

NEW BELIEVER'S GUIDE



TRINITY CHURCH

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NEW BELIEVER'S GUIDE



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PART ONE

BEGINNING YOUR NEW LIFE



Welcome to the Christian life!

You are now a member of God's family because by faith you received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life. Surrendering your life to Christ and choosing to follow Him begins an eternal relationship with God. It is much more than just going to heaven when you die or going to church while you're alive. Salvation is the beginning of your new life. Jesus said, ¹⁰ The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life. (*John 10:10*)

You must understand that you have been saved FROM sin and the penalty that comes with it, which is eternity in Hell. Everyone in the family of God is a sinner saved by God's grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 ⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

You are now able to begin living a brand-new life with complete freedom and purpose. This new freedom will allow you to say no to the old things that held weighed you down so you can do all the good things God planned for you to do and live out!

BEING "BORN AGAIN"



A person who receives Christ as their Savior and receives eternal life begins as a newborn baby in God, we call it being "Born Again". Jesus told a man named Nicodemus that to see the kingdom of God one must be "born again". (See *John 3:1-19*) This is called the "new birth" and means a person has become a new member of the family of God.

There are many things to learn about Jesus and now because you have received the new spiritual birth and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit of God, you will be able to learn about spiritual things of the Lord.

NOW YOU ARE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE & SPIRITUAL THINGS OF GOD!

The Holy Spirit, who now lives in you, begins teaching and instructing you in your new life with God. Since He is our Helper, He will encourage, convict, challenge, and bring clarity to you so that you can continue to grow in God.

1 Corinthians 2:12-14 ¹² What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us.¹³ This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.¹⁴ The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them

foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.

1 John 2:27 NLT

²⁷ But you have received the Holy Spirit, and he lives within you, so you don't need anyone to teach you what is true. For the Spirit teaches you everything you need to know, and what he teaches is true—it is not a lie. So just as he has taught you, remain in fellowship with Christ.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE



Because the Holy Spirit lives within us, He gives us the "new nature", which is the nature of God. We are now able to understand spiritual things because the Holy Spirit is working in us to help us to do so. This includes understanding the word of God. The Bible can seem like a complicated book, but it is actually one continuous story of Humanity's fall and God's love and restoration of it.

What is incredible about the Bible is that God still speaks to us through it with great relevancy, even though it was written thousands of years ago, in many locations, by different people. Before you read the bible, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what it is God is speaking to you and how you can apply His word into your daily life. This is something we should do daily.

In the same way we feed ourselves physically, we should feed ourselves spiritually since the word of God is our spiritual food. **Matthew 4:4**
'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

1. Choose a Bible version that's understandable and easy to read.

The Bible was originally written in Hebrew and Greek. One of the earliest translations to English was the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible, but

today we have a variety of versions to choose from. Some translations focus on being more precise and are best for Bible study, while others focus on readability and are great for devotions.

Being new in the faith, we recommend the New Living Translation (NLT), or a study Bible in the English Standard Version (ESV) or New International Version (NIV). The NLT version of the Bible is most readable while still being literal in its translation; the Study Bibles contain footnotes that explain difficult to understand passages of Scripture.

2. You don't have to start at the beginning of the Bible.

The Bible contains 66 separate books compiled into one book. The 39 books of the Old Testament are the story of God and his people before the coming of the Messiah—Jesus. The 27 books of the New Testament pick up the story beginning with the birth of Jesus.

If you're new to the Bible, the best place to start is the Gospel of John. This book (the fourth book in the New Testament) is John's eyewitness account of the life of Jesus. As one of Jesus' closest disciples, John gives us riveting and informative insight of the life and ministry of Jesus.

John's purpose in writing is to help us believe, making it the ideal place to start. "These things were written to help you believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31)

3. Pick a book of the Bible and work your way through it.

It's easy to get lost thumbing through the Bible, never quite landing on anything. So, pick one book of the Bible and read a little each day, one chapter, perhaps. This way you'll be able to capture the full context (or full picture) of what you are reading.

After reading John, move on to the other gospels – Matthew, Mark or Luke. Next read Acts to find out how the church began following the ministry of Jesus. Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians, are letters which provide practical encouragement and instruction for living the Christian life. The book of Romans is jam-packed with essential doctrine. Genesis explains how everything began. Psalms is filled with heartfelt prayers that offer encouragement for every season of life. Proverbs provides wisdom and guidance to a righteous way of living .

