

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR DECISION!

Your decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Savior will bring positive changes in your life. This brief study will help you understand your new commitment and show you how to grow spiritually.

LESSON ONE: SIN

Man's greatest problem is sin: In Romans 3:23 we read, *"All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God."* The Bible says all people are sinners and sin separates them from God.

The end results of sin: *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). The end result of sin is spiritual death—separation from God.

God loves you and has provided forgiveness for your sins: The Bible says, *"This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world ... as an atoning sacrifice for our sins"* (1 John 4:9-10). God loves you so much that He has provided a way for your sins to be forgiven so that you do not have to reap the wages of sin—spiritual death through separation from God.

The answer to your sin problem: Jesus said, *"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"* (John 14:6). Acts 4:12 confirms, *"Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."* Jesus Christ is the answer to your sin problem. He is the only way to God and the only way to be forgiven.

You must accept Jesus as your personal Savior: Romans 10:9 declares, *"If you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord: and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* If you prayed the prayer accepting Christ as Savior, this is what you did. You acknowledged your sin, asked forgiveness, and accepted Jesus as Savior.

Your past sins: When you accepted Jesus as your Savior, He forgave the sins you confessed, but He also cleansed you from all unrighteousness—even those sins you did not remember and acts you did not realize were sin. You do not need to confess these past sins repeatedly. They are forgiven and God has forgotten them. God says, *"... for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jeremiah 31:34).

Sins committed after you accept Christ: Part of the daily prayer pattern in Matthew 6:9-13 includes asking forgiveness for sins you commit after receiving Christ.

LESSON TWO: LIVING A NEW LIFE

You have experienced a spiritual birth: The Bible teaches that man is body, soul, and spirit. When you accept Christ as Savior, the change is a spiritual one—you experience a spiritual rebirth (John 3:5-8). You do not experience a physical change when you receive Christ—you aren't taller, shorter, heavier, or leaner. Your spirit is born again.

After your new spiritual birth, your soul—which is your mind, will, and emotions—must be supernaturally changed as you live out this new life. For years, your soul has ruled your spirit and your body. Whatever your soul desired or dictated, you did—whether it be drugs, alcohol, pornography, immorality, etc. You did not exercise control over emotions such as anger, unforgiveness, and bitterness. You went where you wanted to go and did what you wanted to do. You got to where you are today by doing what you did. If you want things to change, you must do something different.

You must let your spirit rule: For years, your unredeemed, sinful, soulish nature has controlled your body and your spirit. Now you must learn to let your redeemed spirit control your body and your soulish nature (mind, will, emotions).

When your old soulish nature rises up and you sin, it does not mean you weren't saved. You do not need to accept Jesus as Savior again. You simply need to ask God to forgive you and give you strength to overcome future temptations. God has provided a way of escape in every temptation. Take it! *"No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).*

Repetition of sinful behavior leads to more of the same, until certain actions are so entrenched in our lives that we cannot stop. We become enslaved to habitual sin and spiritual strongholds are erected. This is why you do not want to deliberately sin. Read the struggle the Apostle Paul had in Romans 7:15-21 and the glorious solution in Romans 8.

Recognize the difference between conviction and condemnation. *Condemnation* is general. You think you are a bad person, you can never change, etc. These thoughts come from the enemy to discourage you in your new life. *Conviction* is specific and is from the Holy Spirit to reprove you for wrong so you can correct it. For example, you feel convicted because you lied to someone. This is the Holy Spirit working in you to help you live out your new life of faith.

LESSON THREE: HOW TO GROW IN YOUR NEW FAITH

Study the Word of God: You cannot grow without food. Just as natural food supplies the energy for your physical growth, the Holy Bible is the food which supplies the energy for your spiritual growth. Your spiritual growth will be in direct proportion to your increasing knowledge of God's Word. Personal Bible study must become a part of your daily routine. Start by reading the book of John.

Pray: Use the pattern of the Lord's prayer to guide you in daily prayer: Matthew 6:9-13.

Attend a local Bible-believing church so your new faith will be strengthened.

Make friends with others who are changing their lives through Christ. Become a peace-maker instead of a trouble maker, a problem-solver instead of a problem.

FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR NEW SPIRITUAL LIFE...

Download the courses "*Foundations of Faith*" and "*Kingdom Living*" from the Harvestime web site. After you complete these courses, review the additional resources available at:

<http://www.harvestime.org>