

NOW
WHAT?
for
Youth
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Salvation



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Gospel Publishing House

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The booklet is divided into seven main sections. You can either read one per day for a week or at a speed you find comfortable.

The goal of this booklet is to help you begin your relationship with Jesus. Once you've finished reading, grab the person who gave you this booklet or a leader to answer any questions you might have and talk through everything you've discovered.

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WELCOME!



Deciding to make Jesus part of your life is one of the best decisions you'll ever make! Jesus loves you very much, and He's had a special plan for your life since the beginning.

As you enter this new phase of your life, you probably have a lot of questions. You're not alone! Every person who has chosen to follow Jesus, no matter how young or old, has been where you are. This booklet was created to help you find answers and navigate this exciting new journey.

If you have a Bible, you'll want to use it as you read along. Becoming familiar with it is an important first step as a Christian. If you don't have one, ask the person who gave you this booklet to provide a Bible for you. That person should also be able to help you understand how to navigate your Bible and help you with questions as you read through this booklet.

Don't hesitate to ask questions if you have them. The person who cared enough to give you this booklet will also care enough to help you find answers to the many questions you'll likely have.

Just like with anything new in life, you have to start somewhere. Today is the day you begin learning how to trust and follow Jesus. By the time you finish this booklet, you'll have a much better understanding of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Congratulations and welcome to a new chapter in your life!



1 A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Becoming a follower of Jesus is a life-changing experience. Whether you accepted Him at church, alone, or with a friend, your life is now moving a new direction. It's a direction toward God—the One who created everything and everyone—and His Son, Jesus. It's the direction you were born to go.

You may be wondering, *What just happened?* You took the first step in a relationship with the One who created you. God cares for you and has amazing plans for your life. He loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to bring you closer to Him. That probably raised even more questions, and that's okay! This booklet will help you begin to understand what's next in your new relationship with God. Your spiritual journey begins now!

GETTING CLOSE TO GOD

Becoming close to God requires building a relationship with Him. And like with any friend, building a relationship with God means things like talking to Him, spending time with Him, and learning more about Him. People who have a relationship with God, through Jesus, are called Christians. And now, you're a Christian!

? Think about your closest friendships. What makes those friendships special?

? What things do you do to keep your friendships on track? Are there any of those things that might relate to being a friend of God?

One of the first things a new Christian needs to do is to carve out time in your day to spend with God. That time should be spent in daily prayer and Bible study so that you can begin to discover what's important to Him.

Every time you pray and read your Bible, your relationship with God will deepen.

GOD'S GIFT TO YOU

Building healthy relationships requires giving on both sides. In your case, you gave your life to God when you asked Jesus into your heart. In turn, God forgave your sins and brought you closer to Him. Sin is when you choose to do something wrong, and those wrong acts keep you from a close relationship with God.

The Bible, God's message to His people, has a few things to say about sin.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Isaiah 59:2

So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

James 4:17 (ESV)

Everyone has done things they know aren't right. Maybe you cheated. Maybe you've lied.

Those things separated you from the God who created you. But that is the past. Today is a new day, and God has forgiven all of your past sins!

That isn't the end of sin. Every day you will have to make right choices and avoid sinning. But you aren't alone! As you walk with God, He will give you strength to overcome sin and change you for the better.

You will make mistakes along the way, but don't get discouraged! Even through mistakes, God can teach you valuable lessons if you're willing to learn. There are lots of things to learn on this new journey in life. One of the first steps is making time for God and godly things in your life. You'll learn more about that in the next section.

? What are some ways you can make time for God in your busy life?

? What are two ways you imagine you can deepen your relationship with God?



2 LEARNING TO FOLLOW

Now that you're a Christian, it's important to make the things of God a priority in your life. But what does that mean? If you have a good relationship with your friends or family, you probably get what it means to put the wants of others before yours.

Imagine you have amazing plans for the weekend that you've been looking forward to for weeks. However, just before leaving, a close friend calls to say that they really need to talk. Do you put your plans aside to be available for your friend? If your answer is yes, then you understand putting others first.

FOCUS ON WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO GOD

Surrender in a relationship means putting your personal feelings and desires aside so you can focus on someone else.

When you truly surrender to God, you're admitting that His plans are more important than your own. One of the benefits of surrender is that it will help to keep you on track and away from bad choices.

? How would you define “surrendering to God”?

Sadly, mistakes and sin are a part of life. However, as a Christian, God will forgive you and help you to move forward in your faith—even when you fail. God is ready to forgive you when you ask Him to forgive your sins.

