

# Starting Out

## Welcome to the family!

Your decision to become a Christian is the most important choice you'll ever make. Praying through to salvation completely reverses the course of your life. It makes you a new person. Jesus will see you safely through this world to Heaven if you keep your determination to let Him have His way in your life.

True salvation brings a radical change, and because of this, it can seem a little overwhelming. You're probably not exactly sure what God expects of you. You may even wonder if you really have what it takes to live the Christian life. Here's an important tip—you don't have what it takes. No one does in his own strength! But don't despair, that's why you came to Jesus in the first place. Like everyone else, you desperately needed a Savior to help you to live right, and to show you the way to eternal life. Now that you have the assurance of Christ's forgiveness, you can learn to lean on Him. He will be your strength, your guide, and your counselor. He will be there every hour of every day to see you through any situation. He is a true friend!



Before you became a Christian, you may have tried to tell yourself, "I can handle it." Now you can say, "The Lord can handle it." Just as a child trusts his parents to take care of his every need, God wants you to trust Him as your Heavenly Father. And every day you strive to live that way, you will appreciate even more what a wonderful plan it is.

To hold on to what God has given you, it is extremely important to communicate with Him. Set aside a time every morning to be alone with the Lord. Read a portion of the Bible. A good place to begin is with the Gospel of John. Meditate on what you've read. It will mean much more to you now than it ever did. Pray, talking to God just as you would to a close friend. Tell Him about your desire to serve Him, your needs, and your questions. Let Him speak to your heart. And don't forget to thank Him for what He's already done for you.

When the day is over, take time to pray and praise God for a day of victory. You will discover that through consistently looking to God, you will not only grow stronger spiritually, you will also come to deeply treasure your friendship with Jesus Christ.

The Bible compares the Christian journey to a race. And it's no hundred-yard dash either! This is an endurance race. There's a lot of living between the moment of salvation and the day you finally set foot on those streets of gold.

Along the way you must deal with an adversary who wants you to give up and go back. Satan is a subtle foe. Do not let him discourage you into fearing you will backslide. Even if you do not always feel the same glow you felt at the moment you believed, determine with the Lord's help to maintain your grip. Then you will triumph.

The secret of maintaining your grip is to take life one day at a time. When Satan tries to get you worried about yesterday and tomorrow, tell him that tomorrow is in God's hands, and He's already taken care of yesterday. Focus on today. God promises strength to meet each day's need, no matter what you face.

Christianity is a growing process, and it takes time. Pattern your life after Christ's example, as He reveals it to you. But at the same time, be patient, and let God lead you step by step. He has a perfect timetable for your life, so trust Him to lead at the pace He chooses.

God designed man to be part of a community. As a Christian, you need the fellowship of other like-minded believers. Attend a church where the Bible is taught in all its fullness. The example and counsel of experienced Christians will help you grow spiritually. You will also learn how to witness to others. And you will discover the strength, joy, and satisfaction that come from being an active, committed member of the family of God.

When it comes to friends who are not believers, be aware that Satan would like to use them to defeat you. While you should be courteous toward them, taking them into the inner circle of your friendship is unwise. Why? Because the temptation to compromise your faith will constantly present itself. Light and darkness simply don't mix. Let those around you know what you stand for, and then stand firm. They may persecute you, but often they will respect you and the uncompromising stand you have taken for the truth.

Keep in mind that life passes swiftly. During your time on earth you can make choices that can't be undone. So, base your priorities on eternal values. Let go of everything that could hinder you in any way from making the final goal of Heaven.

Strive to follow Christ's example by living for others. Next to staying true to God, your greatest responsibility is sharing the Gospel with those around you. As you serve the Lord, He will open many opportunities for you to be a light in this dark world. And what greater thrill could you know than to lead another soul to the joy of salvation?

Life as a Christian is an unlimited adventure for those who are willing to surrender everything to Jesus Christ. Just turn your life unreservedly over to Him. As you do, you will experience the deep satisfaction and peace that only the committed Christian knows.