

# Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

## SEEK YE FIRST

Life is full of daily choices and decisions. What should I do? Where shall I go? What should I say? How should I act? How should I spend my time, my energy, and my money? People’s true hearts are reflected through the decisions they make, despite what they may claim or express. Their choices reflect their priorities in life. People of the world seek pleasure, money, fame, ease, etc. Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness” (Matthew 6:33).

It should be and must be the priority of Christians to put the things of God first—above all else. It is an unfortunate reality that many people who name the name of Christ are pursuing the things of this world and the things of God are not primary. The lives of Christians should be defined and identified by their pursuit of Christ and His righteousness.

There are necessary things that we all must take care of in life. We need food and clothing, and it is important to spend time with family and to take time to sleep and work. Before teaching to seek first the kingdom of God, Jesus acknowledged these necessities. “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things” (Matthew 6:31-32). Jesus was not teaching that we should ignore these things, but He was teaching that we should not worry about them because God

knows our needs and will provide for us. He was calling for His followers to make God the priority and place the things of the Lord above all else. He promised that all these other things “shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33b).

For a Christian to find the joy and reality of victory in serving God, the things of the Lord must be the priority. Nothing is wrong with having dreams, plans, goals, and purposes, but all those things must be consecrated to God and sometimes even laid aside or deferred for God to have priority. There is nothing more important than our eternal soul, and we must place value on caring for that soul above the things of the world.

In every decision that is made, it would behoove us to ask ourselves, “Am I putting God first?” Many Christians would justify and rationalize their decisions and choices and offer excuses that Jesus Himself called out in Luke 14:16-20. Some explain away their lack of commitment and dedication to the things of God: I have some property that I need to go check on. I have some oxen that I need to prove. I have just married a wife. The list goes on and yet, is God your priority? Are your choices reflective of that?

Some lawful things that are not sinful take up our time and attention. Christians must place God above those lawful things, for as a snare, those cares of life will choke out the spiritual fruit if we are not careful. Jesus said to “take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts

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“People’s true hearts are reflected through the decisions they make, despite what they may claim or express. Their choices reflect their priorities in life.”

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# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

## Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;  
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;  
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

## Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;  
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;  
1 Cor. 7:10-11

## Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;  
Matt 25:31-46

## Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## Great Commission

Mark 16:15

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be overcharged with...cares of this life.... For as a snare shall it come on all that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke 21:34-35).

Are we seeking God first or the lawful things? We must seek God first and allow that to guide us in where we live, whom we marry, and what we do for a job. Those lawful things should be secondary. Many people are seeking first the riches of this world. While it is not wrong to have money, it is wrong to let the pursuit of it be primary and the things of God secondary.

When Christians first seek the kingdom of God, they give God the best of their time, their money, and their talents. Daily, it takes time to read

**"When Christians first seek the kingdom of God, they give God the best of their time, their money, and their talents."**

the Bible and pray. If we neglect that, something else has priority. When it's time to worship and fellowship with the saints, are we there? Are we seeking first the kingdom of God? When there are financial needs in the work of God, and we are spending money on ourselves and saving for the future and not sacrificing financially, what is getting first place?

The priorities of a true Christian are radically different from those of worldly people. Paul taught the congregation at Rome: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). This generation needs a renewal of their minds that seeking first the kingdom of God is more than a theological statement but a practical reality. ■



DON'T ASK A MAN  
WHAT IS IMPORTANT  
TO HIM.  
WATCH HOW HE  
SPENDS HIS TIME.

-Dale Carnegie

The *Gospel Truth* is a quarterly periodical published in the interest of the Church of God for instruction and encouragement in the truths of the Bible. Visit us online at [www.thegospeltruth.org](http://www.thegospeltruth.org) and subscribe to the email notification list to receive current publications. The *Gospel Truth* is printed in many countries for local distribution and is supported by free-will offerings. A tax receipt will be sent upon request.

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# Editorial



*But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. — Ephesians 4:15*

It is glorious to see a life transformed by Jesus. It is wonderful to have spiritual, newborn babes in the body of Christ. New converts bring life and vitality to God's people, and their care and presence revitalize worship and fellowship. However, the goal should be to keep getting new spiritual babies and for the older babies to grow up in Christ. The Lord desires new converts to grow and prosper spiritually and to become pillars in the Church of God.

It is sad so many new converts live in weakened conditions and that the spiritual infant mortality rate is so high. It need not be so, for God amply provides all the spiritual nutrition and care for the proper growth of new Christians. Too many new converts needlessly fall away, or their growth is stunted. New Christians need not fear that they will be incapable of living successful lives for God. There are great blessings and victories for each one who will take counsel and follow the plan of God.

