

10 Practical Steps in Following Jesus

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Step 3: I'm Going God's Way Now



Following Jesus

Every true Christian is called to be a disciple of Jesus. This means they will follow Jesus and put the claims of Jesus first in their life, regardless of the cost to themselves. They will be determined to live a life according to the example Jesus set.

“Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.”

(I John 2:6)

As you live more in the light of who God is and what He has said, many questions, tensions, confusions, perplexities and doubts will start to fade. Although some difficult circumstances may remain, you can trust that God is in control and experience real inner peace and joy.

Putting God first

“Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you.”

(Matthew 6:33)

God has given us many privileges or benefits as His followers but we also have certain responsibilities. God expects us to thank Him for all He has done for us and obey Him when He shows us His way. Our going on with Christ and growing as a Christian is conditional upon our obedience to God's will. We need to put God first and live for Him rather than ourselves. Jesus said,

“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but

whoever loses his life for me will save it.’

(Luke 9:23,24)

Following Jesus in this way may mean struggle and trials but it also means the privilege of resting in Jesus (read Matthew 11:28-30). As you put Jesus, His will and His work first in your life, you will begin to fully experience God's love and care because He has promised to provide all your daily needs (read Matthew 6:25-34).

“I (you) can do everything through him (Jesus) who gives me (you) strength.”

(Philippians 4:13)

We need to dedicate our lives to Jesus and follow and obey Him every day. The standards of life for the real Christian are much higher than the world's standards. It takes courage to follow Jesus in the way He wants but He will give us all the courage and strength we need if we look to Him and do as He requires.

God's way holds pleasure and fulfilment

“You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence (here on earth), with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”

(Psalm 16:11)

Being a Christian isn't a bore but rather there is great pleasure and fulfilment in it that nothing else can bring, because Christians are living a life that is pleasing to God. The pleasure of sin will eventually

destroy you, but God's pleasures will benefit you for all eternity.

God will show us His way which is the best way

When you make important decisions as a Christian, don't just do what you feel is right but rather seek God and let His Holy Spirit guide you. Also be influenced by God's Word (the Bible) as you read it daily. If you are not sure what to do or you want God's guidance, a good question to ask yourself is 'What would Jesus do?'. If you have the slightest doubt then don't do it, especially if your God-given conscience is troubling you. Let God guide you and let the peace of God rule in your heart (see Colossians 3:15).

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."
(Proverbs 3:5,6)

Seek to put Jesus first in all you do. If you find you cannot invite Jesus into an aspect of your life (perhaps something you are ashamed of), then cut out that activity or area because it will lead you away from God. Let God work out His plan and His will for you. You have trusted Him with your soul for eternity, now trust Him with your daily life. Trust Him to sort out your problems and needs. He can and will help you in everything.

"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4:19)

God asks us To live by faith

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see."
(Hebrews 11:1)

Faith is believing God and what He has said rather than what we see or feel. We need faith in God.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."
(Hebrews 11:6)

How do we receive faith?

"So faith comes from hearing and hearing by the word of Christ."
(Romans 10:17 - NASB)

Faith comes when we hear God's word to us and we believe that God will do as He says He will. If you have given your life to Jesus and therefore are born again, then you have a measure of faith.

"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."
(Romans 5:1,2)

Can we express our faith in giving?

God has inexhaustible riches available for His children. We are heirs to all He possesses (see Romans 8:17) and God is eager to share those riches with us (see Romans 8:32). Everything we have is from God and He has made us stewards or caretakers of this. We can show our gratitude to God by giving generously of ourselves – our time, possessions, talents and money – to those who have needs. Giving is learning how to share and be a good steward of what God has given us. The Bible says,

"Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows generously will also reap generously."
(II Corinthians 9:6)

We cannot give more than God will give back to us (see Luke 6:38).

What about water baptism?

From the very first days of the church, people were baptised by being completely immersed in water when they became a believer (see Acts 2:38,39). Baptism means very simply 'being plunged or dipped'. The same word is used in the Bible to describe a garment being dyed. To dye a garment it is immersed into the dye and the result is that the garment takes on the full colour of the dye. This process of dying makes a fundamental change to the garment – it comes out a different colour. So it is with water baptism. When a person is baptised they are plunged or dipped into water to signify that a great change has taken place in them. In this case, it is not the water (like the dye) that makes the change, but the power of God.

The best explanation of the importance of water baptism in the Bible is Romans 6:1-11. Take time to read these important verses and you will gain some idea of the significance of this action. We can sum it up like this:

- It symbolises burial. We are being closely identified in this symbolic action with the death of the Lord Jesus. A person who is baptised is saying that they have died with Christ (see Romans 6:3).
- It testifies to the fact that our old life is ending. We are not here speaking about physical death, but the truth that when a person becomes a Christian believer, they are cut off from their old way of life (see Colossians 2:11-12).
- It affirms that we are starting a new life with Jesus Christ (see Galatians 2:20).
- It confirms that our fellowship is with the living God: Father, Son And Holy Spirit (see Colossians 3:1-4).

- It *represents* the washing away of our sins because we have availed ourselves of the work of Jesus on the Cross (Acts 22:16).
- It is a *confession* that we stand in the truth of the faith which Christians have held from the beginning (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-7) and that we have moved from the reality of our old life into the power of God's new life (see II Corinthians 5:17).
- It *fulfils* the command of the Lord Jesus Himself which is a sign that we mean to obey all His words to our lives as His faithful disciples (see Matthew 28:19).

Full immersion water baptism is carried out after a confession of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He has done for you and it is done in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ask your local church for details about water baptism by full immersion. Some churches will have differing attitudes towards water baptism to the one presented here. Ask God what He wants you to do about it and discuss it with your church leaders.

Questions and tips:

1. How should we live as disciples of Jesus according to John 8:31,32 and Colossians 3:17?
2. Do we have a responsibility before God for the way we live? (Matthew 5:16)
3. What do the following verses say about us in Christ Jesus? (II Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 2:9,10; Colossians 3:9,10)
4. Can anything separate us from the love of God? (Romans 8:38,39)
5. What assurance does the Holy Spirit give us that we are children of God? (Romans 8:14-17).

6. What is the greatest characteristic a believer can manifest? (I Corinthians 13:1-13)
7. For your encouragement read: Ephesians 2:6-10; II Peter 1:3.
8. Does walking by faith mean we shut our eyes and do what we feel is right and hope for the best? (Hebrews 12:2)
9. What can faith in God do? (Mark 11:22,23)
10. What do the following verses say about water baptism? (Matthew 3:13-17; I Peter 3:21,22)

Prayer

Almighty God, thank You for all you have done for me in Jesus. I want to live as His disciple. Please help me and strengthen me as I seek to do this. Show me what Jesus would do in every situation that I face. Help me always to put Him first in everything that I do. Thank you also for the faith you have given to me that has enabled me to become one of your children. Help my faith to grow that I might serve you more effectively. There is still much that I do not understand but I trust my life into your hands. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.