

FIRST STEPS

with

Jesus

To help you start your new life in Jesus



by Christopher Alam

FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

Dear Friend,

When you received Jesus Christ into your life, you were born into the family of God. The Bible calls this being “born again”. This is a spiritual rebirth, and you became a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26).

Just as a newborn child does not remain a baby all its life, but grows through stages to become a grown man or woman; you’ll also grow up spiritually through different stages to full maturity in your new life with God!

The Bible says: “Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). Having now begun to live in Christ, your heavenly Father wants you to continue to grow. This, I believe, is your desire too.

In order to grow, the newborn baby’s foremost need is food. Just think, how often is a baby fed? Surely then we as spiritual children need to eat every day! The Bible says: “like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the Word (of God), that by it you may grow.... (1 Peter 2:2). Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

The Bible, which is God’s Word, is God’s food for your soul.

Jesus said that your soul, your inward man, is more important than anything else in this world, even more than wealth and riches! “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? What shall a man give in exchange for His soul” (Mark 8:36-37). Christ gave His own life to save you from your sin. That indicates how important you are to God.

Just as you do not neglect your body but nourish it daily, do not neglect your soul. Feed it daily as you would feed your body! The best way to spiritual health is to ensure you have regular and daily spiritual meals. We believe that the basic “meals” in this book will help you in getting a good start in your “New Life” in Jesus Christ.

The Word of God is truth. The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth. Truth put into practice (this is faith), will change you into Christ’s likeness. This is God’s will for your life.

God bless you, as you embark on the most exciting journey of your life - this wonderful new life you have received in Jesus Christ!

Your friend,

Christopher Alam

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How to Use This Book

To your advantage

Begin each day by spending some time alone in God's presence. Take with you your Bible and this book. If necessary get up a little earlier and give God your best.

Within these pages many vital subjects are introduced. Take one lesson each day, and practice it, until each basic truth is believed and practised. This will enable you to build on this new foundation of faith.

Start by reading the Title and the verses under the heading "The Bible says". This will fix the subject matter under consideration in your mind. Now spend a few moments in prayer. Thank God for His Word. Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit in order that you may understand (believe) the part you are reading and thinking about today. Then read the section "to Help You", checking any Bible references given, together with the full context of Bible verses listed "For your Reading". Where necessary, re-read any part until the truth is believed and hidden in your heart.

Last, but not least, before you leave the place where you spend time with God, pause and commit your day to Him. (Psalm 37:5). Then you can face the rest of your day with your soul fed and your spirit refreshed.

Chapter 1

You Have Been Born Again

The Bible says:

“Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1John 5:1)

“....as many as received Him (Jesus)....became children of God...
born of God” (John 1:12)

To Help You:

As you have received the Lord Jesus Christ into your heart, you now belong to God. Your name is registered in Heaven. You are God’s very own child. The Lord Jesus stressed the importance of knowing this (Luke10:20).

When a baby prince is born into a royal family, he knows nothing about his father’s kingdom or about the wealth and dignity of his own position. His ignorance does not deprive him of his sonship. He is still a child of the King and heir of all. You are now a child and heir of the Royal Family of heaven. Only as you “grow up” spiritually in Jesus, will you realize the position, the privileges and wealth that are yours.

Mr. & Mrs. X have no children and decide to adopt a child. They visit an orphanage and choose a

little boy. The day he arrives at their home he is adopted (born) into the family. All the privileges of sonship are now his. He is now their son. When first introduced to them he knew them as Mr. and Mrs. X but now his adoption gives him freedom to say “Mamma and Papa.” When we receive Jesus, God receives us and sends “the spirit of adoption into our hearts...we cry “Abba” Father (Romans 8:15-17).

The Bible says: “Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away: behold new things have come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). You were once part of the kingdom of darkness, but have now been transferred into God’s kingdom (Colossians 1:13).

As you open your heart, you’ll experience how God will change your old ways of thinking. Do not try to live your new life according to your old ideas, habits and ways. Let Christ change you into His likeness (Romans 8:28-29).

For your reading:

1 John 5:1-4, John 1:1-13, Galatians 4:1-7

Commit to memory:

John 1:12

Chapter 2

You ARE now a child of God!

