# NEXT STEPS

Now that I'm born-again (saved), what's next? What should I do, and how will I grow? These are questions you are probably asking yourself. First of all, understand that you are embarking on a journey that is a process, and this means that you will grow and mature over time. The apostle Peter said in 1 Peter 2:2, "…crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation." As a new believer, that is precisely what you must do; you must have a desire to grow.

This new reality of your life will require a daily commitment and sacrifice. Each day will bring its challenges; however, by establishing and implementing routines in your life, you will learn to persevere, be resilient, and mature in Christ Jesus as God produces in you His godly character. If we know anything about farming, it takes time for it to bear fruit when you plant a seed in the ground. It does not happen overnight; it's a process that requires discipline and patience. You are like this new seed that has been planted, and now you must make sure you receive the nourishment you will need to survive. Therefore, we have provided you with practical steps to establish routines that will allow you to grow as you embark on this journey.

**UNDERSTAND** Your Salvation. You must make sure you know what has just happened in your life. God wants us to understand our salvation and have confidence in who we have become and our purpose in this life. Here are some key points of our salvation:

- You were once a sinner who deserved to be punished with eternal separation from God (Romans 3:23 & Romans 6:23).
- Jesus came to this earth and died, therefore paying the penalty of your sins (Romans 5:8 & 2 Corinthians 5:21).
- Everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior has been forgiven by God, received eternal life with Christ, and received God's Kingdom as His child (Romans 5:1 and John 1:12).
- The moment you believed in Jesus Christ as your Savior, you were given God's Holy Spirit to lead you in all truth, guide you in making correct choices, and connect you to your Father's kingdom (Ephesians 1:13 & John 14: 15 – 17).

This is the foundation of your salvation! You were once a sinner who was destined to eternal separation from God, but your faith in Jesus Christ has brought about forgiveness and placed you in right standing with God. Now all your sins have been forgiven, and God promises never to leave or forsake you. Now your job is to build on this understanding and mature into what God has destined you to become.

**MAKE** time to spend with your Father (God). For any relationship to grow, one must take the time to get to know that person. It requires an intentional effort to spend quality time regularly learning about the person you are in a relationship with. Here are a few things you should take the time to do daily.

**READ** the Word of God. If you are going to grow and know who your Father is, you must read His story. When you purchase a new item from the store, you must read the manual that comes with it to understand how to operate that item. By reading the manual, you better understand that item's purpose, and therefore you can maximize its functionality and use. The same is true for you. To understand your purpose and reach your full potential, you must read the manual left for you by your Creator. "The Bible is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work" ~ 2 Timothy 3:16 – 17. God reveals Himself to us through his 100% accurate words written in the Bible. Make sure you find a good Bible version that you can understand and read it daily. The New Testament books of John, Romans, and Ephesians are an excellent place to start.

Key Bible verses: 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Psalm 119:105, Romans 12:2

**PRAY** daily. Prayer is talking to our Father (God). Not only do we learn and know about God by reading the Bible, but we can also know God by talking to Him. Even Jesus, during His earthly ministry, showed us that prayer is an essential part of our faith. We can go directly to God and ask him for help, advice, guidance, forgiveness, wisdom, and most importantly, let Him know how much we love and appreciate Him. And the best part is that we don't do all the talking, but we must understand that prayer is also about listening for God's response.

Key Bible verses: Matthew 6:9-13, Philippians 4:6-7, Colossians 4:2, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Philippians 4:6-7 and 1 John 1:9

**MEDITATE!** Meditation is focusing our minds on God. There are so many things that go through our minds on any given day. In life, we will have many challenges that we will go through, and we need to be able to settle our minds and find peace in God. When we meditate on the Bible and our prayers to our Father, it allows us to reflect, have the proper perspective, and puts our minds at peace. We need to be intentional daily to meditate so that God will keep our minds in His perfect peace.

Key Bible verses: Psalms 1:2, Psalm 19:14, Psalm 119:97, Psalm 49:3, Philippians 4:8

**COMMIT** to a community of believers that will help you grow in the Lord. The Bible teaches the importance of fellowship among the people of God. The book of Ephesians in chapter four tells us that believers of Christ are of one body united in the Spirit of God and that we should make every effort to keep ourselves united in love. The believers in Christ are a community from which love, peace, hope, righteous living, justice, teaching, accountability, service, and discipleship emanates. God expects that the church, the body of believers-not a physical building, will display his wisdom and Kingdom culture on earth. As a new child of God, it is vital to align yourself with a Bible-believing/living church that will assist you in fulfilling God's mandate. It is also crucial for you to disassociate yourself with anyone that will cause you not to be all your Father has called you to be in Christ Jesus. The Bible teaches in 1 Corinthians 15:33 that "Bad company corrupts good character," therefore, develop relationships with people who can help you spiritually.

Key Bible verses: Ephesians 3:10; 4:3-6, 11 – 13, Hebrews 10: 24-25 and Proverbs 27:17

**DISCOVER** your identity and purpose in Christ. Each believer has a gift and a role in God's divine eternal plan. God will reveal His plan for your life on this journey you are currently embarking on. Committing to a community of believers will assist you with discovering your purpose in addition to your endeavors (i.e., reading the Bible, praying, meditating, fasting, etc.). As you fellowship with a Bible-believing church, make sure you participate in things like Sunday School, Bible study, small groups, and prayer groups. Activities like these will assist you in growing in your faith and having a deeper understanding of the Word of God. Once you discover your purpose, get involved and begin serving in your local church based on the gift the Holy Spirit has given you. Use your gifts and talents to honor and bring glory to God and His Kingdom.

Key Bible verses: Ephesians 2:10; 4:7, 2 Timothy 1:9, Romans 8:28, and Psalms 138:8).

**SHARE** your story with others. Tell your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and other people you interact with how Jesus Christ changed your life. Christ said we are to be His witnesses telling people about Him everywhere. Be proud of who you have become in Jesus Christ and let everyone you know have the same opportunity to change their life. One way to publicly display your love and allegiance to Christ is by being Baptized. Baptism is a public display of proclaiming your commitment to serve Christ. Talk to your pastor about becoming baptized once you have been born again and invite as many people as you can to witness this great event.

Key Bible verses: Acts 1:8, Matthew 5:16, Matthew 28:19, 1 Peter 3:15, and Romans 6:3-4.

**LIVE** out what you have been taught. It does no good to know God's truth and not obey or apply it to your life. Since you now have God's truth, make your mind up that you will serve the Lord and be obedient to what he says to do, even if it means you will have to give up some things that you love doing or that bring you self-gratification. Live for the Lord and let your walk before Him bring Him glory. Make this your lifestyle! Let us be like the great man of God Joshua in the Bible, "…As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" ~ Joshua 24:15.

Key Bible Verses: Deuteronomy 30:19, Hosea 4:6, James 1:22 – 25, and Matthew 5:14 – 16.