

Your New Life

Next steps to powerful living

By: Tim Goad

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY OF GOD

I am so excited for you!

As a small boy, I made my decision
to follow Jesus.

No matter what has happened in my life

Since then,

Jesus has never left my side.

My life has changed radically for the best as

I have learned how to love God,

Love others and love myself.

I urge you to take these next six steps

To more powerful living

And discover what millions of believers have learned

through the centuries:

“I can do all things through Christ

Who strengthens me!”

Blessings and love to you in Jesus.

-Tim Goad

YOUR NEW LIFE!

6 STEPS TO POWERFUL LIVING

Tim Goad

Your New Life!

6 steps to Powerful Living

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CONFESSION OF FAITH

I _____,

Believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah,

The Son of the Living God

and my personal Lord and Savior.

I renounce the assignment of the Devil on my life.

I repent of my sins

I receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

_____ day of _____, 2____, at

(place)

BAPTISM BY WATER

I was baptized on _____ (Date) at

_____ (Location)

By

(Signed by Saint officiating the Baptism)

RECORD OF BAPTISM IN
THE HOLY SPIRIT

I was baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence

of speaking in tongues on the

_____ day of _____, 2_____, at

(place)

This is what happened:

FOLLOW JESUS...

The Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and **follow me**. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

(Matthew 16:24-26)

1.

Discovering My Identity in Christ

NOW THAT I'M FOLLOWING JESUS...

I'm part of the family of God, marked by His love.

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

My church family is called by God to show His love and mercy to everyone.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you have not received mercy, but now you have received mercy (I Peter 2:9-10).

In Christ, I have the power to live a godly life.

(For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "NO" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled. Upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope —the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:11-14).

As part of God's family, I will live an exemplary life for others.

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:1-3).

I will seek to grow and mature in faith.

...until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

I will study the Bible daily to understand and apply the good news in my life.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15)

I will also witness to others and share with them about Jesus.

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. 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 (I Peter 3:15).

I confess that I have sinned.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

I understand that faith, not my efforts, is what pleases God.

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him (Hebrew 11:6).

Faith in Jesus as the Christ, my Lord and Savior, the Son of God brings salvation to me and others.

Jesus said:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me” (John 14:1)

The apostle Paul wrote:

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26).

Only Jesus has the power to save.

Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

My faith in God deepens when I see the beauty of His creation.

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands (Pslam 19:1).

My faith in Jesus as the Christ came by knowing that...

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:30, 31).

I learned that I needed to repent of my sin and ask for God's forgiveness. I turned away from sin to live a new life in Jesus.

Jesus said:

... "unless you repent, you too will all perish" (Luke 13:3).

The apostle Paul said:

"In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:30, 31).

I publically confessed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven (Matthew 10:32).

I firmly hold on to my faith in Christ.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess (*Hebrews 4:14*).

I was baptized in water in obedience to God.

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of you sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

In water baptism, I identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life (Romans 6:3-4).

My new life in Christ also means that Jesus will baptize me with the Holy Spirit.

John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am no worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Luke 3:15).

Baptism in the Holy Spirit empowers me to pray and speak in tongues.

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them (Acts 2:4).

Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus. When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied (Acts 19:4-6).

Declaring the Good News with the power and boldness of the Holy Spirit brings others to salvation. I can boldly and unashamedly share about Jesus with others.

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd...When the people heard...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 you sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2:14, 37-42)

I have the authority to make disciples of Christ.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of

the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Signs and wonders will manifest in my life.

And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will get well (Mark 16:17-18)

As a believer, I’ve been given gifts through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines (I Corinthians 12:7-11)

I am not alone; I am a part and member of the Body of Christ, the Church.

And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47b).

To the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven (Hebrew 12:23a).

Even in the midst of suffering and pain, I am part of the Church.

Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church (Colossians 1:24).

I am now a child in the family of God.

You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (Galatians 3:26-29)

Following Jesus, I can confidently walk the talk and live for Christ.

