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The first step for us who were wandering away from God was to turn *toward* Him and ask His forgiveness. The second step is walking *with* Him through life in a new relationship made possible by the taking away of the sin that separated us.

‘It’s not *what* you know, it’s *who* you know’, sums up Christianity perfectly. Reading the Bible and going to Church are good, but, unless we have a relationship with the Lord, they don’t have any *real* value. We read the Bible, and go to Church, *because we want* to know *more* about this One who loved us so much that He was willing to be tortured and killed to save us. Christianity is a Love story, about One who ‘so loved the world’, and *us*, who love Him, because of what *He* has done for us.

To turn and ask God for forgiveness not only entails *remorse*, but also *repentance*, turning *away* from things that we *know* are wrong. As Paul said ‘Therefore, if any man (or woman) be in Christ, he is a *new* creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become *new*.’ (2 Corinthians 5:17). So, as new creatures we live a life that is better for ourselves, and ultimately better for others. Our sin harms *us* when we do it, and it *always* harms *others*. We stole from *someone*, we abused *someone*, we lied to *someone*. So our sin is the pebble that began the ripples on the pond that move out to affect the lives of others. Avoiding a life where we harm others, makes *us* feel better. There are no *regrets* for our actions, and no embarrassing apologies to make. So, we live happier and healthier lives. But is living the Christian life all *our* own efforts? No! God did not leave us alone to bravely muddle-on in our own strength. Jesus promised ‘And lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world’ (Matthew 28:20). In Acts 2:38 we are told to ‘Repent, and be baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ...and you *shall* receive the *gift* of the Holy *Ghost*...’

2.

The Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, is God living *in* us. But *why* do we need Him? Well, *I* cannot live *your* life, because *I* am not *you*. And, *I* cannot live a *Godly* life, because *I* am not God. The Holy Spirit is ‘God working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure’, as Paul puts it in Philippians 2:13. So the Holy Spirit is God *in* us, living His life *through* us. But how can the Holy Spirit do that? It takes our *surrendering*.

When I hear a beautiful song played on a piano, I never tell that piano I loved its playing, because, *it doesn’t* play. It surrenders itself, and lets someone else play it. And that’s how the Holy Spirit works through us. Not by me playing my own tune. But, by surrendering to Him, as Jesus did at Gethsemane when He said, ‘Not my will but yours be done.’ (Luke 22:42). So, the Holy Spirit *is* the power of God to live a Godly life. What else does He do?

He *leads* us personally. ‘As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (children) of God.’ (Romans 8:14).

He *teaches* us. ‘...He will guide you into all truth.’ (John 16:13).

He *empowers* us. ‘But you shall receive *power*, after...the Holy Ghost is come upon you: And you shall be witnesses unto me...’ (Acts 1:8).

He continues the works of Jesus on earth today. ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believes on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.’ (John 14:12).

So, we are a new creation, living a new life. Not following a set of rules, but following a living God. But what does that involve?

Firstly – a **relationship**. If you are in love with someone, you would *want* to tell others about them. But, you would *prefer* to be sitting *beside* them talking intimately, being together, which is the backbone of

3.

any relationship. You would tell them how you feel about them, what your day has been like, and what you are planning for tomorrow. And that is the place of **prayer**. It is conversing with God as you would talk with any other friend. On your knees, honouring Him as Supreme, but also, while you’re walking or driving. Jesus said ‘...I will never leave you, nor forsake you.’ (Hebrews 13:5). So He is always with you listening. ‘...by prayer...let your requests be made known unto God.’ (Philippians 4:6). Prayer changes things, because God does nothing, *except* in answer to prayer. (John Wesley).

Loving someone brings a personal **commitment** to be faithful to them, and to avoid doing anything that would offend them. And commitment is an integral part of loving Jesus Christ. ‘And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are *pleasing* in His sight.’ (1 John 3:22).

Read the **Bible** daily. ‘These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures *daily*, whether those things were so.’ (Acts 17:11). You can get good books and Bible studies which will help you learn in a short time what would otherwise take a lifetime to sift out.

But it is vitally important to become part of a small group (Bible Study group etc.), where you can freely ask all the questions you want or need to ask. Or, at least be in contact with someone by letter, phone, or e-mail, who is happy to hear you out and answer all your questions.

The Bible is called the Word of God. It is also called a Sword, and a sword is used for personal protection. And, the Bible is full of promises, which have been put there for our use, to protect us from harm, evil, and want.

4.

'A thousand shall fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand; but it shall not come near you.' (Psalm 91:7).

'...Greater is He (The Holy Spirit) that is in you, than he (the devil) that is in the world.' (1 John 4:4).

'...my God shall supply all your need...' (Philippians 4:19).

'...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they *shall* recover.' (Mark 16:18). '...with God all things are possible.' (Matthew 19:26).

There is a promise for every need we could ever have in our lives so, claim them in the Name of the Lord Jesus. And God will be faithful to His Word for you.

Baptism, is a public confession that you have taken on the Name of Jesus Christ (a Christian). And, have died and been buried with Him in the waters, and have risen to live a new life. It also has the added promise that you *will* receive the Holy Spirit.

Go and **tell** others what the Lord has done for you, and the changes He is making in your life. If we have spent 40 years getting our lives into the mess they are in today, then everything won't change overnight, it *will* take some time. First our heart and attitudes will change, then everything else will follow. Jesus said 'Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things (everything else) will be added to you.' (Matthew 6:33).

When we were created we were given free-will, which means that each individual has the authority to make every choice in their own lives. The Lord knew that we could choose to *want* to know Him, or, we could choose to *ignore* Him. We could even choose to spend our lives speaking *against* Him, which many people do. But, that is a choice free-will gives them. We can go anywhere we want, and do and say anything we want. We can choose to help or murder. And, God will *never* over-ride our free-will. He will not tie our hands,

5.

chain our feet, or close out mouths. If He *stops* us from doing anything, or *forces* us to do anything, then He has taken away our free-will and reduced us to the level of slaves. But, He doesn't want slaves. He wants us to *want* to love Him by choice. And, to *want* to make ourselves available to serve Him out of love.

Calvary fulfilled the law for us and freed us from it. Paul said '*All* things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient.' (1 Corinthians 6:12). We *can* do anything we want to. But, if we have God living in us, then we will not want to do certain things, anymore than God would want to do them. But, we will *answer* for every thought, word, and act, either at Calvary with grace and forgiveness, or at the Judgement with condemnation.

We still have our free-will intact, and the Lord will *not* force us to live a Christian life. The Holy Spirit gives us a *desire* to serve God, instead of serving ourselves, and our part in it is to respond and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Find a **Church** where Jesus Christ is honoured as Lord and Saviour, and where the Bible is honoured as the Word of God, and make it your Spiritual home. 'Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as you see the day (the return of the Lord Jesus) approaching.' (Hebrews 10:25).

Find a way to serve God when you are ready to, and step out with Jesus Christ on the adventure of a lifetime, that will stretch on into Eternity.

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