4. Read a little every day!

Getting God's Word into your life doesn't have to take long. Start small—five or 10 minutes is better than none. Sometimes less is more, especially when reading less means you'll actually remember more.

Chose a time and place that's convenient for you. Many people read their Bible first thing in the morning, choosing to spend time with God before daily distractions get in the way. But if mornings aren't your thing, don't sweat it. *That* you read God's Word is more important than *when* you read God's Word.

5. Write it down.

As you read the Bible ask two questions:

What does this teach me about God?
What does this teach me about how I should live?

No doubt, as you read, you'll find one or two verses that seem to leap off the page. Maybe they speak to an issue you've been grappling with; maybe they answer a long-held question; maybe they give you comfort or encouragement; maybe they provide an example to follow or avoid.

When a verse resonates with you, stop, and write it down in a journal, word for word. Pause to let the message sink in because these words are God's words to you and this is how you will begin to know God and grow in God.

Remember that the Bible was never meant to merely inform us; the Bible was meant to transform us. Transformation comes when we find ways to apply God's word into our daily lives!

PART ONE



REVIEW

1. Salvation is the beginning of a new _____.
2. You have been saved from _____ and the penalty that comes with it.
3. With Jesus, you are now able to begin living a brand-new life with complete _____ and _____.
4. The way to be born again is to simply place our faith in _____ and follow Him.
5. The reason we can understand the word of God is because the _____ is working in us to help us to do so.
6. We should feed ourselves _____ since the word of God is our spiritual food.
7. When learning to read the bible, it is important to choose a _____ that is easy to understand.
8. Before you read the bible, ask the _____ to help you understand what it is God is speaking to you and how you can _____ His word into your daily life.
9. As you read the bible, ask 2 questions:
 1. _____.
 2. _____.
10. The Bible was never meant to merely inform us; the Bible was meant to _____ us.

PART TWO

BAPTISM BY WATER



Every Christian should be baptized soon after receiving Christ as Savior as it is a public statement of faith, acceptance, and commitment to Jesus Christ. Baptism is an ordinance of Jesus that is both a physical and spiritual action.

Jesus gave the disciples some instructions just before He ascended back to heaven as recorded in **Matthew 28:16-20**, ¹⁹ *Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.* ²⁰ *Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

After a person is saved, the next thing they are instructed to do is be baptized (v.19). Since the beginning of the first church, believers have given evidence of their faith in Christ by being baptized in water. This is why baptism has always come after a person has been saved. When a person is baptized by being immersed under the water, it symbolically unites us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ.

It's important to understand that baptism does not save us or keep us saved. Our confession of Christ and the decision to follow Him is what has saved us. This doesn't make baptism any less important. Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ and shows what has already taken place in our hearts. It describes our union with Christ as seen in **Romans 6:3-5**

³ *Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death?* ⁴ *For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives.* ⁵ *Since we*

have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was.

Baptism is not only a sign of obedience; it is also a sign of the inward work of God's Spirit in the life of the believer. The act of a water baptism acknowledges that a transformation and change of heart has truly taken place. Reading through Acts, we find baptism plainly related to repentance, receiving the Word, believing, and receiving the Holy Spirit. There is no explicit evidence to suggest that non-believers were baptized.

Through baptism we show that, not only are we obedient to the ordinances of Jesus Christ, but that we are in spiritual agreement with the teachings of his scriptures. Baptism is the spiritual representation that we too have been buried with Christ and have also risen with Christ so that we may walk a new life.

Therefore, it is important that your decision to be baptized is that of a sincere and godly intent prompted by the Holy Spirit and not because of a need or desire to please a person, satisfy a religious act, or because you are merely following a crowd. Water baptism demonstrates that you now seek to please God and his will for you and not that of your own.

In **Acts 2:41**, we also find that when a person was saved, they were baptized and joined the local church. This baptism identifies you with Christ and the local church. The church is God's place for Christians to be taught the Bible, to have fellowship with other Christians, and a place to pray, worship, and serve God. Continue to come to church and be a part of everything that is taking place. This is how you will grow and discover the purposes God has for your life.

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT



When a person is saved by placing their faith in Jesus, that person is sealed with the Holy Spirit. What does it mean that we are "sealed" by the Holy Spirit of God?

