter twenty, verses thirty and thirty-one." Sometimes these books are written in short form: Matt. equals Matthew; Rom. equals Romans; 1 Tim.

equals the first letter to Timothy. Don't confuse John (John's account of Jesus' life) near the beginning of the New Testament, with 1 John, 2 John and 3 John (letters written by John) close to the end of the New Testament.

### *Tips for Using the Bible*

1. Pray for understanding before and as you read the Bible.
2. Use the Table of Contents to find the various books of the Bible.
3. Use the markings at the top of each page to keep track of which book and chapter you are at as you look for a passage.
4. Think about what you read, especially the things that strike you. God uses His Word to speak to you this way.
5. Ask yourself questions: Is there: A promise to claim? An action to take? A truth to learn? An example to follow? Something to avoid? Something I should pray about now?
6. Underline important places so that you can find them again easily.
7. Believe and obey what God says!!!

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples, then you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." – JOHN 8:31-32

# Bible Study One

## Believe the Gospel

### *Believe the Gospel*

You may have heard the word “Gospel” before and never have known what it really meant. Perhaps you thought it referred merely to the first four books of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Maybe you thought it meant “Positively true,” because you heard it used in a saying like this: “It’s the Gospel truth.”

Actually, the word “Gospel” means “Good News”. It is the good news about God’s love for us, and the wonderful things He has done for us. Take out your Bible or New Testament, and we will see some of the great things it says about the Gospel.

Before we get into this study, I want to teach you something about studying your Bible. In the front of it, you will see a Table of Contents listing all the various books. Use this to find your way around the Bible until you become familiar with where they all are. Also, you will notice that notation is used something like this: Romans 1:16. It means: The book of Romans, Chapter One, Verse Sixteen. Become familiar with what these notations mean. Finally, pray for understanding whenever you read God’s Word!

O.K. Let’s start in and see what is said about the Gospel. Look up the Bible reference given, and then write out the answer in your own words.

1. *What does Romans 1:16 say that the Gospel is to everyone who believes?*

That’s important, isn’t it? Let’s take a look at the Gospel in four steps.

### *Step One - God’s Love*

1. *What is the one word in John 3:16 that describes why God sent His Son for you and me?*

2. *Look at John 10:10. Why did Jesus come?*

### **Step Two - The Problem**

Sin is doing things our way instead of God's way. The Bible says that our sins have separated us from God.

1. *How many of us have sinned? (Romans 3:23)*
  
2. *What is the result of this sin? (Romans 6:23)*

### **Step Three - The Solution**

God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins and to conquer His death by raising Him from the dead. This way we can come to God and receive all the good things He has for us.

1. *What did Christ go through to bring us to God (1 Peter 3:18)?*
  
2. *True or False: God loved us and did this for us because we were so good that we deserved it. (Romans 5:8)*
  
3. *Is being saved from sin something that I work for, or something God freely gives me? (Ephesians 2:8,9)*
  
4. *Is there any other way to the Father except Jesus (John 14:6)?*

## *Step Four - How it Works*

Now that we know what God has done, we need to receive the result into our lives.

1. *How does one become a child of God? (John 1:12)*
  
2. *What must we do to have Christ come into our hearts? (Revelation 3:20)*

What step are you on? Do you know that God loves you? Will you admit that you have sinned? Do you realize that Jesus is the answer to your problems? Have you received Him as the one who saves you? If you haven't received Him, you might want to do it in a prayer like this:

"Heavenly Father, I confess that I am a sinner, and I thank You that You love me anyway. I believe that Jesus died and rose for me. I accept Him into my life. I turn from my way, of doing things, to Your way, and give the control of my life to You. Thank you for this Good News."

Did you receive Jesus? If so, then God has forgiven you, made you His child, and come into you. He said that He would, and He never breaks His word.

