



***New Hope***  
***A Home Where You Belong***







## **WELCOME TO THE FAMILY!**

Praise the Lord and congratulations on making the decision to trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You've begun an awesome journey to get closer to and be more like Jesus for the same reason you put your faith in Him. He has every thing you need for today and for eternity.

What's cool is that you're not alone! Jesus put you into His family, a family of believers just like you, who are also learning how to live their faith in their everyday lives. This means we're all on journey to listen to and follow Jesus every day everywhere, not just when we come to service.

This process means that we're committing ourselves to trusting in Jesus and His Word, the Bible; to loving Jesus and His family by getting together with and helping each other grow in our faith, to worshipping Jesus through our daily actions and to sharing what He's done for us with others. As we do this we'll become what I call healthy believers. People who are not Christians in name only, but in our daily lives as well.

Therefore, it is my desire to help you become a healthy believer who loves Jesus more and more each day. Now, I know you probably have questions about what it means to be a Christian or how to get going on your journey. That's the purpose of this booklet. We want you to join us on this most exciting journey to love and become more like Jesus and experience all the good stuff He has for us!

Welcome to the family!

***Pastor Chris***



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In order to help you remember what it means to be a healthy believer, I put these action steps into an easy to remember acronym: **DNA**. D stands for **D**ivine truth – is your faith in Jesus and His Word, the Bible, increasing? N stands for **N**ourishing relationships – is your love for Jesus and His people growing? And A represents **A**ccomplishing Jesus’ mission – is your hope deepening your worship of and witness for Jesus?

This booklet then is divided into these 3 sections:

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## **Chapter 1**



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### **LOVE JESUS FOR WHAT HE HAS DONE FOR YOU**

#### **You are a child of God**

In next three chapters I want to introduce to you a number of important truths about yourself. In this chapter, I want you to understand that you became somebody new the moment you decided to believe what Jesus did for you. You became child of God (John 1:12).

As a child of God you have a new Father who loves you and wants you to draw closer to Him without fear of being rejected or feeling like a failure. How can this be true? First, your Father sent Jesus to die for you when you were at your worst (Romans 5:8). Nothing about your life caused God to love you. In fact, since He loved you when you acted and looked your worst, what can you possibly do now that would make Him stop loving you? If you answered, “nothing,” you were correct.

Second, your Father sent Jesus to die for you when you were a total failure (Romans 5:5). Before you became His child, you simply could not become the person He demanded you to be. So what happens if you fail today to be the person God wants you to be? You’re **still** His child!

Third, Jesus came to die for you while you weren’t even close to loving Him (1 John 4:10). Thus, your relationship with God is not dependent on your love for Him, but His for you. He loved us even when we didn’t love Him. So how can your loss or lack of love change how He feels toward you? It can’t!

Romans 8:38,39 states it best, “For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God, that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Do you see the wonderful truth in those verses? There is nothing you did, or didn’t do; nothing you do or don’t do; nothing you will do or will not do; and/or nothing that someone else has done to you or you have done to yourself or others that will ever keep God from loving you. Yes, you may disappoint Him at times by your choices, but He will always be there ready to give you a hand up to try again because you’re His child whom He loves tremendously.

#### **You have a new identity**

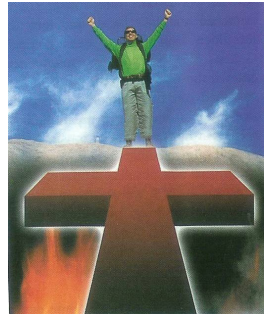
Next, being a child of God means you have a new identity (See Appendix A: *Your New Identity*). As God’s child, your past no longer counts because the slate has been wiped clean. You are forgiven. You are accepted. You belong to someone who loves you intensely. As God’s child, your future is secure no matter what you do today. You belong to Him – period. You can live and make right choices in the present because your Father gave you the ability to make those right choices (2 Peter 1:4).

As God’s child, it is because of **who you are, not what you do**, that sets you free from your past. Right now, from the beginning of your journey to get closer to Jesus, start telling yourself the truth. “As a child of God, I can think correctly and make right choices today because I have a new master living inside me telling me the truth.” (1 Corinthians 2:16)

It is crucial for you to understand this truth. If you want to live as a “victor” instead of a “victim”, you



must start believing this truth about yourself. You must stop listening to the old thoughts such as: “I am a loser,” “I am a failure,” “I can’t live responsibly,” or “I have to keep some list of rules for God to love me.” You must throw those thoughts out like you would garbage. Let Jesus change your thinking. It is the only way you’re going to experience real life in the here and now (Romans 12:2). Will you focus on the truth that sets you free or the lie that destroys you (John 8:32)?



Ask yourself, “When I talk to myself, what do I say?” Jesus not only wants you to know the truth, but it’s His desire for you to keep telling yourself the truth as well (Joshua 1:8). Are you saying, “I can’t,” when the your new Father says “you **can** do all things through Christ who gives you strength” (Philippians 4:13)? Are you telling yourself, “I am a failure,” when the your new Father says you are “a **conqueror** in all things through Christ” (Romans 8:37)? Are you telling yourself, “I am weak and must give in,” when the Bible says, “The Lord is my **strength** and I can take positive action steps” (Psalm 27:1; Daniel 11:32)?

### **Speak to Yourself Truthfully**

You must start telling yourself the truth in order to become more like Jesus. How do you do that? First, when you read the Bible, don’t try to understand everything you read. Simply learn to let Jesus talk to you. When you come across a part (i.e. verses) that hits home to you, memorize it. Second, evaluate every thought that comes into your brain. Do your thoughts agree or disagree with this truth (2 Corinthians 10:5)? If your thoughts agree with this truth, it’s from God. Focus on and ask the Spirit to show you how to obey it. If your thoughts disagree with that truth it’s from your new enemy, Satan. Throw the thought away like you would the garbage and tell your enemy to leave. Don’t think about it anymore and choose to think about what is true (see Philippians 4:8).

It sounds easy, and in a way it is. However, you must understand you will become like what you focus on and what you focus on only gets bigger. Negative thoughts drag you down. Truth helps you soar above life’s challenges. As a child of God you have that choice (Roman 6:13). You are no longer a helpless victim held captive by your urges, habits or past. You are a victor in Jesus!



And as a victor, you can make choices that will draw you closer to Jesus and put a smile on your face. Because you’re a child of God, you can live and stay free from all your “drugs of choice” (you’ll learn more about this by taking the Biblical Worldview: Tools to Draw Closer Jesus class) that destroys your life. Will you make mistakes along the way? Sure. But regardless of what you do or don’t do, you’re still God’s child, whom He loves very much.

Focus on the only activity that has any lasting value in life – becoming more like Jesus with each and every decision. We follow Him because He’s taken the pressure to perform off. We obey Him because we love Him for what He did for us on the cross. We now listen to and do what He says because we trust that what He is telling us is in our best interests.

### **You have a new way of living**

Being a healthy believer means living by faith. This is another crucial concept to grasp for your journey to get closer to Jesus. It’s foundational to all that you will do from now on. You became a child of God through faith (Ephesians 2:8); and you will grow as a child of God by faith (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:17).

Let’s discover what faith is. The Bible defines faith as the assurance and certainty that God will do exactly what He says He will do (Hebrews 11:1). As a child of God, do you trust your “daddy” to tell you the truth? Do you believe that He will only ask you to do things that will make your life better? If you don’t, you will never follow Him. This is why Hebrews 11:6 states “and without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists *and* that He rewards

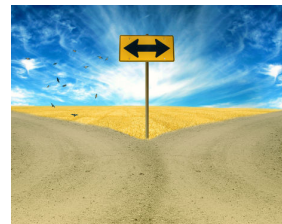


those who earnestly seek Him” (emphasis added).

In reality, you wouldn’t even bother with God if you thought He didn’t exist or would harm you. You wouldn’t be reading this booklet today if you thought there was no God. But it starts here: do you believe that He, and not you, is God? This means realizing you don’t have all the answers and will need someone else to help you find them. That is why you turned to Jesus. You realized you could not save yourself. You needed His help (Romans 10:8,9).

### **The tough part**

Once you settle that issue, the tough part of your journey begins, living daily by faith. This means believing that Jesus has the solutions for your daily decisions. You must surrender your way of thinking and living to Him, which is how you become more like Him on a moment by moment basis. This is called “being filled” or “keeping in step” with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5:25). As you step out on faith and give daily control of your life to Jesus, you can expect to experience “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control” (Galatians 5:16,22).



As God’s child, do you believe Jesus only wants what is best for you? Will your trust Him to reward you for earnestly seeking Him? This is what faith means: you believe there are benefits in following God. No one in their right mind would ever want anything to do with God if they thought He was likely to hurt them. Instead, they’d try to get away from Him, not closer. Yet as your trust in Jesus increases, your life will be changed for the better. Thus, healthy believers take steps to get closer to Jesus throughout their day.

Our natural inclination, however, will be to ignore Him (acting like He doesn’t exist, won’t help, or worse, we can do a better job on our own), walk away from Him and/or do whatever we want. Jesus wants to increase our faith so that whatever He tells us to think and do will follow because we believe it’s best for us if we do. He’s put His Spirit within us, so we can learn to rely on ourselves less and Him more.

