

SO YOU'VE CHOSEN TO
FOLLOW CHRIST. WHAT'S
YOUR...

A crowd of people, likely at a church service, with their hands raised in the air. The scene is dimly lit with a blue-green tint. Overlaid on the image is the text "NEXT STEP?" in large, bold, blue-outlined letters.

NEXT STEP?

SOUTHWESTERN CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY

Scholarship • Spirit • Service

NEXT STEPS
NEXT STEPS
NEXT STEPS



CONGRATULATIONS!

In the Bible, Jesus said, "...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." That abundant life began the moment you stepped over the line of faith and into a relationship with Jesus Christ. But that is just the beginning. You've taken the first step; now what?

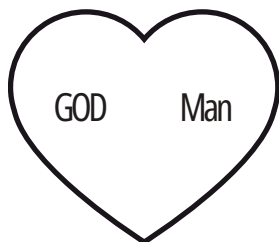
This book will give you an idea of what the Bible, God's Word, says about your next step in your relationship with God.

You probably still have questions about your decision. You may even have doubts. That's ok! But don't let those questions or doubts stop you from moving forward. Doubt your doubts and feed your faith by working through the things in this book. And continue to experience the abundant life – one step at a time!



UNDERSTANDING YOUR DECISION TO FOLLOW CHRIST

**GOD LOVES YOU WITH HIS WHOLE HEART.
THE POTENTIAL OF YOUR LIFE IS UNLIMITED!**



“God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.” - Genesis 1:31

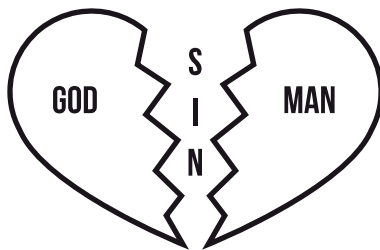
“I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”
- John 10:10b

WE CHOSE TO TURN OUR HEART FROM GOD AND FOLLOW THE BEAT OF OUR OWN HEART. THAT IS WHEN SIN ENTERED THE PICTURE AND SEPARATED US FROM GOD. THAT IS WHEN WE BROKE GOD’S HEART.

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” - Romans 3:23

“For the wages of sin is death.” - Romans 6:23a

“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”
- Proverbs 14:12



GOD SENT JESUS TO GIVE HIS PERFECT HEART FOR US AND BRIDGE THE GAP FROM GOD TO MAN. JESUS IS GOD'S SOLUTION TO OUR POLLUTION.

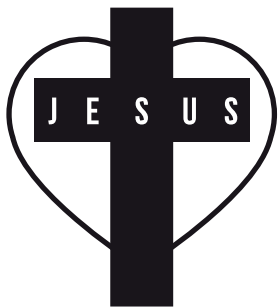
“For God so loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son.” - John 3:16a

“Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, ... He was buried, ... [and] raised on the third day according to the scriptures.”
- 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

“God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:21



WHEN YOU ASK JESUS INTO YOUR HEART, A HEART TRANSPLANT TAKES PLACE.



“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” - Ezekiel 36:26

“If you declare 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

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

PRAY TO ASK JESUS INTO YOUR HEART TODAY!

God, I believe you love me and want my heart to beat for you. But I admit I've sinned and that my sin separates me from you. I believe you sent Jesus to die on the cross for my sins and bridge the gap. Today, I ask Jesus into my heart. Amen.

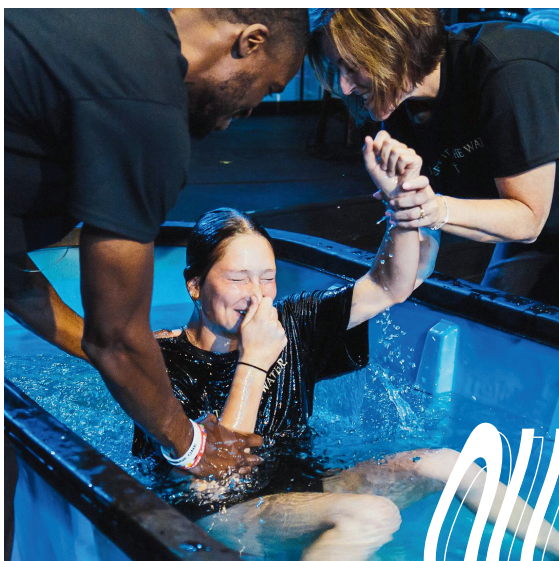
BAPTISM

Simply put, baptism **is an outward display and celebration** of your inward decision to trust Christ with your life. It's **act of obedience, a step of acknowledgement** that is representative of the fact that Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and walked out of the grave alive so that each of us can have eternal life.

When you step into the water, you are letting the world know that you have walked into a new life of faith in Jesus Christ and that you are committing to follow Him down a new path. If you've made the decision to follow Jesus, **baptism is the next step in your spiritual journey.**

You will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and wash your sins away, calling on His name. - Acts 22:15-16

For more details about how you can be a part of our next baptism celebration, contact Student Life offices.



