

How to Get Started Right

Someone has said, in order to finish well, you need to start well. What I would like to share with you right now is for the person who has trusted Christ as Savior. Being a new Christian, you may be wondering, "What's next? I know I'm saved, but what do I do because I am saved?"

What I want to share with you does not keep you saved. Jesus prayed for you that God the Father would keep you saved, and He does. In John chapter 17, we actually read where the Lord is speaking to the Father in Heaven. He's actually praying for us. He's praying for those people who have believed on Him then, and He's praying for us today.

In those verses, John 17:11-20, Jesus said,

¹¹And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

¹²While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

¹³And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

¹⁴I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁵I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

¹⁶They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

¹⁷Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

¹⁸As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

¹⁹And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

²⁰Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;

You can also read Romans 8:34-39 and you'll read there that nothing is able to separate us from the love of God.

Now, you've already started well by trusting Jesus to save you, and now you need to finish well by letting Him guide you and direct you through His Word. Psalm 119:105 says, *Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Well, how do you get started right and finish well? I've already mentioned that you've been saved. If you've asked Jesus into your heart, you've already started right, but now you need to finish well. The first thing that I would say to you is this. Forget the past. Philippians 3:13 says, *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.* Remember this, you cannot change the past. That's over with. You can look toward the future. You can work now for the Lord, not to be saved, but because you are saved.

So, first, I would say forget the past. And secondly, maintain fellowship with God. First, we see that a way to maintain that fellowship is through prayer. In Matthew 6:9, it says, *After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.* We need to have a prayer life as saved

people. We need to talk to our Heavenly Father. And I would remind you that He's not everybody's Heavenly Father. It's only those people who have trusted His Son Jesus as Savior. They are the only ones who can say, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

First, I see that you need to forget the past, then, maintain fellowship with God through prayer and then through Bible study. In Psalm 119:11, the first part of that verse says, *Thy word have I hid in mine heart...* We stay close to God through prayer and Bible study. We're to study the Word of God to grow strong. We're to pray to our Heavenly Father, to have heavenly communion. And as we think of this, Heaven is only a prayer from us. Heaven is with us as we pray to the Lord.

Forget the past, maintain fellowship with God, and then focus on the goal. Philippians 3:13-14 says,

¹³Brethren, 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,

¹⁴I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Note this, if you would, about those verses. Paul is not reaching for salvation or trying to stay saved. Paul is working, doing everything he can to please God because he is saved. The goal is to serve God until we go to be with Him.

Forget the past, maintain fellowship with God, focus on the goal, and then maintain fellowship with other believers. Hebrews 10:25 says, *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.* "Exhorting" in this verse means to build up,

to encourage each other. We need to have fellowship with other believers so that we can encourage each other daily, and we do that by our next point I'm going to share with you. That's by joining a Bible-believing local church.

Forget the past, maintain fellowship with God, focus on the goal, maintain fellowship with other believers, and then join a Bible-believing local church. Acts 2:1 says, *and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.* Acts 2:47 says, *Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* And we've already read Hebrews 10:25.

Do not join a church just because it's handy, in other words, close to where you live. Do not join a church just because your aunt, uncle, grandma, grandpa, mom, and dad have gone to that church for a hundred years. If the church your relatives go to preaches "saved by grace and not by works," then that is more than likely a good church to belong to. Remember Ephesians 2:8-9 says we're saved by grace through faith and that it's not of ourselves; it's a gift of God. *⁹Not of works, lest any man should boast.* And you can also read Titus 3:5 in connection with that.

Join a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching, Bible-preaching, the-blood-of-Jesus-saves church. A good way to find a good church would probably be to ask the person who led you to the Lord.

And then I see, after we join a Bible-believing, Bible-preaching church, then I believe that baptism is in order... by immersion, complete submersion. Baptism is one of the first things you should do if physically possible to let people know you have been saved. Baptism is

an ordinance of God, not a sacrament. There's no sacrifice or sacrament involved in being baptized. Acts 2:41 says, *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.* Being baptized does not save you, according to Acts 2:41. That says you were saved before you got baptized. The people gladly received the Word. They were saved and then were baptized.

After a person gets saved, they need to be baptized, and I remind you once again that baptism does not save a person. Baptism is a way of identifying ourselves with Jesus. Just as Jesus was crucified, when we stand in the water, we are acknowledging the crucifixion of Christ. Just as Christ was buried, when we go down into the water, we are buried in the likeness of Christ's burial. When we come up out of the water, just as Christ was resurrected from the dead, we are identifying that we too have been resurrected to new life through the life of Christ.

I see after baptism we should observe the Lord's Supper. This is communion. Communion is an ordinance of God. It is not a sacrament. No sacrifice, no sacrament, is taking place during the observance of the Lord's table. The Lord's Supper – communion – is only for believers. The ordinance of the Lord's Supper does not save a person. We are told by Jesus in Mark 14:22 and Luke 22:20 to observe this ordinance because we are saved. There is no saving power in the elements – bread and juice – of the Lord's Supper. Once again, we take communion, the Lord's Supper, because this is what the Lord wants us to do. In fact, the Bible says we are to observe this ordinance of the Lord's Supper until He returns.

First Corinthians 11:23-26:

²³For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread:

*²⁴And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, **Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.***

*²⁵After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, **This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.***

²⁶For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

What I have spoken to you about are actually a few basic Bible doctrines. As you grow in the Lord, you will learn more teachings from the Word of God, and if I can be of help to you, be sure and write to me at the address that will be given to you. I pray that, just as you started well by accepting Jesus as your Savior, you will finish well by following the teachings found in the Word of God – the Bible.

Let me remind you that you need to forget the past; you need to maintain fellowship with God; you need to focus on the goal; you need to maintain fellowship with other believers; and you need to join a Bible-believing local church. I pray that God will richly bless you and that He will lead you into all truth.

Let me say this. If you're listening to this or you're reading this and you've never trusted Jesus as your Savior, you can do so right now. Admit that you're a sinner and you can't save yourself, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, the book of Romans tells us, but it also says the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Bible goes on to say in Romans 10:13,
*For whosoever shall call upon the name of
the Lord shall be saved.*

If you realize you're a sinner and you can't
save yourself and you're sorry for your sin,
you need to ask God to save you today. You
need to ask Jesus to come into your heart.
"Lord, come into my heart. I receive You as
my Lord and Savior." If you'll pray a prayer
like that, God says He will save you because
you're sorry for your sin and you receive
Jesus, His Son, as your Savior.

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Lord. May the Lord bless you richly is our
prayer.