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of... how...the holy Scriptures...are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus

(2 Timothy 3:14-15)

The apostle John also wrote:

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are" Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother (I John 3:9-10).

Nothing can separate me from God's love.

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor future, nor any other powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:37-39).

I will study the Bible because...

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

2.

Study God's Word

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

The Bible has two major divisions, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The word “testament” simply means “covenant” so we see that there is both an old and a New Covenant. A look into both will help me understand their relation to each other, for whom they were written, their purpose, and their contents. Then I will be able to understand them correctly.

OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is vital to understanding the New Testament. All that happened in the Old was preparation for the events recorded in the New. The Old Testament points to the New Testament and lays the foundation for Jesus throughout history.

BOOKS OF LAW

The first five books are called “law” because in them, we find the Law of God as given to His people through Moses. There is a great deal of history in these books as well, but they are predominantly law. These five books are also called the “Books of Moses” because Moses wrote them. Another name used is “Pentateuch” or five volumes, for they are really one work with five divisions.

Genesis is the book of beginnings. It tells about the creation of heaven and earth, the Flood, the beginning of God's chosen people through the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) their journey into Egypt, and the death of Joseph.

Exodus opens with Israel (God's chosen people) in slavery in Egypt. Moses is born and his training to be king begins. Moses is exiled in the wilderness but returns to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. It includes the journey to Mount Sinai, Moses receiving God's Law, and instructions for building the Tabernacle. Exodus ends with Israel still encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai

Leviticus contains instructions for the priests in handling religious ceremonies, feast days, etc. It is the “Priest’s Handbook.”

Numbers continues with the Law, but also contains information about the number of people in the various tribes and their duties. Regulations are also given regarding travel through the wilderness. The book ends with the Israelites reaching the Promised Land after wandering for forty years in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy begins with the Israelites’ arrival at the Jordan River, ready to enter the Promised Land. Moses knew that he would not enter the land, so he assembled representatives of the twelve tribes and recounted their history up to that time. Moses also repeated the Law, prophetically emphasizing it.

BOOKS OF HISTORY

Joshua is the record of Moses’ assistant, Joshua, who took Moses’ place as leader of the Israelites. It describes the Israelites’ conquest of the land of Canaan and their settlement in the Promised Land.

Judges continues the story of Israel for approximately 450 years after the settlement of Canaan. The Israelites were governed by judges, through whom God spoke to the people. This book covers the lives and deeds of the first twelve judges.

Ruth is a rural romance that features Ruth, a Moabite woman. She married Boaz and became the great-grandmother of King David, a direct ancestor of Jesus.

I Samuel is named after the prophet, Samuel. It continues the story of Israel through the leadership of the high priest, Eli, and Samuel, a prophet and the fifteenth and final judge. The people called for a king, so Samuel, in obedience to God, appointed Saul as the first king of Israel. This book ends with the death of Saul.

II Samuel is named after the prophet, Samuel, as well. It contains the history of the next king, David, who was called a “man after God’s own hearts.” King David was a fierce warrior who united Israel, and was a direct ancestor of Jesus.

I Kings records the various kings of Israel from the reign of Solomon, David's son, to the death of the wicked king, Ahab. It also explains the dividing of the kingdom into two parts: Israel in the north, and Judah in the south.

II Kings continues the record of the kings until Israel and Judah were conquered and deported to foreign captivity. Many of the twelve tribes of Israel never returned, but those of Judah and Benjamin were later restored to the Promised Land.

I Chronicles is a parallel account of the history covered in I Kings.

II Chronicles is a parallel account of the history covered in II Kings.

Ezra shows the Israelites held captive in Babylon as they begin to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city after their seventy years of exile.

Nehemiah and Ezra were contemporaries and worked together during the reconstruction of Jerusalem and restoration of the worship of Jehovah (God).

Esther is the story of a Jewish maiden who became queen of the Persian Empire. Although God's name is not found in this book the Jews' history would be incomplete without it.

