



6 Next Steps for New Believers

Welcome to the family! The Bible says that today you are a new creation. You have been born-again, forgiven of sin, and it is an awesome day! Just like a newborn baby comes into the world and needs nourishment to thrive, that's how it is with your spiritual birth—you need spiritual food.

The following steps will help you establish a lifestyle that allows Jesus to guide and direct your new life in Him. As you take time to do these steps, we believe and pray that God's plan for you will begin to unfold. Congratulations on the best decision you could ever make!

1. Prayer (talking to God) Prayer is just the biblical word for talking to God. Prayer is communication between you and God. God created you as you are, and He wants to spend time communicating with you. Go ahead and thank Him for the beautiful day. Ask Him for guidance in difficult circumstances. Most important, ask Him to give you strength and wisdom to live a life that pleases Him. As you open your Bible each day, ask Jesus to open your eyes and heart to see and hear what His Spirit says to you.

Scriptures to read: [1 Thessalonians 5:17-18](#); [Philippians 4:6-7](#); [Psalm 34:1-8](#); [Luke 18:1](#)

2. Study (getting to know God) How would you feel if you had not eaten anything for three days? You would feel like passing out! With spiritual nourishment, the principle is the same. When you go three days without reading the Bible and spending time with Jesus, you are spiritually starving. But when you spend time with Jesus, you will be satisfied spiritually. Start where you can, if that is 5 minutes a day, begin there! But be challenged to grow into more and more study. The Bible reveals to us the promises of God, the truth about life, ourselves, and Jesus. So, there is so much to learn. Trying learning something new everyday. Try starting in the New Testament, and learn more about the life of Jesus. It's truly an incredible story.

As you study the Bible, some things will be really practical. And so part of being a Christian is listening to Jesus, so we obey what we read. When the Bible says

to forgive others, we try to do that, knowing that our obedience is not to make us worthy of Salvation, but because we are saved we want to please God.

When looking for a Bible, we suggest an English Standard Version (Pastor Mike primarily uses the ESV for his sermons) or The New International Version (NIV) is also a good version. But any translation you are actually going to read is good place to start. The Message Version of the Bible is a contemporary language Bible that is a great companion to other translations.

Scriptures to read: *2 Timothy 2:15; Psalm 1:1–3; Psalm 119:9–16; Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12*

3. Community (being with believers) By community we mean, to hang around or interact with other Christians. To illustrate this, let's picture a barbecue with red, glowing charcoal briquettes. If you reach in with tongs and remove one of those little briquettes, setting it apart from the others, what will happen? It will go out! It will get cold! But if you take that same briquette and place it back into the fire with the others, what will happen? Once again, it will take on the same characteristics of the other briquettes. So it is with the Christian walk. You can't do it alone, no one can. So we really encourage you to get plugged into the community at Northside.

We will do our best to help you find times to connect with others over meals and hanging out, but we also have other programs, like Women's and Men's groups, as well as Children's and Youth programs.

Scriptures to read: *Acts 2:42–47; Philippians 2:1–4; Ephesians 5:19–21; 1 John 1:5–7; Hebrews 10:24–25*

4. Baptism (Public Confession) Jesus told us that we as Christians are to be baptized. Baptism is just getting dunked in water. It's a public act that shows your faith in Christ to the world and symbolizes your salvation. We die to sin (going under the water) and we arise to new life in Christ (coming out of the water). This is a first step of obedience that Christians take. If you would like to get baptized feel free to talk to Pastor Mike or one of the Elders at Northside.

Scriptures to read: *Matthew 28:19 – 20; Acts 2:38; Acts 8: 35-38*

5. Repent (Saying you are sorry) Repentance is knowing that you mess up sometimes, owning up to it, and changing. We repent to God, because we when mess up it is first against him, but we also, and maybe harder to do, repent to those we offend. We know that God forgives us and that we aren't yet perfect, so because of grace we are freed to move past the embarrassment and say we are sorry. It humbles us, but it is very good for us. Pastor Mike has described repenting as C.R.A.C.

C. Confess – don't wait to get caught, confess. Waiting to get caught doesn't mean you are sorry, it means you are sorry you got caught. As Jesus begins to change us, we will want more and more to not want to make the same mistakes, and will help you do this better.

R. Reparation – this is simply making it right if it is within your power to do so. If you stole, return it and apologize. If you hurt your wife, apologize and buy her flowers. You get the picture. If there is nothing you can do, just apologize. Do what you can do to make it right.

A. Accountability – as we said before, we can't do this alone, and community is important. Accountability just means having someone else you can be brutally honest with, who wants to help you grow in your walk with Christ. You expose your mistake, pray together, and help each other grow.

C. Change – genuine repentance is seen in the desire to change, and really change. Ask Jesus to help change those tendencies, to give you strength when you are weak, and by his power at work in you, change will come.

