

WHAT EVERY NEW CONVERT SHOULD KNOW



You have now accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. You have been born again—born of God. The burden of sin has gone. The peace of God reigns in your heart. The joy of divine forgiveness is yours, as well as everlasting life. Since your name is now recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life, you are no longer under condemnation, but are justified by faith in Christ.

Now that you have been born from above—born of the Spirit—God has become your Father, and all the children of God, the world around, have become your brothers and sisters in Christ. All relationship with the devil has been severed; his hold upon you has been broken by the power of the risen Lord.

You have been redeemed at infinite cost—the precious blood of Jesus—and now you belong to God, and have become his prized possession. All of the divine promises are yours in Christ. You are an heir of

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God, and a joint-heir with Christ. (Rom. 8:17) Now you have begun to really live!

All of this has taken place upon your acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. However, by taking this step of faith and obedience, the devil has been aroused. He is your avowed enemy, and because Christ has broken the chains of sin which held you captive to him, you may expect him to cause you considerable "rough going."

Permit me to make a few suggestions, the following of which will tend to smooth the rough places, and help you to walk in this new and living way.

Should Doubts Come

Satan may try to get you to doubt your conversion. He may tell you that you just think you are saved, or that you do not feel any different now than you did before, and that, therefore, you have experienced no change of heart. Should this occur, look to Christ for whatever protection you need to ward off the fiery darts of the evil one. You should also know what God has said in his Word, for the use of the Bible will

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be very helpful in resisting the enemy of your soul. Jesus quoted from the Scriptures when he was tempted of the devil.

Remember this—the devil is a liar. Jesus said so. (John 8:44) So when he comes with disturbing thoughts, pay no attention to him whatever. You have no reason to doubt your conversion. The Bible says, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13) You called—so claim God's promise.

Jesus said, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37) You came—and since he did not cast you out he must have taken you in.

God's Word declares that the one who confesses and forsakes his sins shall have mercy. (Prov. 28:13) Again, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) God says that if you confess, he will forgive and cleanse—and he always speaks the truth.

Salvation is a matter of faith—not feeling. Even though you may not feel so much different after you have surrendered your heart to the Lord, rely on his word:

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"But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." (John 1:12) Your feelings may change like the weather, but God's word is immutable!

Never Consider Turning Back

If the adversary of your soul cannot get you to doubt your salvation, he will endeavor to turn you back from following Christ. Temptations may come to give up your profession of faith, and go back to the beggarly elements of the world. These will come to you in various forms through your eyes, your ears, through the sense of taste, the sense of smell, and the sense of touch. Your former worldly friends (?) may invite you to join their crowd and make merry.

But let me urge you to avoid placing yourself in positions which are apt to become embarrassing. Shun evil companions whose company will tend to drag you down. Seek rather the association of believers whose fellowship will have a tendency to strengthen you in your new Christian experience.

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"Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11)

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:17, 18)

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." (2 Cor. 6:14) This means that since light has nothing in common with darkness, and since righteousness and unrighteousness cannot mix, we are not to have close association or intimate friendship with those who do not love our Christ or live for him. God's people are a separated and holy people.

A few more Scripture passages right here will not be amiss:

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other." (Matt. 6:24)

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the

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world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (Jas. 4:4)

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." (Heb. 12:14)

How to Meet Temptation

Temptation is not sin. My dear mother used to say, "We cannot prevent the birds from flying over our heads, but we can keep them from building a nest in our hair," which simply means that we cannot prevent temptations from coming to us but we can keep from harboring them in our minds. Suggestions to do evil will come, but do not entertain them. If you do, you will be apt to yield. Always re-

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member that if you never take the first step back into sin, you will never take the second step.

