

I'M A CHRISTIAN, NOW WHAT?

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tim Parsons was called into ministry in the fall of 1981, while studying at Liberty University, in Lynchburg, Virginia. Tim has served as a pastor to students in several locations since that time. He and his family presently reside in Lexington, Kentucky where he now serves as pastor to *Center Point Church*.

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Revised May 2015

PREFACE

Many people come to know Christ as Savior but never progress to the stage of knowing Him as Lord. Without this vital growth, they are miserable and unproductive. The goal of this book is to provide a tool for new believers to aid in these first few steps of growth. This book is designed to stimulate questions and encourage the growth of new converts. I trust it will help you to bridge the gap from *birth* to *adulthood* in the Christian experience!

T.J.P.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Receiving Christ is a great and awesome decision that you have made, and I congratulate you. Receiving Christ is just the first step, though. Now you must grow in Him. That's what this book is all about! Here's what to do:

1. Find a quiet place where you won't be disturbed.
2. Set aside a specific time to complete your lesson on a daily basis.
3. Beginning with day one, read the selected verses. Take your time and try to understand what each verse is saying.
4. Answer the questions for that day as completely as you can.
5. Record any questions that arise and save them until you meet with the person that is discipling you.
6. Try to memorize the selected verse each week.
7. Meet with your discipling partner each week to discuss the lesson.
8. Recommended Bible translations: NIV, NASB, ESV, NLT

To my special wife, Susan, with thanks for her help and patience with me. And to some close friends, models, and teachers that taught me a lot of what I know.

My Mother and Father

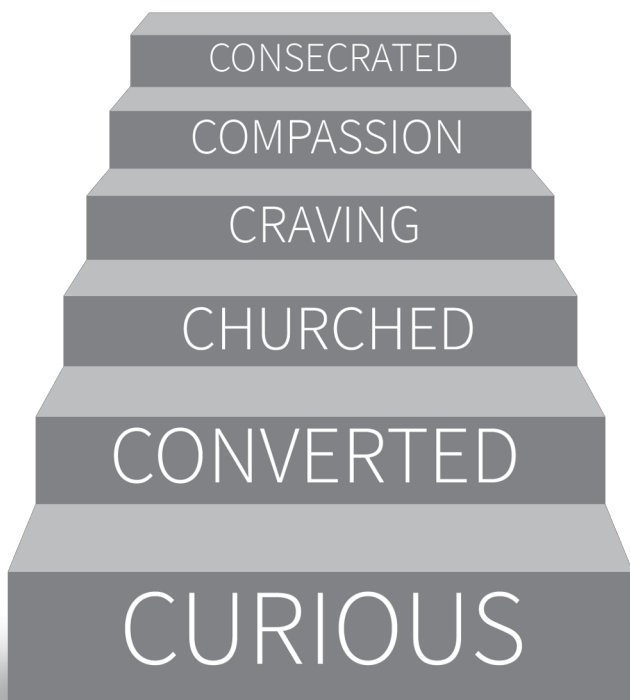
Dr. David Adams

Many students and disciples through the last 30 years

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STEPS TO GROWTH



Week 1: First Steps

Understanding SALVATION,
BAPTISM, & CHURCH MEMBERSHIP



Welcome to the family! It's great to have you! Congratulations on accepting Christ. It is, without a doubt, the most important decision in your life. Now, let's take a few days and go over all the steps to accepting Christ so you can digest and understand each one even better. Then in the last couple days of this week, we will look at what you should do as a new Christian. Be sure to complete the daily lessons. By devoting time to God and His word everyday, you'll develop a strong foundation.

DAY 1 In order to accept Christ, you must first see that you need Him.

(Date) How many of us does Romans 3:23 and Romans 3:10-12 say have sinned?

Read Psalm 51:5 - When did that sin begin in us?

What is the penalty for that sin as seen in Romans 5:12 and 6:23a?

(Death here refers to separation from God forever in hell—see Luke 16 for more detail)

DAY 2 Yesterday, we discovered that we are all sinners, and that our sin deserves death (hell). What is our only escape from that?

(Date)

Read John 14:6. Who is the *only way out*?

How did Christ pay for our sin? _____

(Read Romans 5:6-9 and John 3:15-17)

Describe His

death: _____

How is Jesus Christ different from other "so called" prophets? See 1 Corinthians 15:3-6 (Hint: Is He still dead?)

To become a Christian you must be willing to change or to start over and to receive Jesus Christ into your life.

What are the two simple steps to becoming saved in Romans 10:9-10?

1. _____
2. _____

Most people pray and ask Christ into their lives. An example of this *sinner's prayer* might be:

DAY 3

(Date)

*Dear Jesus,
I know I've sinned against you. I know
I've done wrong things. I realize that the
payment for my sin is death. I also know
that you died on the cross for me and
rose again, and now you are alive. Come
into my life and save me. I want to live
the rest of my life for You!
In Jesus Name,
Amen*

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. List some *old things* in your life that have *passed away* and some things that have *become new*:

There may come a time when you may doubt the decision you made to accept Christ. You may not *feel* saved.

Can you *know* you're saved? See 1 John 5:13

Can you *ever* lose that salvation?

Read John 10:27-30

Although salvation is *totally* and completely received by accepting Christ *alone*, there are some things that you should do immediately *after* you're saved. One of these is being *baptized*. We're going to take a close look at baptism today and tomorrow.

Baptism is a ceremony conducted in a Bible believing Church. It is a ritual that follows Christ's command to us (see Matthew 28:19-20). In most cases, the church would

DAY 4

(Date)

give you an opportunity at the end of the service to "come forward" (walk up to the front), and tell the Pastor that you've received Christ and that you want to "follow Christ's example by being baptized" (see Matthew 3:13-17). At another time, during a baptism ceremony, you will be given an opportunity to profess Christ, and then the pastor would simply place you under the water. It's quite painless, and it will give you the added assurance for which you're looking.

DAY 5

(Date)

Where was Jesus baptized, and by whom? (see Matthew 3:13)

Matthew 3:16 says, "As soon as Jesus was _____, he went _____ the water..." (this shows us that Christ chose to be baptized by immersion (means to go under the water - not to have water sprinkled on your head).

Some reasons that you should consider being baptized right away are:

1. God asks us to. (Matthew 28:19-20)
2. Our new love for Christ should make us want to identify with Him. (Acts 2:40-41)
3. We should follow Christ's example.

Attending church is absolutely important for you as a new Christian. It's a place where you can find answers to your questions, a place where you can worship God, and a place where you can learn more about him and your new life in Christ.

What does Hebrews 10:25 say about attending church?

A church should be a place that:

1. Teaches us the Bible (see 2 Timothy 2:15 and Romans 10:17).
2. Meets our needs (read Acts 2:42-47) List some of the ways this early church met its peoples' needs:

3. Challenges us to give our lives to God (see Romans 12:1).
4. Leads us in worship.
5. Gives us an opportunity to serve God.

DAY 6

(Date)

If you have to find a church on your own... then here is what to look for. A church should:

1. Teach the Bible.
2. Be a warm and friendly place.
3. Present salvation regularly from the Bible, and give people an opportunity to respond.
4. Teach concepts that help you grow in Christ.
5. Have a pastor and staff (other pastors that assist him) that meet your needs.

Let's review what you should do to begin this new life you have just received in Jesus Christ.

1. You need to find a church. Talk with the pastor about your decision to receive Christ and ask him about baptism. Sometimes an opportunity to indicate this is given during the worship service. This is called an invitation.
2. You should definitely complete this book. *You need it!* It will help you to grow spiritually, and it will also answer many of the questions you may have as a new Christian.
3. Begin to read your Bible and Pray DAILY. (You'll learn how to do that in Week 2.)
4. You may doubt your salvation. Who knows, this may have already bothered you. Trust God and take Him at His word. (1 John 5:13)

DAY 7

(Date)

Week 2: Spiritual Nutrition

How to Read the Bible for Yourself



You've made it through the first week of your new life, and I hope it was a good one! Now we must move on. Just like a new baby being born into this world must immediately have milk in order to live...you need spiritual food to grow as a Christian. It's not optional! *You must have it!* For the next 3 weeks, this book will help to *spoon feed* you, but after that you must be able to fend for yourself. This chapter will show you the importance of time spent with God and *how* to go about it!

DAY 1

(Date)

Your time with God is SO important. Unfortunately, many Christians soon forget this, and they begin to die slowly—much like someone who stops eating.

Locate the following verses, and record below the things they say that the Bible will do for you when you read it:

Psalm 119:105 _____

Psalm 119:9 & John 15:3 _____

Proverbs 3:5-6 _____

Proverbs 1:7 _____

Psalm 1:1-4 _____

Let's look at some more interesting facts about the Bible:

What weapon is the Bible compared to in Hebrews 4:12?

DAY 2

(Date)

What is it compared to in Psalm 119:105?

What's the purpose of the lamp?

Why should you study God's Word? (see 2 Timothy 2:15)

Is just reading the Bible *enough*? (see James 1:22-25)

If not, what else should you do? _____

It's also a great idea to begin to memorize some verses that *mean something* to you. Then, when you need them, God will bring them back to memory. (We are told that in Psalm 119:11.)

DAY 3

(Date) _____

Read the following verses and list *reasons* for spending time in God’s Word everyday:

1 Peter 2:2 _____
John 15:7 _____

List some more reasons for you to read God’s Word:

John 16:33 _____
Luke 11:28 _____
1 Peter 3:15 _____
Joshua 1:8 _____
Psalm 119:97 & 100 _____

DAY 4

(Date) _____

The rest of the week will be spent studying the Bible for ourselves. There are several different methods and shortcuts to use. I am going to list a few suggestions you may try.

Described below is the **STUDY** method. Using Romans 8:35-39, search for or do the following:

DAY 5

(Date) _____

S - summarize - *What is this passage saying to you?*

T - title - *Give the passage a title based on its theme*

U - uplifts - *List any promises you found*

D - difficulties - *Write any questions you have*

Y - your verse - *Pick a KEY verse and write it below*

Listed below is the **SMAC** method. Using 1 John 4:7-8, answer the questions:

S - What does it *say*?

M - What does it *mean* to you?

A - How can you *apply* what you learned to your life?

C - What do you need to *change*?

Next, try the **SPECS** method using Psalm 37:1-7.

S - *Summarize* the passage.

P - *Promises* you can claim.

E - *Examples* to follow.

DAY 6

C - *Commands* to obey. (What is God telling you to do?)

(Date)

S - *Sins* to Confess.

I hope you've seen how important spending time in God's Word is to you as a Christian. It's a MUST! A lot of churches have devotional sheets that they distribute weekly to help you. Use them! If they aren't available, start in Romans. Take 5-10 verses each day, and use one of the methods I've described. What's important is that you do it *everyday*.

DAY 7

(Date)

While you may miss a day here and there, you *must not quit!* Just pick up where you left off and keep going! Some students have said, "*No Bible - No Bed*" or "*No Bible - No Breakfast!*". Use whatever it takes. Just *make* it a consistent habit, like brushing your teeth. Here's some hints to help you:

1. Find a consistent time to study everyday (like before bed, in the afternoon, or whenever).
2. Find a quiet place without distractions, so you can think more clearly.
3. Begin with prayer and ask God to help you.
4. Follow through with the method you choose.
5. Think about what you read and memorize a verse or so each week.

Week 3: Communication

Talking with your Father



I hope you've already begun to put into practice what we learned last week. Your daily time in God's Word is irreplaceable. Something else you should do each day is to talk to God. We call that prayer. When you read the Bible God talks to YOU. When you pray - you talk to HIM. You may not know how to pray, or what to pray for... that's what we're going to learn this week. It's an awesome privilege, you know, to talk to the God that created this beautiful world, and for Him to stop and listen!

DAY 1

(Date)

What are reasons God gives for why we should pray?
Examine these verses to find some of those reasons:

1 Samuel 12:23 _____
Mark 1:35 and Luke 6:12 _____
(Jesus, our greatest example, prayed... we should follow in
His footsteps)
James 4:2 and Matthew 7:7-11 _____

DAY 2

(Date)

How do we KNOW that God answers our prayers? Study
these four verses. Briefly summarize and record what they
are saying.

Jeremiah 33:3 _____
Luke 11:9-13 _____
Mark 11:24 _____
John 15:7 _____

DAY 3

(Date)

There are many important parts or elements of prayer. List
some of them next to the verses given below.

Hebrews 13:15 _____
Psalm 100:4 & 2 Thessalonians 1:3 _____
1 Samuel 12:23 _____
1 John 1:9 _____
Matthew 7:7 _____

Remember to include these things: praising God, thanking
God, confessing your sins, praying for others, praying for
your own needs, listening to Him by waiting quietly before
Him.

What are some things for which you should pray? I'll help
you begin a list, but let's start by seeing some things that

God states in His Word.

James 5:16 _____

Matthew 5:44 _____

1 Timothy 2:1-3 _____

DAY 4

(Date)

These are just a few. Here are some other suggestions. Pray for those in your life who don't know Christ, other Christians, your family, your co-workers, your school, and your church. You should record your requests on paper and keep track of the answers God gives you.

Now, what about the things that hinder or block our prayers? Let's look at them today, so that we can avoid them in our lives.

John 9:31 & Psalm 66:18 _____

James 4:2 _____

Mark 11:24-25 _____

James 1:5-7 _____

James 4:3 _____

DAY 5

(Date)

One of the greatest things prayer is good for in our lives, is taking our problems to God and giving them to Him. I'll bet you've had some problems you would like to leave with God! Find 1 Peter 5:5-9 and see what God says to do. How does God describe the prayer of someone who is righteous (seeking God) in James 5:16?

DAY 6

(Date)

There are no wrong or right times to pray. As a matter of fact, you should pray all the time. As we finish this week of looking at prayer, let's see some of the times the Bible describes prayer taking place, and what we can learn from them.

Psalm 5:3 & Mark 1:35

Daniel 6:10

Luke 6:12-13

1 Thessalonians 5:17

Prayer is a vital link between us and God. It is so important. I hope you've learned that this week. Remember, it's *not* optional (1 Samuel 12:23)! I hope you will begin, right *now*, to pray (at least once) every day with a list, and let God open

DAY 7

(Date)

the windows of heaven and pour down the blessings on you that He so wants to give.

Week 4: Beyond Me

Sharing My New Life With Others



Accepting Christ is the greatest decision anyone can make. I hope that you've begun to see what a *great* gift God gave you when He saved you. I hope that there have already been many changes in your life and many more to come. The final week in this book is dedicated to how you can share this GREAT gift with others. I know you have some family and friends who you want to accept Christ, too. During the first part of this week, we will focus on sharing Christ *by how you live*. The remainder of the week will be devoted to sharing Christ *by what you say*. I trust that God will use you to reach many others for Him.

DAY 1

(Date)

Accepting Christ is like starting your life all over! You are a new person. What does 2 Corinthians 5:14-18 say about this?

How do we grow spiritually and allow these changes to take place? (see 1 Peter 2:2-3 and Psalm 119:9-11)

DAY 2

(Date)

What about sin in our lives? How do we get rid of that? Well... you probably never will, but you can learn not to say "yes" to it. What does 1 Corinthians 10:12-13 and James 1:13-16 say about temptation?

Does God tempt us?

How *are* we tempted? _____

Remember you *can't* just do what you want to, because God owns you! (See Romans 12:1-2). What do you think (considering what Christ did for you) is reasonable?

Don't forget... if you do fall, go to God and confess... just tell

God what you did. (1 John 1:9).

If we really love God, we *must* obey Him (see John 14:21-24). One of things he tells us to do is to love others. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 and list all the characteristics of love that the Bible gives in verses 4-8.

DAY 3

(Date)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____

When God begins His work in you, He changes you. Look at one more list of things God produces in you. Read Galatians 5:22-23 and list the changes:

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

Sharing Christ, both by how you live and by what you say, is very important. Read the following verses and record some reasons why it is essential:

Mark 16:15 _____

Acts 1:8 _____

John 3:1-21 _____

Witnessing (that's the word we use for telling others how to accept Christ) shows you are not ashamed of God in your life (see Romans 1:16).

Caring about others is one of the first signs of a life changed by God's salvation. Read John 1:41 and 45. What did Andrew do immediately after he was saved?

What about Philip?

DAY 4

(Date)

You should share your own testimony (that's *your* story of what God did for you and how *you* accepted Him). Remember, witnessing is a process. What are the steps listed in John 4:35-37?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____

You might wonder to whom you should witness. It would be a good idea for you to use a section of your prayer list (the one we discussed last week) to record the names of friends and family who you think might not know Christ.

Remember, God may send someone else *your* way like He did for Peter in Acts 10:1-6. You just need to be sensitive to those around you that are looking for *the answer* you once looked for. (Just like Philip in Acts 8:30-35)

DAY 5

(Date)

There are a lot of reasons why many Christians don't share with others. List a reason beside each of the verses below and decide not to allow *anything* to stop *you* from witnessing.

Proverbs 29:25 _____

Romans 1:16 _____

Matthew 14:14 _____

1 Peter 3:15-16 _____

What are some of the special benefits of witnessing? Look at these verses:

Psalms 126:6 _____

Proverbs 11:30 _____

Daniel 12:3 _____

1 Corinthians 9:25 _____

What does our witnessing produce in heaven? (See Luke 15:7)

How should we approach witnessing? (See 1 Peter 3:15)

DAY 6

(Date)

Now, as we finish this chapter and this book, take a few minutes and write *your* personal testimony. Write about how you accepted Christ so that you'll be ready to share:

Finally, list the names of 5 people for whom you will begin to pray daily and with whom you will share Christ:

DAY 7

(Date)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Here's the plan I use to share Christ:

(You should underline these verses in your Bible and put the page number of the next one by each).

1. Must believe you're a sinner (Romans 3:23)
Your sin deserves DEATH (Romans 6:23a)
2. Jesus Christ died for you (Romans 6:23b; John 3:16)
3. Must accept that FREE gift (Romans 10:9)
Confess Jesus is Lord
Believe
4. Ask Him to come in—Pray
5. Expect God to change you (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Sharing Christ is a difficult, but a rewarding and necessary job. How will others know if we don't tell them? What would be different in your life if someone hadn't told you? I hope you won't be selfish, but that you'll share this great gift with everybody you meet. **It's the greatest gift you'll ever give.**

Some final thoughts:

Christians are special people! The word *Christian* means *Christ-like*. I hope that will be the standard for the rest of your Christian life. I trust that this book has helped you to begin to grow in your relationship with God. Life is short—live it all for God!

Let me leave you with Paul's words in his last book as he wrote to Timothy (a teenager at the time) in 2 Timothy 3:14: *"But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of..."*

If you want to continue in your study of the Christian life, get the sequel to this book entitled, *The Change of Life*.

Be sure to stop by the Center Point website for more helpful tools like this one:

*www.cpclex.org;
put your cursor over the "CONNECT" tab;*

*choose “growth resources”;
click on “download central” on the right side of the page*

