NEXT STEPS

WELCOME *to the Family!*

As a new believer, you have chosen to take the "next steps" in a relationship with Jesus Christ. This Next Steps packet has been put together to help you get started on a personal journey with Jesus Christ. Let me tell you about what you will find here:

• **"God's Good News"**: Starting on the next page, you'll find diagrams and verses that affirm and explain the decision you've made to follow Jesus.

• **A Bible**: The Gospel of Mark is one of four New Testament biographies of Jesus. To begin, I recommend reading one chapter per day. You'll be able to finish the Gospel of Mark in just over two weeks (16 chapters).

• **Bible Study**: At the end of this booklet, you will find a concise Bible study to guide you through major life questions.

Again, friend, welcome to the family of Christ-followers. If there's anything you'd like to communicate to me about your relationship with God or the materials in this packet, please drop me an e-mail at: Jim@ccclife.org.

Your friend,

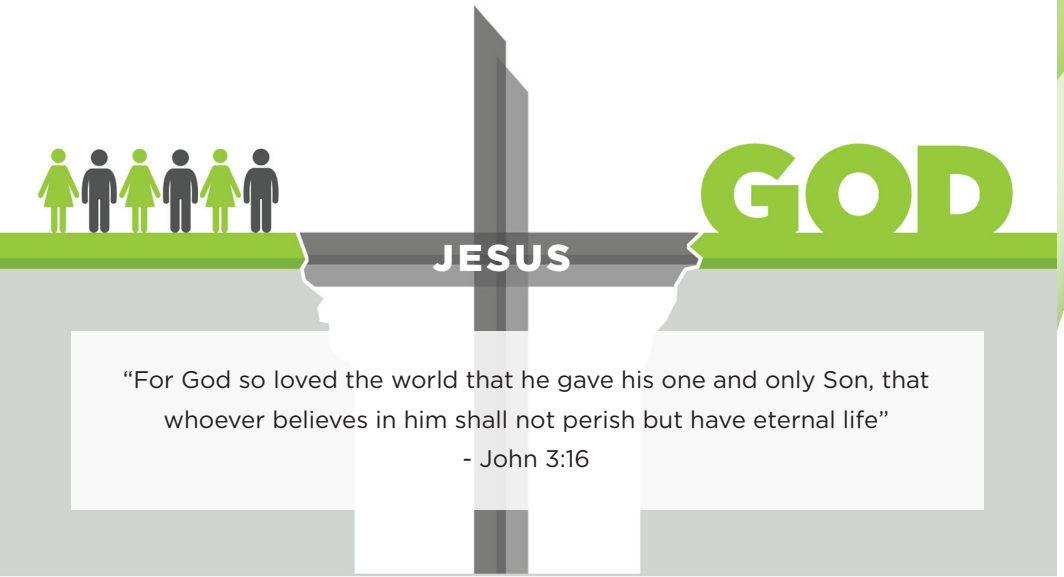
Jim Nicodem | Senior Pastor

GOD'S GOOD NEWS

GOD created us to enjoy a personal relationship with him and a purposeful life.

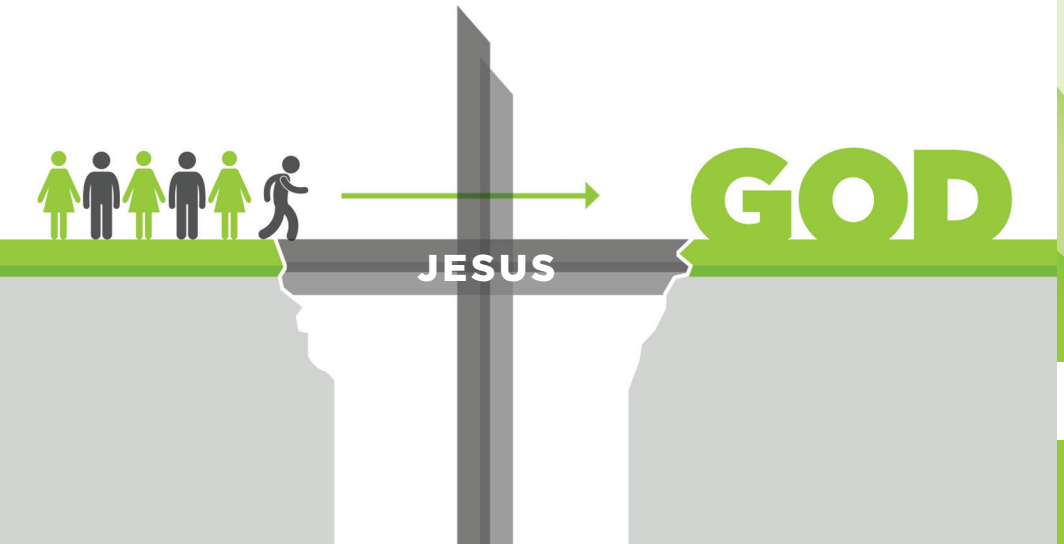
Our ***SIN*** separates us from **GOD.**