When you ask for forgiveness, it's also necessary to be repentant. Being repentant is more than saying you're sorry—it's also a conscious decision to stay away from that particular sin in the future.

*“Repent, then, and turn to God,
so that your sins may be wiped out.”
Acts 3:19*

To help you avoid bad choices, God has included instructions in the Bible. Some people

think that being a Christian means following a lot of rules. Growing up, you probably had rules like don't touch a hot stove, don't cross the street without looking both ways, and don't talk to strangers. These rules are meant to keep you safe—not to keep you from enjoying life!

? Why do you think God gave us rules to follow?

God's instructions serve a purpose. When you stay away from things that can hurt you, you avoid unnecessary pain and stress. Allowing God to be Lord is essential as a Christian.

? Is there any specific sin you struggle with? If something comes to mind, ask God to help you make the right choices.

GIVING GOD CONTROL

When you asked Jesus into your heart, you gave God permission to lead and guide your decisions.

Imagine going skydiving. If you're new to the sport, or fear falling thousands of feet alone, you'll want an instructor. A skydiving instructor's job is to keep you on course and safe. To ensure safety, the instructor will attach to the student. A good instructor knows how to maneuver the parachute and cords to have a successful jump. If you trust your instructor, you can relax in the knowledge that someone else is in control and overseeing your experience.

When you declare Jesus as Lord, you are declaring that you will rest in His capable hands and allow Him to lead and guide you.

? What are some areas in your life where it may be hard to let God be in control?

? What are some possible benefits of allowing God to be Leader of your life?



3

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

Prayer is a core part of your spiritual journey and relationship with God. When you pray, you're simply talking to God and listening for Him to talk to you.

? What kinds of things do you talk about with your friends? Which of those things do you think you could talk about with God?

HOW TO PRAY

You may think that because you're talking to God, your prayer needs to sound fancy. It doesn't. One way to start your new practice of daily prayer is by simply telling God what is on your mind and being open to His response.

Some Christians pray quietly while others are loud; some close their eyes while others keep

them open; some Christians like to kneel in prayer while others stand. Don't worry about the physical mechanics of prayer. Just focus on talking with God in a way that is comfortable for you.

Though there isn't one specific way you have to pray, the Bible records a time that Jesus taught His followers how to pray.

*"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us
our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

*And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil."
Matthew 6:9–13 (ESV)*

Jesus' prayer contains several parts, including showing honor to God for who He is, making requests for spiritual and physical needs, and asking Him for guidance and protection. God is always listening to your requests as well, and you can trust that He will hear you.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Philippians 4:6

It's also good to spend part of your prayer time thanking God for the good things in your life as well as expressing your love for Him.

LEARN TO LISTEN TO GOD

Communication is a two-way street and you can be sure that God will respond. Sometimes God responds through reminding you of Bible verses you've read. Other times He may speak quietly by bringing thoughts to your mind. His response can also be more of a feeling or a change of heart. The more you pray, the more you will learn to hear how God speaks to you.

Sometimes patience will be required when you pray. God may want you to wait for an answer as you learn to trust Him. Other times, you may feel that God's answer is no. You may even have days that you feel like God isn't listening. But you can trust that He is, and He always wants to talk with you.



4

GOD'S MESSAGE TO YOU

The Bible is a compilation of writings that God inspired His followers to write, collect, and pass on. Sometimes it's called God's Word because it's God's message to all people.

The Bible is full of history, wisdom, and instructions to help guide you through life. The Bible is so helpful, you should spend some time reading it daily. Of course, you won't read the entire Bible in a week. You have your entire life to read and reread God's Word.

? What kind of daily reading schedule can you create for reading God's Word?

The Bible is divided into books based on who wrote it, what it's about, or who it's to. It's also divided into chapters, and verses to make it easier to use. For example, John 3:16 is found in the Book of John, the third chapter, and sixteenth verse.

Look up the verse below. Use the index at the front of the Bible if you need.

Check it out in 2 Timothy 3:16–17.

An important part of using the Bible is committing some of it to memory. When you come across verses that speak to your heart, try to memorize them.

! Take a moment to memorize Psalm 46:1.

When you read and study God's Word, Scripture becomes a part of you. You'll be surprised how God will use memorized Scriptures to speak to your heart in times of need.

*I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.
Psalm 119:11*

While the Bible can help guide you away from sin, it also will direct you toward a closer relationship with God.

? How do you think God uses the Bible to speak to Christians? Why?



5 RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS

Don't go it alone! Christians can spiritually learn and grow better together. One place that this happens is at church. A church is a place where Christians gather to do things like hang out, sing, and learn more about the Bible.