You will have many battles, to be sure, but if you look earnestly and constantly to Jesus for strength in the hour of temptation he will make you more than conqueror. (Rom. 8:37) "Fight the good fight of faith." (1 Tim. 6:12)

Rejoice because your name is written in heaven, that Christ dwells in your heart by faith, and that since he has won the victory over the adversary, you share in his triumph. "For the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Neh. 8:10) You are to reckon yourself dead to sin but alive unto God. It is not your human struggles or strength that prevails against the enemy and enables you to live the Christian life, but it is letting Christ live his life in you. Be assured that "He is able to keep that which" you "have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 1:12)

*"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;
Each vict'ry will help you
Some other to win;*

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*"Fight manfully onward,
Dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus;
He'll carry you through.*

*"Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen and keep you;
He is willing to aid you;
He will carry you through."*

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10:13)

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." (Jas. 1:12)

Questionable Things

Things of a questionable nature will sometimes arise, and you will wonder whether or not you would be committing sin were you to do such-and-such a thing. On this point the advice of the mother of

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John and Charles Wesley is quite helpful. She said, "Take this rule: whatever impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes the relish off spiritual things, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself."

Furthermore, although some things may seem harmless in themselves, the doing of them will take valuable time away from other things that are really worthwhile. As you read your Bible and pray, God will give you wisdom to discern between good and evil.

What Jesus said when explaining the parable of the sower and the seed, is worth noting here: "And that which fell among thorns are they which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches, and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8:14)

If Sin Overtakes You

A child of God has no business sinning. The Bible says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. For sin shall not have dominion over

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you. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:11, 14, 2) You have turned your back on the world, the flesh, and the devil.

However, should you in an unguarded moment yield to the tempter, do not give up in despair, thinking that it is impossible for you to live the Christian life. Nothing would please the devil more than for you to abandon all hope or expectation of living victoriously.

Should you fall into sin, humble yourself before God at once, petitioning him for forgiveness, and get up and go on your way, being more watchful and prayerful than ever, and keep on the alert for the wiles of the adversary. There is no sense in staying down just because one stumbles. Here is God's gracious provision: "If any man, sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." (1 John 2:1)

Inconsistencies of Others

It is deplorable indeed, but a fact nevertheless, that occasionally those who claim to be converted act in an unchristian man-

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ner. Should you see such inconsistencies in the lives of professing Christians, do not let them disturb you unduly. Fix your eyes on Jesus, and pray that God will help you to keep your conduct on a par with your claims.

You may see hypocrites, but rather than allow them to diminish your love and your zeal for God and his kingdom, they should serve as a challenge to you to let the world know that although there are worthless imitations of Christianity, there are also genuine God-fearing, righteous living, and Christ-loving men and women in this wicked and perverse generation.

Expect Opposition:

Now that Christ dwells in your heart by faith, you are indeed rich. In fact, you are a child of the King! However, do not expect everyone you meet to congratulate you because of this step of faith and obedience to God that you have just taken. True, there are those who will admire your stand, and will be glad to help you in any way they can, but there are others who will be apt to ridicule you because of your identification with Christ and his church.

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But, remember, now you are on the Lord's side, and he is on your side, and Christ within is greater than all the enemies that are without. He has given us this encouraging word: "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." (1 John 4:4)

God will give you grace and strength in the time of need, so that with firmness, and yet with love, you can declare in no uncertain terms your fidelity to your Lord and Master, and endure the bitterest of persecutions that may come to you as a Christian. Never flinch. Do not deny your Lord. Be true to him at all costs.

"For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing." (1 Pet. 3:17)

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or an evil doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let

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him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." (1 Pet. 4:14-16)

"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Tim. 3:12)

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (Matt. 5:10-12)

CONSTRUCTIVE SUGGESTIONS

Having dealt with what you must guard against, let me now mention briefly a number of things that you should do.

Always allow God the first place in your life. Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things (temporal necessities) shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33)

Take as your motto the first four words of the Bible: "In the beginning God." Seek

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to know and to do his will, and bear in mind that your chief aim in life should be to glorify the Lord.

Read the Bible

A new life has been begotten in you by the power of the precious Holy Spirit, and you need food to sustain that life. That food is the Word of God. Read your Bible. Study it. Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God. (Matt. 4:4) Just as you need physical food in order to sustain physical life, so you need spiritual food to maintain spiritual stamina.

Be equipped with "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," (Eph. 6:17) when you go out to make battle against the forces of evil.

Then, too, the Bible tells us how to live. "Thy Word," says the Psalmist, "is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." (Psalm 119:105, 130, 11)

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"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom." (Col. 3:16)

Prayer—Thanksgiving—Praise

Of vital importance to the Christian is his prayer life. Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray." (Luke 18:1) In another place we read, "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thess. 5:17) Yes, "prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air."

*"What a Friend we have in Jesus,
All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
EVERYTHING to God in prayer!"*

There is nothing too great and nothing too small to take to the Lord in prayer. If you need employment, pray. If you need money for bills, pray. If you need bodily healing, pray. If trials oppress you and burdens distress you, pray. If you want just the right words to speak to a sinner to win him for the Lord, pray. Whatever the need, take everything to God in prayer.

"I exhort therefore, that, first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and

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giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

"For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." (1 Tim. 2:1-4)

*"Oh, Thou by whom we come to God,
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod;
Lord, teach us how to pray."*

Although you should never neglect your prayer life, when speaking to God do not always ask for something. Notice the apostle Paul's exhortation: "In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Phil. 4:6)

Our loving heavenly Father wants us to bring to him our many needs, but at the same time he desires that we thank him for what he has already done, for what he is doing right now, and for what he will do. Thank him for pardoning grace, and for

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all other spiritual, physical, and temporal blessings. Be deeply appreciative of all the goodness of God.

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." (1 Thess. 5:18)

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Eph. 5:20)

Not only should you thank him, but also praise the Lord. Give him the worship and adoration of your heart. Give God the glory and honor that is due him for his mercy that endureth forever, and for all his mighty deeds. He, and he alone, is worthy of praise.

"Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee." (Psalm 63:3)

"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." (Heb. 13:15) In this verse we see that it is not enough to have praise to the Lord in our hearts, but there should be an audible expression.

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The Psalmist, especially, tells us to praise our God. He says, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." Someone has said that the only Scriptural excuse for not praising him is to be out of breath.

"In prayer we are occupied with our needs; in thanksgiving we are occupied with our blessings; in praise we are occupied with God himself."

Then, let me suggest that in addition to making requests, and thanking and praising our Lord, after you have worshipped and adored the One who is altogether lovely, tarry in his presence. In other words, when you get through talking, wait quietly before the Lord. Let him speak to your heart. You will, no doubt, find that what he says to you is worth far more than all you have said to him. This is, indeed, true communion, and as a result of this divine fellowship, you will be strengthened to go forth into the world and live for Jesus. Take time to wait on God.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint." (Isa. 40:31)

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Confess Christ to Others

Then there is the matter of testifying or witnessing for Jesus. This should be done unhesitatingly both in public and in private, as opportunity affords. Never be ashamed to own your Lord.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." (Isa. 43:10)

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:10)

"Whosoever therefore shall confess (acknowledge) me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven." (Matt. 10:32, 33)

"Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." (Mark 8:38)

The Bible also tells us that we overcome the adversary by the blood of the Lamb,

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and by the word of our testimony. (Rev. 12:11)

Wisdom should be used in witnessing for the Lord, looking to him for the right words to speak at the proper time, and trusting him to make them a blessing. Always keep in mind that you are witnessing for him—that you are speaking for him, and not for yourself. Never push yourself to the fore, but rather give Christ Jesus the preeminence in everything. We have nothing whereof to boast. We are what we are by the grace of God.

Tell the world what Christ has done for you, what Jesus is to you, and what he will do for others if they will come to him and trust him, and tell it with the thought of winning others to Jesus. "He that winneth souls is wise." (Prov. 11:30)

Water Baptism

As soon as possible you should be baptized in water.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matt. 28:19)

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"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

Here we see that water baptism is a Christian ordinance that should follow repentance. It is an outward sign of an inward work of grace. **Before** conversion it has no spiritual significance whatever, but **after** the heart has been cleansed from sin, it speaks of our identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

"Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." (Rom. 6:4)

Be Filled With the Spirit

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18)

This glorious experience is more than a privilege, for you cannot be what God would have you be, or do what he would have you do, without this endowment of power. Jesus, himself, did not attempt his

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earthly ministry until the Holy Spirit came upon him, and you, too, need this divine enablement for the accomplishment of the will of God in your life, as well as for service to others.

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

Attend Church Services

Although nothing can take the place of private devotions, it will prove very helpful if you will frequent the house of God. In fact, there is no satisfactory substitute for attending church. Both private devotions and public worship have their place in the Christian's life. In the Bible we are admonished not to forsake "the assembling of ourselves together." (Heb. 10:25)

Now that you are a child of God, you will find delight in worshipping with others of "like precious faith." Both pleasure and benefit will be derived from faithfully

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attending church services where the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is preached in its fullness and in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way you will receive from divinely inspired messages, the soul food that you need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of your Lord. Then, too, in addition to being uplifted by **listening** to sermon, music, and song, as you join in the public devotions in the spirit of worship, your soul will be refreshed. "I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord." (Psalm 122:1)

Then, too, the Lord's Supper is a Christian ordinance which you should observe whenever possible. "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." (1 Cor. 11:26)

It would be well, also, for you to unite with some group of believers, so that you will not only have a church home, but also be able to take a definite part in, and share in the responsibility of, getting out this wonderful gospel message. Investigation should be made and divine guidance earnestly sought before making decision as to

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your church membership, for, alas, some churches are not true to God and the Bible.

Christian Service

This leads us to another thought—that of rendering definite service for our Lord and Master. We are not merely to **speak** of his goodness, but allow him to manifest his life through us in loving service to others. Christianity does not consist in **not doing** certain things that the Scriptures forbid, but the doing of God's will: active service for the Master.

If possible, undertake some specific task for your Lord, even though it takes time, thought, and money—even though it may cause inconvenience. Do it for Jesus' sake. Let your life speak for him. Dedicate your life with all its talents, to the One who gave himself for you. Perhaps God would have you give full time service in some part of his vineyard at home or abroad. If not, do what you can as he directs and opens doors of opportunity.

Here are the words of Jesus, as recorded in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your **good**

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works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Remember that we are to be men and women zealous of good works, not in order to get to heaven, but because we have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, and now we want to show our love for him.

"Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." (Matt. 10:42)

"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40)

Contribute to the Cause of Christ

Now that you have received Christ, and enjoy this wonderful fellowship with him, surely you will desire to make him known to others. Among the many ways that this can be done, allow me to mention a very necessary factor in fulfilling the great commission of Jesus to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

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It takes money to carry on God's work, just as it takes money to carry on any other business, and spreading the gospel is the greatest work on earth. Much expense is incurred in carrying on the work of the Lord, and to you is given not only the glorious privilege but also the solemn responsibility of participating in this phase of the work.

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Prov. 3:9,10)

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:20, 21)

"Give, and it shall be given unto you: good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom." (Luke 6:38)

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

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If you will give systematically, generously, and even sacrificially, God will richly reward you. Many a Christian has learned by experience that to regularly set aside his tithe (one-tenth of his income) to be used in God's service, and then to give offerings above and beyond that as the Lord enables, has brought the blessing of God upon his life spiritually, physically, and temporally. Do not be afraid of giving too much to the Lord. He gave himself for you.

*Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And so, thy servant, Lord, prepare,
A strict account to give.
Help me to watch and pray,
And on thyself rely;
To do thy will from day to day,
Thy Name to glorify."*

"Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." (Jude 24, 25)

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WHAT EVERY NEW CONVERT SHOULD KNOW

Price 50 Cents Each
\$5.00 per Dozen
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