OUTWARD
EXPRESSION
INWARD
DECISION

SEEK SERVE SHARE SOW



GROWTH

When you stepped over the line of faith and chose to follow Jesus, you began a new journey. But, this journey wasn't meant to be traveled alone. Christianity is not a solo sport - that's why the local church and our chapel services exist. We invite you to pull up a chair to the table and join us by attending chapel consistently and faithfully.

Each week, when we gather together as a COMMUNITY in chapel services, we unite to worship God, discover His plan for our lives, and learn how to live out His priorities.

As we continue to walk in faith, we can inspire one another to strengthen our relationship with Christ as we serve, share, and sow. Not only are these steps crucial for our growth, but they also empower us to be a force for change in our community and the world!

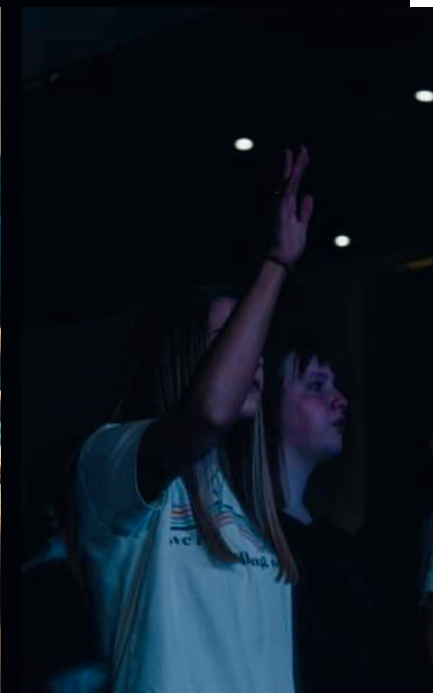
Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching. - Hebrews 10:25

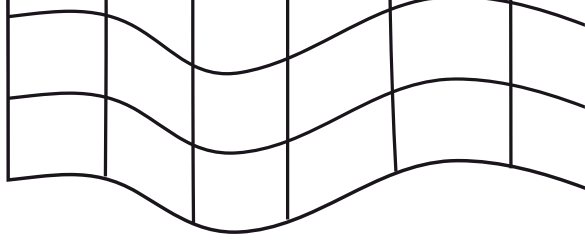
SEEKING

Like any healthy relationship, your relationship with Christ needs trust and communication to grow stronger. As you begin to understand how God sees you and what He wants for you, you will begin to experience the abundant life He promised. This begins by **daily seeking GOD through...**

- **LISTENING** to what God wants to say through Scripture. (See pages 16 and 17 for a 12-day Bible reading plan.)
- **TALKING** to God about what's on your mind. Prayer is simply having a conversation with God. (See pages 18 and 19 for a simple prayer guide.)
- **BELIEVING** what God says in Scripture about His plans for you. He wants to use you to make a difference, but you must first understand who you are, whose you are, and what you have to offer! (See pages 20 and 21 to find out what God says about you.)
- **CONNECTING** with others who will inspire and encourage you as you navigate life together.







SERVING

Jesus Himself said that He did not come to be served, but to serve others. When you volunteer your time and talent in the local church, you discover the key to unlocking a life of influence and change.

As a new Christ-follower, one of the most powerful steps you can take is serving in the church; it's stepping outside of your comfort zone and stepping up to be used by God.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms. - 1 Peter 4:10

SHARING

Fellowship Church was born from Pastor Ed's desire to reach people with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. In college, he began to dream of a church that would be a place where everyone – regardless of their background – could experience a creative, relevant message in an exciting, welcoming environment. Now that you have experienced that change in your own life, God wants to use you to reach others!

God has already placed people in your life – family, friends, co-workers, casual acquaintances – who are just one invitation to church away from experiencing all that God has for them. Begin to pray for opportunities to share your story with others and you'll be amazed at how God will use you to bring life-change to the world, one person at a time!



Everyone,
everywhere,
engaging
in eternity



12 DAY READING

When we read the Bible, we aren't just trying to gather information, we want to experience transformation. The Bible is the only book where the author is present when you read it! Here are a few simple questions we can ask to help us live out what we're learning:

- What can I learn from this Scripture about God and people? • How can I live this out in my life?
- What do I need to pray for?

Ask these questions as you read these passages of Scripture from the life of Jesus.

DAY 1 – Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-21)

Jesus' miraculous birth was a fulfillment of prophecy and a reminder that God loved us enough to come to us so we could have a relationship with Him.

DAY 2 – Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus was baptized to mark the beginning of His ministry and it can be the beginning of your ministry too. When we are baptized, it represents the beginning of our relationship with God. It's our first step of obedience and a symbol of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ that made our relationship possible.

DAY 3 – Temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13)

Jesus faced the same temptations we face, but stood up against them by focusing on the truth of Scripture and relying on the strength of the Holy Spirit within Him. A relationship with God gives us access to the same resources.

