



CALVARY CHAPEL
TRI-CITIES

The New Believers Growth Book



**“As newborn babes,
desire the pure milk of
the word, that you may
grow thereby, if indeed
you have tasted that
the Lord is gracious.”**

1 Peter 2:2-3

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture references are taken from the
New King James version of the Bible.

Welcome! We're glad to have you in the family of God. It's a joy to have you with us and to be a part of the joy we all have in following Jesus. Whether you've just committed your life to the Lord for the first time, or are rededicating your life to Him, you're in for some awesome times as He begins to work in your life.

With that in mind, there are some things I'd like to tell you about that will benefit you as you begin your life with the Lord. First, some of you may be wondering if Jesus really came into your life when you received Him...You may have had an overwhelming emotional experience or you may have felt nothing at all. In either case, the Lord has made promises to you that go beyond any feeling that you may or may not have had. If you meant what you said when you asked Christ to take control of your life, then you can expect that God has forgiven you for your sin. 1 John 1:9 says that **"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** You can also know that God has forgotten your sin and treats you as if it never happened. Psalm 103:11-12 says, **"For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."** Your sin is both forgiven and gone.

In 1 John, God lets us know that when we ask Jesus into our life, we can trust that He really comes in; **"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God."** (1 John 5:11-13).

The Bible tells us: **“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”** (2 Corinthians 5:17). So, your sin is forgiven, your past is forgotten, and you have a new life! You have a lot to be thankful for.

The second thing I would like to share with you is your need for growth. The Bible teaches that when we become new believers, it's like becoming a child in the Lord. And like every child there are things that need to happen to keep us healthy and growing. Here are some steps that you need to take to insure that you have the type of life God wants for you.

1. READ YOUR BIBLE

Jesus pictured the Word as being spiritual food and in the same way that the body needs nourishment, your spirit needs to be nourished by God's Word. **“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”** (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The Word is where you're going to learn what God expects of you and how to handle life. As a matter of fact, the Bible says that all things that pertain to life and godliness are found in God's promises. Those promises are in His Word...so check it out!

A good place to start is in the Gospel of John. John is one of the books of the Bible that speaks the most about who Jesus is and why He came. Getting to know Jesus is a priority for all of us. I'd also recommend that you begin memorizing verses of the Bible. In the Psalms it says, **“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”** (Psalm 119:11).

2. BE IN FELLOWSHIP

This means that you need to be hanging out with other believers. One of the best places to do that is in church. It's very important that you not isolate yourself from other believers. You have to remember that Satan is just as real as God is and he would love nothing more than to get you alone so he can discourage you. Hebrews 10:24-25 says, **"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as in the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching."** A major benefit of fellowship is the encouragement we get from one another as we talk about issues we're going through and pray for each other. Church is also a place where you'll get more familiar with what the Bible says as it is taught at the different services you attend.

3. PRAY

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God..." (Philippians 4:6).

Prayer is just talking to God, and the Lord loves to hear from you. You have access to the Creator of the universe and you can pray anytime. So take advantage of your access to God!

4. WITNESS

A witness is someone who has testimony about an event that they have seen or witnessed. You've experienced a relationship with God, which has changed (or will change) everything in your life for the good. You have family, friends and acquaintances who need Jesus just as much as you do...they need to know what God can do for them. So tell your friends about what the Lord's done for you and invite them to church.

Your relationship with Jesus is something that will grow over time, and it's important that you apply yourself as you follow Christ. There are no shortcuts to spiritual maturity and you're going to find that when you are struggling as a Christian, that you're probably neglecting one of the areas I just mentioned. We need the Word, prayer and fellowship to grow strong as believers, and when we are "filled," sharing with others just becomes a natural thing.

The Christian life is an exciting thing, and you're going to be continually surprised at the changes God makes in your heart and life as you follow Him. We have the opportunity to know the One who made us and discover the individual plan He has for each of us. There's nothing better than living the way that God designed you to live. You've made the right decision...Congratulations! God bless you as you walk with Him.

Steve Whinery
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In John 3:16 Jesus told us about the bridge that God made between us and Him.

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16

“...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

Romans 3:23

The Bible teaches that there’s a gulf between God and man that was caused by sin. Although people try in many different ways to cross that separation, it was a gap that couldn’t be spanned by man’s good deeds or good intentions; it had to be crossed by the work of God.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:23

That’s why God sent Jesus to be the bridge between people and God. The Bible says:

“...who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree...by whose stripes you were healed.”