### **The battle for control**

Will you, at times, take back control of your life? Yes. This is normal because we all faces daily challenges. Yet, how we view these challenges is important as they are designed to encourage us to turn to and rely on Jesus more (James 1:2-4). As your trust in Jesus increases, you will put more and more of the control of your life into His hands. Your faith in Him will grow as you allow Him to prove Himself to you.

So what is the first step of faith He wants you to take? Be baptized. Baptism is simply a public way of showing that you love Jesus. You’re saying to the world, “I love Jesus and will walk with Him for eternity” (1 Peter 3:21). If you have not been baptized, now is the time to do it. If you have made a personal commitment to Jesus then be baptized as a sign of your love for Him (Matthew 28:18-20).



### **Key Concepts:**

1. You have a brand new Father who loves you no matter what you do or do not do.
2. You’re a child of God who is released from your past and from performing for God to be free today!

3. You are a victor, not a victim.
4. You have a new job description: listen to and follow Jesus every day everywhere!
5. You grow as a child of God by faith that your Jesus has your best interest in mind.
6. Be baptized.

What is Jesus asking you to do?

Who is praying with and for you to see it happen?



**Jesus loves you.  
Now love Him back!**



## **Chapter 2**



### **LET GO OF YOUR PAST TO ENJOY THE PRESENT!**

As a new believer in Jesus, you bring yourself into this new relationship. All of us carry excess baggage – being hurt or are the cause of our hurt. What do we do about it? In a word, forgive. This word, however, has been so totally twisted that we must understand what the Bible says about forgiveness so we can apply it to our lives.

Forgiveness is needed because all of us sin (1 John 1:8). It's our sin, our mistakes, that not only hurt us, but others as well (including God) and is the cause of all broken and damaged relationships. Sin basically says, "I will live my life my own way whether anyone likes it or not." Yet the Bible reveals that the moment we sin, we deserve God's punishment and anger. We earn death, separation from God, for our mistakes (Romans 6:23), which drives Him crazy. He created us to have a relationship with Him as He is the only source Who can and will satisfy our needs. It is because of this very separation that God, out of His extreme love for us, sent Jesus to take care of our sin problem.



#### **Jesus is approachable**

By believing what Jesus did for us (died and rose again) we find forgiveness. By putting our faith in Jesus, our relationship with the Father is renewed. Because of Jesus, your new Father is totally approachable. God isn't carrying around a big stick ready to punish you every time you blow it. Get rid of this lie. The truth is that Jesus took all our punishment on the cross so we wouldn't have to take it ourselves. Because of Jesus' actions, our Father is ready and willing to forgive us. All we have to do is admit our mistakes and ask His forgiveness. Guess what? He promises that He will every time (1 John 1:9). Isn't this good news?

"But I don't deserve to be forgiven for what I did. I'm such a horrible person. I'm not good enough for God to forgive me." Wrong! Jesus paid an awesome price for your forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22) not because of who you are or are not, but because of who He is (1 John 4:7-12). The next time you blow it, don't beat yourself up or run away from God because you think He's mad at you. Simply admit what you did was wrong and ask Him to forgive you. Here's an example. "Jesus I admit that what I said was a lie. Please forgive me." He will. End of story. Then start focusing on the truth and what He wants you to do now. Jesus is that approachable!



#### **What letting go of the past means**

But again you might be saying, "What about my past? What do I do with all those hurts, both done to me and the hurts I've caused others?" Jesus says, "Forgive as I have forgiven you." (Colossians 4:13) What? Let me explain forgiveness in a little more detail.

Sin causes separation in all our relationships. It robs us of the peace and happiness that we all seek for in life. Forgiveness is what can heal our relationships so we can experience the very peace and happiness we desire. A lack of forgiveness, then, not only hurts your relationship with God and with others, but it hurts you as well! It hinders your freedom (Proverbs 5:22). It keeps you focused on the

hurt and in bondage to the past. Thus, the person who hurt you or the hurt you caused others acts like a ball and chain that drags you down keeping you from enjoying life now.

Furthermore, lack of forgiveness can also lead to anger, bitterness, depression, all kinds of destructive behaviors, and physical problems (Proverbs 29:6; cf. 1 Peter 2:11, “wars against your soul”). It also allows your new enemy, Satan, to get his hooks into your life (2 Corinthians 2:9-11), and then use those hooks to pull you back to your old lifestyle, which only left you feeling empty and in need of Jesus in the first place. Lack of forgiveness can also repel the very people you need to be around in order to be healthy (Proverbs 16:28). For the most part, those who love you will stick by you, but generally speaking, people simply don’t want to be around angry, bitter or depressed people. Thus, you lose again!

### **The importance of forgiving**

We must begin to understand how important it is to forgive others and ourselves. Forgiving others allows God to forgive you (Matthew 6:14,15). If we don’t forgive others, God will not forgive us. By making this statement our new Father is trying to stress just how destructive an unforgiving heart can be. He knows that an unforgiving heart not only leads to a path of bitterness and destruction, but it also blocks the Spirit from helping you on your journey to love Jesus. Either way you lose. By forgiving others, you win! It brings peace to your life and increases your love for Jesus (Luke 7:47,48). “Jesus forgave me for that? Awesome, thanks!” Forgiveness also brings answered prayer (Mark 11:24,25), and gives you a clean conscience (Hebrews 10:22; cf. John 13:1-17), which again brings peace to your heart and hope to your mind.



### **What forgiveness does and doesn’t mean**

By now I hope you’re crying, “Uncle! I give! Show me how to forgive.” First, understand what forgiveness does and does not mean. Forgiveness **does not** mean forgetting. If we are to forgive as God does, can He forget anything? I don’t think so. So just like God doesn’t forget, we will not be able to forget the wrong done to us either. Forgiveness **does not** mean the person who wronged us will not be dealt with at some point in time. It simply means God, not you, will take care of them (Romans 12:17-21).

Forgiveness **does** mean letting the hurt go and not holding onto the wrong done to us. Because Jesus paid the penalty, God no longer holds our sins, mistakes, against us. That’s forgiveness and we can do the same. Though we can’t forget what happened, we can no longer hold it against them or bring it up again. It’s done and over with.

Based upon that, forgiveness has nothing to do with whether you feel like it or not. It’s an act of the will to love Jesus through forgiving others (Ephesians 4:32; John 14:15). You’re stepping out on faith knowing Jesus will reward you for doing so, which in this case means growing closer to and more like Him.

Asking forgiveness of others brings you closer to those you hurt. As we’re all still “works in progress,” we will hurt each other. This is real life. Forgiveness then becomes a vital part of our journey together as a family of believers who love Jesus (Colossians 3:12-14). Forgiveness gives the other person room to grow without the fear of you leaving. It gives each person the room to become more like Jesus in the Father’s timing.

Giving forgiveness to those who don’t even know or admit they hurt you is also important. Your enemy wants to pull you in his direction – down. One of the ways he does this is to try to deceive you into thinking that by not forgiving someone, you are actually striking back at them. Wrong. Not forgiving someone only allows him to put his hooks into your life so that he can use them to drag you anywhere

he wants you to go (2 Corinthians 2:10-11), which isn't any where good!

You might be saying, "You don't know what they did. There is no way God can forgive them for what they have done, is there?" Yes there is. Forgiveness is what Christianity is all about (Luke 24:47). Didn't God forgive you of all the wrongs you did? Yes. Doesn't sin, no matter what it is, separate you from God? Yes. Here in lies the point I'm trying to make. Others may have hurt you real bad. Forgiveness is not about them. It's about you! It's about not giving your enemy any room to destroy your peace and happiness. It's about you working through the past so that it no longer affects you today. It's all about the freedom to stay in the presence of Jesus where all the "good stuff" you're looking for in life is found!

### **The how-to's of forgiveness**

So how do I forgive others? The first thing you must do is to decide to forgive them (Colossians 3:13). Forgiveness is a decision, not an emotion, to obey God's command. Emotion says, "I can never forgive you for what you did to me." "I just don't feel like forgiving them." Obedience says, "I love Jesus and He says it's in my best interest to forgive. I will forgive the person who hurt me." Once you decide to forgive, you not only become a healthier believer, but you can also forgive when asked or forgive even if the person who hurt you never asks. Remember, forgiveness is about you and your ability to live in peace today, not about them. Once you decide to forgive you can do it and never bring it up again.

Will you be able to forget? No! In fact, in some cases, each time you're around that person again, anger may rise within you. How do you deal with that situation? Tell yourself the truth, "I have already forgiven that person." Give the pain to Jesus. Then get back to what you were doing before you saw that person or remembered the hurt. Focus on the truths you need to stay free. Trust me, in time the pain *will* go away.

Let me illustrate this for you. I remember the day it happen as if it just happened. I was living in Mexico City at the time. We were playing softball on a blacktop diamond field that had a huge boulder four feet behind home plate. I hit a line drive into the gap between right and center field. I took off like a rabbit. As I rounded third and was about to touch home, I realized that I was going too fast to stop and hit my shin on the rock. Oh did it hurt. The impact left a huge bloody gash. The bad part was that the closest first-aid kit was an hour away in my apartment. Needless to say by the time I got home the blood had clotted and it looked real ugly.