In *Ephesians 1:13-14* it says *"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*

You have now been marked and sealed by the Holy Spirit as one of God's very own because you believed. This means you are now God's special possession, and He has made this official by placing his special seal on you; the Holy Spirit of God in your life.

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit

There is an additional and distinct ministry of the Holy Spirit called the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in tongues. **Acts 2:4** *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an empowering gift from God that is promised to every believer (**Matthew 3:11; Luke 11:13; 24:49; Acts 2:33, 38**). It helps the Christian to live a holy life and brings a new devotional attachment to Jesus Christ, making Him very real and precious. The primary purpose of the Baptism is to give greater power for witnessing (**Acts 1:8**). Witnessing is simply sharing with others what God's gift of salvation has done in your life and what it can do in theirs. Other benefits include a greater joy in spiritual service, and a heightened sense of one's mission to the world.

Can a person receive eternal life in heaven without the baptism in the Holy Spirit? If so, why should we be baptized in the Spirit?

Receiving eternal life does not depend on being baptized in the Holy Spirit; for salvation is by grace through faith alone (**Habakkuk 2:4; John 6:28, 29; Galatians 3:6; 5:6; Ephesians 2:8**). It is a gift purchased for us by Christ when He was crucified. All we have to do is accept the gift. Just as the repentant thief on the cross next to Jesus was assured of entering paradise that very day, we too are assured a place in heaven with the Father if we believe in Jesus Christ. It is most unfortunate that some have said, "Unless you have spoken in tongues you will not go to heaven." This is not true. It is contrary to the Scriptures.

At the same time, although the Bible does not say the baptism in the Spirit is required for salvation, it does tell us that Christ commanded His first followers to wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them (**Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8**). The Bible commands us to "be filled with the Spirit" (**Ephesians 5:18**). This personal encounter with the Holy Spirit should be sought and cherished by every believer. With it comes a new and fuller dimension of spiritual understanding and a flow of spiritual gifts.

1 Corinthians 12:9-11). ⁹ *The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing.* ¹⁰ *He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages, while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said.* ¹¹ *It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

On the Day of Pentecost 120 disciples (committed followers of Jesus) were "filled" with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4). This fulfilled the promise

Christ had made to them a few days earlier. He had said, "John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). But this initial experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit is only the beginning of a lifelong experience. God wants us to remain filled with the Spirit.

Perhaps an analogy will best clarify this. As Christians we may be compared with a reservoir for producing electrical power. When we accept Christ, construction of our reservoir is complete. We now have the potential to be useful and to affect lives. But until the flood gates are opened and the cascading river waters pour through, no power is realized. So it is when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit. We open our lives to God and the Holy Spirit pours into us and through us. It is then we become most effective in God's service.

As with the reservoir, this power-generating experience is not intended to be a one-time occurrence. It is to be an ongoing process. When our spiritual power runs low, we need to return to the Source and let the blessed Holy Spirit pour into us again, bringing fresh power. This happened to the early followers of Jesus. They had already been baptized in the Spirit; but later on, when persecution arose, they needed a new surge of spiritual power; so they prayed to the Lord once again and "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 4:31).

As the Spirit-filled believer serves the Lord, there is an expenditure of spiritual power. It becomes necessary for him/her to open themselves again to the Holy Spirit in order that their power may be replenished. The command in Ephesians 5:18 is literally, "Keep on being filled with the Spirit." Here lies the secret of Spirit-filled living. The Spirit-filled life is a continuous process of receiving and giving, of being filled and sharing with others, of receiving power from God and spending it in sharing the gospel.

Who can be baptized in the Holy Spirit?

When the believers were assembled in prayer on the Day of Pentecost, *"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them"* (Acts 2:4). Not one was left out. It was not just the apostles who were filled, but all the men and all the women in that company of 120 persons. Then the apostle Peter addressed the onlookers and told them that they should be filled. He said *"The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off -- for all whom the Lord our God will call"* (Acts 2:39).

As Peter said, the baptism in the Holy Spirit is for every believer in every generation. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is promised to every Christian believer.

The question is often asked: "What can I do to claim the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit for my life?" One thing the believer should do is to seek the Baptizer rather than the Baptism. It is Jesus who baptizes believers in the Holy Spirit. Seekers should focus their attention on Him rather than on an experience.