BOOKS OF POETRY

Job belongs to the time of the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) in background and outlook; he is considered a contemporary of Abraham. The theme of Job is about why righteous people must suffer.

Psalms is a collection of poems and songs of adoration of Jehovah, and ballads commemorating heroic events in the history of Israel. Many of the Psalms were written by King David and speak of his experiences in life and in worship

Proverbs is a collection of wise sayings mostly written by King Solomon (the wisest man to every live).

Ecclesiastes is a brief autobiography written by King Solomon toward the end of his life and finds that no physical or material pleasure gives permanent satisfaction. His conclusion is that

people should remember their Creator when they are young and that fearing God and keeping His commandments is the entire duty of man.

Song of Songs is also known as the “Songs of Solomon.” Probably written by King Solomon, it is often interpreted as an allegory of the relationship between Christ and the Church.

THE MAJOR AND MINOR PROPHETS

Prophets were special messengers from God. There are five books ascribed as the “major prophets,” though there were just four actual prophets. “Major, simply refers to the books of greater length and does not indicate importance. Minor prophets are the shorter books.

Every prophet can be placed in the history of Israel covered by the twelve books of history described above. The prophets are best understood by knowing the period of history in which each prophet lived and the conditions present at the time he prophesied. Viewing the prophets against this background reveals the deep meaning of their writings and throws great light on the history only briefly given in the historical books.

Every prophecy also has meaning for today. God’s Word is eternal and speaks throughout the generations. Therefore, even though a prophet spoke thousands of years ago, the message still resounds in this modern era.

Isaiah wrote during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, at the time when Jerusalem was threatened by invaders from Assyria. He wrote before the exile, but looked beyond it to the coming of Christ the Messiah. He had more to say about Christ than any other prophet, so he is often referred to as the “Messianic Prophet.”

Jeremiah lived a little later than Isaiah, becoming most prominent at the time Jerusalem fell. His message concerned the imminent defeat of Judah and its captivity. He saw the impossibility of Judah overcoming its besiegers, so he advised the people to surrender and thus save the city from destruction. Jeremiah was branded a traitor, though his warnings later came true.

Lamentations was also written by Jeremiah soon after Jerusalem fell. This book is a series of laments over the destruction of Jerusalem while it lay ruined and desolate.

Ezekiel prophesied while the Jews were in exile in Babylon.

Daniel also prophesied during the Exile, foretelling many events by interpreting the dreams of the Chaldean king, Nebuchadnezzar. He also interpreted the meaning of strange writing that appeared on the wall of the king, as well as visions of things to come.

The Minor Prophets consist of all the books following Daniel to the beginning of the New Testament.

A remarkable truth stands out: The prophecies regarding the restoration of the Jews to their native land the rebuilding of Jerusalem were fulfilled in the return under Zerubbabel, Ezra and Nehemiah. Their prophecies were spoken long before the restoration had been accomplished. Furthermore, we see modern-day fulfillment of these ancient prophecies of Israel as the Jews are again returning from the four corners of the earth to reclaim their ancient inheritance.

NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament contains the stories of Jesus—His birth, life, ministry, teachings, crucifixion and resurrection. It also outlines the beginnings of the Church and numerous letters written to the early Church from various leaders of the time.

Gospels

The book of Matthew Mark, Luke and John record the life of Jesus Christ. John begins with a “prologue” explaining that Christ was “in the beginning.” Everything authentically known of Jesus’ life on earth and His personal ministry, is contained in the Gospels. They tell of Jesus from the announcement of His birth, through His teachings and working with the people. They tell how Jesus was arrested, crucified, buried, raised from the dead, and then ascended to the Father. They tell of Jesus giving the apostles direction regarding their work after He was gone.

Book of Church History

The Acts of the Apostles is a book of history that records the apostles’ activities in Jerusalem from Christ’s ascension until the day of Pentecost when the Church was established. The apostles then went out as Jesus commanded, “making disciples of all nations.” Acts gives us the history of the Church and the spread of the Gospel, stories of the conversion of individuals, and the establishment of congregations to around A.D. 70.

Paul's Letters

These books are just what the title suggests, letters written by the apostle Paul to various individuals and congregations. They contain instructions for Christian living, organization of the church and the work of congregations.

Other Letters

These letters were written by persons other than Paul to both individuals and congregations. They contain instructions concerning Christian living and the work of congregations.

Book of Prophecy

Revelation was written by the apostle John, and is the record of the vision he had of things that were "soon to come." Revelation is highly figurative and has many symbols, but most importantly, is a book that describes the victory of good over evil.

The New Testament teaches me how to become a Christian and how the church is going to be organized and function. I learn of Jesus Christ in the Gospels, about men and women in Acts who became Christians under Holy Spirit anointed teachings by the apostles. I also learn in Acts, and in the letters, how congregations and individual Christians must work and live to be well pleasing to the Master.

The revelation of God's Word is complete and final in the Old and New Testaments. It is there that I find instruction and guidance for my life today.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints (Jude 3).

As I study and apply the Bible, I will be light and salt in the world and witness to the resurrected Jesus in my life.

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15KJV).

Following Jesus, I am one of the “living stones” who makes up the Church described by Peter.

...you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:5).

Therefore, I need to know something about the Church, its worship, organization, and work. God’s magnificent wisdom is seen through the Church, which is made up of the followers of Christ—those who have been saved (Ephesians 3:10,11).

They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:46b-47).

The original group of disciples and the people the Lord added were referred to as the Church. So it was that those who obeyed Peter’s command to repent and be baptized were added by the Lord to His Church. The “oneness” of the Church is seen from Ephesians 4:4-6:

There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were called to one hope when you were called— one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

Likewise,

And he is the head of the body, the church, he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy (Colossians 1:18).

Therefore, the first thing I’ll study is worship, because that is often what people first see about the church.

Worshipping God

Worship is a condition of the heart expressed through outward activities, either individually or in an assembly of people. Worship is an attitude of awe, reverence, and respect, which results in praise and honor to God. Praise and honor is expressed in various ways, which we'll examine in greater detail below.

SINGING

Singing songs, hymns and spiritual songs is vital to worshipping God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Music deeply touches the human heart, moving quickly past the mind to reach the innermost depths of the soul. The Bible teaches me to sing and make a joyful noise unto God.

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord (Ephesians 5:19).

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God (Colossians 3:16).

Through Jesus, therefor, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise--- the fruit of lips that confess his name (Hebrews 13:15).

So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind (I Corinthians 14:15).

PRAYER

Prayer provides a direct line for me to express heartfelt love and devotion to God. It's important in praise and worship as well, because I can express the desires of my heart to God in an attitude of worship. Often, I pray in my heavenly language through the Holy Spirit, speaking the deep, hidden things of my soul. However, even when I don't know how to pray, God helps me.

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our own weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches out hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit interceded for the saints in accordance with God's will (Romans 8:26-27).

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42).

Pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Brothers, pray for us (I Thessalonians 5:17, 18, 25).

I pray what God wants, not what I want. When I pray, I follow Jesus' instruction:

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 forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptations,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

(Matthew 6:9-13 NKJV)

TEACHING

Part of the joy of serving God is bringing people to Jesus. Teaching helps prepare me and other Christians for service by learning God's Word. It also provides an opportunity for people to respond to God, and to dedicate or re-dedicate their lives to Him.

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelist, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work (Ephesians 4:11-16)

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord's Supper, consisting of bread and the fruit of the vine, is a symbolic expression of my sharing the divine nature of the Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:4). It's a memorial of His suffering and death, a prophecy of His second coming, and a charge to all believers till He comes!

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer (Acts 2:42).

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (I Corinthians 11:23-26).

GIVING

During the gathering of God's people, tithes and offerings are received. This is much more than a collection to pay church bills—it is worship. Giving tithes (the first tenth of income) and offerings declares that God comes first, and recognizes His blessing on my life. It expresses faith in Him and seeks His guidance in every matter of life. I give liberally and cheerfully as I have prospered and as I have purposed in my heart.

Now about the collection for God's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made (I Corinthians 16:1-2).

The regular assembly of the church to worship is for every Christian who can be present. It's a time of encouragement, fellowship, joy, celebration, praise, honor, and glory to God for His saving grace.

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:25).

Belonging to the Family of God

Now that I'm a Christian I will gladly attend the gatherings of God's family. There, I'll receive inspiration and encouragement from studying God's Word, exercising my spiritual gifts, partaking of Holy Communion---in which I am reminded of the sacrifice that Christ made for me---and fellowshiping with my fellow Christians. The early church has a wonderful story...

THE BEGINNING

Shortly after Jesus was raised from the dead, on the day of Pentecost, the apostles were gathering in prayer along with 120 other disciples, just as Jesus had instructed them (Acts 1). While they were in prayer, the power that had been promised came. Peter stood with the eleven other apostles and preached to the people who gathered, telling them the meaning of the strange things they were witnessing. Those listening were cut to the heart when they realized the enormity of their sin, that they had nailed God's own Son, Jesus Christ, to the cross (Acts 2).

Those who accepted this message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day (Acts 2:41).

This was how the Church began. The large group of people in Jerusalem who witnessed the dramatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit then recognized the divinity of Jesus. This caused them to seek forgiveness of their sins so that they could become disciples of Jesus Christ as well.

People received forgiveness of their sins by accepting Jesus Christ, turning away from their former manner of living, and by being baptized. They were then added to the group of Christ's followers who were already gathering. Up till this point, the small group of believers wasn't even referred to as "the church." Likewise, those who accepted Jesus that day through Peter's preaching were thinking only of receiving forgiveness of their sins and becoming disciples of Jesus.

This original group of disciples grew rapidly until it became a larger number of followers of Christ (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:1, 7).

After the stoning of Stephen, great persecution came, scattering the believers. It was then they were referred to as the “church” (Acts 8:1).

APOSTLES, PROPHETS, EVANGELISTS. PASTORS, TEACHERS

The apostle Paul wrote about the organization of the church as follows:

It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13)

Peter and the other eleven were the original apostles, with others (i.e., Paul and Apollos) to follow. The apostles, in response to the needs of the growing body, inquired of the Lord and set in place other men with various responsibilities.

Apostles

Apostles are those who are sent to establish new congregations and often oversee a network of established congregations. Apostles are pioneers of the Gospel, extending the Church into areas where there is none.

Prophets

Modern-day prophets do not have the same calling or function as the Old Testament prophets we discussed earlier. The office of prophet in today’s church is one of edification, encouragement and enlightenment. A prophet may receive a word of warning for the church to bring about repentance.

Evangelists

Evangelists are persons with a divine gift and sacred calling from God to proclaim or announce the good news of Christ. The evangelist’s calling originally denoted both a function and an office, though there was little difference between an apostle and an evangelist. All apostles were evangelists, but not all evangelists were apostles—a direct call by the Lord was necessary.

Pastors

Pastors oversee local congregations of the church and are charged with the responsibility of making disciples in the local settings. Preaching and teaching the Word lie at the heart of their ministry, which is the building up of the Body of Christ.

Teachers

This office belongs to those whom God has called and gifted to teach His Word. A teacher has keen insights into God's Word and how it applies to the believer, In addition to insight, the teacher is able to communicate in ways the Christians can understand and then apply God's Word to their lives.

Scripture Is My Guide

The Scriptures are the authoritative guide for worship, work, and church organizational structure. Unity is the constant goal of Christians as we relate to each other and seek to determine God's purpose and goals for us. Paul pleads:

I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought (I Corinthians 1:10)

Paul admonished Timothy to "correctly handle the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). Paul was telling him to discover what the writer's true message was and is. Likewise, my sincere desire is to always learn the true meaning of the Scripture and then respond accordingly.

Serving Other to Glorify God

We gather together to worship God, equip people to serve others and then move out into the world to be a witness to this powerful life of following Jesus.

We the Church are not to withdraw from the world, but to go into all the world being salt and light, doing good works that glorify God.

Who [Jesus] gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good (Titus 2:14).

So that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:17).

WE HAVE A MISSION

We belong to a community of faith called the Church through which God makes known to the world His purpose for humanity:

His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord (Ephesians 3:10, 11).

We have a mission to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We must...

Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction (2 Timothy 4:2).

See also Matthew 28:19-20; Thessalonians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 3:1-4

Now that I am following Jesus, I want to do my part so that the local church, of which I am apart, can reach the lost.

I am a witness. I can personally share with others the Good News about the following Jesus:

“Now , Lord...enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.”

After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly (Acts 4:29-31).

EVERY CHRISTAIN IS A SERVANT

I am a new creation in Jesus Christ. His Spirit gifts me with power and ability to live like Jesus and serve others.

“You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:42-45)

I demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ to the world by serving them. I use my gifts, resources, time an talents to serve Jesus by serving others.

Walking the Talk

Now that I'm a Christian I want to know how I should conduct myself in personal relationships and activities. I've reviewed how I became a Christian, and have surveyed the divisions of the Bible. I've also studied the church as a group of Christians in a community.

Now I must go deeper to find instructions and guidance for my private and personal life. Following are some broad principles I'll use, which will serve as beginning for more thorough study.

POWERFUL LIFE PRINCIPLES

I've already learned that God's grace through my faith in Christ prompt me to live a holy, righteous life. In addition to the other passages on the subject which I've considered, this is emphasized in 2 Peter 1: 3-11.

Therefore, I'll work to develop these qualities in my everyday living:

My activities will be virtuous.

I will study to obtain more knowledge.

I will develop self-control.

I will learn patience

Godliness will be my goal.

I will try to show kindness to all.

I will try to show a spirit of love in all things

(I Corinthians 13)

Not all of these qualities can be acquired overnight. In fact, it may take a while to attain great improvement, but the Christians life is described as a race, a battle, and a growth. So, I will try

to grow day by day to be more like my Master until all who know me see the sincerity and reality of my Christianity.

But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

SINS TO AVOID

I have the power in Jesus Christ to avoid sin.

Galatians 5:9-21: sexual unfaithfulness, impurity, worshipping false gods, witchcraft, hating, making trouble, jealousy, unrighteous anger, selfishness, causing divisions, having envy, drunkenness, having wild and wasteful parties, etc.

I Corinthians 5:11; 6-9: engaging in sexual sin, being selfish, worshipping idols, lying about others, drunkenness, cheating people.

Colossians 3:5-9: sexual immorality, doing evil things, letting evil thoughts control me, desiring evil things, selfishly wanting more and more, living to serve false god, ungodly responses to anger, letting my temper control me, doing or saying things to hurt others, using evil words when I talk, lying.

2 Timothy 3:1-5: loving myself too much, loving money, bragging, excessive pride, saying evil things against others, disobeying my parents, not being thankful, not being the kind of person God wants, not having love for others, refusing to forgive others, speaking bad things, lacking self-control, being cruel, hating what is good, turning against friends, doing foolish things without thinking, being conceited, loving pleasure, not loving God.

Revelations 22:15: doing evil magic, sinning sexually, being a murderer, worshipping idols, telling lies.

Following Jesus, I have the power to resist temptation and sin.

These things are universally wrong, so I will try hard not to allow any of them to creep into my thinking and living.

It's important for me to know that such things as sexual immorality, lying, disobedience to parents, speaking evil, and envying are among those things that will keep me out of God's favor. Some things which are lightly passed over in our modern life cannot be tolerated in my life as a Christian.

THOUGH I SIN, GOD IS FAITHFUL TO FORGIVE

Paul's instruction to the Thessalonians is far-reaching in its application: "*Avoid every kind of evil*" (I Thessalonians 5:22).

Nevertheless, I know that every living person sins: As it is written: "*There is no one righteous, not even one...For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:10, 23).

I sin, too. But as a Christian, I've been saved by God's grace.

What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?...Therefore do not let sin reign...but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life, and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:1, 2, 12a, 13b).

Grace gives me the freedom and power to live without condemnation and with the power to do what is right instead of judging myself and others with the law. When I do sin, I have learned that when I sin as a Christian, God is faithful to forgive me, but I must first confess my sins.

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 (I John 1:8, 9).

I have the power to resist sin and to do good works that glorify God.

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

PRINCIPLES OF GODLY LIVING

The wisdom of the Bible is that it does not deal in specifics that are transitory, but with principles I must apprehend. Armed with these principles—integrity, honesty, sexual purity, sobriety, kindness, and helpfulness—I chart my life's course.

These are the principles by which God shapes my living:

For the grace of God that brings salvation had appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age (Titus 2:11-12).

Don't you know that you yourself are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him; for God's temple is sacred, and you are that temple (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers (Galatians 6:10).

I have the character of Christ as the Holy Spirit bears the fruit of His personhood in me:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things here is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other (Galatians 5:22-26).

I'M A NEW CREATION

I'm assured through this positive approach to study the following passages: Romans 14:15-17, 21; Ephesians 4:17-25; Philemon 2:12-18, 4:4-9; John 2:12-17.

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

Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is a new creation (Galatians 6:15).

As a new creation in Christ, I will not live contrary to God and will not do evil things the world wants me to do. I'll live on earth in a wise and righteous way that shows I serve God out of gratitude for His saving grace (Titus 2:11, 12). Furthermore, I'll be careful not to cause someone to be offended by what I do (Romans 14:21).

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe (Philippians 2:14-15).

...make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge, and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:5-8).

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law (Galatians 5:22, 23).

He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need (Ephesians 4:28).

Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20).

THE SCRIPTURES TEACH ME HOW TO FOLLOW JESUS

I can look to all of Scripture for instruction in living the Christian life. Living this life brings great rewards.

To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life (Romans 2:7).

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy 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—kept in heaven for you—(1 Peter 1:3-4).

The Christian life is an attitude of both mind and heart toward life and other people. It's a matter of spirituality and of my having the same Holy Spirit first motivated Christ.

You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9).

Therefore, every business transaction, service or professional practice of mine should be measured by God's standards. Likewise, every social or recreational activity should be examined in light of the following questions for accountability and self-examination:

- Does this word or deed honor or glorify Jesus?
- Does it reflect His character?
- Does this word or deed come from the Father?
- Is what I am doing or saying healthy for my body, the temple of the Holy Spirit?
- Is this activity building covenant relationships with my family and friends?
- Does this activity impact others to desire and seek for God's best?
- Do I cheerfully give and sow into the work of advancing the Kingdom of God through my church, community and around the world?

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves you, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever (I John 2:15-17).

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast (I Peter 5:10).

... in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39).

Following Jesus, I'm equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit to live a victorious, abundant life (John 10:10). I'm an overcomer—a winner, not a loser—a victor, not a victim.

Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth (3 John 1:2 KJV).

Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus (Philippians 1:6).

I can do everything through him who gives me strength (Philippians 4:13).

CONTACT INFORMATION AND MORE RESOURCES

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Next Steps

To Powerful Living

Now that you have decided to follow Jesus, you will be

- Discovering Your Identity in Christ
- Knowing the Word

- Worshipping God

- Belonging to the Body of Christ

- Serving Others to Glorify God
- Walking the Talk

Start walking through these 6 steps today. Don't delay. Never again will you be alone. Jesus is walking with you. He will never leave or forsake you. God loves you forever and you will live with Him for eternity.

Tim Goad is a pastor, singer, writer and dynamic leader traveling internationally to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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