If you prayed this prayer record the date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. *Read 1 John 5:11, 12. Because you have received Jesus, God says that you now have something. What is it?*

### *Here are some additional scriptures for further study:*

**God's Love:** Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 2:4,5; Romans 8:35-39

**The Problem:** 1 John 1:8-10

**The Solution:** 1 Corinthians 2: 14; Galatians 2:16; Romans 5: 1

**How It Works:** Romans 10: 9,10

## Bible Study Two

### New Life - What Is It?

#### *New Life - What is it?*

When you opened your heart and by faith received Jesus into your life, you became a child of God. The book of Galatians chapter three, verse twenty-six (Gal. 3:26) says: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." You have entered into a life that will last throughout all eternity. Let's look in the Bible to learn some things that will get you started on the right track.

1. *What does 2 Corinthians 5: 17 say has happened to you when you entered into Christ?*
  
2. *From whom does Galatians 2:20 say that life comes?*

#### *Back to the Cradle*

3. *In Matthew 18:3, Jesus says that we must do something to enter the kingdom of heaven. What is it?*
  
4. *How are we described in 1 Peter 2:2, and what are we to seek?*
  
5. *In 2 Peter 3:18, it says that there is something that God wants to see us do. What?*

One of the facts of life is that babies should grow and mature. This is not only true in the physical realm, but in the spiritual realm as well. You will really begin to understand and appreciate what it means to be "born again" as you see yourself growing up in the Lord as a new person.

Another fact of life which we should remember is that babies are weak and incapable of doing too much right away. God knows this and doesn't expect you to be a spiritual giant overnight. Can you imagine how clumsy a baby would be if it did all of its growing in a few weeks.

Many times a new Christian baby will become very excited and try to do things that he is not ready for yet, like moving away, trying to change everybody overnight, or getting into some big project. What many times happens is that they expect too much and then get discouraged. Don't fall into this trap.

6. *Notice what Jesus said to the man He healed in Mark 5:19. Was this man told to start off on a new journey, or stay where he was for the time?*

7. *What kind of life does 1 Thessalonians 4:11 say we should lead?*

### ***Be On the Lookout - Changes Ahead!***

This new life that you have will manifest itself as God begins to bring changes into your life. He does this because He loves us and knows the best kind of life for us to live. Here are some areas where changes will take place.

Read over these questions and think how God would have your life become new. Perhaps you may think of specific areas where these apply in your life. In this way, God speaks to us and makes His Word part of our life.

### ***Change of Priorities***

8. *What should be Number One in our lives? (Matt. 6:33)*

### ***Change of Outlook***

9. *What three steps of changes does Jesus point to in Luke 9:23?*

## **Change of Mind**

10. In Romans 12:2, what does it say that we should not be?

*What does it say we should be?*

## **Change of Activities**

11. Read 1 Peter 4:3-5. What areas of change are described in verse 3?

*What possible result is mentioned in verse 4?*

*What does verse 5 say that we should keep in mind?*

12. What is the writer confident of in Philippians 1:6?

## **Here are some additional scriptures for further study:**

1 Thessalonians 5:22,23

1 John 1:7-9, 3:14, 5:4

Galatians 5:16-23

Colossians 3:10

John 3:5,6

1 Peter 1:23-25

# Bible Study Three

## Trials and Temptations

### *Trials and Temptations*

The Christian life is not always a bed of roses. Like everyone else, the Christian has difficulties and hardships. The Christian however, has God with him giving him strength to endure and understanding to know what is taking place. Trials are tests that God allows to happen to show us whether we are really loving and trusting Him, or if we are insincere.

1. *How important is the trial of our faith? (1 Peter 1:6,7)*
  
2. *Jesus gave an illustration in Matthew 7:24-27.  
Who is like a wise man that built on a rock? (verse 24)*

*Who is like a foolish man that built on sand? (verse 26)*

*What happened when the trials came his way? (verse 27)*

3. *Read James 1:2-4. What good will these tests produce?*

Many times when our faith is on trial, we also experience temptation to sin. We may find ourselves feeling bad or having bad circumstances. We will be trying to believe what God has said about His love and faithfulness, and we will get a thought or lose faith and do something wrong. This is a temptation, and can come anytime, even when we aren't in a trial.

