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# Your Most Important Step

This book presupposes that you have committed your life to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. If you have not met Jesus Christ in a life-changing way, now is the time to come to know Him.

The most important and most thrilling discovery in life is finding the way home to God. There are sign-posts that point us home to Him.

First, there is the signpost of *God's heart of love for you*. As the Creator of everything, God is perfect and holy. His heart of infinite love reaches out to embrace you. He desires to cleanse you of your sins. He longs to give you peace of mind and heart, purpose for living, and assurance of a home in heaven with Him.

The Bible says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ offers you eternal life forever with Him in heaven. But He also offers you a full and abundant life right now. He said, "The thief [the devil] does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

At this moment, God is reaching out in love to you. "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation [sacrifice] for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

The second signpost is *your need for God*. The most desperate need of people everywhere is to be forgiven by God and restored to fellowship with Him. The mad pursuit after pleasure and possessions is often an unconscious search for God. Although we were created to enjoy His presence, humanity's rebellion against God's rulership has cut our communion with Him. This rebellion is the root of all sin and has resulted in all the sadness in our world. Further, all of our self-efforts to reach God have proved inadequate.

Our rebellion against God has separated us from Him. The Bible says, "Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you . . ." (Isa. 59:2). This blight of sin has stretched over the entire human race. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6). "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

The payment for our sins is certain death and eternity without God. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

But the story doesn't end with your need.

Signpost number three is *God's provision for you — Jesus Christ*. While humanity raced madly toward judgment and doom, God intervened by sending Christ to pay for our sins.

Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. As the eternal Son of God He lived a perfect, sinless life. His death is the sacrifice God accepts to pay for all your sins. Three days after His crucifixion He physically rose from the grave, forever triumphing over sin, death, and hell. As God's only provision for sin, He offers forgiveness and new life to you, right now. Jesus himself has said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Further, the Bible declares that "there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Eternal life is a gift that God offers to you right now. This wonderful gift is provided, not because of what you have done, but because of what God has done for you. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

The proof of God's love for you is Christ's death for you on the cross. He died so you can experience the way home to God. "For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God . . ." (1 Pet. 3:18).

The fourth signpost is *your commitment to Christ*. Just what does it mean to commit yourself to Christ? First, it means repenting or turning away from your old way of living. In turning to Christ you must turn from all your sins and from all your human efforts

to save yourself. The Bible is clear that it is God who does the work in saving us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

Also, this commitment means trusting fully in Jesus' death for you as the only payment ever needed for your sins. The Bible says, "As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

Since Christ has purchased you with His own blood, committing your life to Him also means transferring ownership of your life to Jesus Christ. Now there can be no other title for Him in your life than "Lord." Jesus Christ literally becomes your Master and you become His servant. When you come to Christ you take Him both as Saviour and Lord. "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. . . . For 'whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved' " (Rom. 10:9-10,13).

Now, what will you do with Jesus, this One who loved you enough to die in your place? You cannot be neutral about Him. He made it clear, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Matt. 12:30).

Now is the time for you to repent of your sins and commit your life to Jesus Christ. To repent means to turn away completely from all our sins and all attempts to save ourselves. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

You can come to Christ wherever you are, right now. As you receive Him, He will receive you. You will finally and eternally be “home,” at peace with God. The past will be forgotten. Your sins will be forgiven. A new life will begin for you right now. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

Make this the prayer of your heart to God right now. *“Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross for me. Right now I repent of my sins and trust Your shed blood as full payment for all my sins. I believe that You are the Son of God and that God has raised You from the dead. I now receive You as my personal Saviour. I commit my life unreservedly to You as my Lord. Thank You for hearing my prayer, forgiving my sins, and coming into my life as You promised. Amen.”*

If you prayed this prayer in sincerity and faith, welcome to the family of God! Jesus Christ has promised to come into your life when, in repentance and faith, you invite Him to be your Lord. The Bible says, “And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:11-12). The Son of God now lives in you. Therefore, you have eternal life.

This book is dedicated to helping you grow as a Christian. Now that you are His, I encourage you to take steps that will lead you to a life of fruitfulness and fulfillment in your walk with the Lord.

David Shibley

## STEP ONE

# Publicly Confess Your Faith in Christ

Congratulations! You have made the most important and most thrilling discovery in life. Nothing is more wonderful than establishing a personal relationship with God. This relationship is made possible by your commitment of heart and life to Christ. By turning from your sins and committing your life to Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, you have entered into an entirely new life.

You are proof positive that the age of miracles has not passed because a miracle — the miracle of a new birth — has happened to you. This transfer of ownership is so life-transforming that Jesus referred to it as being *born again*. This is one of several expressions the Bible uses in reference to your experience of coming to know Jesus Christ in a personal way. You see, your first birth was a physical birth. But now you also have experienced a spiritual birth. Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the

Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again'" (John 3:6-7). Now, not only is your body alive, your spirit — the inner person — is alive as well. You have been made "alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:11).

The Bible also refers to your new condition of being in Christ as being *saved*. You have been saved from the penalty of your sins which would have been eternity without God and without hope. Those without Christ already live under condemnation for their sins. Jesus, referring to himself, said, "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

Few would question the fact that every person has committed some wrong. The Bible clearly says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Sin must be paid for. The punishment for sin is death and separation from God. Either you must pay for your sins yourself or trust the payment that was made in your behalf when Jesus shed His blood for you. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).

Because you have put your faith and confidence in what Christ has done for you, you will be saved from that terrible day when God judges unbelievers for their sin and unbelief. This is the awesome day when Jesus will return "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He

comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe . . ." (2 Thess. 1:8-10).

But the Bible assures you, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom. 10:9). Have you done that? Have you confessed the living Christ as your Saviour? Then the Bible says salvation is yours!

Remember, it is God who does the saving. We are the joyful recipients of the work He has done. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5).

The Bible also declares that you have been *redeemed* — purchased from the control of Satan and sin. Jesus Christ has purchased you with His own blood. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Because Christ has purchased you, He is your rightful owner. As your owner He is free to control every area of your life. Suppose you were to go to a car dealer and pay cash for a new car. The dealer receives your money, promising to give you the car in return. But when he comes back, he only gives you the steering wheel, a couple of tires, and some spark plugs. What would you say? You would probably tell him, "Look, I paid the full price for this car. I have the right to demand the full product!" So it is with Christ. He paid the full price for you. He has the right to demand the full product of

your life. Nothing is to be kept back from His gracious control. Since He created you, He knows best how you should live. "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20).

You see, the Bible says that you have been *converted*. To be converted means to be changed. You, my friend, have been changed. Once you were lost, now you are saved. Once you were alienated from God, now you are His child. Once you were on the road to judgment and hell, now you are going to heaven. Once you thought you could make it on your own, now you know that you need Jesus. That is why Jesus said, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

## You Can Be Sure

One of the most crippling attacks that the devil hurls at new Christians is his attempt to make them doubt their salvation. "Maybe I didn't say the right words." "What if I wasn't sincere enough?" "Can I really live the Christian life?" "What if I sin?" Satan tries to haunt people with these and a thousand other little barbs of doubt.

But, thank God, there is a way to full assurance. You need never doubt your salvation. You don't have to succumb to fear or doubt.

Remember this: *Your ultimate assurance of salvation is in the fact that Jesus Christ lives inside of you.* Since you have made this commitment of your life to Christ, the Bible says that Christ now lives in you. Jesus has made a wonderful promise to all who receive Him. He promised, "Behold, I