

So.... What is Christianity?



Nick Hawkes

What is CHRISTIANITY?

Nick Hawkes

Contents	Page number
What is Christianity?	2
How to become a Christian	7
How to remain a Christian	9
1. Read the Bible	9
2. Pray	13
3. Be baptised	14
4. Worship	15
5. Let your mind be renewed	15
6. Share your faith	16
7. Share in Holy Communion	16
8. Use your abilities to serve God	17
9. Give faithfully	18
10. Finish well	19
Prayers	20
Appendix 1) How to use this booklet to disciple a new Christian.	23

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

© N.J. Hawkes, May 2008

What is Christianity?



Choose what is TRUE

The Good News is that God loves you ...and seeks your love. God created you so that you could live forever with Him in His eternal Kingdom. However, He has given you free will to accept His love ...or not.

What will you choose?

If you are to choose rightly, you must be very sure you know the truth about God. Truth can be difficult to find as there are many different religions teaching different things. The many religions in the world all reflect humankind's attempt to reach God.

Christianity is unique as it concerns **God reaching out to us.**

There is only the One True God

The One True God has told us that He alone is God. He has said clearly that He will not share His glory with any other god (Exodus 34:14). The Bible says:

The Lord is God in Heaven above and on earth below. There is none other.
(Deuteronomy 4:39)

Do not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.
(Exodus 34:14)

God says: You shall have no other gods before Me. (Deuteronomy 5:7)

This means that you cannot be a Christian and also worship other gods.

What can we know about God?

God inspired people to write what was true about Him in Scripture (the Bible). The Bible teaches us that God is:

- perfectly holy
- perfectly good
- perfectly loving
- eternal
- everywhere present
- all-knowing
- all-powerful

The Bible also teaches us that although there is only one God, He lives in community within Himself of:

- Father who co-ordinates the plans for creation and eternity
- Son who shares in the Father's work and who comes to earth as the man Christ Jesus
- Holy Spirit who is the invisible presence of God who indwells faithful Christians to empower their ministry

These three persons of the one God live in mutual, loving community within each other.

Our sin problem

Sins are the things we do that offend God.

Sin is:

- not acknowledging the one true God and loving Him
- not honouring other people by living lives of love and truth

The Bible makes it very clear that no one is completely perfect or without sin. It says: all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

It does **not** matter:

- how many pious religious acts we do
- how many good deeds we do
- how much learning we have

None of these things can make us holy enough to be with God. God's standard is perfection... and none of us can ever claim to be perfect. If God's standard was anything less than perfection, God would not be perfectly holy.

As God is perfectly holy, this means our sin disqualifies us from God's presence. The Bible says:

Your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you so He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2).

God's solution

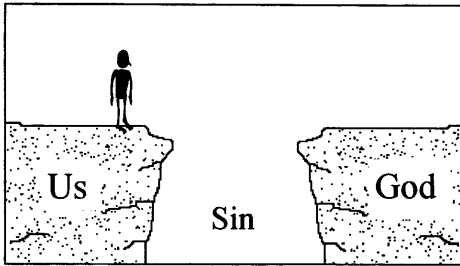
Whilst we could not solve our sin problem, God could. God loved us so much that He decided to come to us as a perfectly holy man, Christ Jesus. God came to us:

- to identify with us in the struggles of life
- to show us the truth about God
- to die on a cross to pay the price for our sins. (In this way, God's holiness and justice were both satisfied.)

Jesus was crucified on a cross and died. However, after three days, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead giving us the confidence that if we join our selves with Christ, we too will be raised by God to eternal life after we have died.

Therefore, if you put your faith in Jesus and allow Him to be Lord of your life, **YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE** and will escape God's judgment.

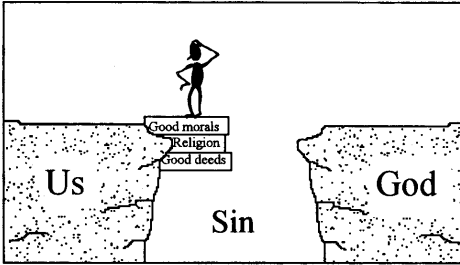
The Bible says:



Sin separates us from God

"But your iniquities have separated you from your God."

