

Ok I Believe. Now What?

By: Daniel Orona

Welcome to the Body of Christ! I can't begin to tell you how happy I am that you made the decision to follow Christ and believe with your heart and confess with your mouth that He was crucified as our payment for our sins and rose from the grave in the full power of the resurrection. You are embarking on a journey with a man who is wholly God and wholly man; who will stick closer to you than a brother and most importantly, who loves you more than you will ever understand.

By now, you've felt the relief that comes with salvation. The feeling of the weight being lifted off of your shoulders and that things are going to be different from this point forward. Yes, they will, but also let me caution you not to compare your new relationship with Christ to other more established relationships. Just like when you meet anyone for the first time there is an awkwardness. You don't really know what to say. You don't know what interests they have or what they want from you. Our relationship with Jesus Christ starts almost the exact same way. Even the apostle Paul had to learn from the Christians at Damascus before he started his ministry (Acts 9). All of us must learn and grow into our relationship. A seed of Christ was planted in you well before you ever came to salvation, now that plant is just breaking through the ground with your salvation. Just as a new plant needs water and food, so do you need water and food to grow your relationship.

But what are you supposed to do? The obvious answers are get into Scripture and begin to pray, but how do you do either of these. The Bible is so long and where should you start and praying just feels awkward. The main thing is don't give up on either even though you may not think that you are doing either very well or that you are learning. You are. It just takes time to see fruit.

So let's talk about the Scripture. It's made out of 66 books. There are 49 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. The division is based upon the dispensation, or how God was dealing with man, at the time. The Old Testament is anything before Christ. I won't get too much into the different dispensations here, but there will be an article/podcast on this topic. What's important to know now is that the Old Testament is exactly what it sounds like. It's old and has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ and you are now under the New Testament of grace. The Old Testament is good to understand that from the foundation of the world Christ was prophesied as all of the Old Testament Scripture points to Jesus Christ. But starting out there can cause significant confusion as to what your relationship with Christ is to look like.

As you open your Bible, know that it is the infallible Word of God. There are no mistakes in the Bible. There are no contradictions. Yes it was written by men, but men inspired by God to give us the foundation of our faith in Scripture. It is perfect and complete and good for all correction, direction and reproof. God will never ask us to do anything outside of His foundational teaching in Scripture. We will talk about the leading of the spirit later, but He will teach us and guide us according to what is written in Scripture.

So, rather than starting at the "In the beginning," my suggestion is to start at the book of Romans. This lays out in very basic terms the foundation of your new found redemption. This will show you what you are redeemed from, introduce you to your greatest enemy (spoiler, it's your flesh) and get you started on the foot of grace. After starting there, go back to the gospels and focus on how Christ was while He was on this earth. Understand His love for the people and His disdain for the religious hierarchy at the time. Seeing how Christ operated on this earth, gives us the blueprint of how we are to treat people,

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particularly those that are our enemies and those that are downtrodden (another spoiler, it's with love and grace).

Regardless if you take my advice or not, please make sure that you try to see Jesus Christ walking through every word and every verse of the Bible. Everything points to Him and His supernatural work on the cross and in the resurrection. Before you begin to read, try saying this prayer,

“Lord, I ask that the Spirit and Revelation in the knowledge of Him be upon me as I go into your word. Allow me to see you Jesus walking through these pages. Teach me and guide me into your wisdom and let me have a deeper understanding of who you are.”

You've seen a revelation of Jesus Christ as your savior, but there is so much more and through Scripture you can find Him not only to be your salvation, but your King, your brother, your intercessor and much much more.

This is just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Scripture, but just like one of my bosses said one time, you eat an elephant one bite at a time. The important thing is that you are starting.

So let's talk about prayer. Prayer is awkward when you start. Think about a first date. You aren't sure what to talk about or what to say. You don't fully know what they want or what you want from them. There's an awkwardness until you get to know each other. That first date is much different than the marriage you may be in now. Our relationship with Christ is the exact same. It starts with us unsure, but he knows and expects it. He gives us the time to grow in Him. Yes he knows your faults. Yes, He knows your shortcomings, so be open and honest with Him. He still loves you and saved you despite all of those things. He will take care of them and His grace is sufficient to cover you when you fall.

Jesus gave us a road map of how to pray in the Lord's prayer, so let's break that down.

“Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name.”

Christ starts with praise. David said we enter your gates with Thanksgiving and into your courts with praise. When we pray we should praise and worship our Father. Thank Him for sending His Son, Jesus for our redemption. Thank Him for just being who He. I typically start my prayers with, “

“Dear Heavenly Father, I just praise and worship you. You are the alpha the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the great I am and I give you all glory honor and praise.”

Now that's the way I do it, but you aren't me and your relationship isn't mine. I just give that as an example, but develop your own way to praise that is personal to you and makes sense to you, but definitely start with praise.

He next says, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.” This is praying for the will of the Father in your life no matter what it is. Sometime the will of God does not line up with the things that we want or the things that we think we need, but He will meet all of our needs according to His riches and glory, even the ones that we may not think we need.

He goes on, “Give us this day our daily bread.” We should be fed spiritually by the Lord himself. Yes you can learn and grow through ministers, writings that people have written, music and many other ways, but we should daily receive something from the Lord that feeds our soul. When praying, ask Him to reveal more of Himself to you for it to be your daily bread from Him. Christ is our bread of life and He will give us fresh revelation of Himself daily if we ask Him (Ask not) and allow Him to.

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He then says, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Christ said that if any of us have ought against our brothers to not even bother coming to Him. We must forgive those that have wronged us and show them the same grace and mercy that Christ showed us. Similarly we have been forgiven, but as David said Lord forgive me of my secret sins and the wrongs that we have done to others. Praying to God in the spirit of forgiveness is a necessity.

The next part He says, “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:”. He prays for deliverance from temptation and deliverance from any evil that may come. Christ knew that in our flesh lived no good thing, so He asked God to not lead us into that temptation of the flesh, but to deliver us from any evil that we may come. I say something similar when as I’m ending I ask God to lead and guide me through everything in His will and order my footsteps and to be a light unto my pathway and a lamp unto my feet. We need the guidance that comes from the Father through Christ by the Holy Spirit for us to fulfill His will in our lives.

Finally Jesus ends it with praise, “For thine in the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen. You enter the gates with praise and you leave with praise. I always end my prayers with, “We give you the glory the honor and the praise.” My dad taught me that, but it shows the reverence and honest love and honor to who God is.

While this is a roadmap of how to pray, Jesus said don’t repeat vain babblings. Make it personal. He is a personal God and a personal Christ so make it your own. Don’t worry about how it sounds the important point is that you are talking to Him.

The last thing to get you started is to make sure that you are combining the two and praying the Scripture while you are praying. God’s word is yea and amen to the believer. He will never go against His written word, so reminding Him of it can be key to seeing things get accomplished. The Bible says that out of the mouths of two or more witnesses will every word be established. So praying Scripture over what you need is key, but you need two. So if you are praying for healing use two healing scriptures, such as:

God sent His word (Christ) and healed them and delivered them from their destructions.

Wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him and by His stripes we were healed.

There are Scriptures that apply to just about every circumstance. You can Google and find key Scriptures, but there is also a very good reference book called Keys to the Kingdom that lays out several for different situations.

Regardless, make sure you are talking to God every day and spending sometime in Scripture everyday. This will help form the foundation for your growth.

Finally, find a mentor. Someone that you trust spiritually that will agree to disciple you in love. Be open and honest with them and demand the same from them. They will help to lead and guide you on your growth and be a sounding board as you work through different situations. You are not on an island, but have an entire body of believers that are here to support you as you grow.