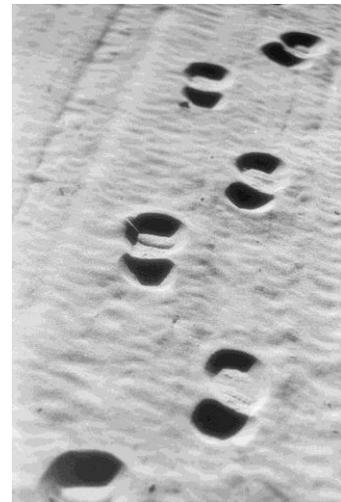


Next Steps for New Believers

1. You are saved by Faith -- Your salvation is based purely upon your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. In other words, salvation is not something that can be "earned" by how good you try to be or some religious act that you perform. Salvation is a free gift from God, and came as you simply put your faith in Jesus, His death and resurrection, and trusted him to forgive your sins and become your savior and Lord. The scripture says "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -- and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

2. You're not saved by feelings -- Good feelings are nice to have, but feelings do not prove whether you're saved or not. There may be times when you "feel" that God is close to you, and other times when you "feel" that He's not. But remember that He has promised to always be with you and never leave you, regardless of feelings (Hebrews 13:5). Always remember that the Christian lives by faith, not by sight or the feelings of our natural senses. The Bible says "We live by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7).



3. You may experience doubts -- One of most common things that happens to a new believer is that the Devil tries to whisper doubts in your thoughts: "You're not really saved," or "nothing really happened to you." But don't buy into Satan's lies and deceptions! If you placed your faith in Jesus Christ, then you are saved, regardless of whether you feel it or not. God's Word promises, "If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

4. You are Forgiven of all your sins -- The Bible teaches that all mankind has a sinful nature which keeps him separated from God's presence and will result in eternal death. But Jesus came to suffer the consequences of that sin as our substitute, so that we could be forgiven of sin and have access to God's presence. When you repented (turned away) from your sins, and asked Jesus to forgive you and become your savior, that's exactly what he did. He forgave every sin you've ever committed, regardless of how awful or evil they may have been. God can forgive more sin than man can commit. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

5. You're not perfect, just forgiven -- Being a Christian doesn't mean that you won't make mistakes, but it means that you are forgiven of sin and that your goal is to live like Christ and not live in the old sinful way anymore. Don't ever let the Devil condemn you if you stumble or make a mistake! God loves you and wants you to ask Him to forgive you (1 John

1:9), then He wants you to get back on your feet and keep walking for Him! Don't ever let other people or the Devil bring condemnation upon you! God loves you and will correct you, but He will not condemn you. "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 8:1).

6. You are a New Creation -- At the moment you accepted Jesus, He came into your heart by His Spirit, and now His presence and nature lives and dwells in your heart (1 Corinthians 6:19). You did not merely become a better person, you were "born again" spiritually as a brand new person! Now He wants you to learn to live your life according to the new nature of His Spirit inside you. The Bible says "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

7. You have the promise of Eternal Life -- God's Word says that when you place your faith in Christ, you are given eternal life. That is, someday when your physical body wears out and dies, your soul will go to be in the Lord's presence to spend eternity with Him! "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" (John 3:16).

8. You must keep living for Christ -- You must understand that your salvation is based upon your "continued" relationship with the Lord. He has promised to keep you saved, as long as you keep believing and living for Him. As a new Christian, you need to grow in your relationship with God and deepen your faith, so that discouragements, temptations, or trials will never cause you to drift away from God. Remember, if you depart from the Lord, you also depart from what gives you the promise of salvation. The Bible says that Christ will one day present you before God, holy and unblemished "...If you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the Gospel" (Colossians 1:23).

9. You need to go to Church -- You should attend church regularly so that your faith can be strengthened by the preaching of God's Word, and so you can grow spiritually and be encouraged by the fellowship of other Christians. Church is where you can go to express your love, faithfulness, and worship to God. Church is where we can learn how to be a Christian, and where the Pastor and spiritual leaders can help you and encourage your faith. The Bible warns us not to absent ourselves from church attendance, because we need the strength and encouragement it brings. "Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..." (Hebrews 10:25).

10. You need to Pray every day -- Prayer is vital to your spiritual growth. God is your Heavenly Father, and He wants to hear from you and have daily fellowship with you. Not only does He promise to answer your prayers, but as you pray He will also provide guidance and spiritual strength. The Bible tells us to "Pray continually," that is to pray faithfully every day (1 Thessalonians 5:17).

11. You need to read the Bible daily -- The Bible is God's Word, and as you read from it every day, it will cause you to grow spiritually (2 Timothy 2:15). As you study His written word (start with the Gospel of John), He will strengthen your faith, speak to your heart, and

give you guidance and direction for every need and decision in your life. "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalms 119:105).

12. You need to be baptized in Water -- At your first opportunity, you should obey the Lord's command to be baptized in water as a confession of your repentance and faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:19). Water baptism in itself, (not to be confused with baptism in Holy Spirit) does not save you or wash away your sins, but is an act of your obedience in God's Word. It symbolically shows that you have died to the old sinful life, and have risen in the newness of the Life of Christ. The scriptures say "...Repent and be baptized, every one of you..." (Acts 2:38).

13. You need to live a Holy life -- As we have mentioned, Christians are not perfect. However, God wants you to "aim" toward perfection. That is, your goal must be to grow in submitting yourself to the new nature of His Spirit in your heart, follow the example of Jesus, and live a godly and wholesome life (Hebrews 12:14). You repented and asked Him to forgive your sins, and now you need to grow closer to Him each day, which will take you farther away from sinful thoughts and behavior which are displeasing to God. Your faith in God will cause a desire to obey Him and do those things pleasing in His sight (Colossians 1:10).

Should you continue to live in an unrestrained, sinful lifestyle, this would lead you away from God and back into the old ways which lead to death. But as we grow in our relationship with God, His strength in our life will increase to overcome sinful behavior and habits. "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

14. You need to be Filled with the Holy Spirit -- We already said that the Holy Spirit was born in your heart when you received Christ and now resides in you. But the Bible also says that the Holy Spirit can "immerse" you with a special power for service, to enable you to live a powerful Christian life, and to be bold in your Christian witness and testimony. "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you: and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). To receive this special power, all we have to do is ask Christ to baptize us with His Holy Spirit, and He promises that He will.

15. You need to tell others about Christ -- It is important for you to openly declare Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord to others, as it establishes the testimony of your faith. Once you have accepted Jesus Christ, tell someone. Don't keep it a secret. The Bible says that "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown before my Father in heaven" (Matthew 10:32-33).