

THE 1ST STEP

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CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations! You have just made the most important decision of your life. Believe me, no other decision is as crucial as the one that you have just made for Jesus Christ. This vital decision is going to affect you for all time and eternity.

Now you know your ultimate destiny. That knowledge gives you both a purpose and a direction in life. Your perspective of life is not just confined to this world or to time and space. Through Jesus Christ, you are now connected with the true and living God Who is eternal and infinite.

With eternity perspective in your soul, you do not merely live for this life alone, but also for the next one to come. You do not merely live for this short lifespan on earth, but also for all eternity with God.

Confidently knowing that your eternity is secure motivates you to live a more meaningful life on this earth. Your life can be beautiful.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

Do you know what you have just done when you prayed the sinner's prayer of repentance and reconciliation to God? What you have just done is something spiritual. You have just received the Lord Jesus, Who is the Source of Life, into your heart, spirit and life.

Although you have a visible physical body, your real person is invisible. The real you is your spirit, that's the part of you that never dies. And your spirit has received the Lord Jesus and He has become your life Companion forever. As long as you trust Him in this journey of life, no one can steal your salvation.

Begin to cultivate the art of trusting Christ regardless of feelings or circumstances. No matter how lousy you feel or how adverse the circumstance, Jesus will never leave you or forsake you.

Stay in relationship with Jesus, your Lord and Saviour, and you will never lose your salvation. Your salvation is certain because God is going to keep you by His power. Keep believing and trusting Him. The end will definitely be good.

HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

The Bible tells us that believers are ambassadors of Jesus Christ. We actually represent this greatest Person in the whole universe. This world is not our permanent home, we are just passing through. We are citizens of Heaven.

Each of us has an absolutely freehold mansion up there. Your heavenly, eternal Home is too beautiful for human vocabulary to describe. It is a place totally devoid of pain and sorrow.

The Bible tells us that there is no night in Heaven. It allows no darkness, not even a faint shadow. Everything is bright and in the light. Sin, fear and death never exist there. That's the place you are inheriting, that's the place you are going and that's your destiny because you are trusting in Jesus Christ.

In the meantime, on this earth, you are representing the King of kings and His eternal Kingdom. So do not be too rooted to the things of this world. This is not your home, you are only passing through. Praise God that you have a high destiny! Therefore, live like an ambassador from Heaven.

THE PROBLEM OF EXTREMES

In the Christian walk, there is a tendency towards certain extremes. It is better that you are pre-warned so that you can be pre-armed to avoid the pitfalls.

Some young Christians are totally disinterested in the things of God. They know they are saved but refuse to go deeper as they are so completely engrossed in worldly pursuits. Consequently, they do not grow in faith. They go to church as a form of ritual.

Very soon, they are back to their old ways of living again. As they cut themselves off from the life of God, the power of the devil begins to control these backsliders.

This is a very dangerous tendency of young believers. They pursue temporal things at the expense of eternal things.

On the other hand, other believers are so wrapped up in Christian activities at the expense of basic responsibilities to their families and employers. They do not put in an honest day's work.

They may be doing some very good things like witnessing and counselling, but very often at the wrong time. They treat their homes like hotels where they only return home late each night to sleep. For all their religious display, they never set the right example at home or at work.

The Bible tells us that there is a proper time for everything. There is a time to witness for Christ, there is also a time to work diligently as unto the Lord. There is even a time to feast and eat heartily unto the Lord. The key is to live a balanced life, so that we will not bring shame and reproach to the Name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

There is also another problem of extremes. There are new believers who find it extremely difficult to believe God for the supernatural such as the healing of sicknesses and diseases and deliverance from demonic oppression.

It is not uncommon for some of these saints to swing to the other extreme. Often, as a result of some weird teachings which are unscriptural and baseless, these people then become spooky and flaky. They begin to "prophesy" ridiculous things. Now God, it seems, only speaks to this exclusive group of people. They think that nobody else has that direct line to God except them. This extreme practice often leads to confusion and division in the church. Lives can sometimes be destroyed too.

Always read the Word of God pertaining to the subject under discussion to see for yourself whether or not a particular teaching is in line with the Bible. Don't run to extremes which could very well be the devil's tricks to destroy you.

THE PROBLEM OF AN EVIL PAST

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

Isaiah 43:25

The moment the repentant soul comes to Christ for forgiveness of sin, God takes those sins and buries them into His sea of forgetfulness. He remembers them no more.

However, the devil delights in digging up your sins. He is an expert at replaying the memories of your evil past in order to instigate further shame, guilt, condemnation and even temptation into your life again.

It is vital to remember that all your sins which you had confessed and forsaken had already been put under the Blood of Jesus Christ. As far as God is concerned, you have been forgiven and your sins are forgotten.

Therefore, you have to forgive yourself too and begin living anew and afresh. Put your past behind you. The Lord Jesus will make a big difference in your future.

