

**ONEIGHTY
SALVATION
JOURNAL**

BEFORE YOU START ...

As a church, we've provided this resource for you to help you understand the basics of what it means to be a follower of Jesus.

Maybe you are thinking about beginning a relationship with Jesus.

Maybe you've recently made the decision to accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior of your life.

Maybe you've been a Christian for a while, but you want to brush up on the basics of your faith.

No matter where you are, this resource will help deepen your understanding and faith in Jesus.

What you'll find inside of this Journal:

1. Understanding Salvation
2. A Personal Bible Study
3. New Believers Journal
4. Taking your Next Step

Our hope for you

Our ministry exists to help you connect with God and go deeper in your faith. ONEIGHTY is organized by a series of Next Steps. We know that it can be difficult to keep growing in your faith. We want to help you. Salvation is the first step. There will be more information at the end of this journal about how to take your Next Step.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to talk with us. We'd love to do whatever it takes to help you take your Next Step.

Praying for your Growth!

UNDERSTANDING SALVATION

Salvation is a free gift that anyone can accept and the Bible has a lot to say about beginning a relationship with God. Any relationship is more than a formula or checklist! However, thinking about the following teachings will help you understand God's grace and what it means to respond in faith.

1. We are all sinners.

Romans 3:23 tells us that, *"all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*. Since we have fallen short of God's glory, we must pay the penalty.

2. The penalty is death.

Romans 6:23 says, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* The price we owe for our sin is death. The good news though is that, through Jesus, we may find forgiveness and life. We are not bad people that need to be made good. We are dead people that need to be made alive. Jesus offers this life. Without Him we are responsible for the punishment on our own.

3. Jesus paid the price for our sin.

Romans 5:8 tells us that *"God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* God did not simply wipe away our sin. Our sin still required punishment. But instead of the punishment coming to us, it went instead to Jesus on the cross. Jesus did not expect us to get better before we came to Him. He met us where we were and paid our punishment for us. Our death went to Him. His righteousness went to us.

4. You receive salvation when you confess and believe.

Romans 10:9 says, *"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

A sample prayer of faith in Jesus:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me unconditionally. I have nothing to prove to you, I couldn't earn your love even if I tried. I can't be perfect; I don't have the power. I'm sorry for the times that I've ignored you and gone my own way. I need you in my life, and I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand you more and more, every day. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your free gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian and live a life that pleases you."

Have you said all of these things to God?

A PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY

The following section contains six short teachings, and each one has a few questions for thought. Work through the following material at your own pace. If you have any questions, talk with a Life Group Leader or a member of the ONEIGHTY Staff.

What is the Christian Life Like?

What's So Great About This Relationship?

Forgiveness: Can't Leave Home Without It

Direction: Which Way is God's Way?

Hope: the Future Is Secure

What Do I Do Now?

What is the Christian Life Like?

1. Becoming a Christian is like a wedding.

A wedding is a great celebration of life where everyone is happy and excited. As great as it is, a wedding ceremony is only the beginning of the marriage. A marriage is based on the commitment two people make to serve one another in love. In the Christian life, a person commits to serve God in love.

“In that day,” declares the LORD, “you will call me ‘my husband.’ Hosea 2:16

“For the Maker is your husband—the LORD Almighty is his name—the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer; he is called the God of all the earth.” Isaiah 54:5

2. The Christian life is like a party.

The Christian life isn't boring or uninteresting! It's filled with challenges and excitement and should be characterized with excitement for life and thankfulness for God's gifts.

“The Kingdom of Heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son.” Matthew 22:2

3. Being a Christian means entering into God's family.

Without God we're orphans; in Christ, we've been adopted into God's very family.

“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.” John 1:12-13

4. Living God's way leads to continual life change.

God is in the “business” of changing lives. He wants nothing but the best for his children.

“Do not conform 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—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Romans 12:2)

What does it all boil down to?

Christianity isn't just another RELIGION to fit into your life. God isn't a “KILLJOY” handing us rituals and rules to ruin our fun. Christianity is all about a real and vibrant RELATIONSHIP with God based upon his unconditional ACCEPTANCE of us.

What do you think???

1. How do these images make you feel about being a Christian?
2. What are some benefits you think might come from belonging to a church family?
3. What is one area in your life you'd like to see God change?

What's So Great About This Relationship?

(Jesus speaking) "I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you." John 15:15

Being in God's family means he gives us:

1. Forgiveness for our past

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:19

2. Direction for our present

"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path." Psalms 119:105

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

3. Hope for our future

"...faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time." Titus 1:2

"This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: (and for this we labor and strive), that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:9-10

Over the next few pages, we're going to explore what the Bible teaches about God's forgiveness, direction, and hope for our lives.

What do you think???

1. Why is it important for you personally that God has forgiven your past?
2. What are some things that have influenced the direction of your life?
3. How does hope play such a vital role in a person's life?

Forgiveness: Can't Leave Home Without It

1. No one is perfect; we've all felt guilty.

"...for all have sinned (imperfect) and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23

2. God is perfect, and our imperfection can't survive in his presence.

God's forgiveness washes away our imperfection and ALLOWS us to have a relationship with God.

3. Forgiveness is possible because God LOVES us and sent his Son, Jesus, to pay the PRICE of our imperfection.

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."
Romans 5:8*

4. Because our forgiveness comes from God, our salvation is secure and unshakable.

There's nothing anyone can do to keep us from God's forgiveness.

"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39

"I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." 1 John 5:13

What do you think???

1. Why do you think we have to be forgiven in order to have a relationship with God?
2. How does receiving God's forgiveness help you in your daily life?
3. Do you need to ask God for forgiveness over something in your life that's keeping you from him? If so, use the space below to write a prayer to God asking him for his forgiveness.

Direction: Which Way is God's Way?

1. God has a plan he CUSTOM-DESIGNED for your life.

Every believer has a special part to play, one that God has designed for us before we were even born.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart..." Jeremiah 1:5

2. God is the author of LIFE and the creator of this playground we call Earth and he wants to give us life to the fullest.

"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. Now choose life..." Deuteronomy 30:15, 19

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I [Jesus] have come that they may have life, and have it to the fullest." John 10:10

3. When faced with difficult DECISIONS, God wants us to run to him for his ANSWERS.

"If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him." James 1:5

4. Our present situations are never too difficult for us to handle.

Life isn't easy, and in many ways it become more difficult for a believer. As long as we are on this side of eternity, we will face temptation. God is in control, and he won't let us face anything we can't handle provided we rely on him.

"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

"Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint." Isaiah 40:30-31

What do you think???

1. What are some things you think God wants to do through you to help others?
2. What are some areas in your life where you feel like you really need God's strength and direction?

Hope: the Future is Secure

1. Hope: our perception of how the future will turn out

All humans live with a hope in something, for we are always anticipating something good in the future. Even when everything is crumbling around us, even in the most difficult times, we place our hope in something. Hope is powerful. Our thoughts about the future impact our actions today. The hope God offers is true and trustworthy; it will never let us down.

"Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold." 2 Corinthians 3:12

2. The hope we believers have is different from anything non-believers can hope in.

"In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from God's people, Israel, and you did not know the promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope." Ephesians 2:12

"And now, brothers and sisters, I want you to know what will happen to the Christians who have died so you will not be full of sorrow like people who have no hope." 1 Thessalonians 4:13

3. Our hope is in the Living God.

"This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: (and for this we labor and strive) that we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, and especially of those who believe." 1 Timothy 4:9-10

4. The hope God offers can't be shaken, shattered, or stolen.

"We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure." Hebrews 6:19

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:3-5

What do you think???

1. Make a list of all the things you HOPE to happen by the end of next week?
2. In what specific ways do these hopes work to shape how you live?
3. How does knowing that the future is totally secure and in God's hands help you for living today?

What Do I Do Now?

"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation." 1 Peter 2:2

1. Celebrate your new life!

As a believer, you've got the greatest thing worth celebrating: a new life in Christ!

2. Get connected with other believers.

Tell another Christian about your decision, that way you can share your EXCITEMENT and they can begin PRAYING for you.

Take an inventory of your current relationships. Are the people you are connected to helping or hindering your faith?

3. Take your Next Step

After Salvation, the Next Step is Baptism.

4. Commit to growing in your new faith.

Make it a habit to spend time with God so you can get to know him better.

5. Begin thinking of ways you can help others.

At the center of what it means to be a Christian is servanthood-helping others in the name of Jesus. There's no better time than now to start helping other people.

6. Begin thinking of how you can share the truth about Jesus with your non-believing friends.

Accepting Christ has changed your life, and it can change the lives of your non-believing friends. YOU DON'T NEED TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS to talk about Jesus. All you have to share is the life change you've experienced.

NEW BELIEVER'S JOURNAL

The following journal pages are designed to help you reflect on your decision to accept Jesus as Lord in your life.

The Bible teaches that becoming a believer is a deliberate step of faith, not a hasty decision. We want your decision to have some depth and the roots of your choice grow deeper when you reflect upon your experience.

Work through the following questions slowly, at your own pace. It's not a race and you don't have to finish all of them in one sitting. Don't let the questions limit your reflection, they're meant to serve as a springboard for your thoughts. If you go in a different direction, that's OK. This is your journal, and your thoughts and words are priceless.

Praying for Your Growth!

Why have you decided to make Jesus the Lord and Savior of your Life? What factors went into your decision?

Who are some people who were most influential in your decision?

What attracted you to the people you just mentioned? What are some of the qualities you respect or admire about those people?

How would you describe your relationship with God right now?

What are five words you think best describe God? Next to them write why you chose those words.

What do you think are some good things to do to deepen your relationship with God? (If you're stuck, think about this: what would you do to deepen a relationship with a friend?)

Why do you think God wants you to be in his family?

Who are some Christians you know and respect and could talk to about your faith?

Write down some big time questions you or your friends have about God, Jesus, the Bible, life, etc.

What do you hope and expect your new life to look like now that you're a Christian?

The Bible says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come!" (2 Corinthians 5:17) What are some of the "old things" in your life that you hope to leave behind?

TAKING YOUR NEXT STEP

The Next Step after Salvation is Baptism. Baptism is the act of a BELIEVING Christian who wants to publicly confess their personal commitment to Jesus Christ. It is the symbolic WASHING AWAY of one's old, sinful past and the RISING again to LIFE, God's way. The act of baptism can be defined as an outward expression of an inward decision.

What does baptism mean?

Baptism illustrates Jesus' DEATH, BURIAL and RESURRECTION.

"Christ died for our sins ... He was buried ... and He rose again." 1 Corinthians 15: 3-4

Baptism illustrates NEW LIFE as a Christian.

"By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead... so also we may live a NEW LIFE." Romans 6:4

Baptism does not make you a Christian. It is a demonstration that you already believe.

It is important to understand that baptism does not "save" you. You are saved only by your faith in Jesus.

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9.

Why do we get baptized?

To follow the example set by CHRIST (Mark 1:9) & because Christ COMMANDED it (Matthew 28:19-20).

When is a good time to get baptized?

As soon as you BELIEVE! THERE IS NO REASON TO DELAY! As soon as you have decided to trust Christ with your life, you can and should be baptized. If you're waiting until you're perfect, you'll never be ready.

"Those who believe ... were baptized ... that day!" Acts 8:35-38

WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU AS A PART OF OUR NEXT BAPTISM!

Ridgecrest schedules baptisms on a regular basis. Go to ridgecrest.net/baptism for more info on how to be baptized!