6. Witnessing (telling others about Jesus) When you begin living your life in Christ, and begin to do these steps, you will be noticeably different. Those who know you will be able to see a change in your life. Witnessing, or sharing your faith, is simply telling others what Jesus has done to bring about that change. In Mark 16:15, Jesus says, "Go into all the world and preach the good news 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

If you have any questions, know that you are more than allowed to ask away. No question is off limits. If you need help or advice while you are working through the steps above, ask someone! We are here to help you become who God wants you to be! This is an exciting time in your life, and the Bible says even in Heaven the angels rejoiced when you came home. There was a party just because of you.

We also know that this is a new way of doing life, and so at the start things may be confusing and different, even difficult at times, but just remember, we have all been there, and the best part of being connected to a Church is that we all know what you are going through. Don't be afraid to ask someone. And remember, you are going to screw up, make a mistake, say something you shouldn't have, done something you knew was wrong, but that doesn't mean you aren't a Christian, your good actions didn't save you, Jesus did, and your bad ones won't make him turn away. Trust in his work in your life. It's a life long journey, buckle in and enjoy the ride.

Here is what is called a **Statement of Faith**. This briefly outlines some of our key beliefs as followers of Jesus:

The Scriptures

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments, is the complete Word of God. As originally given, it is verbally inspired, without error, and entirely trustworthy. The Bible constitutes supreme authority in all matters of faith, teaching, and behaviour. The Bible has Jesus Christ as its focus and fulfillment.

2 Peter 1:16-21, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Luke 24:27, Matthew 5:17-18

God

God is the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all. The Lord our God is one God who eternally exists in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three have the same perfect nature and attributes. Each Person of the Godhead is worthy of the same worship, confidence, and obedience.

Genesis 1, Psalm 8, Psalm 2, Romans 8:28-30, Deuteronomy 6:4, Matt. 28:19-20

- **The Father**– God the Father loves the world. He sent His Son into the world to save sinners. He raised Jesus from the dead, exalted Him – putting all things under his power -- and together with Him has sent the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:22, John 3:16, 1 John 4:14, 1 Peter 1:21, Philippians 2:9-11, John 14:26

- **The Son**– God the Son became God incarnate as Jesus the Messiah. Jesus is fully God and fully man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, and lived a sinless life. He was crucified, raised bodily from the dead, and ascended into heaven where He reigns as King and serves as our High Priest and Advocate.
He will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to set up His earthly Kingdom.

John 1:1, John 1:14, Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah 7:14, 2 Corinthians 5:21, 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4

Hebrews 1:3, Hebrews 7:25, Revelation 22:12-13

- **The Holy Spirit**– God the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ in all that He does. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. At the moment of salvation He regenerates, baptizes, indwells, gifts and empowers for Christ-like living and service.

John 16:8-15, Titus 3:5-6,

1 Corinthians 12:11,13, Romans 8:9-14, Galatians 5:22-25

Mankind

Human beings are created in the image of God. The first humans, Adam and Eve, were disobedient to the will of God with the consequence that every aspect of their human nature became sinful and corrupt. Thus, being spiritually dead, they became subject to physical death and the power of Satan. The image of God is distorted in all humanity, with the exception of Jesus, as we inherit a sinful nature at conception. Therefore we are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God and under His condemnation.

Genesis 1:27, Genesis 2:16-17, Genesis 3:6, Ephesians 2:1-3, Romans 3:9-10,

Psalms 51:5, John 3:36; Romans 5:12-14

Redemption/Salvation

Redemption is accomplished solely by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was made to be sin and died in our place as an acceptable sacrifice to God. His atoning death is sufficient for all and effective for every person who repents and believes in Him, resulting in a reconciled relationship with God.

Salvation is available by grace through faith. This salvation is not our own doing. It is the gift of God.

Salvation includes being declared righteous by God [justification], being transformed into the likeness of Christ [sanctification], and being fully restored to the image of God [glorification]. This Salvation which includes our new birth and eternal inheritance is kept by God's power. It is therefore impossible for the saved to lose their salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 5:6-10, Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 1:18-19, 1 Peter 2:24,

2 Corinthians 5:21, Romans 5:1, John 17:17-19, 1 John 3:2, John 5:24, John 10:27-30,

Romans 8:28-39, 1 Peter 1:3-5; 1 Timothy 4:10

The Church

The Church consists of all the redeemed who are united by the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ, of which Jesus is the Head. Local assemblies of believers are visible representations of the Church that gather regularly for the purpose of worship, which includes instruction in the Word, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer.

The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances: Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Though not the means of salvation, these ordinances testify of the gospel.

The Church has been entrusted with the task of global discipleship as found in the Great Commission.

Matthew 16:17-18, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Acts 2:42

1 Corinthians 11:23-28, Luke 22:19-20, Romans 6:3, Matthew 28:19-20

Angels

God created angels for His glory and service. Some rebelled under the leadership of their fellow angel, Satan, and are opposed to God and His purposes. Though Satan is still active he has been defeated by the Lord Jesus Christ and will be committed forever to the lake of fire with all the fallen angels.

Hebrews 1:14, Jude 6, Hebrews 2:14-15, Revelation 20:10; Ephesians 6:12