The burden of this issue is to share some of the keys for new Christians to use to maintain life and grow spiritually. While the focus is on new converts, the daily use of these keys also keeps mature Christians growing and prospering. God will do His part to ensure our success, but we can not sit back and be at ease. We must be faithful and make sound choices and decisions to allow God's purpose to be fulfilled in us. We must make our relationship with God our priority and follow hard after the things of the Lord.

A new convert need not be overwhelmed by spiritual needs, for it is a daily walk—step by step, little by little. God will empower and help us daily as we seek His will in our lives. When you come to a locked door, you check your keys and find the right one. There are many spiritual keys at our disposal if we are diligent and avail ourselves of them.

If you are newly saved, be encouraged. The Lord will help you grow, bear fruit, and have victory as you do your part. "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Deuteronomy 31:6).

May the Lord bless and keep you in His care and grace.

*Michael W. Smith*

*July 2023*



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## REPENT AND BE BAPTIZED (ACTS 2:38)

After being saved, one of the first acts of obedience is for the convert to follow the example of Jesus in full immersion baptism. Baptism is a witness of the resurrected spiritual life in Christ and is an outward testimony of salvation. The Bible instructs new converts to be baptized right after being saved.

It helps fortify the salvation experience and is a means of combating doubts from the enemy.

If you are saved and have not been baptized, I encourage you not to delay.

Gospel Truth Issue 10: Baptism



# Bible Study Guide

## Subject: Keys for New Christians

**Scripture Reading:** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: (7) Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. — Colossians 2:6-7

**Summary:** There are practical, spiritual keys for new and mature Christians alike that will open up doors to spiritual growth and victory. When new Christians avail themselves of these keys, they will be able to live consistent, godly lives.

### I. Set Your Purpose

- A. Colossians 3:1-2 Set your affection on things above.
- B. 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 Carefulness, desire, zeal.

### II. Stand in Faith not Feelings

- A. 2 Corinthians 5:7 Walk by faith, not by sight.
- B. Ephesians 2:8-9 Salvation is a gift.
- C. Romans 8:1 No condemnation in Christ.

### III. Build a Relationship With Christ

- A. John 15:4-5 Abide in Christ.
- B. Mark 12:30 Love God with all your heart.

### IV. Walk Daily to Please God

- A. John 14:15 Keep the commandments.
- B. Hebrews 12:14 Live a holy life.
- C. 1 Corinthians 10:31 Do all to the glory of God.

### V. Blessing of Grace

- A. 2 Peter 3:18 Grow in grace.
- B. Hebrews 4:16 Help at the throne of grace.
- C. 2 Corinthians 12:9 God's grace is sufficient.

### VI. Minimize Temptations

- A. Matthew 26:41 Enter not into temptation.
- B. Romans 13:14 Make not provision for the flesh.

### VII. Maintain a Clear Conscience

- A. Luke 19:8-9 Make restitution.
- B. Acts 24:16 Keep a conscience void of offence.

### VIII. Study the Bible

- A. 1 Peter 2:2 Desire the Word.
- B. 2 Timothy 2:15 Study the word of truth.
- C. 2 Timothy 3:14-17 Continue in the Scripture.
- D. Psalm 119:105 The Bible illuminates the path.

### IX. Pray

- A. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 Pray without ceasing.
- B. Philippians 4:6 Let your requests be made to God.
- C. 1 Peter 5:7 Casting all your care on God.

### X. Fellowship other Believers

- A. Hebrews 10:25 Do not forsake the assembling of the saints.
- B. Colossians 3:16 Encourage one another in worship.

### XI. Share Your Testimony

- A. Revelation 12:11 Overcome by your testimony.
- B. Romans 1:16 Be not ashamed of the gospel.
- C. Mark 16:15 Preach the gospel.

### XII. Work for the Lord

- A. Ephesians 2:10 Walk in good works.
- B. Matthew 6:19-20 Lay up treasures in heaven.
- C. 1 Corinthians 14:12 Be zealous of spiritual gifts.
- D. James 2:14-17 Faith without works is dead.

### XIII. Keep Proper Priorities

- A. Matthew 6:33 Seek first the kingdom of God.
- B. Romans 12:2 Be not conformed to this world.

### Conclusion

*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. —Philippians 3:13-14*



# KEYS FOR NEW CHRISTIANS



“God did not leave us unequipped, but there are things that all Christians must do to continue to preserve and grow their relationship with God.”

After getting saved and turning away from the world, the realities of the new life will soon settle in on the convert. The enemy will try to overwhelm the new Christian with questions, doubts, and fears. There are keys of truth that, when used and followed, will help the young convert to stay faithful and grow in the things of God.