4. *Who is our enemy? (1 Peter 5:8)*

5. *What are three areas in which we are tempted? (1 John 2:16)*

6. *Look at 1 Corinthians 10:13. Is your temptation unique?*

*Is it more than you can take?*

*Are you trapped in it without help?*

7. *Who gives us strength to meet temptations? (Philippians 4:13)*

8. *Why is He able to make us victorious? (1 John 4:4)*

The devil did not just appear after you became a Christian. He has been around all this time, but you may not have been aware of his activity.

9. *According to Ephesians 2:1-2, who was influencing your life before you were a child of God?*

If you asked a cloud about the wind, he would say; "What wind? I just move." He goes wherever the wind blows. If you asked a tree about the wind, he would know about it because he fights against it every day. This is a picture of our past and present relationship with the devil and temptation.

10. *What are two things we should do in temptation? (James 4:7)*

It is not a sin to be tempted. It is only a sin when we give in to temptation. Even Jesus Christ, Himself, experienced temptation.

11. *Read Matthew 4:1-11. In verses 4, 7 and 10, what did Jesus use to meet Satan's attacks?*

12. *What has God promised to the one who endures trials and temptations? (James 1:12)*

### **What If I Blow It?**

13. *Even if we fall and sin, we should not give up on being a Christian. Realize that God knows we aren't perfect, and still loves us. What does 1 John 1:9 say we should do?*

*What will God do in response?*

14. *Overcoming sin and responding correctly when we sin are both part of our life with God. What does 1 John 3:5 say that Jesus was manifested for?*

### **Here are some additional scriptures for further study:**

Hebrews 12:10-11  
Ephesians 6:10-18  
James 1:2  
Luke 8:1-15, 12:35-38  
Romans 6:12-14, 12:21  
Acts 26:18

## Bible Study Four

### Relating to God

#### Relating to God

It is important to realize that the Christian life is not just a new way of acting towards people or a new way of thinking but actually a whole new relationship with the living God. Because of His love and through Christ's death and resurrection, we now have the privilege of communicating with, and getting to know the almighty God! The key to this relationship is our believing that He is there, and that He does love us.

1. *What does Hebrews 11:6 say we must have to please God?*
2. *On what do we base our faith? (Romans 10:17)*
3. *2 Corinthians 5:7 says, "We walk by \_\_\_\_\_ not by \_\_\_\_\_."*

Our relationship with God is like a tree that is "rooted and grounded in Him by faith" (Colossians 2:7).

The ground represents the fact of God and His Word, the roots represent our faith, and the branches and leaves represent the feelings and experiences that we have. In beautiful summer weather, we rejoice in our experience of God's blessings. However, when a storm comes that breaks off branches, or winter comes when the leaves fall away, we see that being rooted in the Lord keeps us going until the new growth comes. It is your faith that keeps you in contact with God, not your feelings.

#### Prayer

The Lord wants us to talk with Him. That is what prayer is all about: It is communicating with the Father.

4. *What should we do in time of need? (Hebrews 4:16)*

5. *What important fact about God should we keep in mind when we pray? (Acts 4:24)*
  
6. *Read Philippians 4:6-7. Instead of being anxious or worried, what does verse 6 say we should do? What does verse 7 say will take place?*
  
7. *Look at 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and list three things that God wants to see in your life.*
  
8. *What are two things that we should always do when we pray? (Mark 11:24-25)*
  
9. *James 4:3 gives us a reason why we don't always get what we ask for. What is it?*
  
10. *If our prayer seems to be unanswered, and we believe that we are asking in God's will, what attitude should we take? (Hebrews 10:35-39)*

## **Abiding**

It is truly a wonderful thing to be able to ask God for needs that we encounter; nevertheless, God wants our relationship to be much deeper and closer than that. Many Christians get so caught up in the things of the life (even good things), that their interaction with God becomes almost like this: "Lord, I would like to place an order. Please give me peace of mind on Monday, physical healing on Tuesday, and financial help on Wednesday. Amen". Perhaps we might even send Him a thank you note saying, "Thank You for that blessing you gave me last month." This becomes our whole relationship with God.

Our Heavenly Father loves us just as we are, and He wants His children to come and spend time with Him. Rather than being always wrapped up in our needs, we should take time to be with the Lord, to talk with Him and let Him talk with us. Jesus wants to be your closest friend.

In John 15:1-15, Jesus describes this relationship. Read it, and we will observe what He says.

11. *What does He say to do in verse 4?*

*What result will this bear? (verse 4-5)*

*Why must we abide in Him to bear fruit? (verse 5)*

*How will this affect our prayer? (verse 7)*

*How do we glorify the Father? (verse 8)*

*What does He call us in verse 15?*

12. *Read Galatians 5:22,23. What fruit will come from our abiding relationship with Him?*

***Here are some additional scriptures for further study:***

**Prayer**

Luke 18:13-14

1 John 3:22,5:13-15

James 5:13-16

Matthew 7:7-11

**Abiding**

1 John 5:3

2 John 1:9

2 Peter 1:10-11

2 Thessalonians 3:5

Romans 8:28

# Bible Study Five

## Relating to People

### *Relating to People*

Because of your new relationship with God, you will have a whole new relationship with people. Being a Christian is not something that you do once a week or when no one is watching, it affects your total life. The Lord is very concerned about your involvement with people. Let's look in the Scriptures to see how God views us.

1. *Read 1 Peter 2:9-11. List some names that the Lord now calls us. (verse 9)*

*Have we always been His people? (verse 10)*

*How are we described in this present world? (verse 11)*

*What are we to proclaim? (verse 9)*

We see that there are two aspects to our dealings with people. First, there are the other members of God's family with whom we interact. We will call this aspect "Fellowship."

Secondly, there are the unbelievers to whom we proclaim God's message. We will call this aspect "Witnessing."

### *Fellowship*

The word fellowship means sharing something with another person in a deep way. We share in the life of God.

2. *Besides having fellowship with one another, who else do we have fellowship with? (1 John 1:3)*

3. *In the Bible, this fellowship that believers have with each other and with God is described in various ways. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, this relationship is called a body. Read this passage and answer the following questions.*

*Whose body is it? (Who is in charge?) (verse 12 & 27)*

*Are all the members the same? (verse 14 & 27)*

*Who puts us in our place in the body? (verse 18)*

*Are you needed in the body? (verse 21-26)*

*Do you need the other members of the body? (verse 21 & 26)*

4. *What are some activities that the early believers shared in Acts 2:42?*
5. *When we pray together, what should we keep in mind?  
(Matthew 18:19,20)*
6. *Name some actions that should accompany the Word.  
(Colossians 3:16)*
7. *What should we not neglect? (Hebrews 10:25)*
8. *How can we show that we are Christ's disciples? (John 13:35)*
9. *1 John 3:18 says we should not just talk love. How should we love?*

10. *To whom should we especially do good? (Galatians 6:10)*

## **Witnessing**

The truth is on trial today, and God wants us to take a stand and give our testimony on behalf of Jesus. We should back this up with our lives. We will then win people over to Christ.

11. *What should we always be ready to do? (1 Peter 3:15)*

12. *What will Jesus do if we follow Him? (Matthew 4:19)*

13. *What good example did Andrew give that we should follow (John 1:40-42)*

14. *Read Matthew 5:14-16. What will result from being a proper witness?*

15. *How will Christ respond if we deny Him? (Mark 8:38)*

16. *James 5:20 states a goal that we should keep in mind as we are a witness. Put in your own words.*

## **Here are some additional scriptures for further study:**

### **Fellowship**

Galatians 5:13, 6:10  
1 Corinthians 10:24, 13  
Romans 14:19, 15:1-3  
Matthew 18:15-17

### **Blessings**

Matthew 10:16  
1 Corinthians 8:1  
2 Corinthians 1:12  
1 Timothy 6:20-21



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