The Bible says:

“...what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you...that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and... Jesus Christ”. (I John 1:3)

“These things I have written to you who believe in the Name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have Eternal Life”. (I John 5:13)

To Help You:

God wants you to be assured of the certainty of His promises. When you are tempted to doubt the reality of your Salvation (your New Life in Christ), remember that these thoughts of doubt are the voice of Satan, God’s enemy and yours. From the beginning of creation he has sought to undermine the believer’s confidence in God’s Word (the Bible).

Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

The devil is the thief that Jesus is talking about

here. A thief always seeks to steal from those who have something precious. If you do not possess New Life in Christ why does the devil bother you? It is because you have received something from God of great value. Be aware of the thief! He tries to rob you of your treasure!

Your defence against this “thief” will be the Word of God. God means every word He says. Just consider how all the Scriptures describing Jesus Christ’s coming were fulfilled in every detail when Jesus first arrived on the human scene. He lived on this earth for those few short years, died, was buried and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Some six weeks later He went back into heaven to His Father from whence He had come.

The Lord Jesus said: “I am the truth” (John 14:6). The whole teaching of Christ assures us of the sincerity of His Father’s intentions towards us. The Cross of Jesus and His Empty Tomb are proof that you can absolutely trust the integrity of God.

“He who believes in the Son has Eternal Life”
(John 3:36)

“ Whosoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13)

Do you believe these promises of God? “Yes, I do believe, I will believe!”, is your answer. Then rest assured that you are “born again”, “saved”. You have Eternal Life. Put “the thief” to flight by boldly declaring - “I have New Life in Christ my

Saviour. I know it by the Word of the Lord.”

For your reading:

John 20:26-31, 1 John 1-10, 1 John 5:1-21

Commit to Memory:

Romans 10:13

Chapter 3

Talking to God Through Prayer

The Bible says:

“In everything by prayer...with thanksgiving, let your requests be made unto God”.

(Philippians 4:6)

“I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting”. (1 Tim 2:8)

To Help You:

Prayer is simply talking to God as a child talks to it's father.

When a baby is born it has only one way of communicating and this is linked to survival. Loud yells convey the desired message, generally with immediate response. However, from those first cries there is a steady development of the infant's ability to communicate. The child becomes more and more aware of it's family, and of it's surroundings. Speech begins and understanding increases as the child grows. The goal is maturity.

You are now in God's family. Prayer is talking to God our Father, the Head of our Family. Prayer is an exercise of faith in spiritual communication.

We may start with a very basic understanding of prayer, but we learn more and more, and begin to ask according to His Will (1 John 5:14-15).

Jesus prayed. We read of Him in the Bible as “often talking to His Father”. It was vital for Him to know and do His Father’s Will, in fact He said that all He did and said was with His Father’s approval (John 14:10). Jesus taught and therefore expected His disciples to pray.

Jesus wants you to pray. Prayer is an enormous Bible subject but the best way to learn is to start immediately. Learn as you pray and pray as you learn. Listen to God’s voice (the Bible) and grow in your understanding of prayer.

Pray regularly and you will find a steady development in your communication with heaven and an increase in your power with God. Because prayer is so vital to our spiritual life, our personal prayer time becomes a target for attack. The biggest opposition comes from within ourselves, the Bible calls it our “flesh” or the “old natural man”.

Be on your guard and let nothing hinder you from that sweet communion with your loving Father God. He longs to hear you. Prayer changes your life. Jesus said we should pray to our Father in His Name. The Holy Spirit will help us at all times to do this.

For your reading:

Luke 11:1-13, Philippians 4:6-7, Ephesians 6:10-18

Commit to Memory:

Matthew 6:6

Chapter 4

His Word gives you life and faith!

The Bible says:

“...my words, they are spirit and they are life”.
(John 6:63)

“...Faith therefore comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”. (Rom 10:17)

To Help You:

We learnt In the last chapter that prayer is talking to God as a child talks to it's father. In the same way, reading God's Word, the Bible, is God talking to us as a father talks to his child!

God's Word carries in itself the life, faith, and power of God! As we read the Word of God the following are some of the things that happen within our hearts:

1. We begin to understand the mind, the thoughts and the ways of God our heavenly Father
2. We become stronger in our faith (Rom 10:17)
3. We become aware of our position, rights and privileges as God's children.