## You Are Not Left Alone

There are biblical truths, practical principles, and guidelines that are vital to the success of the new Christian. Salvation is a wonderful experience, but as with any good thing, there is effort and work required to maintain the new life in Christ. God did not leave us unequipped, but there are things that all Christians must do to continue to preserve and grow their relationship with God. The newly saved are not called to a life of holiness without help from God and are not left without resources. If you will avail yourself of these keys of wisdom that have long been used by children of God, your future is bright, and you will be able to live a blessed life in Christ. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:6-7).

## Keep Your Purpose and Decision

That same heart and desire that drew the sinner to Christ to be saved must be fixed with a purpose to follow Jesus. The world will try to draw the convert back, and past temptations often will pull on the flesh. It is a vital key to success to daily “seek those things which are above” and to set your “affection on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:1-2). Salvation is divine, but the Christian must make a conscious decision: “I will not go back to the world.” Paul reminded the converts at Corinth of their original purpose: “For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what

fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter” (2 Corinthians 7: 11). This carefulness of purpose will fortify Christians in the face of opposition and temptation.

## Faith Over Feelings

After praying for salvation, the sun will set; another day will begin, and the feelings and euphoria of conviction are often not felt as strongly. Many converts question whether they were even saved when the feelings fade. A key to use at this time is the key of faith, “for we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Good feelings are wonderful, but salvation is not about feelings. Feelings come and go, but the gift of God is sure. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Ephesians 2:8). Trust in the merits of Christ’s shed blood on your behalf, and trust not in your feelings or works. Despite doubt and feelings, there is “no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1). When the devil contests your salvation, it is a good time to ask yourself: “Have I gone back to sin? Do I still want to serve the Lord?” If you are free from sin and still want to serve the Lord, rejoice in the gift of God and send the devil and his accusations on their way.

## Get To Know Jesus

The Christian life should not be defined by rules and regulations but rather by a relationship with God. Christians often struggle within themselves to try to be more like Christ and keep coming

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“As we draw closer to Jesus, we become more like Him. We bear fruit not because of our willpower but because we are connected in a relationship with Christ.”

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short. The effort would be better spent on drawing closer to God. Jesus said in John 15:4-5: “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can

ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” As we draw closer to Jesus, we become more like Him. We bear fruit not because of our willpower but because we are connected in a relationship with Christ. That relationship is not based on fear but upon loving God with all our hearts.

### Walk Daily to Please God

As children loving our Father, we will seek to please Him and obey Him. Jesus said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). A key to victory is walking daily to please God. This means living holy and pure because it is the will of the Father. When questions arise of what to do, follow the apostle Paul’s advice: “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). When we do things that are not to the glory of God, our experience with God will begin to erode.

### Use Your Secret Weapon

God has provided His children with a wonderful key to use in times of trouble, temptation, and trial. It is the key of grace. It is God’s favor and help to us when we are so underserving of His mercy and power. Peter taught us “to grow in grace” (2 Peter 3:18). Seek God’s help and grow in His favor. When we struggle, it is not time to distance ourselves from God. It is time to be vulnerable and to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16).

Do not be discouraged when you feel weak and incapable. God’s “grace is sufficient for thee” (2 Corinthians 12:9), and His strength will manifest in your weakness if you trust in Him. What a blessing to have this resource of grace that never runs dry.

### Minimize Your Temptations

As long as we are on this earth, we will have temptations. No experience of salvation will ever remove all pressures and influences of sin and the flesh. However, we need not yield to those temptations. It is important to make decisions to minimize the temptations of life. Jesus told His disciples in Matthew 26:41, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.” Not only should we pray and be aware of our temptations, but we also should flee them. We should never flirt with temptation, “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans 13:14). Distance yourself from people and influences that open the door to temptations in your life. Choose to live carefully; and God’s grace will enable you to withstand temptation. If you get careless and make willful provisions to sin, you will find God’s grace does not work, for it is null and void by decision.

### Maintain a Clear Conscience

When someone first gets saved, they should make restitution to those they have wronged, as exemplified by Zacchaeus in Luke 19:8-9. However, Christians should exercise themselves daily like Paul, who lived to keep his life clear with God and with people. “And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men” (Acts 24:16). When mistakes are made, and you fall short of the fulness of the fruit of the Spirit, be quick to humble your heart and acknowledge your need. This promotes spiritual growth as you maintain a clear testimony.