1 Peter 2:24

You cross that bridge into God’s family when you receive Jesus into your life to be your Savior.

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

John 1:12

Jesus said:

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.”

Revelation 3:20

The door that Jesus is speaking of is the door to your heart, and you receive Jesus by asking Him, through prayer, to come into your life.

At this point I need to address people who may not have ever received Jesus, or may not know if they have. If you haven't, there are four things that you need to do:

1. **Confess**: (admit) that you are a sinner (1 John 1:9).
2. **Repent**: decide that you want to turn away from your sin (Acts 3:19).
3. **Believe** in Jesus (John 3:16).
4. **Receive** Jesus in your life *through prayer* (John 1:12).

Here's a prayer that you can use if you'd like to receive Jesus:

Lord Jesus, come into my heart. I confess that I've sinned against You and I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I want to turn from my sin and follow You. Thank You that You love me and died for me and that You rose from the dead. I receive You into my life and give my whole heart to You. Thank You for saving me. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer, or something like it, Jesus said that you've been born again! You have a brand new life!



One of the things many people are concerned about when they consider coming to Christ, is whether or not they have the ability and the power to be what God expects them to be. Most understand something of what it means to be a Christian and have a desire not to be a “hypocrite.”

Good news! God’s got you covered! Jesus has not only called you and literally drawn you into a relationship with Him; He’s provided the power you need to live the life He has for you. You’re not on your own!

In Acts 1:4 & 8, Jesus told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they received the promise of the Holy Spirit. He let them know that they would receive power, and be witnesses for Him, “in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.”

The word for “power” in the language the New Testament was written in (Greek) is “dunamis.” We get our words dynamic, dynamite, and dynamo from it - that’s the kind of power God has for you. Dynamic! Explosive! He wants to make you a “dynamo” for Him.

So how do you receive this power? Jesus said this happens when the ‘Spirit comes upon you’...and this can happen through prayer. In Acts, chapters 8 and 19, there were disciples who had come to believe in Christ and had been prayed for...specifically to receive the baptism of the Spirit; the empowering work of the Spirit. So having someone, a pastor or church leader, even another Christian

pray for you to receive the Baptism of the Spirit, is one way to get the power you need. Luke 11:11-13 also teaches that God is good; if you ask for something you need, He'll never give you something weird or dangerous, and it specifically says that if you ask Him, He'll give you the Holy Spirit. So, if you need power to live for Jesus (and you do!), you can ask God yourself. Pray something like this...

“Lord Jesus, I want to live for You and I know I don't have the power to do it myself. I want everything You have for me, so please baptize me in Your Spirit and give me the power I need to live for You. I thank You Lord, that You've provided this for me and I receive it now, in Jesus' name. Amen.”



FREE REFILLS!

Having God's power come into your life isn't a one time event. Whether someone prayed for you, or you prayed for yourself, or God just gave you the power the day you came to Him, God wants you to be continually recharged.

Ephesians 5:18 says, “...be not drunk with wine, where in is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.” *KJV

In Greek, the phrase “be filled” means to be continually being filled. Kind of like getting a car's gas tank filled. So when you feel low on “gas”, you can go to the Lord as many times as needed and expect that He'll give you what you need to live for Him. God is good and He doesn't expect you to do this alone. He wants to be involved in helping you to be more like Him-so take advantage of God's “power supply!”



A LIFE THAT CHANGES

All through this booklet we've been talking about changed lives. God wants to make you new and bless you. But He's not just doing that for you...He wants to use your life to influence and help others. Sometimes that will happen with friends who are Christians in church; sometimes God will use you to influence those who don't know Jesus yet. In either case, God not only wants to empower you, He wants to give you the "gifts" that will help you "minister to" or serve others.

On top of that, He has a place for you in His church. The Bible compares Christians to a body; with each of us being a part, or "member," and Jesus being the head. When you became a Christian, God plugged you into the Body of Christ. You have a part to play! God uses the gifts of the Spirit to give you the abilities you need to play your part.