GOD bridged our separation through his Son, **JESUS.**



"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

We must put our faith in **JESUS** the Savior and King.



YOU CAN PUT YOUR FAITH IN JESUS AS YOU PRAY THIS PRAYER:

"God, I recognize that you created me to enjoy a personal relationship with you and a purposeful life. My sin —rebelliously going my own way instead of yours—has separated me from you. I cannot do anything to repair the damage done by my sin. I'm in need of forgiveness and new life.

"I believe Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to pay sin's penalty and break sin's power. By faith, I surrender to you as my Savior and King. I want to obediently follow you. Please forgive my sins, give me the gift of eternal life, and send your Spirit to help me become more and more like Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen."

IF YOU PRAYED THIS PRAYER,

CONGRATULATIONS!

WELCOME TO GOD'S FAMILY!

NOW THAT I HAVE TRUSTED CHRIST, WHAT'S NEXT?

You have just made a decision that will change your entire perception on life forever. The Bible describes it as passing from darkness into light. You have been adopted into a family—the family of God. God is no longer a non-related Creator, but a divine, Heavenly Father. As your Father, He has a plan for your life. He tells us in Jeremiah 29:11, *"'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"* Just as a newborn baby is brought into this world and relies upon a parent for nourishment to grow, such is the case with your spiritual birth—you need spiritual nourishment. Take the time to do the four things listed in this section and God's plan for you will begin to unfold.

READ THE BIBLE

The Bible says in 1 Peter 2:2,*"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation..."* How would you feel if you had not eaten anything for three days? It is the same principle with spiritual nourishment. When you go without reading the Bible and spending time with Jesus, you are spiritually starving; but, when you spend time each day with Jesus, you will be spiritually satisfied. Ask yourself each night before you close your eyes to sleep, "Did I learn something new about Jesus today? What promise did Jesus reveal to me today? How have I become more like Jesus today?"

SCRIPTURES TO READ:

2 Timothy 2:15 • Psalm 1:1-3 • Psalm 119:9-16

Ephesians 6:17 • Hebrews 4:12

PRAY

Prayer is the biblical word for "talking" to God. Prayer is communication between you (a child of God) and your heavenly Father (God). God created you the way you are, and he wants to spend time communicating with you. Go ahead, thank him for the beautiful day. Ask him for guidance in the difficult circumstance you are in. Most important of all, ask him to give you strength and wisdom to live a life that is pleasing to him.

SCRIPTURES TO READ:

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 • Philippians 4:6-7

Psalm 34:1-8 • Luke 18:1

TELL SOMEONE

When you begin to live your life according to the first two principles above, you will be noticeably different. Those who know you will be able to see a change in your life. SHARING YOUR FAITH is just telling others what Jesus has done to bring about that change. Jesus says in Mark 16:15, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*" Share what Jesus has done in your life. Give others the same opportunity you were given to live for eternity with Jesus Christ in heaven.

SCRIPTURES TO READ:

Acts 1:8 • Matthew 5:14-16 • Ephesians 6:19

Acts 4:13-21 • Acts 10:42-43

GO TO CHURCH

The Bible calls it "fellowship," and it's more than just hanging out with other Christians. In Acts 2:42 we read, "*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*" "Devoted" refers to concentrating on a particular pursuit with zeal and loyalty, always with spiritual significance. Connecting with others in this way is only possible when we have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It is about a relationship, not just social activities.