Let us look for a moment at faith: Faith is accepting God's Word as truth and acting upon it

(James2:17-22). Faith means believing God's Word in spite of all circumstances that say the contrary. Steadfast faith in God's Word will always change our adverse circumstances so that they in the end line-up with God's Word! That is the power of faith! Such faith is imparted to our hearts as we give ourselves to God's Word!

God's Word will begin to govern our outlook and behavior. Faith therefore, affects the whole life of a believer. The exercise of faith in a believer's experience brings about a total change of life that accords with the Word of God.

Jesus said: "if you continue in my Word, then you are my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

The source of faith is Jesus Christ, He is the one who shapes the faith which we have. God deals with each one of us on a personal basis. He purposefully makes a measure of faith for each person, and from there onwards the individual grows in faith as he responds to each opportunity that he or she has to act in faith!

The first challenge to operate in faith in a believer's life will lead to the next experience and challenge, and so on. The Bible describes this as going "from faith to faith" ((Romans 1:17). This could be compared to a man who owns a well. Each bucket of water he brings to the surface adds more water to the reservoir at the top.

Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). The Bible is the supply line of faith. By this we understand the importance of knowing the Scriptures.

Faith springs from the knowledge of God through His Word . It was said of the first Christians “that they continued steadfastly in the Apostles Teaching”, (Acts 2:42).

They showed a hunger for the Word of God by eagerly sitting under the ministry of those who broke the “bread of life” to their souls. With their attention thus focused on the Word of God expounded to them it is little wonder that faith filled their hearts. So we read in the Bible “these that have turned the world upside down are here also,” (Acts 17:6) and “mightily grew the Word of God and prevailed” (Acts 19:20).

Your desire as a child of God is to bring pleasure to your heavenly Father by living what the Bible calls it the “Life of Faith.” Jesus lived like that and He has left you His example that you should follow in His steps.

For your reading:

Hebrews 11:1-16, Hebrews 12:1-4

Commit to memory:

Mark 9:23

Chapter 5

Following Jesus through water baptism

The Bible says:

“If any man wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself...and follow me” (Luke (9:23)

“...Peter said: Repent, be baptised...those who had received his word were baptised...”
(Acts 2:38, 41)

To help you:

Bible baptism in water is a total immersion in water. “Following Jesus” is a Christian phrase for “obeying Jesus.”

At Calvary, Jesus publicly identified Himself with sinners. He paid the penalty for sin and rose from the dead on the third day.

Water Baptism is our public identification with Christ as both Savior and Lord. God chose Baptism as the way we publicly state our faith in, and submission to Jesus Christ as Lord. In Water Baptism, we identify ourselves with Jesus, burying our past ways and coming out to follow Christ Jesus. Our old spiritual membership of the Kingdom of darkness ends as we bury our “old identity” in Baptism.

The early believers wasted no time in getting baptized (See Acts 2:41, 8:12 & 36, 9:18). Their love for Jesus was exhibited by their eagerness to obey His commands. After all, He was now their Lord and Master. They were not ashamed to declare their own death, burial, and resurrection in Christ by baptism in water.

Jesus Himself was baptized in water (Mark. 1:9). His own disciples were baptized in similar manner (John 4:1), and He gave commandment for all believers to be baptized.

The Ethiopian asked Phillip: “What prevents me from being baptised?” (Acts 8:36).

Ask yourself the same question!

You have received Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Then the pathway of obedience is clear. Get baptized!

Speak to your pastor about this at the earliest opportunity.

For your reading:

Mark. 8:34-38, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 8:35-40

Commit to Memory:

Romans 6:6,13.

Chapter 6

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

The Bible says:

“ John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16)

“...You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you” (Acts 1:8)

To Help You:

When you received Jesus as your Savior, the Bible says you were “born again”. This is how you became a child of God. This wonderful spiritual experience is also described as “being baptized into Christ”, an operation performed by the Holy Spirit (Romans 6:3, 1 Corinthians 12:13).

The Bible makes it clear that there is another spiritual reality subsequent to being “born again”, namely being Baptized into the Holy Spirit. This time it is Jesus Himself who immerses you into the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16). He (Jesus) described the experience as an “endowment of power” (Acts 1:8).

In the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, we receive greater ability and confidence in talking to others about Jesus. We also receive power to heal the sick and to cast out demons through the Name of Jesus Christ.

