

First Steps In Christ

Step #1: Rejoice In the Lord

Becoming a Christian was the most important decision you could ever make. Now, like a newborn baby, you must feed on the milk of God's word and focus on taking your first steps in Christ (Hebrews 5:12-14). This series will overview some early steps you should take that will help put you on a path to spiritual maturity. To begin, though it may be tempting to rush ahead to all the other things involved with your new Christian life, it is important to rejoice in the Lord. This is what we can see happening in the Scriptures when the lost was found (Luke 15:5-7, 9-10, 32). In fact, it is one of the first things we can see some doing after baptism (Acts 8:39; 16:34). For, becoming a Christian gives you real reason to rejoice (Philippians 4:4)!

1) Rejoice that you have come to Christ.

Prior to becoming a Christian, you were spiritually lost, the enemy of God, and headed for eternity in the fires of Hell (Ephesians 2:1-3). Yet, you have now accessed the grace and mercy of God through His love and have been saved from sin (Ephesians 2:4-10)! Like the lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7), you were away from the safety of the flock but have now been found and carried home. Like the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10), your life was of no real value while you were living in sin but have now been found and are useful in God's service again. And, like the lost son (Luke 15:11-32), you wasted God's blessings on your own pleasures and came to a spiritual wasteland but have now come to Jesus for forgiveness. Though you had sinned and deserved eternal punishment (Romans 6:23), you have now experienced a new birth when you were baptized into Christ (John 3:3-6). While this does not mean all your struggles and challenges have been automatically taken away, it does mean you have an entirely new opportunity to live for the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:17). Now, rather

than serving the old master of sin, you serve Jesus Christ (Romans 6:16-18)!

2) Rejoice that you have been forgiven.

Although you had rebelled against God, you have now been redeemed (bought back) by God through Jesus's blood (1 Peter 1:18-19). Now, every sin you had committed in the past has been forgiven. While God does not remove all the physical consequences of your sin, He does not hold them against you any longer as if you are still guilty of them (Hebrews 8:12). Through your faith and obedience to Jesus Christ, your past sins have been wiped out (Acts 3:19-20). The idea of this has to do with the practice of creditors recording the debts of their debtors on wax-covered tablets. Then, when the debt is paid or forgiven, the creditor would smooth the wax and remove every trace of the debt. In fact, while you could never have repaid the spiritual debt you incurred against God by your sin, God is merciful and has forgiven you as if you never committed any sin (Matthew 18:23-27)! This has given you the opportunity to have a fresh start with God. No matter how you had sinned, God views you as if you have not committed them! For example, even though Saul (Paul) had persecuted and killed Christians, he found forgiveness through Christ (1 Timothy 1:12-17). Let this new opportunity motivate you to faithfully and zealously serve God in the future!

3) Rejoice that you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing.

Although nothing may have changed as far as how God has blessed you physically after you have been baptized (Matthew 5:45), you have went from being spiritually bankrupt to being spiritually rich in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3)! These spiritual blessings are far greater than any amount of physical blessings. These blessings include: Hope (Romans 5:5), joy (Philippians 4:4), peace with God (Philippians 4:6-7), forgiveness (Ephesians 1:7),

salvation (2 Timothy 2:10), God hearing your prayers favorably (1 Peter 3:10-12), etc. All of these blessings have been provided to you now that you are a child of God (Ephesians 1:5, 11). God has now adopted you and you can call Him your Father, and be a coheir with Jesus Christ (Romans 8:14-17)! Then, you also have an entire spiritual family now that you are in Christ – with God as your Father, Jesus as your Brother (Hebrews 2:11), and other Christians as your brothers and sisters (Matthew 12:48-50)!

4) Rejoice that you are going to Heaven. To better rejoice over Heaven, you must also better appreciate that God has saved you from the place of eternal separation from Him in the fires of Hell you deserve to experience (Revelation 21:8; Romans 6:23). Thankfully, God's gift is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). As a Christian, you are now set to receive the inheritance promised to every child of God in Heaven (1 Peter 1:3-4). This place is pictured in Revelation 21:1-22:5. Included in this is the promise that God will wipe away all tears from your eyes and there will be no more death, pain, or sorrow (21:4), there will be no evil (21:27), and you will forever be with God (22:1-5)! Therefore, rather than an eternity of suffering and separation from God in a terrible place, you (if you remain faithful to God) will spend eternity in a true paradise where you will see God and be with Him!

As you begin your life as a Christian, you should rejoice in the Lord! Rejoice that you have come to Christ, that you have been forgiven, that you have been blessed with every spiritual blessing, and that you are going to Heaven. Of all the people on this earth, no one is more blessed than you and no one has greater reason to experience true joy than you! Therefore, you should live every day of your new life in Christ rejoicing in the Lord always!

Discipleship Questions

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

Teaching: What did you learn from this lesson?

Rebuking: What are some ways this lesson challenges you to live differently?

Correction: How does this lesson help you make positive changes for Christ?

Training & Equipping: How can you apply this lesson to be trained and equipped in God's service?

Discovering God's Word Bible Study Series

Written by Eric Krieg

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