I knew what I had to do. I got some hot soapy water and started cleaning the leg. Ouch! It hurt just as bad as when I hit the boulder. Once it was clean, I put hydrogen peroxide on it. Burn baby burn! Yet I knew all of this was in my best interest. If I didn't want the leg to get worse, I had to go through the pain of ripping off the scab and cleaning all the dirt from the wound.



Did the pain go away when the scab appeared? Not a chance! Have you ever hit a scab, especially on your shin? It hurts big time. But I also knew that if I left it alone, in time the scab would go away and leave a scar that wouldn't hurt when touched.

We feel pain just like my shin did from hitting the boulder when someone hurts us. If we choose not to forgive, we make our lives worse just like my leg having to wait until I got home to clean it. If we continue to choose not to forgive, we then choose to let the pain get worse, just like my leg would have if I'd not cleaned it. Forgiveness is the cleaning out process. The sooner it is done the better. Yes it hurts to pull the scab off, but the healing can only begin once the wound is cleaned.

Further, choosing to forgive also helps every time you see the person who hurt you or you remember the incident that caused the hurt. The pain from the wound takes time to heal, just like it takes time for the scab to go away. In time, however, the pain will get smaller and smaller until all you have left is the memory, not the pain. The cool thing is this that you still have your leg to enjoy life today!

## **Get the hooks out – 4 Steps to Freedom**

Forgiveness is a crucial tool for your walk with Jesus. In order to live as free individuals (Galatians 5:1) and grow closer to and become like Jesus, you must get all the “hooks” out of your life.

### **Pre-step 1: Remember who you are.**

You're God's child. If you ever hear or start to think negative thoughts, tell Satan to leave you! He does not want you to be free and will try to keep you from this process. Get in a place where you can quietly listen to the Spirit of God.

### **Pre-step 2: Get someone to pray with you.**

You are not alone but the enemy wants to make you think that you are. Have someone pray with you while the Spirit helps you examine your heart during this time. The battle is for your mind. The only way you can be kept from being free is to listen to the evil one. If at any time you sense him attacking you, let your friend know so they can pray with you.

### **Step 1: Work through your hurt by forgiving others.**

We need to forgive others so Satan cannot take advantage of us (2 Corinthians 2:10,11). Acknowledge the hurt and the hate. Let God bring the pain to the surface so He can deal with it. This is where healing and freedom take place.

Get a pad of paper and a pen. Ask the Spirit to bring people and/or incidents to your mind, write down their names and offenses. If you can't remember specific names, ask Him to bring back the memory of what happened to you. The more specific you are, the more effective this step will be. Once you're done writing, one by one forgive each person and/or memory on your list aloud: “Lord, I forgive (name) for (specifically identify all offenses and painful memories).”

If more names come up, write them down and deal with them. When you're finished, burn or shred that piece of paper. You have forgiven them. You will no longer hold what they did to you against them. You are free, so let it go!

If the memories come back, put up your shield of faith. Rebuke Satan in Jesus' name and tell yourself that you forgave the person for the hurt. Don't give the memories any more “head time.” Then get back to what you were doing before the memory interrupted you. If new memories or if you are hurt again, repeat this step.

### **Step 2: Cutting loose your past by asking forgiveness.**

In some circles this is called “making amends.” We are human and hurt others. We can help them become more like Jesus by asking forgiveness from those we've hurt. This step also teaches us to be sensitive to how we treat others. If we hurt others we can quickly correct the situation through asking their forgiveness.

Get a pad of paper and a pen. Ask the Spirit to bring to mind the names of those you've hurt and what you did to them. Be specific. Then ask Jesus how He wants you to approach those on your list. Telephone calls are best, face to face is next. Never email or write a letter to the person you've hurt, unless the person is dead.

As the Spirit gives you opportunity, by faith ask each person on your list to forgive you. Don't just say you're sorry! Give just enough detail so the person you're asking forgiveness from knows that you know what you did. Then ask them to forgive you for whatever you did to them.

If they say no, hold on to the truth of Romans 12:18. We are to do all we can to be at peace with others. If they are not ready to forgive you now, don't beat yourself up! Be ready to ask again when the

## **FORGIVENESS**



Spirit gives you the opportunity. If you can't find those on your list, be ready to ask them the Spirit brings them across your path.

### **Step 3: Repent of occult or false religious practices.**

Go after the obvious first. Cut the ties from all your previous or current involvement with satanically inspired occults or false religions.

**Pray:** "Dear Father, I ask you to reveal to my mind all the cult or occultic practices, false religions, and false teachers with which I have knowingly or unknowingly been involved."

As He brings items to your mind, write them down. If you need help recognizing what items you need to be released from, get a list from your Gathering shepherd, or the church office. Then when no more items are brought to mind, confess and renounce them one by one praying, "Lord, I confess that I have participated in \_\_\_\_ (specific item) \_\_\_\_\_. I ask your forgiveness, and I renounce \_\_\_\_ (specific item) \_\_\_\_\_. Thank You that in Christ I am forgiven."

Once you have covered every item on that list, shred or burn it. It's done.



### **Step 4: Renounce the stuff your ancestors did.**

Satan's attacks can come through what our ancestors have done (Exodus 20:4,5). When you tear down a satanic stronghold, which has been established in your family, you may have some resistance. In order to walk free from past influences pray the following prayer.

**Pray:** "Dear heavenly Father, I come to You as Your child purchased by Jesus. I have now rejected and disowned all the sins of my ancestors. As one who has been delivered from the power of darkness and placed into Your family, I cancel out all demonic workings that have been passed on to me from my ancestors. As one who has been crucified, raised with Christ and who sits in His lap, I reject any and every way in which Satan may claim ownership of me. I declare myself to be eternally and completely signed over and committed to the Lord Jesus Christ. I now command every familiar spirit and every enemy of the Lord Jesus that is in or around me to go to the pit and to remain there until the Day of Judgment. I now ask You, Father, to take control of my life through the Holy Spirit. I submit my body as an instrument to be used by You, as a living sacrifice, that I may glorify You in my body. All this I do in the name of Jesus, Amen."

**Aftercare:** Stand firm in your freedom by getting into a Bible Impact Group, which we'll talk about later! You can thank Dr. Neil Anderson in his book, *Victory of the Darkness*, for Steps 3 & 4.



#### **Key Concepts:**

1. Jesus is totally approachable. He is ready and willing to forgive any and all sin.
2. Because of what Jesus did, you can work through and let go of your past to walk in peace today.
3. When we ask, God's Spirit will bring back to our memories incidents in the past that need to be dealt with through forgiveness so we and others can be free today.
4. As a child of God, you can keep Satan out of your life through a humble surrender to Jesus.

What is Jesus asking you to do?

Who is praying with and for you to see it happen?

**It's for  
FREEDOM  
that  
CHRIST  
has  
SET YOU FREE!**



## Divine Truth

### Chapter 3



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### Love Him More Every Day

Now that your past is taken care of, enjoy the present! Stay free. How? By becoming more like Jesus every day. Remember that you are a child of God no matter what you do or don't do. You can now become a healthy believer by listening to Jesus and then stepping out (faith) to do what He says every-day everywhere.

#### Talk with Jesus all the time

Now the natural question comes, what does Jesus want you to do? He simply wants you to love Him. He wants you to hang out with Him everywhere you go. He wants a deep and satisfying relationship with each of us. And in order to build this type of relationship with anyone, you've got to be around and talk with them. With God, the start of this process is called prayer.



Jesus wants you to talk with Him about anything and everything. There is nothing too small to talk over with Him. He loves you that much. He is ready and expectantly waiting to hear from you. The smart phone shut off. The TV is off. The paper is down. He is totally focused on you. So talk. You have His full attention 24 hours a day.

As you talk with Jesus, you not only make Him happy (Proverbs 15:8), but it gives you joy as well (John. 16:24). When you see God change your life because you asked Him to, it strengthens your faith. "Hey, God works! If He helped me overcome this challenge, maybe He can handle other areas in my life as well."

#### How to pray

So how do you pray? In Matthew 6:9-13, Jesus told us to focus on the Father. Simply start off by addressing Him: "Dear Father, my Father, or Lord," (whatever He leads you to say). Then share your heart with Him. Let Him know what's going on in your life. Share your secrets, your hurts, your victories, your needs, your desires, etc. Bottom line, share your life with Him! He is your Daddy and wants to hear about everything that is going on in your life. And when you're done praying, simply recognize that Jesus is the one who made it possible to have this new relationship. You can say anything you want, but here is a simple closing statement: "In Jesus' name, Amen."

When talking with God, keep a few things in mind. One, He is not the candy store. "I want this. I want that." He is more than your new Father. He is God who desires your worship. Therefore, spend some time thanking Him for Who He is (character qualities – love, strong, giving, merciful – that mean something special to you), for what He's done for you, and for what He can do for you. God knows that when we remember what He has done for us in the past, we are more apt to believe He will come through for us in the present. This is called giving thanks, praise and adoring Him.



Two, prayer is one of your weapons against your enemy (Ephesians 6:18). What areas of your life do you want God to change? Pray for victory. What lies are you holding onto in your heart and head? Ask God to show you. What truths from the Bible do you need to replace those lies? Ask Jesus to show



you. Where do you see that your enemy wanting to attack? Pray for God to show you to stay clear of it.

Three, prayer is one of the main ways to build a relationship with Jesus. “Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture. Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:3,4)

### **Building better relationships**

Relationships are built upon trust and trust is built upon getting to know someone. The more you know someone, the more you’re capable of trusting them. When you talk with God, ask Him to help you know Him better. Then as you know Him better, you can trust Him more (“Trust in the Lord,” “delight yourself in the Lord”) that He will reward you for following Him (“give you the desires of your heart”), which again helps you become a healthier believer who loves Jesus.

Therefore, ask the Spirit to deepen your love for Jesus and make you more like Him everyday. As this trust relationship grows, you will begin to see life through His eyes. You will know more and more what He wants done in a particular situation. As you enjoy being in His presence, you will begin to feel comfortable enough to “deposit” life at His feet. And the more you talk with Jesus the deeper your relationship with Him will grow and you will begin to see prayer as the first action step for every situation you face.

Here is a quick way to remember all this: **FACTS**. Direct your prayer toward the **F**ather. **A**dore Him by thanking Him for Who He is and what He has done for you. **C**onfess your sins to Him. He knows all your sins anyway, so get them off your chest. Confession not only brings forgiveness, but healing to your body as well – Psalm 32:1-5. **T**alk with Him about life. **S**pecifically ask God for not only your needs, but also for the needs of others.

### **Listen to Jesus**

Now that we have talked to Jesus, it’s time to *listen* to Jesus. Every relationship demands two-way conversation to help it grow. Jesus can speak to you while you are praying. Thus, you should make time to sit silently and let Him speak. Often when answers do not come right away, we want to go ahead and do something about it. But Jesus will answer **if** we are willing to patiently listen to Him (Matthew 7:7,8). Don’t stop asking or listening until you get an answer! How badly do you want it? How close to Jesus do you want to get? Keep praying. Keep talking with Jesus. Keep waiting for Him to speak.



He will not only speak to you in prayer, but He will also speak to you through His Word. In fact, it is the main way to hear God speak. The Bible is not only your Father’s “love letter” to you, it is also His instruction manual on how to live each day to the fullest. As God speaks to you through the Word, you will come to love and trust Him more and to understand what Jesus is asking you to do each day. When you have a vital personal intake of the Bible, your love for Jesus will deepen greatly.

Guess what? You can trust Bible. It’s the most remarkable book ever written. Forty men from several countries, a variety of backgrounds and occupations, and speaking three different languages wrote the Bible over a period of approximately 1500 years. Yet the Bible is a well-organized unit with one great theme and central figure – Jesus Christ. All of this would be impossible unless the Bible had one supreme Author, which it did – the Holy Spirit of God.



The Bible contains 66 books divided into two parts, the Tanakh (some call it the Old Testament) and New Testament. The over-all theme is to show us how to live both now and forever in a loving relationship with God and each other through Jesus Christ. The Tanakh contains 39 books, which show us where mankind came from, the mess he made and God’s plan to clean it up, Jesus. The New Testament contains 27 books, which reveal how Jesus brought us into a loving relationship with the Father, how He

will help us live today and how someday He will come back to get us to live with Him forever.

Don't be afraid of all this! God wrote the Bible so He could talk with you. Come with the expectation that He will speak to you through it. As you begin to read, simply ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand what your Father wants you to know. Paul wrote, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better." (Ephesians 1:17)

Listen to the Spirit as you read. It's His job to guide you to the truth (John 16:13). This is one of the most crucial steps you can take as a brand new child of God. Start reading the Bible asking God to speak to you through it. You can pick up a Bible reading program at any Service at the Information Table, download from my website ([www.morethanasundayfaith.com](http://www.morethanasundayfaith.com)) or your smart phone and join and/or start a Bible Impact Group (see Appendix B: *Starting A Bible Impact Group*). The important thing, though, is to take time every day to read and ask Jesus to speak to you. For now, don't worry about the details. They will come in time as you participate in a Gathering, come to the Services, and take classes at the ***New Hope Training Center***. Come with the attitude that you want to fall deeper in love with Jesus, to consistently be in His presence and to develop a closer relationship with Him.

The way to do this is to put the Word of God into practice. You can either know about God or you can know God. It's your choice. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will obey Me" (John 14:23). So, when the Spirit speaks to you through the Word or prayer, ask Him to coach you as you practice it. Again, will you make mistakes? Yeah. So? Even though God wants us to be perfect (1 Peter 1:15,16), He knows that we're a journey to become like Jesus, which means we'll fall and fail Him at times. Yet, it is through His grace (i.e. the room to grow on that journey without fear of Him getting mad at us) that He will forgive us (1 John 2:1) and give us a hand up to start walking with Him again.

As you walk on your journey and make mistakes, what do you do? Just like you do in any other strained relationship, you acknowledge that you messed up (confession) and ask His forgiveness (1 John 1:9). He will of course. Then you're back walking on your journey again with God!



### **Key Concepts:**

1. You can talk with Jesus anytime about any and every thing.
2. Jesus wants to speak to you, so listen up!
3. Start reading the Bible to begin to learn how to listen to Jesus and then ask the Spirit to give you the strength to practice what you heard.

What is Jesus asking you to do?

Who is praying with and for you to see it happen?

## Nourishing Relationships

### Chapter 4



## BE A PARTICIPANT IN SHARING JESUS' LOVE WITHIN THE FAMILY

As you read His Word and listen to Jesus in prayer, you should be discovering what He wants you to do. Hopefully you're also discovering that what He wants you to do involves other people, your new family at ***New Hope***. He wants to use you to help those in your new family to become healthy believers who love Jesus.

### You are part of a new family – His

When you became a child of God, the Spirit put you into a new family (1 Corinthians 12:12,13). This family was designed by your Father to help you develop a deeper love for Jesus, and to share that love with others.

One of the things you must understand about this family is that your Father is more concerned with who you are becoming rather than what you're doing for Him (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Galatians 5:23,24). So don't compare yourself with others in the family. Each person will walk on their journey at different rates. Let your Father work in you and in them as He wishes on His timetable.



Another thing you must understand about this family is that God will use other family members, to help you become a healthy believer who loves Jesus (Hebrews 10:24,25). He will use your new family as a chisel in His hands to shape your character to be more like Jesus (Ephesians 4:11-13). Yet, these people are just like you, imperfect people being shaped by God themselves. What do imperfect people do? They hurt each other, sometimes knowingly, but mostly unknowingly. We all come to Jesus with different backgrounds, problems and challenges, which can make for a wonderful mix in the family of believers who love Jesus, the church. Yet we are all on the same journey together.

### How to relate to other family members

And since we are all on the same journey together, God knew we would need room to grow as we made mistakes, as we hurt each other, and as we help each other grow. So, He has shown us many different ways how to relate to each other while on our journey to develop a deeper love for Him.

We are to be *devoted* to each other (Romans 12:10), which means we are to make the commitment to never leave the church family even when something negative happens. Everyone grows at different rates, so we should be committed to each other's health as believers. This leads to *accepting* each other (Romans 15:7), though not liking all that they do, while loving them towards being more like Jesus. We all have strengths and weaknesses, good qualities as well as quirks, but we still support and encourage each other anyway.



As you accept them, you will need to *put up* with them (Colossians 3:13), give them room to change, while *forgiving* when they hurt you (Colossians 3:13), which we talked about earlier. This does not mean you keep your mouth shut when they hurt you or when you see them doing something that is not pleasing to Jesus. The Father also wants us to *correct* one another (Romans 15:14). We are to

take the tough path by taking the risk of being rejected through letting them how they got off the path. However, when we do this, it should be done in a loving way that will help them get back together with and become closer to Jesus (Ephesians 4:15,16). This is called *serving* them (Galatians 5:13). Our Father doesn't want us to correct them and then leave. Instead we are to do whatever we can to help each other become healthy in Christ by correcting and deciding to stick around.

To this end, God has given us the glue that will hold it all together, *love*, which guides everything we do (1 Corinthians 13; Colossians 3:12-14). And what's another word for love? *Commitment*. It's a commitment to hang in there with each other no matter what happens. Love does not head out the back door when trouble enters through the front. Love says, "I am committed to you and to you becoming like Jesus forever, no matter what." We all need this kind of love. So let's give it to each other.

And a good place to practice all this is at a *Gathering*. A *Gathering* is a small group of people who share their struggles and hopes, and encourage each other to keep progressing on their journey to be like Jesus (James 5:16). It's about creating an atmosphere where people can be real with each other by being able to ask hard and/or heart wrenching questions without fear of rejection or being judged. It's also the place where you will be given the tools to get closer to Jesus, especially to practice using your spiritual gifts.



### **You have been given new abilities**

But you might be saying, "I can't do that!" Yes, you can. The Spirit of God lives inside you and has given you specific abilities to help others love Jesus more. These abilities are called spiritual gifts. (Appendix D: *Spiritual Gifts Definitions*). The Bible lists quite a few of these gifts from teaching to encouragement, from sharing about Jesus to helping out in the family

The Bible says you have at least one specific God-given ability (1 Corinthians 12:7,11) to help others in the family develop a healthier faith in Jesus. By listening to Jesus and doing what He tells you, you will use that gift. Don't worry about what gift you have, just be obedient to what Jesus tells you to do. Guess what? By doing so, not only will you be blessed by your Father, but the one you helped will be blessed too! So go for it. Get involved in a *Gathering* and allow God to use you to develop the Lord's character in another brother or sister. As you begin to reach out to those in the family with God's love, you will discover your gifts.

### **How to get started serving in your new family**

Your new Father not only gave you a spiritual gift at your spiritual birth, but He created you at your physical birth with certain abilities. Thus, the first step in learning where God wants you to serve others is to ask yourself a number of questions. What do you enjoy doing? What hobbies or activities do you feel good doing that could be used to serve Jesus? What have others said that you are good at and are encouraged when you do it? When you find yourself getting passionate about something, what is it?

Whatever you are good at and enjoy doing, can now and should be done for Jesus within your new family and with those who don't know Jesus. Whether you are an introvert or an extrovert, Jesus has a place for you and people for you to touch with His love. Whether you are a person who moves through life with their head or their heart, the Spirit can use you to touch lives for Jesus. Who you are: your personality, your abilities, your spiritual gifts will affect where you serve, not if you serve.

And the best way to find a ministry that fits you is to start experimenting. Serve! Try something out. If it doesn't fit, try something else. At *New Hope*, we never try to put a round peg into a square whole. It's my desire that you listen to and





follow Jesus everyday everywhere, which means you worship Him by helping others become the healthy believer God desires us all to be.

Therefore, keep trying different options until you find one that fits. You are a failure only if you stop trying, not from searching for your place of service, which sometimes means finding out what you are not good at. Thomas Edison didn't fail hundreds of times his light bulb didn't work. He simply discovered a lot of ways that didn't work.

### **Have a servant's heart**

When it comes to finding the right place for you, ask yourself, "What would I do whether anyone ever patted me on the back for doing it?" When we put our faith in Jesus, we asked Him to be Lord of our lives. This means that we have a Master who tells us what to do, not the other way around. Loving Jesus through serving His family of believers, means giving up the control of our time, talents and treasures and allowing Jesus to use all three anyway He desires at any given time.

### **Use your time for Jesus**

Jesus has given you other valuable asset besides spiritual gifts and talents. He has given you time. Simply by making the time to be around other believers unbelievers and being willing to be used by your Father, you can help another person's faith grow.

Your primary service should be in your area of enjoyment, but there will be times because of need that you may be asked to serve outside your giftedness for a season for the sake of the over-all health of the family of believers at ***New Hope***. When Jesus asks you to serve outside your giftedness it's for a reason and He will give you the strength to do it. Will you trust Him and serve? A healthy believer should.

If you're faced with trash in the House – will you pick it up or wait for someone else to do it? A healthy family member would pick it up and throw it away. Though this is not your primary area of service, a need presented itself, you had the opportunity and time to do something about it, so you did it.

When the Spirit puts a need in front of you and the ability to do something about it, He is giving you the chance to grow in servanthood. Surrender to your Master and serve.

A wonderful Christian servant said, "Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."

### **Using your treasures for Jesus**

Jesus has given you another asset that can be used to help those around you grow, treasures or money. Now for some, money is a sensitive issue. But understand something from the beginning, I'm not after your money. It's my goal for you to become a healthy believer who loves Jesus by listening to and following Him everyday everywhere.



How is this done? By allowing Jesus to change your life. As He changes your life, you'll trust in Him more and your love will grow. One area that He wants you to trust Him is with your finances. Do realize that Jesus spoke more often about money than He did about heaven, hell, immorality, or violence. Why? Because He knew our hearts would be focused on whatever was most important to us. Do you trust Him? Act on His principles. Do you love Him? Obey His commands. What are those principles? What are those commands?

**Principle one:** you belong to God (Psalm 24:1). In fact, your very breath is held in His hands (Acts

17:28,29). God could take you home at this very moment and you would cease to earn or own anything else! So as children of God, we're committed to money management not ownership. When you placed your faith in Jesus, you gave Him control of your life. And this is part of what it means to be Lord – letting Him control the finances He has given you.

**Principle two:** you should have a plan to give back to God (2 Corinthians 9:7). In other words, put it in your budget. When you plan to give back to Jesus you show: 1) who your Lord really is (Matthew 6:24); 2) your gratitude for what He has done for you (2 Corinthians 8:9); and, 3) your faith in Him to provide for the future (Malachi 3:10). So plan (i.e. budget) to give back to God. Proverbs 21:5 states, "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."

**Principle three:** as you give back to the Father, He will reward you. Remember when we talked about faith earlier? God will reward you for stepping out on faith. In fact, the Father promises to meet all your needs (2 Corinthians 9:9). He basically says, "You give and I will give." It's that simple. Do you love Him enough, which means you trust Him, to give?

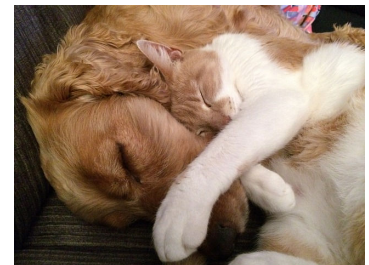
**Principle four:** How much should you give? The real question is, "How much do I love and trust Jesus?" In order to become a healthy believer we must ask is my faith in Jesus and His Word increasing? The amount or percentage of what you should give is all a matter of faith in Jesus and His Word (Romans 12:3). The level of your trust will determine the amount you give.

However, a good guideline to follow is this: strive to give 10% (Genesis 14:20) of your income as a minimum and then go beyond. Build your faith. Test the Lord. Jump in and give 10% now. But if your faith needs building, take baby steps. Start with say, 3%, then raise it each month. See what God does.

You are capable of sharing Jesus' love with others in the family and those who don't know Jesus yet. You can do it by using your talents (spiritual gifts), your time and your treasures (money). Step out on faith and see God reward you!

### **You can set others free**

There is one more way you can help others in this family grow – forgiveness. As you read earlier, anger, hurt feelings, bitterness can destroy any relationship, even between believers in Jesus. As we are on this journey of loving Jesus together, we can and will hurt each other. So what do you do if you get off the path or take a detour on your journey? Bottom line, what if we sin? Ask for forgiveness. Forgiveness is the healing agent that helps you stay tight with others in the family. Forgiveness gets you back on the path to loving your God more.



Remember our talk about forgiveness in Chapter 2? Now is the time to apply it in your every day life, not just with your past. Don't let a day go by where you have not asked God where you have hurt him. Let Him show you. As He does, simply ask His forgiveness. You know He will! This keeps you close to and on the path towards becoming a healthy believer.

What happens when you sense the Spirit telling you that you have hurt someone else? Go ask for their forgiveness! Admit that what you did was wrong and ask them to forgive you. Don't make excuses or say you are sorry. That only makes you feel better. Ask them to forgive you and wait for their response. If they forgive you, tell them thanks. If they don't, step back and let God work. He has only asked us to do what we can (Romans 12:18).

No matter how many times, keep on practicing forgiveness. Why? One, we are all on the same journey where mistakes can happen. Two, and most importantly, Paul says we are to forgive as God forgave us. How much have we hurt God? A little, a lot, huge amounts? I stopped counting a long time ago? You get the point.



Let me repeat. Keep short lists. When you hurt God (i.e. sinning) or others take care of the problem as soon as possible! Once you get forgiveness, reassure your friend of your commitment to staying their friend.



### **Key Concepts:**

1. You are part of a family designed to help each other develop into healthy believers. So hang out with that family at Service, Gathering and/or in a Bible Impact Group.
2. You have talents and interests the Spirit can use to help others become healthy believers and help others come to faith in Jesus. Start using them.
3. You have been given time and treasures that can also be used to show your love for Jesus.
4. Do whatever you enjoy doing for Jesus with excellence.
5. You can keep the love flowing in your new family through forgiveness.

What is Jesus asking you to do?

Who is praying with and for you to see it happen?



**You are part of a family of believers  
who love Jesus  
that helps each other  
along their journey towards  
being like Jesus.**

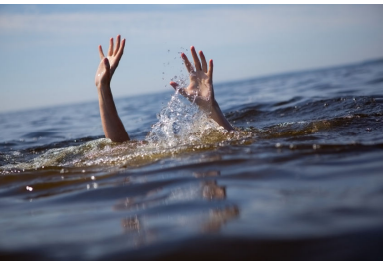


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**BE A PARTICIPANT IN SHARING JESUS’ LOVE  
OUTSIDE THE FAMILY**

Not only does our Father want us to share His love within our new family, He also wants us to do it with those who are not part of His family. I like to call these people prebelievers as they are just one step from believing in Jesus. We share His love with them not only because Jesus told us to do it (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 1:8) and because we love Him (John 14:23); but because prebelievers need Jesus! “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (cf. Acts 4:10 “Jesus Christ of Nazareth”) under heaven given to men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12). People need Jesus’ love. And just like you were, they are only one decision away! We can show them where to get it.

The natural question that arises is, how do you share with those who don’t know anything about Jesus? First, you must be around prebelievers. Just because you are a child of God and belong to a new family, don’t throw out all your old friends! You can be the light they need to see Jesus. Furthermore, keep doing the things you like to do from last chapter, just keep doing them around and with those who don’t know Jesus...yet!



