

to the praise of his glory (Eph 1:13-14).

The Holy Spirit is given to those who commit their lives to God (Acts 5:32). Sometimes it is given with great outward signs (Acts 2:1-4; 19:6), at other times it provides inner deep conviction and joy (1Thes 1:5-7). It is like the earnest money one receives when agreeing to sell a house—just to let the seller know the buyer is serious. It is not the full price or even a “down payment”—it is just a token of the real thing to come. Christ actually has “bought us” with His sacrifice:

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? **For you were bought with a price;** therefore glorify God in your body (1Cor 6:19-20, NRSV).

What Is the Believer’s Future?

God is training and teaching us now so that we can “be like him”. We learn this while we are physical so that our mistakes are limited and do not “mess things up” for all eternity. But the destiny of one who follows God is so fantastic that the Apostles had a hard time describing it.

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, **will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body** (Phil 3:20-21).

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, **we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is** (1Jn 3:2).

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now **the dwelling of God is with men**, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. **There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain**, for the old order of things has

passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “**I am making everything new!**” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true” (Rev 21:3-5).

What Is The Next Step to a New Life?

Committing your life to God is the first step down a long, wonderful, meaningful, yet at times difficult road. **You need to begin reading the Bible and living by “every word that comes from the mouth of God”** (Matt 4:4) Christ will lead you, the Holy Spirit will be inside you, and you should meet with other believers (Heb 10:25). You will want to ask some of them to baptize you, as a sign of your commitment to God.

Notice that we did not say, “join a church”. The apostle Paul taught believers not to align themselves with a specific religious teacher (1Cor 1:11-17, 3:1-11), but to consider themselves part of the entire body of Christ—the one Church. Yet today, most religious denominations are aligned with a specific religious teacher or group of teachers (some living, some dead).

Look for local congregations of independent or non-denominational believers. Visit more than one. If you ask us, we will try to help you find a group, or send you more literature to help you grow. We do not have a church organization to join.

May God bless you as you follow Him! 📖

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A New Life

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death (Prov 14:12, NIV Bible unless otherwise noted).

There comes a time in many individuals’ lives where they see that what they are doing is just not working. Their efforts to be happy, to make friends and to “get ahead in life” are not producing the results that they want. They hope that there is something better, but they are not sure what.

I remember going through a time like this myself. I read some of the Bible, including the above proverb. I interested to find that this verse was so important that the verse was repeated in Proverbs 16:25. I was also interested to find that Jesus said essentially the same thing:

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets. Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it (Matt 7:12-14).

I realized that I was not always treating others the way I wanted to be treated. Now of course, I

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thought I had good reasons for treating others badly—I thought some of them were stupid; I thought some of them deserved it. But Jesus did **not** say “do to others what you would have them do to you unless you have a reason not to”. He was good to others even when they put him to death.

I realized that I was walking down the broad way that leads to destruction. Was I the “worst of sinners”? No. I was a good student in school. I avoided participating in the mess of drugs, drinking, stealing, lying, immorality, etc. that was fairly common all around me. But was I less in need of God because other people were “worse” than me? Jesus spoke about “more guilty” sinners:

Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them [a disaster that made “big news” in that day] — do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! **But unless you repent, you too will all perish** (Luke 13:4-5).

My experience may be similar or very different from yours. But I will stop mentioning myself so you can focus on yourself and what the Bible says about you:

What You Need to Know

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives (1Jn 1:8).

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus (Rom 3:23-24).

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 6:23).

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did

not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him (John 3:16-17).

Everyone has sinned. God has made a way, through Jesus, the Christ, to pay for that sin. (“Christ” is not Jesus’ “last name” but means “anointed” or “one chosen for leadership”). He wants to save everyone from his or her sins.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! (2Cor 5:17).

...God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you” (Heb 13:5).

For it is **by grace you have been saved**, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Eph 2:8-10).

Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him” (John 14:23).

Following Jesus is not following a new set of rules, but a complete change of life. It is seeking to live as He lived and do the things that he did. Christ offers complete forgiveness of all past sin—no matter how bad—and his close presence so that we may walk as he walked (1Jn 2:6).

What You Need to Do

Is there something a person needs to do when he or she decides to begin to follow God and His ways? Many Christians will ask new believers to join a church, sign a card, walk down an aisle, pray at an altar or something like that. The Bible contains clear examples. Here are two:

He [a Roman jailer] then brought them [apostles] out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They replied, “**Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved**—you and your

household.” Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately **he and all his family were baptized**. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family (Acts 16:30-34).

When the people heard this [message about Jesus], they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “**Repent and be baptized**, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the **gift of the Holy Spirit**. 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 2:37-39).

The Holy Spirit

What is the gift of the “Holy Spirit”? What does it do? There are many Bible verses that we should study on the subject. These are a start:

May the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace** as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another (Rom 15:13-14).

God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and **gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will** (Heb 2:4).

But when he, the **Spirit of truth**, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come (John 16:13).

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised **Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—