THE PROBLEM OF HARMFUL FRIENDSHIP

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1 John 2:15

Unlike you, your unbelieving friends are living in darkness and walking in the ways of the world. They view life and circumstances from a very different perspective. Their values and priorities in life are in direct opposition to yours.

It doesn't mean that you should be unfriendly and hostile towards them. But it does mean that you should not be conforming to their ways of life or belief systems.

When Jesus was on earth, He ate with the sinners. However, His primary purpose in doing so was to win them over. But He did not partake of their sinful activities.

Bad influence from harmful friends can very well hinder or even destroy your spiritual life. You have to exercise great caution in handling such friendships. Instead of winning them, you could be won over by them. And that would be tragic!

Cultivate new friends who love God. Be with Christians who love to read the Word of God and to pray. Pray for each other and bring the best out of each other. Let God lead new friends to you to replace the harmful ones.

THE PROBLEM OF FLUCTUATING FEELINGS

You are saved because you have put your trust in Christ, and not because of some good feelings. It is not unusual that a new convert receives some kind of nice feeling in an anointed meeting in which he has just received Jesus as his Saviour.

However, feelings are so undependable, and they change ever so quickly and so often too. Thank God that our salvation is based solely on the finished works of Jesus Christ and not upon anything else.

Just remember: You remain saved, regardless of circumstances or feelings. Good feelings do not make you more saved, neither do lousy feelings make you less saved. So long as you keep trusting in Jesus (in what He has already done and is still doing for you), no one can change your relationship with your Saviour.

Here is how you train your inner spirit to overcome the fickle emotions of a human heart. When you do not feel like reading the Bible, train yourself to read it despite the contrary feeling. When you do not feel like praying, get down to pray anyhow. Read and pray until you enjoy it. When you do not feel like going to church, gird yourself up and enter the house of God with thanksgiving in your heart.

When you do not feel like doing the right thing, ask God for strength and simply obey God by doing the right thing. Do not allow bad feelings to dictate your actions. Learn to act according to God's Word and not according to fluctuating feelings. That is how you grow mighty in spirit.

THE PROBLEM OF DISAPPOINTMENTS

The journey of life is marked by ups and downs. Disappointments are part and parcel of life. When things do not match up to our expectations, we tend to be disappointed. Therefore, learn not to be too idealistic in your expectations of others.

Our eyes must be focused on our Lord Jesus Who is our perfect example. Everybody else is fallible. Nobody should be put on a pedestal except Jesus Christ. It is foolish to stumble over the blunders of others.

Let's keep in mind that we have our fair share of sins, mistakes, failures and defeats. Make allowances for others and yourself. Nobody can be absolutely perfect. But every Christian can go for a higher average score as time goes by.

Peter the Apostle denied the Lord three times, yet Jesus tenderly dealt with him. In due time, Peter became one of the greatest spiritual leaders of all time.

Do not forget that God is still dealing with those "unreasonable" Christians with whom you have problems with. God is not through with them yet. By the same token, He is also not through with you. You can be certain that He is also dealing with you. Whatever the case, people may fail you but not Jesus Christ.

Over the long haul, if you keep trusting Jesus, you will ultimately know for sure that He is trustworthy. As you conform to His principles, you will be worthy of trust also. You will take on His characteristics – faithfulness, dependability and trustworthiness.

It is vital that you learn to forgive others because Christ has forgiven you so much. To minimize disappointments, choose your close friends carefully. Determine to give more than you receive. And try to structure your lifestyle in simplicity. Learn the art of trusting Christ more than anything or anyone else.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

God hates sin but He understands our frailties. In His wisdom, He provides a safety net for us in the foregoing verse. Sin is no longer a lifestyle with us but that doesn't mean that we are perfectly sinless.

If we do sin, there is a provision of forgiveness and cleansing. As soon as we approach Christ in repentance, the effect of His forgiveness is immediate. So be quick to confess your sins to God and have them dealt with. Keep short accounts with Him.

We must understand that there is a big difference between stumbling into sin in a moment of weakness and wilfully living a lifestyle of sin without repentance. Knowing this difference will keep you from the devil's condemnation.

When you, a child of God, do stumble, your first response should be to get up again. Jesus will be right there to pick you up and help you along the way. Don't allow any sin to dominate your life, deal with it quickly and put it behind you. Keep moving on as you still have your journey to complete.

KNOWING GOD'S WORD

The Bible is God's love letter to you. He speaks to you through His Word. The more you know His Word, the more you will know Him. And the more you know Him, the more you will understand His Word. Knowing Him makes Bible reading a great delight.

It is so thrilling to discover that the greatest Person in this universe longs to be known by you. He wants to reveal Himself and His secrets to you.

The deeper you dig into God's Word, the more you will know Him. The more you know Him, the more you will love Him. The more you love Him, the more you will be like Him. Knowing Him deeply will transform and empower your life.

There is a true story about a young lady who was not interested in spiritual matters at all. In contrast, her mother was a godly lady.