The first 120 disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost while gathered in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4). Since then multitudes have had the same experience, for this blessed gift of the Holy Spirit is for every believer (Acts 2:38-39) and provides extraordinary help in “living for God” in this present evil world.

The Bible says that Believers must be:

- Filled with the Spirit continually (Ephesians 5:18).
- Led by the Spirit (Romans 8:14);
- The Holy Spirit:
 - Assists us when we pray - (Romans 8:26)
 - Gives gifts - (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)
(which we are to earnestly desire and cherish. (1 Corinthians 14:1 & 12)

There is also ample evidence given in the Scriptures that those who are baptized with the Holy Spirit will know it because they will speak in a language unknown to them, as the Holy Spirit gives them the words (Acts 2:4, 10:44-46).

There are millions of Christians today who have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and they have found that the experience has revolutionized their lives. Jesus commanded His disciples to “wait

until they had received the Holy Spirit” before doing anything for Him (Acts 1:4-5). You too need this impartation of power in order to successfully declare that Christ is alive today.

Ask the Father (Luke 11:13) for His gift through Christ, for the promise is for you (Acts 2:38-39). Receive this precious gift by faith, and magnify God in other tongues (Acts 2:11).

For your reading:

Luke 3:15-18, John 7:28-39, Acts 1:4-8

Commit to Memory:

Acts 2:38,39

Chapter 7

Praying in the Holy Spirit

The Bible says:

“...these signs will accompany those who have believed...they shall speak with new tongues”
(Mark 15:17)

“...they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance” (Acts 2:4)

“...one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God” (1 Corinthians 14:12))

To Help You:

When a person is baptized in the Holy Spirit he or she speaks by the Spirit in an unknown tongue or language, (i.e. unknown to the person speaking). This is the fulfillment of the words of Jesus recorded in the closing verses of Mark’s Gospel and also in the Gospel of John 7:37-39.

You will notice that when we “speak in tongues” we speak to God (1 Corinthians 14:2). Whenever we do so we find that our innermost being receives strength from God (1 Corinthians 14:4). No doubt that is why Paul states that he spoke in tongues

more than all the Corinthian church put together (1 Corinthians 14.18). His faith seized every opportunity to be more effective in his service for God.

Let us not neglect such a great source of grace and power. Faith overcomes all inhibitions and criticism to lay hold of God's provision of power for service.

The baptism in the Holy Spirit, (Jesus Himself is the Baptizer -Luke 3:16), is a doorway into a new dimension of "living for Jesus." One is then able to receive the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit stated in 1 Corinthians 12.

Speaking and singing "in tongues" is very precious both in private devotions and public worship (1 Corinthians 14:39-40). We must keep a balanced attitude however, so that we neither over nor under-emphasize it. God is never the author of confusion. By all His means of grace and power, including tongues and the gift of tongues, he enables His children to live balanced and victorious Christian lives.

Speaking in tongues is certainly God's Will for your life.

For your reading:

Mark 16:14-20, Acts 2:1-11, 1 Corinthians 14:1-18

Commit to Memory:

1 Corinthians 14:15

Chapter 8

Talking about Jesus to others

The Bible Says:

“therefore who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven...” (Luke 12:8)

“whosoever is ashamed of Me and My Words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed...”
(Luke 9:26)

To Help You:

You have just entered into a New Life in Christ. Do not be silent about this miracle that has taken place in your life.

You have repented. God has forgiven your past. Jesus has become your Lord and Savior. You are now going God’s way. You are now a child of the greatest and wealthiest family in the universe. These are just some of the wonderful realities in your life now because you believe in Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: “ Out of the abundance of the heart a man speaketh” (Matthew 12:34).

The Bible says that we who love Jesus have the spirit of faith which says, "I believe therefore have I spoken!" (2 Corinthians 4:13).

Freely speak of those things that you know about Jesus. This is confessing Christ, or telling others about Him - a most important aspect of your life with God.

Your New Life in Christ is sealed in the presence of God by your confession of Jesus Christ before men. We speak by our lips and by our lives. Both are essential. Never be ashamed of Jesus. Remember that by Him you are now the child of a King.

At times we may suffer ridicule or even persecution because of the Christ we confess, from those who do not know Him. Do not fear nor be intimidated by this. Our reward is great when we suffer for Jesus. Jesus said we are blessed by Him on such occasions (Matthew 5:11). He said that we should bless those that persecute us, and love those that hate us.

Each day tell others about Jesus. Jesus will then tell His Father about you. You shall also be instrumental in sowing the seeds of eternal life through Jesus, in the hearts of others.

For your reading:

Romans 10:6-15, Matthew 10:24-33, Luke 9:18-26

Commit to Memory:

Matthew 10:32 & 33

Chapter 9

Fellowship with others who love Jesus

The Bible says:

“...and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our assembling together” (Hebrews 10:25)

“...where two or three have gathered together in My Name, there I am in the midst...”
(Matthew 18:19)

To Help You:

The most natural thing for a family is for its members to be together. God’s family is no exception. You are now a member of this family through faith in Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:26).

Jesus said whenever His people gathered together in His Name, He would be present (Matthew 18:20)! Here lies the main reason for attending church services. It is to meet with Jesus our Living Lord together with others who share our faith. What a marvelous incentive!

Under normal circumstances, the regular meeting together of Christians in a particular place is a local church, provided it is properly constituted

according to God's Word. In brief, a local church is intended by God as a community where people are nourished and being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).

It is very true that "whatever I am today is a result of who I have allowed to influence my life". Whether we like it or not, we are all influenced by people who we choose to spend our time with.

When we give our lives to Jesus, we desire to be around people who are full of faith, full of the love of God and reflect Christ in their lives. This is because we want to be like them! We too desire to be full of love, faith and want others to see Christ in us! So where does one get to know such people? The best place to meet and to get to know them is in church!

The first Christians realized the importance of meeting together. They met regularly to worship both in their homes and in larger gatherings. Services were held as often as possible at which were conducted Bible Studies (Doctrine), Breaking of Bread, (sometimes called Communion), Prayers and Fellowship, (Acts 2:42).

All these are activities necessary to Christians for balanced spiritual growth. Little wonder that the first Christians were noted for their love, zeal, loyalty and involvement in their local gatherings. It could be said that their motto was "All for Jesus...Jesus for All". From their gatherings they

reached out into their communities to win others to Jesus.

Find a godly local Church full of the love, power and the Word of God. Become a part of the fellowship. Make friends there, get involved, and let God use the church in your life, to make you a strong Christian!

Remember, the local Church is:

1. God's Family (Ephesians 2:19).
2. Jesus is it's Head (Ephesians 1:22,23)
3. Where God wants to meet His Family (Matthew 18:20).
4. Where God wants to meet our needs and build us up (Ephesians 4:11-13).
5. Where we receive guidance in God's truth (Ephesians 4:14)
6. Where we learn to relate as God desires (Ephesians 4:15,16).
7. Where God empowers us for service and reaching others (Acts 4:31).
8. God's special instrument for victory over the work of the devil (Ephesians 3:10).
9. Where God intends to manifest His Glory (Ephesians 3:20,21).

For your reading:

Hebrews 10:16-25, Matthew 18:15-20,
1 Timothy 3:14-16

Commit to Memory:

Hebrews 10:25

Chapter 10

A life of love towards others

The Bible says:

“Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.” (1 John 4:11)

“We love, because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

To Help You:

The Bible says: “God is love” and “love is from God” (1 John 4:7-8).

Love then is an essential part of God. God’s love arrives in our hearts by the action of the Holy Spirit when we first receive Jesus and it matures as we follow Him (Romans 5:5 and 1 John 4:16-17).

Jesus commanded His disciples “to love” (John 13:34), to be like Him. God wants you to be like Jesus. God’s Love is more than just an emotion. With God’s love we can love the unlovable just as God loved us when we were sinners! Your feelings, and emotions should not decide whether you should love or not. You should love God and love people no matter how you feel. Love is a decision to obey God and to do good to others no matter how we feel!

The love of God is there deep in the center of the

real you - willing good to all men regardless of who they are and what they do.

God says, "Choose good, and will it to men." This is love and is characteristic of a real Christian.

Love is always expressed by action. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." (John 3:16). "...the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20).

Jesus told a simple story which we know as "The Good Samaritan."

In this He illustrated the love of God and object upon which love is focused. We are to love as He loves, impartially. God has no favorites. We express our love in good deeds involving personal sacrifice (unselfishness). Our neighbor is to be the object of our love - anyone who is in need. That means everybody.

Our blessed Savior said to the man who prompted the above story:

"Go and do likewise...Go and love all men."

Dare we live on a lower level?

For your reading:

1 John 4:6-21, Luke 10:25-37

Commit to Memory:

1 John 4:10,11.

Chapter 11

A life of Giving

The Bible says:

“Bring ye the full tithe into the storehouse”
(Malachi 3:10)

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38)

To Help You:

Today we focus on giving. God is the giver of all good things, and we as His children have inherited his life and his giving nature!

The New Testament encourages us to give as God has prospered us (1 Corinthians 16:2) and indicates that the early Christians gave their gifts when they met together for a Breaking of Bread service. It formed part of their worship to God.

“How much should I give?” always seems to be the question.

Looking at Genesis chapter fourteen we find that

Abraham gave a tenth of all that He had to a King Priest called Melchizedek, after he had received bread, wine, and blessings from Him. We are told this Melchizedek was the King of Peace and King of Righteousness.

Hebrews chapter seven explains that Jesus Christ is our Melchizedek, our Great High Priest. We understand that in this story Melchizedek typifies Christ while Abraham typifies the believer. Abraham gave the tenth of his possessions to God out of pure love for God, and in thankfulness for all the blessings that he had received.

Years later, after God gave his law to Moses, the Israelites were commanded to give a “tithe” or “tenth” of their gross income: and extra offerings as the occasion demanded.

These gifts were to be received into the Storehouse or the Tabernacle and then later the Temple, in order for these to function properly. God instituted the giving of a tenth of our income as a key of Blessing in our lives.

We who are under the Blessings of Jesus have so much more blessings than those in the old covenant! We have so much more to be thankful for! Keeping this in mind, the minimum a Christian should give is a tenth of his or her income, with extra offerings on top of that. One may give even more according to how God prospers the individual!

For some, a tenth may seem a lot, but remember, that 9 dollars with God's blessings go much farther than 10 dollars without God's blessings!

God does not want you to be poor. He wants you to prosper and be blessed (3 John 2). God blessed Abraham to be a blessing to others, and in the same way He wants to bless you so that you too can be a blessing to others. However, remember that you can never bless others unless you yourself are blessed to start with!

The key to receiving blessings from God is in giving! Even if you do not have much, begin to give anyway, and God will lift you up higher financially. As you live a life of financial generosity towards God and towards men, God will surely bless you! Consider these scriptures from the Bible:

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again” (Luke 6:38).

“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully” (2 Corinthians 9:6).

Sow richly into God's work and into the lives of others. God shall also bless you bountifully! Live a life of giving and generosity!

Giving generously:

1. Sets you free from the love of money and from greed.
2. Sets you free from the fear of not having enough.
3. Enriches you so that you can have even more to bless others with!

The Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver, one who gives liberally without restraint. Our giving should be like this and on a regular basis according to the way God has blessed us. This ensures that the local assembly (church) functions properly and the work of God in which it is involved, particularly the work of reaching the lost for Jesus is not hindered.

Always remember that a generous giver becomes only richer, not poorer!

For your reading:

Hebrews 7:1-17, Genesis 14:8-20
2 Corinthians 9:1-8

Commit to Memory:

2 Corinthians 9:8

Chapter 12

Forgiveness

The Bible says:

“And be ye kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you”. (Ephesians 4:32).

To Help You:

Before Christ entered your life you were like someone in a “condemned cell.” Sin had put you in “death row.” You were in a perilous position indeed.

Then Jesus came with His wonderful Offer - a free pardon with forgiveness. You responded and eagerly accepted His gracious gift. This was deliverance indeed. You passed from death unto life, a prisoner set free. New Life in Christ was yours.

Over the years you had amassed a great pile of sins, each pointing an accusing finger, each demanding death. (James 1:15). You deserved to die but instead you received pardon and forgiveness from God.

Now, says Jesus, “Freely forgive people who

offend you.” Whatever the offence, and no matter how often it is repeated, you are to hold no bitterness or animosity against anyone. Unforgiveness can make your prayers of no effect. Always be quick to forgive and to release those who sin against you. This is to act like Jesus. He prayed thus for those who crucified Him, “Father forgive them: for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). God wants you to be like Jesus. (Romans 8:29).

We have been forgiven our big debt that we owed to God. The offences (debts) of others to us are small by comparison. As you freely forgive others, your own trespasses are cleansed away by God and harmony with Him is maintained. (Matthew 5:23-24).

Our hearts are right with God as we maintain sweet relations with others, whether saved or unsaved. This may sometimes be very hard, but remember, you possess the Spirit of Christ. “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13).

Be like Jesus - Be forgiving.

For your reading:

Mark 11:24-26, Matthew 18:15-35.

Commit to Memory:

Mark 11:25.

Chapter 13

Thanksgiving

The Bible says:

“...in everything...with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Phil 4:6)

“In everything give thanks, for this is the Will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you” (1 Thessalonians 5:18)

To Help You:

God brought Israel out of Egypt in order to bring them into the Promised Land.

They had experienced miracles on coming out of Egypt, but most of them never made it into the Promised Land. How sad. Their failure was due to a lack of trust and wrong attitudes

Instead of thanking God and praising God for their deliverance from Egypt, they grumbled continually about their circumstances, at the slightest adversity. Though physically free, their hearts were still bound by wrong attitudes. Egypt was still in their hearts.

For us Christians, Egypt represents our old life of sin and selfishness. Jesus has delivered us from the

POWER and the PENALTY of our sin. Now we need to break the HABITS and ATTITUDES of sin.

Major SIN ATTITUDES are “complaining” and “criticism”. We must break the habit of complaint and criticism by using the godly exercise of “THANKSGIVING”.

REMEMBER, God ALWAYS loves you; the blood of Christ ALWAYS cleanses; God’s promises of blessing and life are ALWAYS true for those who have faith in Christ. Sometimes, your circumstances may sadden and confuse you, but the GREATNESS and GOODNESS of God remain. So, exercise thanksgiving IN all circumstances (1 Thess. 5:18).

Thanksgiving brings victory. It is the voice of faith that overcomes the pressures of this world (1 John 5:4). The Psalmist realized this and said: “Therefore will I give thanks and sing praises!” (Ps. 18:49).

For your reading:

Philippians 4:4-7, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-23,
Ephesians 1:18-21

Commit to Memory:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Chapter 14

Serving the Lord

The Bible says:

“If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me...if anyone serves Me, the Father will honour him” (John 12:26).

“ Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Hebrews 12:28)

“I urge you therefore, brethren,...to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship” (Romans 12:1)

To Help You:

One of the privileges of being a Christian is serving God. Prior to our being “born again” everything we did (even those we thought were good and of service to God) were unacceptable to God. The Bible describes the actions of our former life as being “dead works” or as “filthy rags.” (Hebrews 9:14, Isaiah 64:6).

However, we were made completely clean by the blood of Jesus Christ at the time we received Him. From being held captive by sin we were wonderfully delivered, given freedom to both

follow and serve our God. (Romans 7:6). There is now nothing from our past to hinder us from serving Him in ways that would please and honor Him (Hebrews 12:28). Our service should be willing, cheerful and generated by faith and love (Galatians 5:13).

We are to be “fervent in spirit serving the Lord.” (Romans 12:11). The word “fervent” here means to be “on the boil”. We could put it like this, “Be always on the boil for Jesus, cheerfully and faithfully dispensing good to everybody as unto God.” The outworking of our service to God will be towards people, not just Christians but also to those whom the Bible refers to as being lost (Luke 10:36-37 and Jude 23).

This calls for a complete re-thinking of our motives in all that we do. Every department of our lives must be open for the Holy Spirit to fill, lead and control all the time. We are told this is only our reasonable service (Romans 12:1-2). Such a commitment to Christ demands much self-denial, but as we yield to Him He puts within us all the good things that come by the Holy Spirit and that make us Christlike.

Your highest service then is to live at all times for your Lord and Master Jesus Christ. You must decrease and He must increase. This is a life of continual receiving from God, and by word and deed giving Jesus to others. This is living “in the Spirit”, your reasonable and acceptable service.

For your reading:

John 12:20-26, Hebrews 12:22-29

Romans 12:1-13.

Commit to Memory:

Romans 12:1 & 2

Epilogue

“And now I commend you to God and to the word of His Grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.” Acts 20:32

“I count all things to be loss in view of the surprising value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death; in order that I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 3:8-1

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