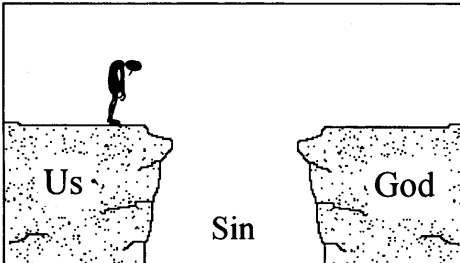
(Isaiah 59:2)



We can't earn the right to get to God

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

(Romans 3:23)



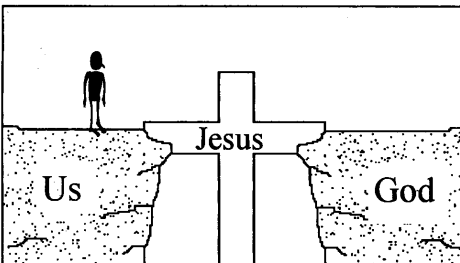
"All our righteous acts are like filthy rags".

(Isaiah 64:6)

Our sins will be judged

"For the wages of sin is death."

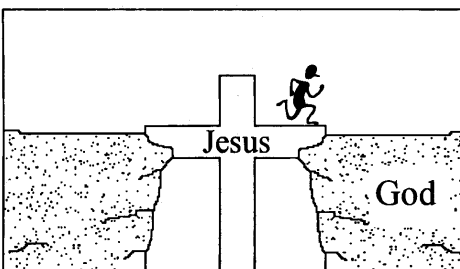
(Romans 6:23)



God rescued us through Jesus

"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

(1 Peter 3:18)



We can get to God through Jesus

"Whoever hears My words and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life".

(John 5:24)

Heaven, hell and God's coming Kingdom

It is God's intention that you live forever with Him after you die. The place where you live with God forever is called God's Kingdom. God will end this old imperfect world (polluted by sin and suffering) and combine a new Heaven and a new earth to make His eternal Kingdom. Before this final Kingdom is instituted, those who are righteous will wait for it in a place called Heaven (also called "paradise").

- Jesus dying on the cross to pay the price for your sins had won for you the right to be with God in His Kingdom after you die.
- You accept God's offer of being with Him in His Kingdom by accepting Jesus as your Lord and Saviour.
- God gives you the freedom to accept an eternal destiny with Him or to reject it.
- Those who reject Jesus will go to hell (a place of punishment and regret) until their sins face final judgment, after which they face the "second death". They will not share in God's eternal Kingdom.
- Therefore, accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour and be saved.

The crucial question is: will you choose eternal life? Will you choose truth? Will you choose to be rescued by God?

Christianity is NOT a Western Religion

Christianity is not a Western religion.

- Jesus was born a Jew in the Middle East and the earliest missionaries travelled to Africa, the Balkans, and India
- Christianity is not a way to become rich and westernised. Christians are those who are prepared to sacrifice their wealth and be persecuted for their faith (read Luke 14:33)
- Christians around the world continue to honour their own national customs in every area that does not go against God's principles of truth, love and justice

How to become a Christian

You become a Christian by:

- 1) Believing Jesus is the Son of God who has come to us and died to pay the price for our sins.
- 2) Confessing your sins. This means being honest and fully admitting to God all the wrong things you have done in the past.
The Bible gives us this assurance: 'If we confess our sins, He (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).
- 3) Repenting of your sins. This means to stop living in a way that displeases God. The Bible says: 'Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord' (Acts 3:19).
- 4) Renouncing every other god, spirit or superstitious ritual you have previously been involved with in your life. This means to give them up and announce you have done so.
- 5) Declaring Jesus to be your Lord and Saviour.

A prayer you can pray to become a Christian?

If you do want to accept Jesus as your Lord and have the certainty of an eternal future with God, then there is no reason why you can't become a Christian right now. To do so, simply pray this prayer:

*Heavenly Father
Thank You for Your love for me.
Thank You for sending Jesus to die for me to pay the price for my sins.
I turn from my sinful ways now
and ask You to forgive me for living life without You in the past.
I now accept You as my only Lord.
In Jesus' name, I cut the ties to all other gods
and reject the ceremonies and fetishes associated with them.
From today, I worship only You – the One True God.
I ask that You fill me now with
the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit
so that I can follow Jesus faithfully
and fulfil Your purpose for my life.
I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen*

If you have prayed this prayer sincerely, congratulations on becoming a Christian!



Be assured

Be encouraged by these assurances from the Bible:

Yet to all who receive Him (Jesus), to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).