Some gifts include:

- **TEACHING** - the ability to share the Word in an understandable way.
- **EVANGELISM** - the ability to lead others to Christ.
- **PROPHECY** - God telling you to share something with someone else.
- **TONGUES** - a supernatural language most often used in prayer (1 Corinthians 14).
- **GIFTS OF HEALINGS** - God using you to pray for someone's healing and seeing it happen!

All these gifts are given so you can be involved with God in helping others come to know Him and grow as a Christian. Check out the following verses to learn more about the gifts:

1 Corinthians 11-14 (Specifically 12:31 and 14:1)

Romans 12

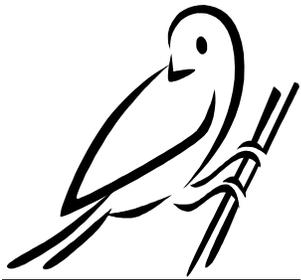


Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (John 15:5).

In this passage, Jesus is comparing Himself to a grapevine and us to the branches that come off of that vine. The fruit is the changes for good that God wants to happen in our lives. The point He's making is this: You are not going to be the person that God wants you to be unless you are plugged into Him like a branch is to a vine.

And just like in a grapevine, the fruit that comes, comes naturally. The branch is not sweating, grunting, or working hard to produce fruit. It's plugged into its source of life and nourishment. That's how you need to be...plugged into Jesus.

Jesus also told a story about a farmer who sowed seed in his field. You can read about it in Luke 8:5-15. In that story, Jesus says that the seed represents the Word of God and that the different types of ground that the seed is sown on are the lives and the hearts of those who hear the Word.



THE SEED FALLS ON PACKED GROUND

In the first, the seed falls on packed ground or a road and the birds come and take it away. Jesus said that this is like those who hear God's word and the devil steals it away before they can believe and be saved.



THE SEED FALLS ON
ROCKY GROUND

The second type of soil is stony ground; the seed begins to grow but has no deep root. When the sun comes out it withers and dies. Jesus said these are those who receive the Word, but when hard times or temptations come they turn away from Christ.



THE SEED FALLS
AMONG THE THORNS

Then there are the seeds that fall among the thorns; the thorns grow with the seed and choke it out. These people hear the Word, but it's choked out with the worries of life and the desires for money or pleasure.

Finally, there are the seeds that fall on good ground; people who hear the Word with an open heart and keep what it says. These seeds are going to bear the kind of fruit that God desires for them.



THE SEED FALLS
ON GOOD SOIL

Four different types of ground that describe the hearts of those who hear the Word. You have a choice as to which you are going to be. Satan would love for you to be one of the first three; he'll do everything possible to tempt you away from being good ground. On the other hand, God promises to work

in your life and He will continually encourage you to bear “good fruit,” along with giving you power to live your life for Him. As you spend time with the Lord in prayer, study of the Word and just making a daily decision that you’re going to stay with Jesus, you’ll find that the Lord is at work empowering you and making you into someone you never knew you could be. So, make sure you stay rooted and grounded in the source of spiritual life-Jesus.

	OVERCOMING TEMPTATIONS AND TRIALS	
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A wonderful thing happened when you became a Christian—so wonderful that Jesus said that the angels in heaven rejoice when one sinner comes to repentance (Luke 15:10)! Many of your friends and family may be excited for you too!

But not everyone will appreciate your commitment to Christ. God is real and so is the devil; and the devil would like nothing better than to turn you away from Jesus or make you ineffective as a believer. He will try and tempt you to disobey God by sinning against Him and His Word. He may cause situations to arise in your life to see if he can discourage you and keep you out of God's will. The Bible teaches that we are all involved in a spiritual warfare...and you just switched sides (Eph. 6:10-18). Expect some conflict. In this war Satan is fighting to win and he doesn't fight fair.

Sometimes, he'll use people in your life to try to hassle you or even tempt you away from Christ. These people can even be friends or people that you love. When that happens, the Bible tells us that we're not to treat these people as enemies, but realize that Satan has deceived them. If this happens to you, just pray for them, share what God's done for you, and let your changed life be a witness that draws them to Jesus.

All this can be a little overwhelming, but God's got you covered there too! The Bible says:

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you (God) is greater than he who is in the world (Satan)." (1 John 4:4).

In 1 Corinthians 10:13 it says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

What this means is that, first, you're not alone in going through trials and temptations...and you're not the only one who's ever gone through the specific trial you're in. Satan would like for you to believe you're the only sinner in your church. You're not, and that can be a real comfort.