There are other steps that, if taken, will assist seekers. (1) Understand that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift from God. It should be received with gratitude and giving of thanks to the Giver. It cannot be earned or merited. It can only be accepted with an open and willing heart. (2) Be fully persuaded that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is both biblical and doctrinally correct. (3) Confess any known sins in your life and decide to live a righteous life with God's help. (4) Begin to worship the Lord with expressions of praise and worship. (5) Express to the Lord, who is the Baptizer, a desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit for His glory. (6) Ask someone who has already been Baptized in the Holy Spirit to pray over you to receive this gift.

PART TWO



REVIEW

1. After a person is saved, the next thing they are instructed to do is be _____.
2. Baptism is an ordinance of Jesus that is both a _____ and _____ action.
3. Baptism is the spiritual representation that we too have been _____ with Christ and have also _____ with Christ so that we may walk a new life.
4. What passage in the bible talks about believers being sealed by the Holy Spirit? _____.
5. The Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an empowering _____ from God the Father that is promised to _____.
6. The initial physical evidence of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is _____.
7. The primary purpose of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is to give greater power for _____.
8. Witnessing is simply sharing what God's gift of salvation has done for _____ and what it can do for _____.
9. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is for every _____ in every generation.
10. What can you do to claim the promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit for your life? _____.

PART THREE

WORSHIP



Praise is the joyful recounting of all God has done for us. It is closely intertwined with thanksgiving as we offer back to God appreciation for His mighty works on our behalf. Since God has done many wonderful deeds, He is worthy of our praise. **Psalm 18:3** *I called on the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and he saved me from my enemies.*

Worship, however, comes from a different place within our spirits. Worship should be reserved for God alone (**Luke 4:8**). Worship gets to the heart of who we are. To truly worship God, we must let go of our self-worship. We must be willing to humble ourselves before God, surrender every part of our lives to His control, and adore Him for who He is, not just what He has done. Worship is a lifestyle, not just an occasional activity. Jesus said the Father is seeking those who will worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (**John 4:23**).

In Scripture, praise is usually presented as boisterous, joyful, and uninhibited. God invites praise of all kinds from His creation. Jesus said that if people don't praise God, even the "stones will cry out" (**Luke 19:40**). This is why church services provide a time of praise and worship with music. This sets the atmosphere for a person to freely praise and worship God. You can sing, clap, jump, shout and raise your hands as a sign of thanksgiving, humility and surrender. Often, worship is coupled with the act of bowing or kneeling, which shows humility and contrition (**2 Chronicles 29:28; Hebrews 11:21; Revelation 19:10**). It is through true worship that we invite the Holy Spirit to speak to us, convict us, and comfort us. Through worship, we realign our priorities with God's and acknowledge Him once more as the rightful Lord of our lives.

Just as praise is intertwined with thanksgiving, worship is intertwined with surrender. It is impossible to worship God and anything else at the same time (**Luke 4:8**). The physical acts often associated with worship—bowing, kneeling, lifting hands—help to create the necessary attitude of humility required for real worship.

Worship is an attitude of the heart. A person can go through the outward motions and not be worshiping (**Psalm 51:16-17; Matthew 6:5-6**). God sees the heart, and He desires and deserves sincere, heartfelt praise and worship. Praise and worship go beyond singing and dancing and into the way we are living.

GIVING



Giving is another form of worship. When it comes to giving you might hear the word "tithe" in church often. Although the word has gained a negative connotation over the years, it is a wonderful blessing in the life of a believer. Simply put, we don't have to give, we get to give!

The word "tithe" comes from an Old English root meaning "one tenth." It is the common English translation for the Old Testament Hebrew asar word group. The tithe was an offering of one's agricultural income to the Lord as an expression of thanks and dedication. In the Old Testament agricultural economy, tithes were paid not in cash, gold or goods but in crops or livestock.

The main principle behind tithing and giving is the fact that what we do with our money shows where our heart is. **Matthew 6:21** says "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" When we are able to give a tithe or more of our income instead of keeping that money for ourselves, it shows that our heart isn't tied to our money and that we love God more than our money.

The Bible mentions money over 800 times and of all of Jesus' parables, more than half of them talked about money. Why? Because that is where so many people get tripped up! When we are able to give back to God, our money doesn't have as tight of a hold on us because we realize that God is in control of our finances. We remember that everything we have has been given to us by Him. Even though most of us probably work for the money we make each month, even God has his hand there - He has given us the ability to do our jobs. Many who grasp what God has truly given them seem to agree that a tithe doesn't even feel like enough!