SCRIPTURES TO READ:

Acts 2:42-47; Philippians 2:1-4; Ephesians 5:19-21

1 John 1:5-7; Hebrews 10:24-25

GET BAPTIZED

Baptism is a celebration. It is an opportunity to follow Jesus' example and teaching by publicly proclaiming our identification with him (Matthew 3:13-17, 28:19). By being baptized, we announce that Jesus has washed away our sin and given us new life. It is a wonderful step of obedience in following Christ (Acts 8:12-13a).

Baptism is not about what we've achieved but what Christ has achieved for us. Baptism also pictures the fact that we are dead in our sins until we put our faith in Christ, who paid our sin's debt and conquered sin's power through his resurrected life.

At Christ Community Church, baptism is celebrated three times a year and is open to every person who has surrendered to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

CONSIDERING BAPTISM?

Before each baptism celebration, a one-hour information class is offered at various times. Check out our next class schedule and learn more about baptism at ccclife.org/baptism

GET CONNECTED

COMMUNITY GROUPS

At Christ Community Church, we ask every attender to participate in a Community Group.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY GROUP?

A Community Group is an intentional community consisting of 3 to 12 people who meet regularly to pursue spiritual growth, friendship and support. It's a safe place to study the Bible, share your life, and ask tough questions. The typical Community Group meets 2-plus times a month, though weekly meetings are most common.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT IN A COMMUNITY GROUP?

Each Community Group has its own unique characteristics, but all groups provide an environment where you can experience two of our core values: Belonging and Growing.

BELONGING

Ownership - Everyone invests in the group
Friendship - Encouraging relationships
Care - A safe environment of mutual support
Accountability - Applied with wisdom and love

GROWING

Bible - Application-focused study
Prayer - Earnest and impactful
Transformation - A community of life-change
Leadership - Christ Community trained and coached

HOW DO I GET INTO A COMMUNITY GROUP?

- Ask a friend about their group
- Visit ccclife.org/communitygroups
- Test-drive a few groups to find the right fit

ALPHA

Alpha is a 10-week series of interactive sessions that freely explore the basics of the Christian faith. Alpha includes dinner, a short talk, and a discussion at the end where you can share your thoughts and ask your questions

SOME TOPICS DISCUSSED ARE:

Who is Jesus? • Why did Jesus die? • How can we have faith?

Why and how do I pray? • Why and how should I read the Bible?

How does God guide us?

For more information, visit ccclife.org/alpha

CARE NIGHT

WHAT DOES CARE NIGHT OFFER?

More hands-on and participatory than traditional classes, our Tuesday evening Care Night workshops, classes, and recovery groups foster relational, emotional, and spiritual growth and practical skill-development through large group teaching and small group discussion.

Our Care Night workshops, classes, and recovery groups meet for three 9-week or 12-week sessions at the St. Charles Campus. Our Christ-centered recovery program named 12 meets year-round at the St. Charles Campus.

Workshops can vary semester to semester but regularly include groups for marital restoration, divorce and separation care, personal finances, grief support, physical health, and more. See the current roster of workshops at ccclife.org/carenight.

DAY ONE: MY NEW LIFE

What does it mean to become a Christian?

Becoming a Christian means several things. It means you have decided to put your faith in Jesus Christ. It means you are trusting in what he did on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin. It means you are intentionally turning from a life of sin and self-rule to a life where Christ becomes your focus and pleasing him becomes your desire. Being a Christian means you now have a home in heaven and your time here on earth is in preparation for your eternal life with Christ. How do we know all this? Because God has revealed these truths to us in his Word, the Bible.

Let's look at several passages of Scripture that help us understand this new life you have in Christ. Write down the things you discover about your new life as a Christian.

2 Corinthians 5:17

_____

Ephesians 2:4-5

_____

John 1:12

_____

What does it mean to you be a child of God?

_____

Read John 10:10. What does Jesus desire for us?

_____

Spend some time praying, thanking God for this new life. As you go through the day, keep in mind these truths. Consider how they change your perspective on situations you face.

DAY TWO: HOW DO I GROW?

Just as there are healthy habits and disciplines that can help you grow physically, there are some important things you can engage in to grow and develop in your spiritual life.

Over the next few days, we'll look at a few practical steps you can take to grow spiritually strong. These daily disciplines are vital to your Christian growth. But first, let's see what God's Word tells us about the importance of growing in our relationship with Christ.

What do the following verses reveal to you about growing as a Christian?

2 Peter 3:18

_____

Ephesians 4:14-15

_____

1 Peter 2:2

_____

What things has God provided for you to help you spiritually grow?

_____

What may be keeping you from growing?

_____

What changes do you need to make?

_____

Take time to pray. Ask God to help you to grow in your faith, and to take away those things preventing you from growing strong.

DAY THREE: GETTING INTO GOD'S WORD

The Holy Bible is unlike any other book in the world. It's unique in its purpose and power; it's God's autobiography and his instruction manual for life. In it, you'll discover how he desires you to live in accordance with his will and how his Spirit empowers you to live in a way that blesses you and pleases him.

God's Word is also a love letter to you. The pages of Scripture will unfold an amazing love story for you to enjoy, and you'll discover that YOU are the object of your Heavenly Father's love.

Let's look at a few verses that describe benefits and blessings of the Bible. What do the following verses reveal to you about God's Word and its importance in your life?

2 Timothy 3:14-17

_____

Hebrews 4:12

_____

In Joshua 1:8, God commands us to meditate on and do all that is in his Word. Obedience to this command is accompanied by a powerful promise: "*Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*" Commit God's Word to memory and obey it!

What steps will you take to spend time in God's Word each day?

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DAY FOUR: PRAYER

Every loving father loves to have meaningful conversation with his kids. Our Heavenly Father is no different. Prayer is our opportunity to talk to God about whatever is on our hearts and minds. You can tell him what you are concerned about, thankful for, or challenged by.

In Matthew 6, Jesus demonstrated in a very simple way how we should pray. Prayer is our own personal intimate conversation with our Heavenly Father. It gives us a great sense of freedom when we look to the Biblical instructions given regarding prayer and consider how pure and simple God designed prayer to be.

To learn about prayer and how it's a powerful part of our growth as Christians, let's look at the following verses. Record what you learn from each verse.

Matthew 6:5-13

_____

1 Peter 5:7

_____

Philippians 4:6-7

_____

Make a prayer list. Write out what you are thankful for, those things you are asking God to help you with, and your prayers for others. You may find it helpful to create a prayer journal and keep track of how God answers your prayers!

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_____

_____

_____

DAY FIVE: SHARING MY STORY

God loves you. He saved you. He blesses you. By his grace, he's given you everything you need to grow in him. Truly amazing isn't it? Even though you may not fully understand all that God is up to in your life, you do know enough to declare without hesitation that God is good!

So, in light of his goodness and grace, why not share it? Is there someone you know who needs to hear about the amazing love of Jesus Christ? Maybe someone is coming to your mind right now--someone who needs to hear what God has done in your heart, so that they might allow him to do the same in theirs!

Take a minute now to pray. If someone's name comes to mind, pray for them. If not, pray that God would bring someone to your heart and open doors.

Your faith in Jesus Christ is something you will have opportunities to tell others about. When those times come, be ready to share your story!

Simply sharing what Jesus Christ has done for you can make a powerful impact on those who hear and can lead them to know God personally. Read these verses and write down what stands out to you:

Mark 16:15

_____

_____

_____

1 Peter 3:15-16

_____

_____

_____

DAY SIX: CONNECTING WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS

God never intended for you to walk the Christian life alone! His plan and purpose includes you being connected to other Christians. Developing Christ-centered friendships is critical to your growth as a believer.

As a Christian, you need to be aware of the danger of isolation. Trying to follow Jesus without the encouragement, support, and accountability of other Christians is nearly impossible. That's why staying connected with other Christians is essential!

As you explore the Bible, you'll see how first century believers found it absolutely necessary to meet together regularly for strength and support. It was also in that context that they grew, learning more about Jesus as they shared their lives of faith together. Today, followers of Christ still need the blessing of belonging. As a Christian, you belong to the family of God, and that means there are both privileges and responsibilities. To know and be known, to love and be loved, to serve and be served— this is what the family of God is all about.

What do the following verses say about the importance of connection with other Christians?

Acts 2:42-47

_____

Hebrews 10: 23-25

_____

1 Corinthians 12:26-27

_____

What opportunities are there for you to regularly connect with other Christians?

What may be keeping you from developing Christian friendships?

FOR

LOCATIONS & SERVICE TIMES

VISIT CCCLIFE.ORG/LOCATIONS

LOVING GOD.
LOVING PEOPLE.

CHRIST COMMUNITY
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