THE VALUE OF GOING TO CHURCH

Church is a great way to interact with other Christians. Think of Christianity as a team sport. The more you grow and spend time together, the better you'll be able to work together toward common goals.

Check it out in Hebrews 10:24–25.

Of course, church attendance isn't just about self-growth and support. It's also about finding

your position on the team. Don't be satisfied sitting on the sidelines—get involved! Find ways to help out where you can. There are always ways to serve at church.

Besides giving of your time, you can also give financially. The Bible teaches that we should give a portion of what God has given us back to Him. Your giving can help care for the needs of a church, support a church leader (pastor), and even help send people all over the world to share about Jesus. Giving back, with your time and money, is a way to thank God for His many blessings.

? Think about the different areas of a church. Are there any areas where you may be able to help? Name a few ways you may be able help at your church.

THE VALUE OF SPIRITUAL MENTORS

When you start something new, it's good to have support. If you've ever played a sport, you understand the importance of having a good

coach. A good coach will instruct and encourage you so that you become better over time. The same is true for a spiritual mentor.

A spiritual mentor is someone, maybe a pastor or mature Christian friend, who can instruct and encourage you as you become more like Jesus. Finding someone to fill this role in your life is vital.

*As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.
Proverbs 27:17*

? How do you think a spiritual mentor might benefit you?

! Ask someone you trust to be a spiritual mentor. Keep in mind that this person should have been a Christian for a while and have good character.



6

YOUR NEXT STEPS

BAPTISM IN WATER

Water baptism is a special way to show others that you've chosen to follow Jesus. Jesus instructed some of His first followers to baptize all those who became new followers.

Check it out in Matthew 28:19.

When you are baptized in water, a pastor or Christian leader dips you fully under the water and then lifts you out of it. This baptism symbolizes the burial and resurrection of Jesus. When you are baptized, you are symbolically raised to a new life in Christ. God felt this act was so important that Jesus himself served as the example.

Check it out in Matthew 3:13–17.

Through following Jesus' example and instruction to be baptized in water, you show your willingness to follow God's instructions and allow your relationship with Him to grow.

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Salvation and water baptism aren't the end of your growing relationship with God. He also wants every Christian to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit gives Christians power to live for Jesus and to share Him with others. It is a gift that the early Christians prayed for and received that is still available when you ask God for it.

Check it out in Acts 2:1–4.

To discover more about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, ask the person who gave you this booklet for a copy of *Now What? for Youth: Baptism in the Holy Spirit*.

! Talk to your pastor or a church leader about a time to be baptized in water.



7

TELL YOUR STORY

What Jesus has done and will do for you is exciting! And like any good news, the good news of what Jesus has done should be shared with others. You don't have to preach a sermon to a large crowd. You can start by telling those closest to you about what Jesus has done for you.

? Can you think of friends, family, or classmates who might not know Jesus? Write their names below and pray that God will give you an opportunity to share His love.

BE NOTICEABLE

Christians come in all shapes and sizes. However, all Christians should have certain characteristics. Every Christian should be easily recognized by his or her words and actions. Jesus said:

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."
John 13:35

Loving others is the one of the best ways to share Jesus with others. Love tears down barriers and helps people to be more open to receiving Jesus. Love should always guide how you live and interact with others.

? What are a few ways that someone has shown God's love to you? Which of these could you also show toward others?

BE OBVIOUS

If you need help in a store, you look for an employee, right? But what if no one in the store seemed to fit the part? Being able to find an employee is important when you need one.

As a Christian, you need to be easily identifiable by your actions, attitude, and character. You should be a bright light that draws people to God. To help you stand out, the Bible lists characteristics that every Christian should possess.

Check it out in Galatians 5:22–23.

! As you read these verses, look for the nine characteristics of a Christian found there. These are called the fruit of the Spirit. List those fruit on the lines below.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____

BE CONFIDENT

Now that you're a Christian, be confident in who you are. God loves you so much that He gave His Son for you. God's been anxiously waiting on you to commit your life to Him, and now that you have, there's so much in store for you.

Will you fail sometimes? Absolutely. Will you experience sadness and loss? Probably. But, don't be discouraged! As a Christian, you'll never be alone. God will walk with you when you need Him, and He'll answer.

In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.

Ephesians 3:12

Never forget that you're loved and valued! Friends and family may fail you at times, but God's love will never fail. Be encouraged and confident that your decision to serve God has opened the door to a brand-new future. The possibilities are endless as to what God will do in your life. Enjoy the journey!

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