Jesus said: Whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life (John 5:24).

Belong to a church

Your first priority as a new Christian is to find and attend a good Christian church. A good Christian church is one that:

- believes the Bible's teaching
- demonstrates Jesus' love and acceptance
- shows integrity
- equips you to use your gifts to do God's work
- is active in sharing the love and truth of Christ to others

Church is not a building; not a denomination and it is not a Sunday service. It is a group of Christians who gather together to:

- 1) worship God
- 2) help each other grow as disciples of Christ

The Bible says: *"Let us not give up meeting together ...but let us encourage one another"* (Hebrews 10:25).

Just as a burning coal will lose its heat when removed from the fire, we need to be put back in the fire regularly with other pieces of coal so we can share our heat and help each other to burn brightly

- 3) combine their different abilities in order to:
 - enable others to become disciples of Christ
 - help those in need

The Bible says: *"Each one of us should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms"*
(1Peter 4:10)

The purpose of the church is to give God glory by its words and actions (read: John 15:8; Ephesians 3:10).

A good Christian church will teach you, care for you and baptise you.



How to remain a Christian

These ten disciplines will help you remain a Christian:

1) Read the Bible

Try and read a section of the Bible each day. Knowing the principles of God in Scripture will teach you what is true and how you should live.

What does the Bible contain?

The Bible comprises 66 Books, written by 40 writers over at least 1,500 years. It details how the Jewish and Christian people have experienced God reaching out to them in history.

There are two sections to the Bible, the OLD TESTAMENT which was written before Jesus came, and the NEW TESTAMENT which was written after Jesus came.

How to use the Bible

Bible passages are referred to like this: John 3:16-17

John is a book in the Bible. Find which page it begins on by looking in the front of the Bible at the index.

3 means it is the third chapter of the book of John.

16-17 refers to the verses in the chapter.

When you have found the passage you want to read in the Bible:

- RELAX, be still and focus on God.
- PRAY and ask God to show you what it is He wants you to learn.
- READ the passage and ask yourself two things:
 - What key principles does it teach?
 - How will I apply it to my life?

Here are forty daily readings to help you **grow as a Christian**:

Day	Reading	Day	Reading	Day	Reading	Day	Reading
1	John 3:16-21	11	John 18:1-11	21	Luke 12:22-34	31	Colossians 3:5-21
2	John 5:17-24	12	John 18:28-40	22	Luke 15:11-24	32	Acts 2:22-39
3	John 6:35-47	13	John 19:1-16	23	Luke 18:18-30	33	1 John 4:7-18
4	John 10:7-18	14	John 19:16-24	24	Luke 19:1-10	34	Revelation 3:1-6
5	John 13:1-17	15	John 19:38-42	25	Luke 22:14-27	35	John 13:1-17
6	John 14:1-14	16	John 20:1-9	26	Matthew 4:17-25	36	John 14:1-14
7	John 14:15-27	17	John 20:24-31	27	Matthew 5:1-12	37	John 14:15-27
8	John 15:1-11	18	Luke 6:27-38	28	Matthew 6:5-14	38	John 15:1-11
9	John 17:1-11	19	Luke 8:4-15	29	Philippians 2:1-16	39	John 17:1-11
10	John 17:20-26	20	Luke 9:18-24	30	Colossians 1:9-23	40	John 17:20-26

Know the power of God's Word

The Word of God has great power. Its divine authority means that its truths reach into the hearts of those willing to hear it. The Bible says: "For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

Know the importance of reading God's Word

Reading God's word will teach you:

- the truth about God,
- the promises of God
- how to live in a way that pleases God

The Bible says:

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the person of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8).

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

Know the benefits of memorising God's word:

- you are always equipped with knowledge about God
- you can meditate on God's Word at any time
- you can teach others about Jesus with confidence
- you can keep yourself from believing and doing wrong things

King David said in the Bible: *"I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You" (Psalm 119:11).*

Here are twenty key verses from the **Bible** for you to memorise:

1) Christ makes you new

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

2) God's love

For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

3) Sin separates us from God

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you so He will not hear.

(Isaiah 59:2)

4) Jesus came for sinners

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

(1 Timothy 1:15)

5) Sin's penalty

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 6:23)

6) Christ paid the penalty

For Christ also suffered once for sins the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the spirit

(1 Peter 3:18)

7) Your need to accept Christ

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me.

(Revelation 3:20)

8) Your need to believe Christ

Yet to all who receive Him, to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.

(John 1:12)

9) Saved by grace alone

For it is by grace you have been saved through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is a gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

(Ephesians 2:8-9)

10) Need to repent

Your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

(Acts 3:19)

11) Need to obey Christ

Whoever has My commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me.

(John 14:21)

12) Need to follow Christ

If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me.

(Mark 8:34)

13) The Bible

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.

(2 Timothy 3:16)

14) Church

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

(Hebrews 10:25)

15) Assurance of forgiveness

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:9)

16) Assurance of salvation

Whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

(John 5:24)

17) Temptation

God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

18) God's faithfulness

Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

(Hebrews 13:5)

19) Share your faith

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you for the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.

(1 Peter 3:15)

20) Prayer

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

(Philippians 4:6)



2) Pray

God wants to share our love. We therefore need to share our thoughts with God through prayer. Prayer is simply talking with God, either silently or out loud.

Prayer is the means God has given us to communicate with Him, so it is no wonder that the Bible tells us to: *“Pray continually”* (1 Thessalonians 5:17). If you don’t talk together in prayer, your relationship with God will not grow.

Through prayer, we:

- **seek** God (Jeremiah 29:12-13)
- **listen** to God (Acts 13:2)
- **ask** of God (James 1:5; Philippians 4:6)
- **offer** to God (Psalm 141:2)

Prayer is something that ALL Christians can do. God already knows the thoughts of your heart but wants you to share them with Him. Jesus taught us to pray to God as “Father”. This means we can talk with God truthfully, respectfully and lovingly as a child would talk with their earthly father (Matthew 6:7-13).

The following factors will help you pray effectively:

- Don’t have selfish motives when you pray (James 4:3).
- Do not cherish sin in your heart when you pray (Psalm 66:18)
- Be determined to obey God (Zechariah 7:13).
- Don’t pray in order to show off (Matthew 6:5). Pray in secret (Matthew 6:6), but also with other Christians (Acts 1:14; Matthew 18:19-20).
- Be mindful of what you say when you pray. Let prayer be sincere rather than mechanical or careless (Matthew 6:7-8; Ecclesiastes 5:2).
- Make sure you have forgiven others when you pray for God to forgive you (Mark 11:25).
- Ensure you are being considerate of others in the way you live your life (Mark 11:25; 1 Peter 3:17).
- Pray with faith (James 1:6-8) and confidence (1 John 5:14-15).

The Lord’s Prayer

When Jesus’ disciples asked the Lord Jesus to teach them how to pray, He taught them this prayer (Matthew 6:9-13):

*Our Father in Heaven
hallowed be Your name,
Your Kingdom come,
Your will be done,
on earth as in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us in the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the Kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen.*

This prayer has a beautiful balance of praise, submission, confession and petition, all of which should feature in our own prayers.

3) Be Baptised

Baptism is a symbolic act which God asks all Christians to perform to demonstrate that you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.

The symbolism of baptism

Baptism symbolises two things:

1) It represents a burial service for the dead.

It represents the death of your old sinful self. If you are baptised by being submerged under the water, this represents you being buried as someone who is dead. Being raised up from the water symbolises the fact that we will be raised with Christ to eternal life. The Bible says: *we were buried with (Christ Jesus) into His death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead ...we too may live a new life...united with Him in His resurrection* (Romans 6:4-5).

2) It represents a bath for the dirty.

It represents Jesus washing away the sinful, evil, anti-God ways from your life. The Bible says: "Be baptised and have your sins washed away, calling on His name" (Acts 22:16).

The different methods of baptism

Different Christian churches baptise in different ways. Some who emphasise the washing aspect of baptism, pour water over the head of the person being baptised. This may be reduced to merely sprinkling water over someone.

Other churches baptise by fully immersing people under water. This emphasises both the washing aspect, and the burial aspect of baptism. Baptism by full immersion seems to be the usual method of baptism in the Bible.

Some churches divide the ceremony of baptism into two parts. Christian parents can have their child baptised as a baby. In this ceremony, they:

- thank Jesus for dying on the cross to pay the price for the sins of all people, including those that will be committed by their child
- thank God for the gift of the child
- promise to bring the child up to know and love Jesus

When the child matures and becomes independent of its parents, the young adult then confirms that they have accepted Jesus for themselves in the second ceremony of confirmation. This act completes (confirms) the act of baptism.

The Biblical model reserves baptism for those old enough to repent and believe for themselves. The Bible says: "*Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins* (Acts 2:38). For this reason, many believe it wise to reserve baptism for those who are old enough to repent and who know what they are doing.

The benefits of baptism

The benefits of baptism are:

- It is an act of obedience to God's command for us to be baptised
- It is a public witness that you are a Christian
- It cuts the spiritual ties to the demonic activities of false gods and evil spirits. It signifies to the spiritual world that you are under God's authority

4) Worship

There is nothing more important than worshipping God. The Bible says:

"...continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise" (Hebrews 13:15).

"Let everything that has breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6).

"Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendour of His holiness" (Psalm 29:2).

Worship means to pay homage to and honour. Worship is not a dutiful, dull routine of singing songs of praise to God and saying prayers, it should be an expression of your love for God. Jesus said that the most important commandment is to: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength"* (Mark 12:30).

Expressing our gratitude to God with thanksgiving is at the heart of worship. The Bible urges us to make thanksgiving a regular component of our prayers to God. (Philippians 4:6).

Worship can:

- be exuberant and loud (but not disorderly) ...or quiet and meditative
- involve the raising of hands to God, or kneeling, or lying prostrate before God, or even dancing

Corporate and individual worship

The Bible encourages Christians to:

- worship privately, on our own (Matthew 6:6)
- worship corporately, when we are gathered together with other Christians (Acts 1:14; Matthew 18:19-20).

5) Let your mind be renewed

Becoming a Christian will change the way you think and speak. Our responsibility is to allow God's renewal of our minds to happen. The Bible says:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is (Romans 12:2).

Some renewal of the way we think and speak will happen quickly, some will take longer. It will happen as you learn to submit to God's will. This renewal of your mind will result in your behaviour changing so that it reflects God's love, justice, truth and strength. Some of the things you can expect to change are:

- fear becomes hope
- deceit becomes honesty
- addiction becomes freedom
- bitterness becomes forgiveness
- ignorance becomes knowing
- hate becomes love
- cynicism becomes motivation
- meaninglessness becomes purpose

6) Share your faith

God tells us in the Bible to share our faith with others. The Bible says:

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect (1 Peter 3:15).

Then Jesus came to them and said, ...go and make disciples of all nations..."
(Matthew 28:18-20).

How to lead people to faith

- 1) Establish a friendship with those who are not yet Christians. Earn their trust and respect so that they allow you to speak to them about God. Show that you care for them. Listen to their concerns and respond wisely in ways that are Biblical and helpful.
- 2) When it is appropriate, share the essential truth of the Christian Gospel you have learnt in this book.
- 3) Ask whatever is appropriate to help your friend make a commitment to Christ, e.g: "It sounds to me that you are ready to become a Christian." Is that what you want?
- 4) If they say yes, ask them if they are willing to bear the costs, (possible persecution) of being a Christian. If they are, invite them to pray a prayer the same, or similar, to the one in this book in which the person confesses their sins and accepts Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
- 5) Take them along to a good Christian church where they can learn to be a disciple of Christ.

Your testimony

You will have your own story of how you came to be a Christian. Being ready to tell people this story is one of the most powerful ways of introducing others to the Good News of Christianity. Practice sharing your testimony briefly using the three headings:

- before I was a Christian
- how I became a Christian
- why I am still a Christian

7) Share in Holy Communion

When we meet together with other Christians, Jesus asks us to remember Him using a simple ceremony. That ceremony is called Holy Communion.

Jesus began the tradition of Holy Communion at the last meal He had with His disciples before His death. At that time, Jesus took the bread, broke it and distributed it to His disciples saying that the bread represented His body which would be broken in order to give eternal life to others. After supper, Jesus took a cup of wine and shared it with His disciples saying that the wine represented His blood which would be shed to take away people's sins (Luke 22:19-20).

Since that time, Christians have shared bread and wine (or grapejuice) regularly together in the ceremony of Holy Communion. Some churches do this each week, others each month. The Bible does not tell us how often to celebrate Holy Communion, it simply says that we are to celebrate it with reverence (1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

Holy Communion is a time when:

- Christians celebrate Jesus' death on their behalf in order to pay for their sins
- Christians have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet waiting for them in Heaven
- Christians commit themselves to living in unity with each other (as they all share the one piece of bread - the one body of Christ).

8) Use your abilities to serve God

God has given every Christian:

- natural abilities.
- spiritual abilities (spiritual gifts given by God's Holy Spirit to empower your ministry)

and God expects you to use both in His service.

Questions

- What are your natural abilities? How will you use them in God's service?
- What are your spiritual gifts?

Six simple actions will help you discover what they are:

- 1) PRAY.** Ask God to guide you as you seek to discover your spiritual gifts.
- 2) STUDY.** Read and study the Bible passages (below) that teach about the different spiritual gifts God gives to Christians.
- 3) EXPERIMENT.** Try out your spiritual abilities by doing the ministry you suspect God has given you the spiritual gift to do. Be sure to do this under the oversight of wise and mature Christians who can guide you.
- 4) FULFILMENT LEVEL.** Examine your feelings about doing particular ministry. If you feel a strong sense of fulfilment, the chances are good that this is your area of ministry.
- 5) EFFECTIVENESS.** Ask yourself whether there are good results when you minister in the area you suspect you are spiritually gifted for.
- 6) VERIFY.** Ask yourself whether other spiritually wise people confirm that you are spiritually gifted for a particular ministry because of the good results they see.

Listed below are most of the spiritual gifts listed in the Bible. Please underline any words in bold which describe a ministry you feel God has gifted you for:

From Romans 12:6-8:

- Serving others
- Teaching
- Encouragement
- Giving
- Leadership
- Prophecy (speaking a message from God to people)
- Mercy

From 1 Corinthians 12:8-10,28

- Wisdom
- Knowledge
- Discernment
- Faith
- Healing
- Praying for Miracles
- Being an Apostle (someone who begins and maintains a number of churches)
- Tongues (praying to God with your spirit in an unlearned language),
- Interpretation of tongues (so that others can know what has been prayed)
- Helping
- Administration

From Luke 2:36-38

- Intercession (praying for others)

From 1 Peter 4:9-10

- Hospitality

From Ephesians 4:11

- Evangelist (who is gifted at leading other people to faith in Christ)
- Pastor (who is able to lead and care for a Christian church)

God will hold us accountable for how faithfully we have used the gifts He has given us in His service, so use them well.

9) Give faithfully

God invites you to be part of His church so you can participate in doing God's work there. As such, your church should have first priority in the giving of:

- your finances
- your time
- your resources

The Bible encourages all those who can to tithe, that is, give one tenth of your income to His work. Tithing was God's instruction to His people during much of the Old Testament period (Leviticus 27:30). Other styles of giving mentioned in the Bible include the giving of "gifts" and "offerings".

Tithing was encouraged by Jesus (Matthew 23:23). However, the New Testament replaces the legal necessity to give with an invitation to give because of our love for God and other people (2 Corinthians 9:7). Jesus made it clear that it was spiritually important for people to be able to give (Mark 10:17-31).

Why does God ask us to be faithful in giving?

- Because Jesus says "Follow me" in a life of sacrificial love
- Because God asks us to share in his mission
- Giving frees us from the slavery of self-centredness
- Because we receive when we give. It is a Biblical principle that our ability to give determines what we will be given. Jesus says in the Bible:
"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For the measure you use, it will be measured to you" (Luke 6:38).

In the end, we give in response to God's love.

10) Finish well

Satan and the spiritual battle

The evil spiritual forces that seek to oppose God are led by Satan, also known as the devil. Satan was a powerful angel of God who envied God His glory and tried to take it for himself. He rebelled against God and tried to defeat God's Kingdom with His evil.

Satan is responsible for:

- accusing people
- deceiving people with lies
- afflicting people with sickness
- trying to destroy God's people and all the good things God has created

The Good News is that Satan's kingdom of sin and death has been utterly defeated by:

- Jesus' death on the cross
- Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

God has defeated Satan but will allow Satan to exist for a little longer. Eventually God's final judgment against him will be carried out. At this judgment, Satan will be destroyed, along with the evil spirits (the fallen angels) and evil people who have followed him.

What this means for you is that you are caught up in a spiritual battle. Although the devil knows he is defeated, he will still try and destroy God's people until his final judgment.

Therefore, be on your guard. Arm yourself with:

- 1) truth;
- 2) righteousness;
- 3) a readiness to share the gospel of Christ with others;
- 4) faith;
- 5) Christ's salvation;
- 6) empowerment by God's word and spirit, and
- 7) prayer (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Persecution and suffering

- All Christians will be persecuted. The Bible says: *"Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted"* (2 Timothy 3:12).
- Persecution means that we have the privilege of sharing in Christ's sufferings. Jesus told us that we must be prepared to *"take up our cross daily"* (Mark 8:34).
- Suffering can also help refine our faith (James 1:2-4)
- Let your hope in God's eternal Kingdom give you the strength to endure suffering now (2 Corinthians 4:16-17).
- God has promised that He will never forsake us but will strengthen us and be with us as we face the challenges of life (Hebrews 13:5).

Finish well

There is no spiritual merit in beginning as a Christian but not completing your life as a Christian. Therefore, it is vital to keep your faith in Christ strong until the end (Hebrews 12:1-3).

Keep your gaze fixed on your heavenly prize and stay faithful. Be able to say, like the Apostle Paul in the Bible:

"I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me" (2 Timothy 4:7-8).

Finish well.



Prayers

Here are some prayers which may help you in different situations.

Whilst you can pray these prayers, please remember that you can pray to God using your own words too in order to express what you want to say:

A prayer, asking God to baptise you in His Holy Spirit.

Dear Heavenly Father
In Your awesome majesty,
You still take notice of my aching heart.
I confess my heart yearns to know and love You more
and longs to show Your truth and power in my ministry.

I repent of the sins which hold me back
from embracing You and Your love more fully.
I surrender to Your Lordship of my life
and want to proclaim, in my weakness,
that it is by Your strength alone
that I can fulfil the high calling to be Your disciple.

I therefore ask You to baptise me more fully
in the empowering presence of Your Holy Spirit.
You have promised not to withhold any good gift from us,
so I ask with confidence.

Fill me now with more of Your Holy Spirit.
Let me show the power of Your Spirit in my ministry
so that Your Kingdom on earth may grow.
I commit to faithfully exercising any spiritual gift
the Holy Spirit gives me to Your glory alone
and will use the gifts and abilities You give me
with integrity and faithfulness.

In Jesus' name, I ask to be baptised with the Holy Spirit
and gratefully receive Him now into my life.

A prayer to pray when praying for God to heal someone

Lord Jesus Christ,
We proclaim Your authority over all kingdoms.
Before You, every knee will bow and all evil will give way.
We come to You now, acknowledging our dependence upon You.

We reaffirm You as Lord of our lives
and confess our sins of unforgiveness and unfaithfulness.
We repent of these things and ask for Your mercy,
proclaiming You to be our only Lord and Saviour.

We know that it is Your desire that Your authority
be displayed through Your church.
We know that through faith in You, all things are possible.
We therefore pray according to Your will and in Your name.



We pray:

- not with our own presumption but at the invitation of Christ
- not in our own holiness but in the holiness of Christ
- not in our own authority but in the authority of Christ.

In Jesus' name, be healed of your sickness.

In Jesus' name, receive your healing.

In Jesus' name, do the things God enables you to do that you could not do before.

And in all things, give Jesus the glory and praise.

We thank You Lord for your gift of healing. Amen.

A prayer for peace

Dear Loving Father,
my heart is weighed down with anxiety
and I am weary with worry.
I therefore come to You, my safe refuge and strength.
I cast my anxieties upon You because You care.

In Your love and understanding,
I ask that You fill me with Your peace,
a peace that is beyond understanding.
I pray also for the grace and strength
to meet the challenges ahead
and to live in such a way that gives You glory.

Now, Lord, I embrace Your peace
and commit myself to Your love and care.
I trust You with my life – and am content. Amen.

A prayer of confession

Loving Lord, we rejoice in Your presence
and delight in Your glory
but we also need Your forgiveness.
Therefore, in the confidence of Your love,
we ask for Your mercy and renewal.

You have been extravagant with Your love,
but we have shared it sparingly.
You promise us joy in serving others,
But we have held back in selfishness.
You have healed our brokenness,
but we have hurt others with anger.
You have lavished Your love upon us,
but we have been bitter and resentful.

Lord, we repent with heartfelt sorrow
and declare our need of Your forgiveness.
We give ourselves to You,
asking that You restore us and empower us
to give You glory. Amen.

A prayer for strength to be a faithful disciple

Loving Father,
by Your grace, and power alone, this is what we want to say:

We will not allow our sins to separate us from You.
We will say “yes” to Your offer of forgiveness.

We will not allow our fear to separate us from our mission.
We will say “yes” to Your purposes.

We will not allow the hurts of the past to rob us of our future.
We will be people of new beginnings and hope.

We will not be indifferent to truth or fail to seek it.
We will guard the truth we see in Scripture.

We will not come to church for what we can get from You.
We will seek Your face because we love You.

We will not choose styles of worship that suit our tastes.
We will choose worship which gladdens Your heart.

We will not insist on a life free of pain and grief.
We will seek a life which honours Your name.

We will not claim Your name but live carelessly.
We will allow Your Spirit to transform our characters.

We will not be in despair for what we can't do.
We will embrace Your Spirit and do what He wants us to.

We will not be indifferent to those who are lost.
We will befriend them and let them see the Gospel.

We will not insist on our comfort and entertainment.
We will do all it takes to be faithful and finish life well.

Loving Lord, forgive us for what we have not been,
and by Your grace and Your power, make us to be
Your disciples, Your children, Your church.

How to use this booklet to

Disciple a New Christian

How to do it

- 1) Organise to meet once a week for coffee and talk with your new Christian friend about how they are going.
- 2) Don't make these meetings too formal or structured. You are mainly to be a friend who cares, who prays faithfully for your new Christian friend and who teaches essential Christian skills.
- 3) How do you teach these essential Christian skills?
 - Ask what they know about the next subject you are wanting to teach.
 - Give them a resource to help them learn more.
 - Next time you meet, ask what questions they have from:
 - their daily Bible reading (see session 3, below)
 - their reading of the next subject in *What is Christianity?*
(If they have not read it, then do the same thing next week. Don't push on to more new information until the current information is understood.)
- 4) Don't be too structured. Allow questions to come from the natural flow of conversation. Have fun. Laugh a lot and be hospitable. Be yourself.
- 5) Always end by praying for your new Christian friend out loud. Keep these prayers simple, sincere and short. This will give your new friend confidence that they too will be able to pray such prayers. Before you leave, ask your friend what you would like to pray for them in the coming week ...and then invite them to pray for you in a specific area of your need.

The Teaching Syllabus

Your teaching Syllabus is this booklet, *What is Christianity?*

Session	Subject	Pages in <i>What is Christianity?</i>
1	What is Christianity?	2 - 6
2	How to become a Christian	7 - 8
3	Read the Bible	9-11 (Begin the daily reading program on page 9) ¹
4	Pray	13
5	Be baptised	14 (If possible, organise a date for their baptism)
6	Worship & Letting your mind be renewed	15
7	Share your faith & Sharing in Holy Communion	16-17
8	Use your abilities to serve God	17-18
9	Give faithfully	18
10	Finish well	19-20

The Next Step

Ensure your new Christian friend joins an appropriate home group in which they will be nurtured and allowed to develop their gifts for ministry. This should happen as soon as possible.

And finally... **THANKS FOR DISCIPLING YOUR FRIEND ...AND LIVING YOUR PURPOSE**

¹ When this is finished, introduce them to a Bible daily reading guide such as "The Word for Today", available from www.thewordfortoday.com.au

Resources to help you take the next STEP

Find out what the Bible says about **50 of the most popular questions concerning life and faith.**

The Bible on the Key Issues of Life

Nick Hawkes

The Bible on **the Key Issues of Life** was written as a result of a quarter of a century of people asking questions about life and faith. Issues such as: Guidance; Jesus; Suffering; Other Faiths; Assurance; Getting a Job; Sex; Holy Spirit; Resurrection; Heaven... have been explored in this reference book.

The book is written in an easy-to-read form and includes all the relevant Bible references for people to explore.

Available from bookshops and online (see: www.nickhawkes.net)

Find out what's actually in the Bible – without reading all of its 800,000 words!

A Summary of the Bible

Nick Hawkes

A Summary of the Bible was initially written in response to requests from Christian mission agencies working in the two-thirds world. Demand for the book then came from time-pressured people in the developed world who wanted to know what the Bible contained and how it should be understood.

It is a comprehensive summary: about one sixth the size of the full Bible:

- Key passages of Scripture are reported in full
- Each book of the Bible has an introductory page which gives the background details of the book
- Memory verses, which you are invited to learn, are included
- Questions designed to provoke thought are also included

Available – **mid 2014** from bookshops and Amazon.