Just like God tells us to keep sex within marriage, to love one another, and to seek first His kingdom, tithing is a blessing to our lives and

something that will help better our lives (as well as help the lives of others). We are not saved by works, thus failing to tithe will not send us to hell, but doing so will help improve your life and strengthen your relationship with God.

Tithing, offerings, and contributing to special initiatives is how we involved ourselves with God's work while supporting God's work. When we give, we are helping to sustain and push the work of God forward in our local church. With your giving, we can continue initiatives, programs, and ministries that help others and further the gospel of Jesus Christ locally and globally.

Every Christian should diligently pray and seek God's wisdom in the matter of participating in tithing and/or how much to give (**James 1:5**). Above all, all tithes and offerings should be given with pure motives and an attitude of worship to God and service to the body of Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:7 NLT *7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."*

PART THREE



REVIEW

1. Praise is the joyful _____ of all God has done for us.
2. God invites praise of all kinds from His _____.
3. It is through _____ worship that we invite the Holy Spirit to speak to us, convict us, and comfort us.
4. Worship is an attitude of the _____.
5. Singing, clapping, jumping, shouting and raising your hands are all signs of _____.
6. Giving is another form of _____.
7. The main principle behind tithing and giving is the fact that what we do with our money shows where our _____.
8. _____, _____, and _____ to special initiatives is how we involved ourselves with God's work while supporting God's work.
9. When we give, we are helping to sustain and push the _____ forward in our local church.
10. Above all, all tithes and offerings should be given with _____ and an _____ to God and service to the body of Christ.

PART FOUR

EVANGELISM



Evangelism means to share the gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ with someone else. The gospel is the good news that God loves the world enough to give His only Son to die for our sin (**John 3:16**). The gospel is good news because our salvation and eternal life and home in heaven are guaranteed through Christ (**John 14:1–4**). *“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. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you”* (**1 Peter 1:3–4**).

Personal evangelism should be the lifestyle of every true Christian. We’ve been given a great gift, and our Master left us with clear instructions: *“Go into all the world and make disciples of every nation”* (**Matthew 28:19**). Before we can “make disciples,” we must evangelize. There are other reasons, besides Jesus’ command, that should also motivate us to share the greatest news in the world with people who haven’t heard it:

1. Evangelism is an act of love. Love must be the defining characteristic of every follower of Jesus Christ (**John 13:35; 1 Corinthians 13:1–7**). It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit, so anyone who walks in the Spirit will demonstrate love in dealing with people (**Galatians 5:16, 22–23**). We possess the best news in the world, and love propels us to share it with those who haven’t heard. Love wants everyone to have a chance to respond to God’s offer of salvation. Withholding news that could save someone’s life is the utmost cruelty; therefore, those who truly love God will love the people

whom Jesus came to save (**John 3:16–18; 1 John 4:20**).

2. *Evangelism builds our own faith.* Nothing helps us learn a subject like teaching it to someone else. When we make a practice of sharing our faith with those in our lives, we strengthen our own beliefs. Regular evangelism forces us to wrestle through the hard questions, find answers for ourselves, and prepare to respond to the questions of others. We should *“always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect”* (**1 Peter 3:15**). We prepare by studying God’s Word for ourselves, listening to sound Bible teachers, and staying in close fellowship with Jesus. Those practices keep our own lives pure so that we are not hypocrites who preach one thing but do another (**Galatians 6:1**).

3. *Evangelism provides eternal benefits.* Jesus encouraged His followers to *“store up treasure in heaven”* (**Matthew 6:19**). That treasure consists of rewards for what we did on earth in His name and for His glory. It is not self-centered to make choices that will ensure eternal treasure for ourselves. Jesus told us to! Our service to Him can be as simple as offering a cup of cold water to one of His own (**Matthew 10:42**). The parable of the unjust steward underscores the importance of doing whatever we can to bring people to faith in Christ (**Luke 16:1–13**).

4. *Evangelism is an overflow of the “hope that is within us”* (**Hebrews 6:19; 1 Peter 3:15**). When two people fall in love, they cannot help but let everyone around them know it. Joy shows on their faces, stars glitter in their eyes. They are eager to tell anyone who will listen about the wonderful person they love. So, it is when we’ve fallen in love with Jesus. We cannot help but tell people about Him every chance we get. We think

about Him all the time. We're drawn to His Word, to worship services, and to others who love Him. We look for opportunities to share His truth with someone who is far from Him. If Jesus is not at the forefront of our minds, we have a spiritual problem and need to address that first before we can share the "hope that is within us."