Secondly, God is not going to allow any temptation that will overwhelm you. One of the reasons God allows trials in your life is to strengthen you. As a matter of fact, the word "trial" means "test." God allows tests to show you where your heart is, or where it should be. He also allows trials to train you for growth and so that you can be effective in future situations that you might not be able to handle right now. Trials are God's proving ground for spiritual maturity. It's been said that when God allows you to go through the fire (a test), He has His eye on you and His hand on the thermostat. God will never allow a test to overwhelm you.

The third thing this verse teaches is that God will give you a way out, so that you can bear it. If you feel like you can't take it, start looking for an exit! Sometimes it's going to be coming to God in prayer for strength. Sometimes it can be just walking away from a bad situation. Or it may be that God will intervene and take the pressure off. Just remember that although temptations and trials can be hard, God is with you, and He'll use them to make you someone you never thought you could be.
Look up 2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

	<h1>KNOWING GOD'S WILL</h1>	
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Not only does God have a plan for your life – He wants to let you in on it! Some of the most awesome promises in the Bible are those about knowing God's will. The Bible teaches that you can seek God (pray) and God will guide you in the way He wants you to go.

Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths."



A LIFE THAT CHANGES

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:1-2).

The Bible teaches that in order for us to know God's will we must first submit our bodies to Him as a living sacrifice...that's the idea that my body is no longer my own, it's the temple of the Holy Spirit.

“For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body...” (1 Corinthians 6:20).

The things we do with our bodies; our hands, our eyes, our tongues, etc., need to be pleasing to God.

Secondly, we are not to be conformed to this world...we are not to have the same attitudes as those in our society or handle problems in the same way. Have you noticed that what Jesus teaches us to do in a tough situation is almost always the opposite of what the “world,” or society, teaches we should do? Don’t be conformed to the world. Instead, be “transformed.”

And that brings up the third point; we are to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Some people accuse Christians of being brain washed. The reality is that all of us could use a good cleaning up of our brains. As we grow in Christ we become more and more like Him. We start taking on His attitudes and His heart towards people and situations; our minds are renewed. This starts the day we give our lives to Him and it should always be our goal.

If these three things are happening in our lives: 1) bodies being used to glorify God 2) lives that are not conformed to the world and 3) a renewed mind, then the Bible teaches that we can “prove” or test what the will of God is.

Here are some ways that the Bible says you can know the will of God:

1) Reading the Bible:

You can pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. The Bible contains direction, instruction and examples for how we’re to live (2 Timothy 3:16). God has said that He makes His Word “come alive” (Hebrews 4:12) so that it will speak directly to you. So open your Bible and find out what God has for your situation. This is the most important way of learning what God’s will is for you. Remember to read the Bible in context.

2) Prayer:

Many times, God will speak to your heart about a situation. Sometimes you might feel guilty about something you're doing...or you might have a strong feeling that you're supposed to do something that you haven't done or to go in a direction you haven't considered. Either way, this may be the Lord directing you! Listen up! That's what the Bible calls "the still small voice" of God (1 Kings 19:11-13). God can speak to your heart, and obviously it's worth hearing what He has to say.

3) Circumstances:

Sometimes you'll be praying for a specific answer and God will give you just what you've asked for. Look for God to bless you by answering your prayers. There may be times when He chooses not to give you what you've asked for – kind of like closing a door in your life. Just know that when He does this, He's watching out for your good. At times we can ask for a thing that will hurt our walk with Christ, and obviously, God doesn't want that for you. So, whether through "open doors" or "closed," you can look for God's guidance through circumstances in your life.

"Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we have asked of Him." (1 John 5:14-15).

4) Peace of God:

In one translation Colossians 3:15 says, "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, acting as umpire, settling with finality all decisions..." There will be times when outward circumstances will look all wrong for what you're praying about and yet you feel a supernatural peace in your heart that you're right where God wants you. Other times, it may seem that an opportunity is opening up, but you feel a real disquiet in your heart. Again, pay attention! This may be God, on the one hand giving you His peace, or on the other hand removing it so you'll know what to do. Remember that God will never lead you to do something wrong or against His Word, whether through His "still small voice," circumstances, or His peace.

It's great to know that we're not alone and that we can get direction from heaven. Take advantage of it.

