

SEVEN "FIRST STEPS" OF A NEW BELIEVER



FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Seven “First Steps” of a New Believer For Spiritual Growth

Welcome to the family of God! You have been convicted by the Holy Spirit and made a confessional prayer asking the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive your sins and accept you as His child. Salvation is very simple. “If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). And “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13). If you received Jesus Christ into your heart and believe in Him, you are a child of God. The Word of God says – “To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). You are a new creation and an amazing child of God added to the family of God. Congratulations!

Having been added to the family of God, like a newborn baby, you need to grow spiritually! This booklet serves as a guide to help you understand the first few steps to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

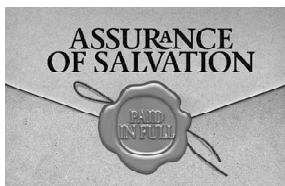
Before you go further, say a small prayer asking the Lord to help you to understand and apply the truths/steps in this booklet. Preferably have The Holy Bible with you so that you can read the references given and get more insights as you go through this booklet.

Christian life is a progression towards perfection.

Growth is essential in Christian life. The goal of every believer is to grow into the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. The spiritual growth is a slow, steady and a daily-process of becoming more like Jesus.

1. BE ASSURED OF YOUR SALVATION

If you honestly and wholeheartedly prayed the confessional prayer, you are truly saved! Never doubt your salvation. Once you are truly saved, you are



saved forever! You will never lose your salvation unless you deliberately continue to sin which means that you are not truly saved (1 John 5:18)!

After you got saved you may falter or fail sometimes. You may be tempted to doubt your salvation. "Am I really saved or is it an illusion"? "If I am saved, why am I falling into sin again"? "May be I am not fully saved!" "What else do I need to do to get saved?" Satan puts all such doubts into your mind.

Understand that salvation is a gracious gift of God. "It is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works" (Eph. 2:8-9). All that you need to do is to put your faith in Him; that's all! And your life is now hidden with Christ

in God (Col. 3:3). The Lord Himself assured us – “I give them **eternal life**, and they shall never perish; **no one can snatch them out of my hand**” (John 10:28). “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). Till the time of His Second Coming, when He returns to take us to be with Him, you are shielded by God's power! Jesus told His disciples - "For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:40). Oh what an assurance we have in Jesus Christ! Nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God. “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 8:37-39).

Your salvation is the collective work of the triune God - God, the Father, God, the Son and God, the Holy Spirit. You are made secure by the sovereign purpose of God, the Father (John 6:40), the continual faithful intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ (Heb. 6:19-20) and the seal of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13).

When you received the Lord Jesus as your personal Saviour, you are a new creation. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has

come" (2 Cor. 5:17). The Holy Spirit comes and dwells inside you. He transforms you day after day as you yield to Him and obey Him. After you are saved, you will observe that there are two natures operating within you – one is the 'old nature' and the second is the 'new nature' which you acquired when you were saved. And there is a constant friction and fight between these two natures. Your 'old nature' prompts you to do the same-old filthy things whereas your 'new nature' urges you to keep yourself pure and holy. By the continuous work of the Holy Spirit you slowly will get rid of the old nature and be transformed into the new nature. During the process when you go through the struggle, don't worry. It is proof that the work of salvation has begun in your life. And you will realize that you are being delivered day by day from the power and effects of old habits/sins. One day, at the Second Coming of the Lord, you will be fully delivered. Your spirit, soul and body will be made holy and perfect in His sight (1 Thess. 5:23-24) so that you can live with Him in the heavenly kingdom forever.

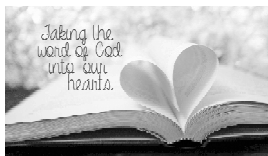
Therefore be assured of your salvation. You are forever sealed by the Holy Spirit and reserved for eternity!

2. HAVE "QUIET TIME" WITH GOD DAILY

Develop a habit of having "Quiet time" alone with the Lord daily; preferably early in the morning before you go about the hectic activities of the day. In the "quiet time", you listen to Him through His Word and speak to Him through prayer.

Spend time with The Word of God

A good sign of a true born-again person is his/her hunger for the Word of God. As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that you



may grow in your salvation (1 Peter 2:2). Ask the Lord to speak to you through His word. God's Word gives you strength to face any test or temptation that might come your way during the day. You will experience how amazingly the Lord speaks to you according to your needs.

Bible, the Word of God, is the source of truth (John 17:17), source of God's blessings (Luke 11:28), source of victory (Eph. 6:17), source of growth (1 Pet. 2:2), source of power (Rom. 1:16) and the source of light (Psalms 119:105). Psalm 119 lists abundant blessings of the Word of God.

If you want to grow spiritually, you must:

- *Listen* to the Word of God because faith comes from hearing the message (Romans 10:17)
- *Read* (Neh. 8:3)
- *Study* (Deut. 17:19; Isa. 34:16; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; Romans 15:4)
- *Memorize* (Psalms 119:11; Job 22:22)
- *Meditate* (Josh. 1:8)
- *Obey* (James 1:22)
- *Seek* (Ezra 7:10)
- *Delight* in the Word of God (Psalms 1:2)

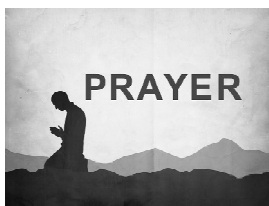
Blessings of the Word of God

- **Word of God keeps you from sin.** The Psalmist says, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you” (Psalms 119:9, 11).
- **Word of God makes you fruitful and prosperous.** When you delight in the Word of God you will be like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever you do prospers (Psalms 1:2-3).
- **Word of God gives you victory.** When the Word of God lives in you, you will overcome the evil one (1 John 2:14; Romans 16:20).
- **Word of God gives you wisdom.** “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:15, 16).
- **Word of God, the Truth, sets you free.** “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free” (John 8:32).
- **The Word of God**
 - * **Sanctifies** you (John 17:17)
 - * **Enriches** you (Col. 3:16)
 - * **Nourishes** you (1 Peter 2:2)
 - * **Restores** you (Psalms 19:7)
 - * **Protects** you (Psalms 119:11)
 - * **Counsels** you (Psalms 119:24)
 - * **Strengthens** you (Psalms 119:28)
 - * **Guides** you (Psalms 119:105)
 - * **Revives** you (Psalms 119:154)
 - * **Gives you peace** (Psalms 119:165)

Read the Bible systematically from the first book Genesis, till the last book, Revelation. Initially some passages might be difficult to understand. But as you read it over and over, Holy Spirit will help you understand them. If you are totally new to the Bible, you may start with the New Testament and then read the Old Testament; that will help you understand the Bible language and grasp the basic spiritual principles better.

Spend time in Prayer

A true born-again person will have the desire to speak to his/her Heavenly Father. Prayer is nothing but speaking your heart



out to God. You can go to Him anytime, talk to Him about any issue and ask Him anything. He is your Father who loves and cares for you.

Start every day with prayer. In your morning "Quiet time" thank Him for all His blessings and pray to Him for all your needs. Pray for all your physical, emotional, educational, financial, social, relational and spiritual needs. You will know how wonderfully the Lord answers all your prayers. The Lord Himself told us - "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives" (Matt. 7:7-8). "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matt. 6:8). Our Lord assures us - "I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may

ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:13-14). So, go to Him anytime for anything.

Close the day with prayer. Each night before you sleep thank Him for His protection, guidance and help through the day. If you slipped or failed spiritually in any area, sincerely ask for His forgiveness! Start the next day with a refreshed mind and soul.

How should you pray?

- ***Pray with faith*** : "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer" (Matt. 21:22).
- ***Pray with holiness***: "If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened" (Psalms 66:18). "The LORD is far from the wicked but he hears the prayer of the righteous" (Prov. 15:29).
- ***Pray with humility***: "Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).
- ***Pray regularly and persistently***: Pray till you get the answer. Do not be discouraged if the prayers are not answered in the way you want and in the timeframe you desire. God is Sovereign and He answers according to His perfect timing. Do not fret nor get discouraged. Be persistent in your prayers.
- ***Pray for others***: Have a prayer list of all your friends, family-members, colleagues, relatives etc., especially those who are not yet saved. Pray that Lord favors them just as He favored and crowned you with His salvation.

If you want to grow spiritually, don't miss out your "Quiet time" with the Lord by studying the Word of God and spending time with Him in prayer. This will help you to be strengthened day after day.

3. ATTEND THE HOUSE OF GOD REGULARLY

If you want to grow spiritually, you must develop the habit of going to a church, the house of God, regularly. In the House of God you are nurtured, nourished and strengthened. You will be guided and protected there. You will hear the voice of the Lord when the messengers share the Word with the power of the Holy Spirit. In His house, the Lord reveals His will to you. Prayers offered in the house of God are answered. You will learn to worship and glorify Him in His house.



Learn to live a 'church-centered' life. King David had a strong desire to be in the house of God in spite of his busy life as the King of Israel. He wrote - "One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple" (Psalms 27:4). "I love the house where you live, O LORD, the place where your glory dwells" (Psalms 26:8).

In the House of God, you find:

- **Joy and delight** : “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand” (Psalms 16:11).
- **Goodness and love** : “Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever” (Psalms 23:6).
- **Safety and shelter** : “For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his tabernacle and set me high upon a rock” (Psalms 27:5).
- **Growth and guidance** : “The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the Lord, they will flourish in the courts of our God” (Psalms 92:12-13).
- **Comfort** : “I will comfort you there in Jerusalem as a mother comforts her child” (Isaiah 66:13).
- **Prayers are answered** : “Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive” (1 Kings 8:30, 44).
- **Victory**: Nothing can shake us. We get victory in the house of God. “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matt. 16:18).

If you are not attached to any church currently, find a Bible-believing, doctrinally-sound, mission-focused church and attend regularly. Do not insist on a perfect church – we are all growing; every local church has

some or other weakness in it. Do not get carried away by the “mega churches” or churches with great infrastructure, technology and/or music. As long as the church is Bible-believing and provides spiritual nourishment to you, it is good. Pray that Lord will lead you to the right church where you can grow spiritually.

4. GET ATTACHED TO A FELLOWSHIP

If you want to further grow spiritually, you must attach yourself to a fellowship or a ‘small, closed group’ of believers. In the fellowship of similar-minded and spiritual people you will be encouraged, strengthened, tuned and molded. It may be a small group of believing-youth or a small-sisters-fellowship or a fellowship in your office or college. Fellowship is extremely vital for growth. It holds one another accountable for spiritual growth. They are your “best buddies”. If you are going astray, they will counsel, correct and bring you back on track. In the fellowship your hidden talents are identified, sharpened and used for His glory.



The first generation disciples practiced this diligently – “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the **fellowship**, to the breaking of bread and to prayer” (Acts 2:42). Apostle John exhorted us – “If we

walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

For example, look at a heap of burning coals. As long as the coals are together in the fire they keep burning and give heat and light. What happens if you take out one burning coal and set it aside? Slowly the fire dies down and it becomes ash with neither heat nor light. Let's say you want to rekindle that coal, what would you do? Put it back into the burning heap and it catches fire in no time. In the same way attach yourself to a godly fellowship that is on fire for God. Ask the Lord to guide you in finding such a fellowship that is passionate and zealous for the Lord. Hence, "Let us not give up meeting together... but let us encourage one another -- and all the more as you see the Day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

5. BEWARE OF TEMPTATIONS

Tests and temptations are inevitable in the life of a believer. Temptation is defined as "the desire to do something, especially something wrong or unwise". As long as we are in this



mortal body, we continually face temptations. There are different types of temptations that different age groups experience. Today young people face

temptations transmitted over media, magazines, movies and Internet. We live in days where outer physical beauty is glorified with no importance given to inner spiritual character. You need to be extremely vigilant and careful in your interactions and relationships. Martin Luther said - "We may not stop birds flying on the top of our heads, but, definitely, we can make them not to put a nest on the head"!

Practical tips to resist and run away from temptations:

- *Be watchful* especially where you are vulnerable to fall. Be 'extra careful' on those slippery paths.
- *Never make decisions alone* on important matters. Take the advice and counsel of spiritual people around you.
- *Never be alone with the opposite gender.* Never make any agreements about future plans all by yourself, especially with unbelievers!
- *Have fellowship with like-minded people* (2 Tim. 2:22).
- *Always be prayerful* (2 Tim. 2:22; Matt. 6:13; 26:41).
- *Be filled with the word of God.* Like Jesus, resist all temptations using the word of God (Matt. 4). Do not rationalize your behavior (Psalms 119:9).
- *Make God your primary focus;* not things of the world. Run away from materialism: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does" (1 John 2:15-16).

God is faithful and He will restore you

If you have been struggling with any addictions before you came to the Lord, ask Him to deliver you from them. God will help you to get rid of them. These addictions may be as simple as Internet/Facebook addiction or as complicated as drug/alcoholic addiction. You know your issues. Be honest before God and He will deliver you from all habitual sins. "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 Cor. 10:13). If you fail or falter, do not worry; get back to him as quick as you can! "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).

- *Strongly purpose and promise God that you will not repeat the sin (Psalms 119:106).*
- *Resist the first risings of the flesh and its pleasures.*
- *Be immediately repentant over your lapses.*
- *Let your heart be fixed on God with an undivided devotion to Him (Psalms 57:7).*
- *Never think that it's too big a sin or it's too late to come back to God and ask for forgiveness.*

6. BE BAPTIZED AND TAKE PART IN THE LORD'S TABLE REGULARLY

After you start attending a local church, share your testimony with a pastor or elder or a youth leader in the church. They will help you with the processes of baptism and Lord's Table.