Beyond this, as you go to the supermarket, mow your lawn, head to the hardware store, get gas, sit in school or just about everywhere you go on your daily travels, the Spirit can bring people across your path with whom you can share what Jesus has done for you (Matthew 28:18-20). Yes, we all have to-do lists that we want to get done each day. Is this list more important than the people around you living without the hope that you now have? By slowing down your daily routine just a little, the Spirit can use you to give others hope.

Then as you are around people, watch them. Is there someone around you crying? Do they need a helping hand with their grocery bags? Listen to them. Where do they hurt? Where do they struggle? Where are their needs?

As you feel God’s Spirit lead you, share with them how Jesus helped you in a similar situation. This is called being a witness. A witness shares what they have experienced Jesus do in their own life. You can share how your new Father has helped you through your struggles, fears and challenges. More than likely, these struggles are the same ones those around you are facing.

If they ask why you became a Christian, you can use the following simple format to share your Jesus story. First, describe what your life was like before Jesus or your current challenge. Give only enough details for them to understand the change Jesus has made in you.

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Second, describe how you met Jesus or went to Him for the answer to your challenge. Why did you decide to follow Jesus? What things happened in your life that caused you to discover Jesus and commit

your life to Him? If someone was instrumental in your believing in Jesus, mention their name and their relationship to you):

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Lastly, describe what Jesus did for you. What have the benefits of knowing Jesus been? What changes have taken place in your life?

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It's that simple! A good exercise would be to write it out. Don't worry about the grammar or spelling. You're the only one who will see it. The process of writing it out will help you think through what Jesus has done for you. You can then use this information to help you learn how to share it.

Another way to think about your story is this: What have been the major life lessons that you've learned since coming to believe in Jesus? What has Jesus taught you from failure? Have you ever had an addiction that the Lord delivered you from? Other people have these same challenges. If you are listening when they start talking, you can share how Jesus changed your life (1 Peter 3:15) without being too pushy. The natural door opened and you simply walked through it.



Until those natural doors open, be praying for those around you (neighbors, relatives, friends, co-workers, and acquaintances) that the Spirit would open doors for you to be around them and to share what Jesus has done for you with them. Pray for the Spirit of God to do His job in this person's life (John 16:8-13). It's His job to make them children of God. Your only job is to share what Jesus has done for you.

You can also share Jesus' love through inviting them to be around other believers in Jesus. You can invite them to any one of our Services where they will hear about Jesus in ways they can understand; and to **New Hope** hosted events where they can see that believers can have a good time too. They could also visit your *Gathering* where they'll see real healthy believers falling deeper in love with Jesus.

Lastly, you can also love on prebelievers by praying for the missionaries that we support. Jesus said to be His witness around the globe (Acts 1:8). At the times you can't be around the globe, you can pray for our brothers and sisters in Jesus who are. You can get a list of those that **New Hope** supports from your *Gathering* Shepherd or a staff person. You don't have to limit yourself to just praying either! There will be opportunities for you to leave home to share about Jesus as well. Be ready to go when the Spirit calls!

### **Sharing how to know Jesus**

Now what if the person with whom you are sharing says, "How do I become a Christian, a believer in Jesus? Can you help me?" You certainly can! Practice and share the two-verse method given in Appendix E: *Lead Someone to Jesus*.

As God leads you to share with prebelievers, keep in mind the following:

1. Don't be concerned about changing their lifestyle. You **are** concerned about putting them into a relationship with Jesus, who then will change their lifestyle. The basic need of prebelievers is eternal life (Luke 10:20), not temporal help or peace.
2. You don't have to know everything. A witness is someone who shares what they have experienced and know to be true. You are witness of what God has done in your life (Acts 5:29-32).
3. You can't "argue" anyone into the family of God. Salvation is a moral issue, not an intellectual issue. The reason a doctor will not put their faith in Jesus is the same reason your gas station attendant may not. They just don't want to! So avoid arguing. Here are some possible replies you can use to avoid confrontation: "I'm glad you asked that." "That's a good question, and I think you'll understand it as we progress in our discussion." "I'm glad you asked that, and I can see where that would hinder your understanding of what I'm talking about." "I really identify with what you are saying, and I appreciate how you feel because I struggled with that same issue. I finally resolved it by..."
4. Don't feel like you have to be sharing your faith 24 hours a day to be a healthy believer either. Don't use the "shotgun approach" – spray everyone with what you know. Wait upon the Lord. Let Him open the doors for you to share with those around you. Relax and have fun! When He leads you to say something, do it.



### **Key Concepts:**

1. You have something, hope, and know someone, Jesus, that those around you need to know about.
2. Slow down and notice those around you. Be open for opportunities to share what you have and about who you know.
3. Be ready to share it when the Spirit gives you an opportunity to share.
4. Go for it when the Spirit opens the door!

What is Jesus asking you to do?

Who is praying with and for you to see it happen?



**You have a  
Jesus Story  
to tell, so  
be ready to tell it!**

# Accomplish Jesus' Mission

## Chapter 6



### FOLLOW THE SPIRIT'S LEADING

#### You have help for the journey

Throughout this booklet, you have read: as the Spirit leads, when the Spirit talks, listen to the Spirit, when He leads, etc. What does all this mean? While Jesus was still on earth, He told His followers that He had to leave so He could send the Holy Spirit who would help us on our journey (John 16:5-15).

The more we grow as believers in Jesus, the more we will learn who the Holy Spirit is. But for now, here are a few things you should know about Him. One, He is God (John 14:17) and is fully capable of helping you love Jesus and your Father more (Romans 5:5; John 16:8). Two, it's His job to teach you how to pray (Romans 8:26) and to understand and know the truth (John 16:15), which will help you grow on your journey to knowing Jesus. Three, it's His job to search your heart for stuff that needs to be changed as well as to reveal the things of God to you (1 Corinthians 2:10-12). Four, since it's His responsibility to help you on your journey to become like Jesus, you must listen to Him and let Him reveal Jesus to you and what Jesus wants to you to do (Revelations 2,3; Ephesians 1:17). Lastly, you must allow Him to lead and control you (Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18) so that you become a healthy believer.



As you allow Him to do these things in your life, He will encourage and strengthen you (Acts 9:31). As you give Him control of your life, you can filter life through Him and truly understand what is and what is not from Jesus (2 Corinthians 2:14-15). As you follow Him, you will gain insights into life you could not get on your own (1 John 2:20). As you learn to listen to Him, you will know what to say to those, in your Bible Impact Group, your *Gathering*, on your job, and to those you come into contact with every-day to help them either come to faith in Jesus or to love Him more.

The bottom line is that you have God living inside you in order to help you on our journey. As you learn how to follow the Spirit's leading in your life, you will develop a deeper love for Jesus. As He does this, He will use you to share that love with others – both in the family and who are yet to be in the family.

#### Start following Him!

A lot more could be said, but let's just get together with other children of God in a Gathering or a BIG and keep walking on that journey together towards becoming healthy believers who increase their faith in Jesus and His Word, who grow in their love towards Jesus and His people; and, who deepen their hope through worshipping Jesus and being a witness for Him.



#### Key Concept:

1. You have a Helper, the Holy Spirit, living inside you to help you grow closer to Jesus and the Father. Surrender to Him and listen!

What is the Spirit asking you to do?

Who is praying with and for you to see it happen?



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**Appendix A: Your New Identity**

**Appendix B: Starting a Bible Impact Group**

**Appendix C: Spiritual Gifts**

**Appendix D: Leading Someone to Jesus**



## Appendix A: Your New Identity

**I belong, I am loved, and I am accepted:**

John 15:15 –  
1 Corinthians 6:17 –  
1 Corinthians 6:19,20 –  
Ephesians 1:1 –  
Ephesians 1:5 –  
Ephesians 2:18 –  
Colossians 1:14 –  
Colossians 2:10 –

**I am significant:**

John 15:16 –  
Acts 1:8 –  
2 Corinthians 5:17f –  
Ephesians 2:6 –  
Ephesians 2:10 –  
Ephesians 3:12 –  
Philippians 4:13 –

**I am safe and secure:**

Romans 8:1-2 –  
Romans 8:28 –  
Romans 8:35f –  
2 Corinthians 1:21,22 –  
Colossians 3:3 –  
Philippians 1:6 –  
1 John 5:18 –

**Your Identity in Christ:**

**Truth:**

Don't waste time *discovering* who you are; instead *act* upon who your Father tells you who you are. Your identity is not based upon what you do, but upon what *Jesus* did for you.

You *are* a saint with a sin challenge.

You've been given a new mind – Christ's, so you can *think* correctly.

You've been given a new nature – Christ's, so you can *act* correctly.

The question is, "Will you *choose* to exercise the truth in your everyday situations?"

## Appendix B: Starting a Bible Impact Group

Hopefully, throughout this booklet you've discovered that every child of God needs to develop a closer relationship with and become more like Jesus. You have also seen that He wants to use you and other believers in this process. You can accomplish both by starting a Bible Impact Group (BIG). This can be done with someone who either has been a believer for years or for only a few days.

A BIG is just like it sounds – letting the Bible impact your life. You simply meet on a weekly basis for about an hour discussing how each other's relationship with Jesus is going.

The goal of BIG is to help each believer process daily life using the Word of God so they can listen to and follow Jesus everyday everywhere. As they do: lasting life change is experienced; joy, peace and love are tasted; and, purpose for real living today is gained.

BIGs allow the Spirit of God through the Word of God and the people of God to change a believer's life from the inside out, and to allow every believer to make disciples/healthy believers.

There was a BIG card included in this booklet, but in case it got lost, pick up a BIG card at the Information Table or download one at [morethanasundayfaith.com](http://morethanasundayfaith.com).

### Here is a simple checklist to follow:

1. Make sure everyone in your group has a Bible. If anyone doesn't, they can pick one up from the Information Table in the House. They are provided free of charge.
2. Read the BIG card and know how to use it. Talk with a Gathering Shepherd if you have any questions.
3. Ask the Spirit with whom He wants you to start a BIG. Give the person He puts on your heart a BIG card. Set a time to get together and start meeting!
4. No one is the leader as every one can ask the questions from the Card.
5. Invite those in your BIG to come to your Gathering and the Worship Service.

### Bible Impact Card



## Appendix C: Spiritual Gifts Definitions

**Apostle:** to use whatever spiritual gifts you may have in a cross-cultural situation to start and establish more local churches (Ephesians 4:11).

**Prophecy:** to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to His people and unbelievers that brings about edification and conviction about a present or future situation (Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:10; 14:1-40; Ephesians 4:11).

**Evangelist:** to draw closer to prebelievers in Jesus and effectively communicate God's message of love to them so that they place their faith in Jesus (Ephesians 4:11).

**Pastor:** to assume the shepherding responsibility for the spiritual care of a group of believers (Ephesians 4:11).

**Teacher:** to make God's truth relevant to people in such a way that they learn, grow and mature in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:28; Romans 12:7).

**Message of Wisdom:** to receive insight from the Holy Spirit into how to apply God's truth to a specific situation (1 Corinthians 12:8).

**Message of knowledge:** to receive from the Holy Spirit understanding about things that could not be known from any other source (1 Corinthians 12:8).

**Faith:** to discern what the will of God is for the future and trust in Him during difficult circumstances (1 Corinthians 12:8).

**Healing:** to be used of God to cause a complete and instantaneous physical healing by direct command or touch (1 Corinthians 12:9).

**Miracles:** to perform supernatural acts, which clearly demonstrate God's power as being greater than that of Satan (1 Corinthians 12:10).

**Discerning spirit:** to discern with assurance whether certain behavior purportedly to be of God is in reality divine, human or satanic (1 Corinthians 12:10).

**Tongues:** to speak foreign languages without any previous knowledge of that language (1 Corinthians 12:10).

**Interpretation of Tongues:** to translate for the benefit of others the message of one who speaks in tongues without any previous knowledge of that language being spoken (1 Corinthians 12:10).

**Helps:** to perform any task or responsibility with joy, which benefits others and meets practical and material needs (1 Corinthians 12:27).

**Administration:** to understand clearly the goals and to devise and help execute plans for the efficient operation and accomplishment of those goals (Romans 12:6-8).

**Service:** to bring immediate support or help to someone in the performing of a task, in order to allow others to perform other tasks, which they do more effectively (Romans 12:6-8; Ephesians 4:12).

**Encouragement:** to draw near to individuals in time of need to minister and persuade them to take courage in the face of something they must do or assure them to take comfort because of something that has happened (Romans 12:6-8).

**Giving:** to give their material goods and financial resources to the work of the Lord with generosity and cheerfulness (Romans 12:6-8).

**Leadership:** to set goals that will lead others in meaningful endeavors that demonstrate personal care and concern to meet their needs and encourage personal growth (Romans 12:6-8).

**Mercy:** to have immediate compassion for those suffering physically, mentally or emotionally and to translate that compassion into deeds to meet those needs with great joy (Romans 12:6-8).

**Hospitality:** to entertain guests in your home with great joy and effectiveness (1 Peter 4:9).

**Prayer:** to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers to a much greater degree than that of the average Christian.

**Additional gifts:** to bless another Christian, as long as it does not violate Biblical principles, to help them love and worship Jesus more intimately.

With spiritual gifts always remember two things: one) God is more concerned more about who you are than what you do. If using or searching for your gifts is done without love, your search and actions will be in vain (1 Cor. 13). Two, listen and respond to the Spirit. As you do what He says, you will automatically use your gifts. The most important thing is to love and listen to and follow Jesus everyday everywhere.

## Appendix D: Lead Someone to Jesus

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 6:23

“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 10:9,10

No matter where you are, here is a simple way to share your story with others (witnessing). When you find your conversation turns to Jesus or topics related to Him, ask a simple lead in question such as: “If you were to die today and God should ask you, ‘Why should I let you into My heaven?’ What would you say?” If they respond with any answer other than the fact that they believe that Jesus died and rose from the grave for them, ask them if they would like to know the answer. Assure them it will only take ten to fifteen minutes.

If they say yes, pull out a piece of paper and present the following illustration. Make sure each point is clear before you proceed any further. If necessary, go back and explain each point that is not clear.

Open your Bible to Romans 6:23 and ask the person to read the verse aloud to you while you write it at the top of a piece of paper. If you don’t have a Bible with you, simply write the verse at the top of a piece of paper.

### WAGES

Draw a box around the word WAGES in the verse. Then write it midway down the left side of the page and box it there also. Ask them to define wages. (Wages are the reward we receive for what we have done.)

Wages

How would you feel if your boss refused to pay you the wages that were due to you? Deep down, we all know that it is only right that a person gets what they deserve. We earn wages from God for how we have lived our lives.

### SIN

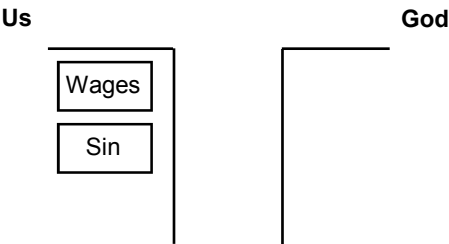
Draw a box around SIN in the verse and then write it below WAGES. Draw a box around it there. What do you think of when you hear the word sin?

Wages

Sin

How would a person have to live in order to get into heaven? Have you always lived a life like you just described? (This should help them see that even by their own definition they fall short of living a good and perfect life.)

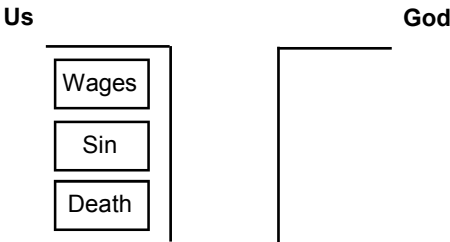
Sin is both an attitude than an action. It can be a hostile or apathetic response to God. At any point in your life, has God seemed far away? When they answer yes, draw in the lines of the cliff on both sides and explain that sin has separated everyone from God.



Imagine that you agreed with your roommate on rules regarding how to use your stereo. What would happen if your roommate ignored the rules and broke your stereo? Would that create a separation or a problem in your relationship? Our sin creates a distance between God and us.

**DEATH**

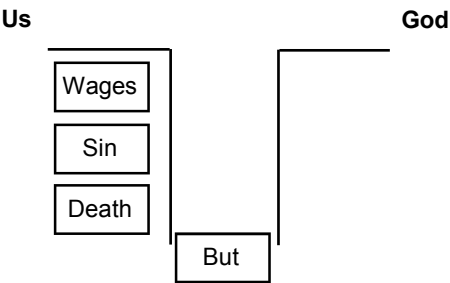
Draw a box around the word DEATH. Write it down on the illustration, and box it there.



What thoughts come to mind when you think of death? Death means separation. When we die our soul is separated from our body. If a person chooses to reject God while they are alive, that separation will extend into eternal separation away from the presence of God forever.

**BUT**

Draw a box around BUT in the verse and write it in a box between the bases of the cliffs.

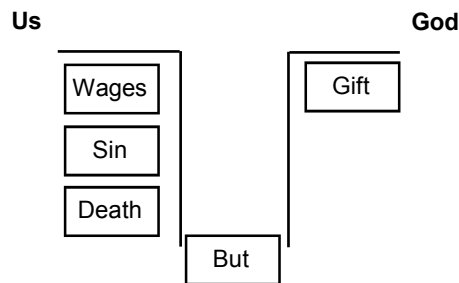




This is the most important word in the verse because it indicates that there is hope for all of us. All we have talked about so far is bad news, but God has good news. What we're going to talk about now is a contrast to what we just discussed.

## **GIFT**

Draw a box around GIFT in the verse. Write it on the right side of the cliff across from WAGES. Box it there.



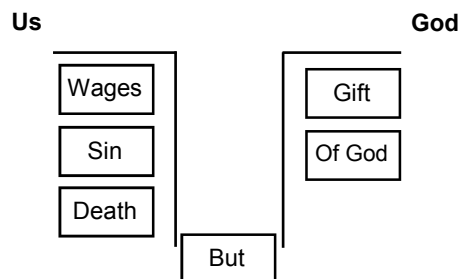
What is the difference between a gift and wages? (From now on, be sure to point back and forth to each side of the cliff to emphasize that the words contrast with each other.)

The person who receives it does not earn a gift, but someone else pays for it. How do you feel towards someone who gives you an expensive gift? Some people try to earn God's favor by doing good deeds, living moral lives, or taking part in religious activities. But it's impossible to earn something that has already been bought.

Say you wanted to buy a special gift for a close friend to show how much that person means to you. How would you feel if the friend refused to accept it without first paying for it?

## **OF GOD**

Draw a box around OF GOD and write it on the right side of the cliff, across from SIN. Box it.

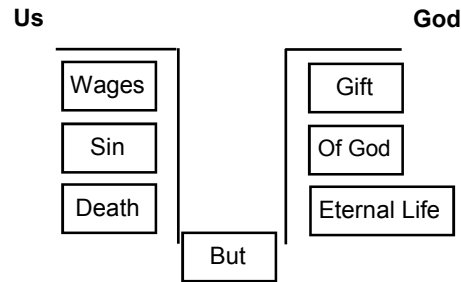


Point to SIN of the left side and then back to GOD on the right and explain that all of us have sinned but God is perfect and has not.

God wants to give you a gift. I can't give it to you; a church can't give it to you; no one can give you this gift but God alone. Why do you think God would want to give you a gift? Why does anyone want to give someone a precious gift?

## ETERNAL LIFE

Draw a box around ETERNAL LIFE and write it on the right side of the cliff with a box around it.



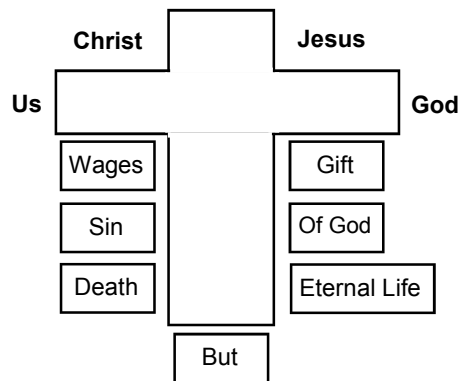
What do you think eternal life is? Point to DEATH on the left side and show that ETERNAL LIFE is the opposite.

Eternal life means a relationship with God. Just as separation from God starts in this life and extends into eternity, eternal life starts now and goes on forever. No sin can end it.

Ask if there is any part that you have explained so far that they do not understand or if they have any questions.

## CHRIST JESUS

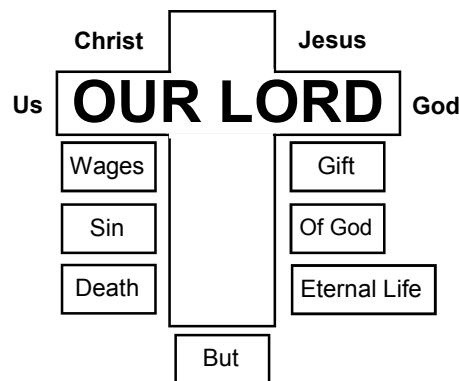
Draw a cross between the cliffs as a bridge. Box the words CHRIST JESUS in the verse. Write CHRIST JESUS across the top of the cross.



Imagine that a police officer writes you a ticket for speeding and you go to court and the judge finds you guilty. But to your surprise, the police officer pays your fine out of their own pocket. In the same way, Jesus paid the fine for you – death. Jesus is the means by which we can obtain eternal life. No one can offer a gift except the one who purchased it. He purchased it by paying for it with His life.

## OUR LORD

Draw a box around the words OUR LORD in the verse. Write them inside the cross on the illustration.



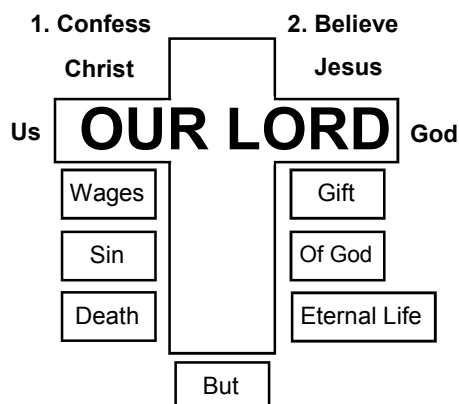
Hold out a pen to the person, and ask them to imagine that someone had bought it for them as a present. As you hand it to them, ask them at what point the pen became theirs (when they accept it). The gift is offered to everyone who makes Jesus Lord. For Jesus to be Lord, He has to have total control of a person's life. He gains that control, or becomes Lord, when a person does two things.

## CONFESS AND BELIEVE

Open your Bible to Romans 10:9. Ask the person to read the verse aloud to you while you write it under Romans 6:23. Again, if you do not have your Bible, simply write the verse down for them.

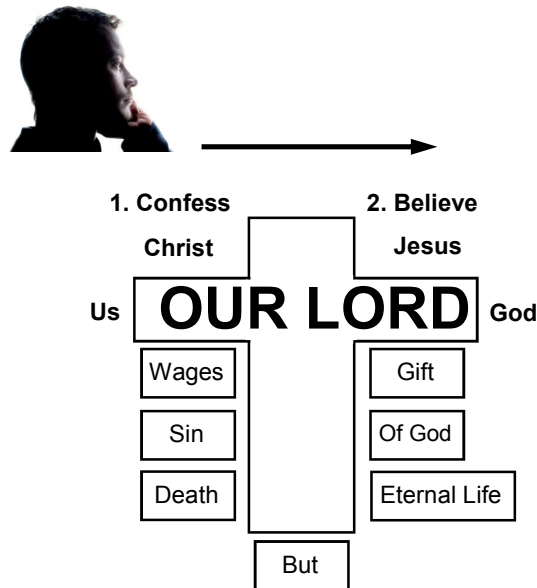
Draw a box around the word CONFESS in the verse. Write CONFESS and the number '1' across the left side of the cliff. Confess means to agree with God that we are not perfect, that there are things in your life that are wrong, and that you want Christ to forgive you as you turn away from your sin.

Draw a box around the word BELIEVE. Write BELIEVE and the number '2' across the right side of the cliff. Believe means to put your faith in what Jesus did for you. Believe that He died and came back from the grave to take care of your sin problem.



Draw a person on the left side of the bridge. As a person confesses and believes, they pass across the bridge. They begin a relationship with God and start to experience a new and eternal life.

**Draw an arrow across the bridge.**



If you were to place yourself on the bridge, where would you be? Are you far off to the left – far away from God – or close to the bridge and eager to learn more about God?

What two things does a person have to do in order to cross over the bridge to gain a relationship with God and have eternal life? (If they do not say confess and believe, go back and explain it until it is clear.)

Is there any reason why you should not confess and believe right now and begin to experience a close relationship with God and eternal life by crossing that bridge?

If they say, “Nothing,” then ask them, “Are you ready to confess and believe in Jesus right now?” If not, without being pushy, ask them why? Let the Holy Spirit guide in what to do from here.

If their answer is, “Yes,” then ask them if they would like to pray to Jesus asking Him to be their Lord and Savior or would they like to repeat after you.

If they wish to repeat after you, you can pray something similar to what you prayed when you crossed the bridge or they can pray something like this, “Father, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to die for my sins and to rise from the dead so that I can know Your forgiveness and cross that bridge to have a relationship with You. Right now I ask Jesus to be my Savior and Lord so that I can have that relationship with You forever. In Jesus name, Amen.”

After they pray this prayer or a prayer of their own, welcome them into the family! Then give them a copy of this booklet and go through it as you start a BIG with them. You are now on the journey of being used by the Spirit to make a healthy believer who reproduces healthy believers.

Naturally, you will want to put the questions and explanations into your own words. You might want to practice with the people in your BIG before you share with a pre-believer.

After you have become familiar with this method, be sure to personalize it. Use your own stories so this presentation becomes a natural part of you. It’s also a good idea to know at least one verse that backs up each step in the illustration in case the hearer needs further explanation.

Be sure to carefully listen as the person answers the questions. Try to understand where they stand in relation to Jesus and adjust your presentation to fit their personality and needs. Be alert to signs of confusion as you explain.

Most important, remember that the power to change lives is not in having an effective, smooth-flowing talk. It's the Spirit of God who opens people's hearts to hear the message of salvation (John 6:63-66). So ask the Spirit to lead you as you share about Jesus. What a privilege we have in being able to co-labor with God Himself in reaching others with His love. Let us sharpen our tools and always be ready to share our story and Jesus' love both simply and clearly.

If the person chooses to put their faith in Jesus, add them to your Bible Impact Group. Give them a Bible from the Information Table at the Service and a BIG Card. As they meet with you, give them a copy of this book or have them download it from [www.hope4youtoday.com](http://www.hope4youtoday.com). They can begin to read it for themselves or you can go over as a group. As you do, you'll loving Jesus by obeying His command to go make disciples!



To get the most from this booklet, it's greatly suggested that you reread it while looking up the verses on your own and letting the Spirit speak to you.

Some of the material contained in this booklet was modified from *Steps to Freedom in Christ* by Neil Anderson and from "One-Verse Evangelism," Randy Raysbrook, *Discipleship Journal*, Issue 34, 1986, pp. 28-32.

Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations are from the *New International Version of the Bible*.

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# Born Again Certificate



This certifies that \_\_\_\_\_ has become this day reborn of the Spirit of God by putting his/her faith in the fact that Jesus died for his/her sins and was buried and raised on the third day according to the Scriptures to become his/her Lord and Savior on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, in the year of our Lord, \_\_\_\_\_, at *New Hope* Community Church, in Canyon Lake, California.

This new birth was witnessed by \_\_\_\_\_.

“You must be born again.’ All who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.” John 3:7; 1:12