DAY 4 – Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

When God speaks to our heart, it's like a seed planted in soil. The condition of our heart determines how much growth will happen.

DAY 5 – Jesus Prays (Luke 11:1-13)

Prayer is one of the primary ways we communicate with God. It helps us to align our plans and perspective with His. Don't be afraid to share your needs and concerns because He cares for you.

DAY 6 – Woman at the Well (John 4:1-30)

When Jesus encountered the woman at the well, her thirst was satisfied, her life was changed, and she immediately began to invite others to come meet Jesus. Be willing to share your story and invite others to experience what you have experienced.

DAY 7 – Holy Spirit (John 14:16-27)

When we receive Christ and our relationship with Him begins, the Holy Spirit comes to be our counselor and teacher.

DAY 8 – Ultimate Servant (Matthew 20:20-28)

If we want to follow Christ's example, then we need to serve as He served. Find a place to serve within the church and watch how God uses your gifts to impact the lives of others!

DAY 9 – The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-35)

Jesus celebrated Passover with His disciples. Even He, the perfect leader, had people who turned against Him. Don't be discouraged if some people don't understand your relationship with Christ!

DAY 10 – The Crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:26-56)

Jesus' death was the ultimate expression of His love. His sacrifice provided forgiveness for our sin and paved the way for us to have a relationship with Him.

DAY 11 – The Resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-49)

Jesus' resurrection was final evidence that He was truly the Savior of the World. The power of God that raised Him from the dead is the same power that is at work in you.

DAY 12 – The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

Jesus' last recorded words to His disciples were a challenge to go throughout the world and share their story. This small group of people changed the world with their boldness and commitment to tell others about Christ. God calls you to do the same!

For more resources, download the **YOUVERSION BIBLE App** to read inspiring and relevant daily devotionals.

BB

AY

P-R-A-Y

Prayer is one of the most crucial aspects to a vibrant relationship with God. It's not reserved for spiritual superstars. Prayer is simply having a conversation with God; something everyone can do. There's no one way to pray, but here is a template that may help you as you begin to connect with God through conversation:

P – Begin your prayer with **PRAISE**. Praise is showing adoration for who God is, what He can do, and what He has done.

R – Next, **REPENT**. What is repentance? It is recognizing our shortcomings and turning away from them. God isn't surprised by anything you bring to Him. So do not be afraid to admit to Him those things that fall short of His standard for your life.

A – Then, **ASK**. God wants us to ask Him for things in our lives. Like any father, He wants His children (that's us) to come to Him with our requests.

Y – Finally, **YIELD**. Prayer is not just asking God for what we want; it is putting ourselves in a position to want what God wants. We must yield to His plan and His purpose above all.

WHO YOU

Understanding what God says about you is one of the most crucial aspects in continuing, and growing, in your relationship with Him. Throughout the Bible, God makes it clear who we are, whose we are, and what He thinks of us. As His children, we are precious, purposed, and filled with potential. Here are just a few of the things God says about us in His Word,
the Bible:

1. YOU ARE CREATED BY GOD

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb." - Psalm 139:13

You are not an afterthought or an accident. God, the ultimate Creator, created you on purpose and for a purpose. When God sees you, He doesn't see a person who has no reason for being; He sees someone He intentionally put here for a reason. Your identity is found in WHO created you.

2. YOU ARE CLOTHED BY GOD

"For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness..." - Isaiah 61:10

The Bible says that we all fall short of the glory of God. If left to our own, we are stitched in sin, ripped by rebellion, torn and tarnished. But when we step over the line of faith, God trades our sin for His salvation, our fallenness for His forgiveness. No longer does God see you as a sinner; now He sees you as clothed by Christ's righteousness!

3. YOU ARE CHANGED BY GOD

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—His good, pleasing, and perfect will." - Romans 12:2

You are not defined by your past. Scripture says that you become a new creation when Jesus infiltrates your life. God wipes the slate clean. This instantaneous change starts a process that continues throughout our lives. God will continue to transform our thoughts, attitudes, and actions so that they match the new person that He has made us to be.

4. YOU ARE CELEBRATED BY GOD

"Long before He laid down the earth's foundations He had us in mind. He would settle on us as the focus of His love to be made whole and holy by His love." - Ephesians 1:4

Love has to have an object. You are the object of God's love. When He created you, He created someone He also celebrates! When you receive forgiveness through Jesus Christ, you become a child of God and gain access to all the rights and privileges of a child of the King. You are loved, accepted, and valued not because of what you've done, but because of who your Father is.

5. YOU ARE COMPLETED BY GOD

"So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority." -

On our best days, we still fall short of God's glory. To put it another way, we are incomplete because good isn't good enough. However, God is God enough! If we have a relationship with Christ, if we've received Him, then we are complete. Jesus completed the incomplete.

**GOD
SAVS**

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