### Study the Bible

It is fundamental for spiritual growth to read the Bible daily. “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). How can we know how to please the Lord if we do not spend time reading His Words to us? The Bible is God’s Word and was

given “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17). There are many voices in the religious world, and it is important to study and mediate for ourselves the very source of truth. As David said in Psalm 119:105, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

## Talk to God

Prayer is one of the most important keys to spiritual blessings and success. How often should we pray? “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Set aside specific time to pray to your Heavenly Father. Pray first thing in the morning before facing the trials of life. Pray before you go to sleep at night but have an attitude and heart of communion with the Lord at all times. God is our friend, burden bearer, help, comforter, and guide. Open your heart and have open communication with God. God is interested in you and gave us the privilege to “in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6). When a Christian’s spiritual experience gets weak and stale, you can about be sure the prayer life is lacking.

## Fellowship other Believers

Spiritual isolation has sounded the death toll on many a child of God. Fellowship with other saints is important, and it is imperative that converts find a place to fellowship where truth is being taught and lived. It would be better to live in an undesirable place and make less money on a job and be in fellowship with the saints every week than to be isolated and become overcome by the influences of the world. This has happened to many people and young couples. Instruction was given on this very point in Hebrews 10:25. “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.” How important is your soul? Do not neglect service and worship with God’s people.

## Share Your Testimony

Another key to spiritual victory is sharing your testimony of salvation with others. The saints of old overcame the devil “by the word of their testimony” (Revelation 12:11). When we share our personal experience with others, it is not only a witness to the world, but it also fortifies our faith and helps combat the accusations of



the enemy. It strengthens us spiritually. We need never be “ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16). As we share with others what God has done for us personally, we also help fulfill the commission of Christ to “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel” (Mark 16:15).

## Work For God

God did not save us to sit down and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus. There is work to do in the kingdom of God for us all. People have backslidden because they became lazy and did not get busy working for the Lord. We were “created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). While people of the world are laying up treasures upon earth, children of God should “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (Matthew 6:19-20). We are stronger spiritually when we occupy our minds and time working for the Lord. Paul said to be “zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church” (1 Corinthians 14:12). Minister and serve other people, and you will be strengthened in your own spiritual experience. If you want to see a weak Christian and one in danger, look for the one who is living selfishly to themselves and not working for the kingdom of God.

A song says, “Mighty to save, mighty to keep.” The initial work of salvation is wonderful, but it is almost a greater miracle to stay saved and faithful to the Lord. Apply your heart to wisdom and use the above keys effectively, and you will enjoy the blessings of growth and victory in Christ Jesus. ■

“Spiritual isolation has sounded the death toll on many a child of God. Fellowship with other saints is important, and it is imperative that converts find a place to fellowship where truth is being taught and lived.”



### DID YOU KNOW?

“A soul at the altar does not generate much excitement in some circles because we realize approximately 95 out of every hundred will not become integrated into the church. In fact, most of them will not return for a second visit.” – Charles E. Hackett

Salvation is more than a response to an altar call or a momentary decision. It is a life changing experience whereby converts must daily follow Jesus lest they become just another statistic.



A Word  
in Season

## GOD WILL FINISH WHAT HE STARTS

### Contact

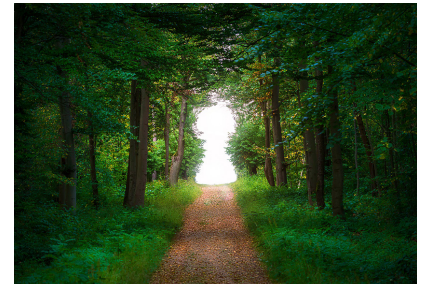
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*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. —Philippians 1:6*

When a sinner comes to Christ with a repentant heart, there is rejoicing in Heaven. God mends the broken, cleanses the unrighteous, and transforms the sinner into a new creature. What a wonderful experience of peace and joy as the convert walks in the newness of life.

The initial experience is just the beginning. There is life to live, and the new Christian will soon face the realities of self, temptation, and hurts. It is not time to give up or let down on the things of God. The Christian should take courage and be fully persuaded, as Paul the apostle, who was “confident” that God who had saved would continue to work and enable the child of God to make it victoriously until the return of Jesus.



God did not send His Son to die for our sins to do a partial work. He has provided us with everything we need to get through the problems of life. God knows our weaknesses, our struggles, and our propensities. He knows everything about us, and we can rest with the assurance that God is willing and able to minister to the depth of our needs. He will empower us to faithfully follow Jesus and be found ready to meet Him in peace at the judgment.

Salvation is a complete plan, and the work of God is not haphazard. He will not abandon what He has started. He will bring us to completion through the ongoing work of grace and the Holy Spirit. God is very aware of our humanity, and He made adequate spiritual provisions for our success. We have no problem or struggle that is too big for God. While we have the power to walk away from God, He will never leave us nor forsake us as we maintain our purpose to follow Him. If you do not quit on God, He will not quit on you. He will finish what He started in your life! ■

HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD