

## **1. Prayer.**

Some time each day should be spent alone with God away from the distractions of family even if it's only for a few minutes. Prayer is not formal: we are simply talking to God as we would to a friend. If you are not sure how to pray, begin by thanking God for all the good things that have happened to you, then pray for others, and finally pray for your own needs.

You may want to spend some silent time waiting on the Lord to speak to your heart. Also, learn to pray throughout the day, for example: while driving alone in the car, or while doing some task which requires no concentration. And as good things happen during the day, take a moment to thank God for them.

## **2. Reading The Bible.**

You need to spend time reading God's Word. At least once a day read a portion of the Bible. You can read a chapter or a column or, if you have a modern translation, a paragraph. A good place for a new believer to start is the book of **Saint John** which is known as the Gospel of Love.

## **3. Meeting With Fellow Believers.**

Attend church every Sunday, join a Bible study, get together with other Christians. You need the encouragement and support of others who have an understanding of how God works in our lives.

*Avoid These New Believer Pitfalls...*

### **1. Impatience.**

We want to become a mature Christian overnight. We want to have an understanding of spiritual things, and we want everything to be changed immediately. Be patient. Good things only come through perseverance and with time.

### **2. Our Failings.**

Now that you have committed your life to the Lord, it's easy to expect yourself to always act with pure intentions and to walk perfectly before God. When we fail, which we all do, we can become very disappointed with ourselves and become discouraged.

The Christian walk is one of learning to turn over areas of our life for God to handle. When we try to do things in our own strength, we will fail. But as we mess up, we learn to trust God in those areas of our life.

So God uses our failings to help us grow in him. Don't become frustrated when you fail. Think of it as an opportunity for God to teach you how to better trust in Him.

### **3. Not Understanding The Bible.**

As a new believer, it's easy to become discouraged at our lack of Biblical knowledge. Often, we have no idea where any of the books of the Bible are located, and it seems that everyone else is so much more spiritually mature than we are that we will never catch up. Like anything else, knowledge of the Bible comes from reading and studying the Bible.

When you entered kindergarten, you didn't think that you would understand algebra, did you? It's the same with God's Word. God will give you understanding as you learn his Word one day at a time. You will be amazed at how quickly the Holy Spirit will reveal God's truths to you as you read the Bible.

### **4. Feelings.**

When we make a commitment to Jesus, we are often filled with tremendous feelings of God's love, peace, and joy. We are excited. But then when something bad happens to us, we may lose that initial joy, and since the feelings are gone, we may question whether we are saved or not.

We are not saved by feelings. We are saved because God did a work in our life. The Bible confirms this to us. Sometimes we have to walk by faith. Whether you feel glad or sad, know that God still loves you, and he is with you to help you along the way.

### **5. Doubts.**

The Bible tells us that after God plants his word in our heart, the enemy comes to try to fill us with doubt. You may question whether God really did something miraculous in your life. Remember, we are saved by faith, and we live by faith. Doubt can only grow in our heart if we allow faith to take a vacation.

### **6. Reaction of Friends and Relatives.**

The reaction of those who knew us before we were saved can be unexpected. We may lose friends: we no longer have the same values as they do. Our family may consider us weird or fanatical.

Old friends may get mad at us when we don't do the same old things with them like we used to, such as partying or doing drugs. We don't want to shut out friends or relatives, but we may have to choose between them and the Lord. We can still show them love, but we soon discover that the way we look at things has changed.

### **7. Answers to Prayer.**

As a new believer, you may have a desire to get everyone in your family saved, and see your whole neighborhood come to church with you. Or you may pray for God to instantly heal you or solve your financial problems or deliver you from bad habits.

We sometimes pray and expect God to immediately grant our prayer request. God wants to see your family saved. But he allows them to decide: He forces no man to serve him. God desires only good for you, but He wants you to learn step-by-step how to trust in Him.

If God would instantly deliver us from all of our problems, we would never learn how to trust Him. *When we pray, God always answers. But sometimes the answer is yes, sometimes no, and sometimes wait.* We need to trust that He knows what's best for us. So when you pray, always pray "according to the will of God."

But don't ever forget that prayer changes things. Pray for your loved ones, pray for healing, pray for deliverance. God has promised that our prayers are very effective.

### **8. A Rosy Outlook.**

When we first become a Christian, we may have the idea that everything is going to be wonderful and all our problems are solved. As long as we live in this sinful world, there will be problems, confusion, and turmoil in our life.

We are not immune from these things. The difference is we have someone to guide us through our difficult times, and someone who has promised that whatever happens to us will work out for our own good. As we learn to trust in Jesus, we will discover that we can have peace even in the most trying of circumstances.

### ***An Overview of the Bible***

The Bible is not just one big book, but actually a collection of 66 smaller books written over a period of at least 1600 years by about 40 different authors. Everything they wrote was inspired by God. In the front of your Bible is a Table of Contents which lists the names of all the books in the Bible.

The Bible is divided into two sections: The Old Testament, consisting of 39 books, and the New Testament, consisting of 27 books. The New Testament reveals to us Jesus and the plan of salvation. It begins with the book of **Matthew** and ends with the book of **Revelation**. It is divided into four general areas:

- The first four books: **Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John** tell us the story of Jesus when he was on this earth.
- The book of **Acts** tells us the history of the early church after Jesus' death and resurrection.
- The letters (from **Romans to Jude**) are correspondence from early Christian leaders to other churches or individuals. These letters answered questions concerning the new believer's walk in Christ.
- The book of **Revelation** tells us the future story of the end time when Jesus will come back to this world and reign on earth.

A new believer should always start reading the Bible in the first four books of the New Testament, called the gospels. The book of **John** is especially easy to understand. Some short letters in the New Testament (also called epistles) which are helpful to new believers are the books of **Philippians, James, and 1 John**.

The Old Testament reveals to us how God dealt with the nation of Israel. It looks forward to the coming Savior of the world, Jesus. It begins with the book of **Genesis** and ends with **Malachi**. It is also divided into four general areas:

- The first five books [**Genesis to Deuteronomy**] tell us the beginning of man and the establishment of the nation of Israel with the promise of the Savior of the world coming from this chosen people. It not only contains the early history of Israel, but also the Law of God as revealed through Moses. For example, **Exodus** chapter 20 records the Ten Commandments.

- The next twelve books [**Joshua to Esther**] are the historical books of the nation of Israel after it became a kingdom in Canaan. Two short books in this section which reveal God's hand on the life of believers, which new Christians may enjoy, are the books of **Ruth, and Esther**.
- The next five books [**Job to Song of Solomon**] are the books of poetry and wisdom in the Bible. Especially helpful to new believers are the book of **Psalms**, which was the hymnal or songbook of the nation of Israel; and **Proverbs**, which contains the sayings and advice of the wisest king Israel had.
- The last seventeen books [**Isaiah to Malachi**] are the books of the prophets of Israel who God sent to warn, admonish, and encourage his people toward the end of the history of Israel as a nation. A short book in this section which is good for new believers is the book of **Jonah**.

There is a handy abbreviation that Christians use to specify verses in the Bible. They list the name of the book first, followed by the chapter number, and then the verse number. For example: **John 3:16** means the book of **John**, chapter **3**, verse **16**. This way you can quickly and easily locate scriptures.