One day, her mother attended a Christian convention which featured a prominent speaker from overseas. Having been blessed in the convention, the mother purchased a stack of books written by the visiting speaker. She gave her daughter those books and persuaded her to attend the convention. The young lady remained disinterested.

The persistent mother decided to invite the preacher into her home for tea so that her daughter could get a chance to talk to this godly man. The invitation was made and accepted.

So the preacher came over and he began to encourage the young lady to a closer walk with Jesus.

Subsequently, they met rather frequently. Not only was that young lady drawn closer to Christ after each meeting, she was also drawn closer to the preacher. Soon, a romance

blossomed. Then the preacher had to return to his country. As they bade each other farewell, he promised her that he would return to marry her.

In his absence, this young lady felt lonely and sad. She missed him terribly. Now she eagerly read his books. Now every word became so precious and meaningful. She read every page with delight and her faith grew. So did her love for that man. Very soon, she was reading his books over and over again. Her life was completely transformed.

Reading the Word of God need not be a drudgery. Instead, it can be a pure delight if you know the Author personally.

DAILY PRAYER

Prayer is simply fellowship and communion with the Lord. When you pray, speak naturally as you would to a friend. Bring to Him all your concerns. Always pray in Jesus' Name.

Keep a prayer journal in which you record your petitions regarding your daily responsibilities and activities, your family, your career, your church, your ministry, your problems and your aspiration. Record all the prayer answers and how God deals with you in the process of meeting your needs. This journal is going to encourage you in times of discouragement.

It is going to serve as a reminder that God is faithful and reliable in all circumstances.

LIFE OF THE CHURCH

Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Hebrews 10:25

No matter how imperfect the local church is, God has ordained it to provide feeding and protection for the flock. We should not forget that the church is not Heaven yet. No church is perfect because it is filled with imperfect people like you and I. Nonetheless, God ordains that there be a certain degree of protection in the church.

Satan always tries to isolate a despondent soul from the church. He knows that a discouraged Christian, who has foolishly cut himself off from the main Body of believers, is at the most vulnerable point.

The Bible describes the devil as a roaring lion seeking for a lone prey. He waits patiently for you to stray away from the rest of the flock.

In the natural, we observe how a few lions could prey on a huge ox. The first step is to distract and separate that ox from the main herd. Once that poor animal is cut off from the rest of the oxen, the lions begin to chase it. Once it is caught, they proceed to inflict it with fatal wounds. Very soon they begin to devour it.

The above is a tragic picture of many Christians. Often, because of some discouragements and disappointments, a Christian stops attending church. Consequently, he becomes an easy prey for Satan. Then his spiritual life is totally destroyed. Don't allow that to happen to you!

In any local church, there are Christians with different faith and maturity levels. Some are stronger while others are weaker. The weaker ones can draw strength from those who are stronger. And the stronger ones should support those who are weak.

That local church to which you have been called is your spiritual family. And as a family, there will always be some problems and misunderstandings. Do you run away from your biological family just because there are some troubles? Of course not! If you are a responsible person, you would stay put, be proactive and help resolve those problems.

If every believer flows together as a united whole in a church, despite inevitable differences and disagreements, the gates of hell will never prevail against us. The church will always triumph.

SHARE CHRIST'S LIFE

Someone had shared the living water with you. Now it is your turn to carry and share that living water with somebody else.

In God's law of multiplication, the more you share, the more you will receive. You don't have to know very much before you start sharing your faith. Just tell people about the transformation that Jesus has done in your life. Tell them what you were before and who you are right now in Christ.

As you share Christ's life, you will reap souls into the Kingdom of God. That's the only everlasting treasure you can lay up in Heaven. When this life is all over, you will be so glad that you have invested in eternity by telling others about Jesus.

LOOK AT THE ULTIMATE

Finally, without exception, everyone will be thrown into eternity. We all may go at different times but go, we must.

The big question is: Where and with whom are you going to spend eternity? There are only two choices – it is either in hell with the devil or in Heaven with Jesus. Your eternal destiny is the single most important thing in your life. Everything else seems so insignificant.

As a child of God, you are definitely going to spend eternity with Jesus Christ. Your ultimate destiny is everlasting life. Your ultimate destination is Heaven. Your ultimate goal is to be with Jesus forever. Live by that ultimate goal.

A very old Christian was about to go home to be with the Lord. He was about to draw his last breath when a visiting pastor gently touched him on the shoulder and asked, "Of what persuasion do you belong to?" That question means that that pastor wanted to know which Christian sect or denomination the home-going saint belonged to.

Suddenly, it seemed as though a new energy had been released upon him. The dying man sat upright and said, "Of what persuasion? This is my persuasion. Listen! *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*" (Romans 8:38-39).

With that, he closed his eyes and crossed over. He had declared his lifelong commitment with his last breath. And I'm certain that he woke up to the unspeakable glorious reality of the other side.

God is able to keep your faith until you see Him face to face. Meanwhile, live a full life of victory and success in Christ Jesus! Amen.

You must not forget these three regular exercises for spiritual health:

- read God's Word
- pray to God
- go to church.



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