5. *Evangelism pleases the Lord.* The Christian life must never be lived according to "shoulds." Yet we hear that word often in relation to Bible reading, prayer, church attendance, and other Christian practices. "I should do that, *but . . .*" The *but* is a bigger problem than we want to admit. God's children will naturally want to please their Heavenly Father; it is their greatest delight. So, our compass is set with God at true north. In everything we do, we feel the magnetic pull toward pleasing God. Even mundane tasks can be completed with joy because we are doing what God has given us to do (**1 Corinthians 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:9**). Showing and teaching other people how to have a relationship with Jesus is what truly pleases God. He does not delight in anyone remaining away from His love and perishing. This is why evangelism on our part is very important.

DISCIPLESHIP



By definition, a disciple is a committed student, one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines of another. A Christian disciple is a person who accepts and assists in the spreading of the good news of Jesus Christ. Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are equipped by the Holy Spirit, who resides in our hearts, to overcome the pressures and trials of this present life and become more and more Christlike.

Unlike the process of evangelism, discipleship is long term in nature. Discipleship requires believers to respond to the Holy Spirit's prompting to examine their thoughts, words and actions and compare them with the Word of God. This requires that we be in the Word daily—studying it, praying over it, and obeying it. In addition, we should always be ready to give testimony of the reason for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15) and to disciple others to walk in His way.

Too often, we believe the lie from Satan that we don't really know enough bible or haven't been a Christian long enough to make disciples. No matter what our maturity level in the Christian life, we have something to offer in the area of discipleship. In fact, some of the most enthusiastic representatives of the Christian life are new believers who have just discovered the awesome love of God. They may not know a lot of Bible verses or the "accepted" way of saying things, but they have experienced the love of the living God, and that is exactly what we are to share. The discipleship process is two-fold in that we grow as disciples learning to obey all that Jesus has commanded us, while teaching others to do the same.

According to Scripture, being a Christian disciple involves personal growth characterized by the following:

1. Putting Jesus first in all things (Mark 8:34-38). The disciple of Christ needs to be set apart from the world. Our focus should be on our Lord and pleasing Him in every area of our lives. We must put off self-centeredness and put on Christ-centeredness.

2. Following Jesus' teachings (John 8:31-32). We must be obedient children and doers of the Word. Obedience is the supreme test of faith in God (**1 Samuel 28:18**), and Jesus is the perfect example of obedience as He lived a life on earth of complete obedience to the Father even to the point of death (**Philippians 2:6-8**).

3. Fruitfulness (John 15:5-8). Our job is not producing fruit. Our job is to abide in Christ, and if we do, the Holy Spirit will produce the fruit, and this fruit is the result of our obedience. As we become more obedient to the Lord and learn to walk in His ways, our lives will change. The biggest change will take place in our hearts, and the overflow of this will be new conduct (thoughts, words and actions) representative of that change. The change we seek is done from the inside out, through the power of the Holy Spirit. It isn't something we can conjure up on our own.

4. Love for other disciples (John 13:34-35). We are told that love of other believers is the evidence of our being a member of God's family (**1 John 3:10**). Love is defined and elaborated on in **1 Corinthians 13:1-13**. These verses show us that love is not an emotion; it is action. We must be doing something and involved in the process. Furthermore, we are told to think more highly of others than of ourselves and to look out for their interests (**Philippians 2:3-4**). The next verse in Philippians (verse 5) really sums up what we are to do when it comes to everything in life: *"our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."*

PART FOUR



REVIEW

1. Evangelism means to share the _____ of Jesus Christ with someone else.
2. Personal evangelism should be the _____ of every true Christian.
3. Before we can "make disciples," we must _____.
4. Evangelism _____ the Lord.
5. Discipleship is _____ in nature.
6. The disciple of Christ needs to be _____ from the world.
7. We must be obedient children and _____ of the Word.
8. As we become more _____ to the Lord and learn to walk in His ways, our lives will _____.
9. The discipleship process is _____ in that we grow as disciples learning to obey all that Jesus has commanded us, while teaching others to do the same.
10. *"our attitude should be the same as that of _____."*

TRINITY CHURCH GROWTH TRACK




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