BAPTISM

Water Baptism is a one-time act that every believer should undergo. It is a mark of salvation. God's Word says –



– “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). ***It is the outward expression of your inward experience.*** It is a testimony of our identification with the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3-6). In baptism we symbolically declare to the world, “I am dead to sin and am buried with Christ (as I submerge under water), and I am raised with Christ to live for God anew (as I come out of water)”.

Apostle Paul explains this in Romans 6:3-5 – “Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection”. It is the fulfillment of God's command (Matt. 28:18). Therefore do not neglect baptism. Baptism is usually followed by laying-on of hands by the church leadership. “Laying-on-hands” is your identification with church, the body of Christ. Christian life is not a solitary life; it is a corporate life. You are placed in the body of Christ along with others. “Let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead

works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment (Heb. 6:1-2). After your salvation, take baptism as early as you can in a local church, with your family and friends as witnesses.

LORD'S TABLE

Our Lord Jesus Himself established the Lord's Table just before His crucifixion (Matt. 26:17-29). Later Apostle Paul explained it in 1



Cor. 11:23-32. We should partake of the Lord's Table with reverence and respect. "The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-26). There are two emblems in the Lord's Table: bread and wine. Bread reminds us of the body of Christ. Wine reminds us of the blood of Christ that was shed for the remission of our sins. (Note that the 'wine' mentioned here is a non-alcoholic wine, generally used during the festivals of Jewish nation. Most of the churches serve concentrated grape juice. So, you don't need to worry that the wine served in churches is alcoholic and is unhealthy and/or addictive).

Significance of the Lord's Table

1. **Table of Remembrance:** At the Lord's Table we remember the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. We remember His great sacrifice, love, deliverance and grace and thank Him for the great work of salvation.
2. **Table of Examination:** It is also a time of self-examination. "A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself" (1 Cor. 11:28-29). We need to look into our lives and check whether we are living in a way that is holy and honourable to the Lord. We should ask ourselves questions like – 'Is my conscience clear?', 'Did I displease my Lord or commit any sin that angers Him?' etc. If God reminds you of any sin, you should immediately confess it, seek His forgiveness and forsake it. Then you can take part in the Lord's Table worthily.
3. **Table of Anticipation:** We should come to the Lord's Table with eagerness to prepare ourselves for His Second Coming. "We know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure" (1 John 3:2-3).
4. **Table of Identification:** We should partake in the Lord's Table with an understanding that we are members of the same body of Christ. We should regard one another as equally important, equally necessary and equally precious in the body of Christ. We should love, help, support, comfort and encourage each other as members of His body.

The Lord's Table helps us to retrospect ourselves on a regular basis and re-consecrate and re-dedicate ourselves to a holy living. We grow in our holiness when we take part worthily in the Lord's Table.

7. LEARN TO WITNESS TO OTHERS

Please share with your friends and colleagues your testimony – how your life was before you were saved and how it was transformed after Jesus Christ became your Saviour and Lord.



Witnessing is simply telling what we experienced! Suppose you go to a new restaurant and like the food there a lot. What do you do? You tell everyone about the experience and recommend them to try it out. Witnessing is exactly the same – we tell others about our experience and ask them to try it for themselves.

Jesus commanded all believers to be His witnesses (Matt. 28:19-20). "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses" (Acts 1:8).

The witnessing started with the Apostles. Today, every believer has the responsibility of witnessing about the Lord's mighty work in their lives! To be a witness means to be loyal no matter the cost. Apostle John tells us what witnessing means – "We proclaim to you what

we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:3).

Start witnessing right where you are. Witness about Him in your own home, with friends, at work places or colleges. Initially it may be difficult to come out of the inertia but as you pray and practice, the Lord will help you overcome the fear.

Pray and practice to share your living testimony so that many souls may be added to His kingdom! Amen!! What a joy it would be when you see others coming to Christ because of your testimony!

Conclusion

Dear friend, having received Lord Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, you need to come under His Lordship, become His disciple to learn from Him, imitate Him and be transformed into His likeness. Here are the first few steps that we studied which you need to adapt to grow spiritually:

1. Be assured of your salvation
2. Have "Quiet Time" with God daily
3. Attend the House of God regularly
4. Get attached to a fellowship
5. Beware of the temptations
6. Be baptized and take part in the Lord's Table regularly
7. Learn to witness to others

***May God bless you and
Help you to grow into His likeness for His glory!***

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"We... are being transformed into His likeness
with ever-increasing glory" (2 Cor. 3:18)

ASSURANCE
OF SALVATION



Quiet Time
With God



Overcoming
Temptation



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