

"Perfect for brand new believers!"

WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU GET SAVED

The Glorious Life in Christ Series
Part 1

RYAN RUFUS

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A Glorious Life in Christ

by
Ryan Rufus



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FOLLOW AFTER CHRIST

You made the greatest decision of your life! You have put your faith in Jesus and invited him into your life. It may not look like it on the outside, but on the inside a miracle has taken place and everything has changed! You have passed from death to life, darkness to light, out of the kingdom of this world and into the kingdom of God. Your spirit has come alive in God. You are now a child of God, born-again to live a new life, a great life in the hands of almighty God!

“If God is for us, who can be against us?”

ROMANS 8:31 (NIV)

God is for you and has a great plan for your life! He knew you before you were even born and had already planned great things for you. Ephesians 2:10 (ESV) says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”

The good news is, your life is no longer your own, it belongs to Christ. That is the best possible place you can ever be as a hu-

man being!

“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”

GALATIANS 2:20 (ESV)

In the New Testament of the Bible, believers in Christ are called ‘disciples’. A disciple simply means a believer, a convert and a follower. When someone gives their life to the Lord Jesus they become his disciple to follow after him. There is no such thing as believing in Jesus but not being his disciple. If we receive him as Savior we must also receive him as Lord. By the same act of believing in Jesus you have also become his disciple. Therefore, as a new believer, you have now become a glorious disciple of Christ to live the life he wants you to live. You are no longer living for yourself. You have died to that old way of only living for yourself. Your new life is so much better because not only are you alive to him, but he is alive in you and wants to live through you in all his glory and power.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,”

EPHESIANS 2:4-6 (NIV)

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and

overflowing with thankfulness.”

COLOSSIANS 2:6-7 (NIV)

Let him take a hold of your life and live through you. The first act in making Christ king in your life is surrender. We are no longer the king or queen of our life – Jesus is the King and he gets to rule over us. The best thing about that is he is a good king that has good things for your life and he loves you so much.

Learn how to let Christ be king in your life. Learn how to surrender to his will and be obedient to him. Let him teach you and guide you through life.

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of following Jesus?

2

BE BAPTIZED IN WATER

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.”

ROMANS 6:3-4 (ESV)

The first act of obedience as a disciple of Christ is to be baptized in water. This is a very important thing for you to do and the first step in your spiritual growth. Baptism is an outward declaration of what has taken place inside of you. What did take place inside of you? You were united with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection! Everything that happened to Christ physically, in these three things, happened to you spiritually because of your faith in him. Your old life died and was buried, and you were raised up into new life!

Baptism is a public declaration to yourself, God, your family, friends and to the devil that this all has taken place.

Baptism is going down into the water, which symbolizes being buried with Christ. Your old life of sin and believing you could save yourself by your own efforts, was crucified with Christ (died) and is buried. As you come up out of the water you are leaving that old life behind in the grave and rising up into new life. Just as Christ rose from the dead, your spirit has come alive in God so you can now walk in newness of life in him! Baptism does not make this all happen, it just shows that you believe it all happened as you declare it publically.

The only requirement for baptism is to be a believer in Christ! If you believe in Christ and have not been baptized, it is now time to consider it. It may feel a bit strange and might take some courage, but it is an important thing to do and will be a defining moment in your life that will significantly help you grow as a disciple of Christ.

Scriptures about Baptism

“Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:16–20 (ESV)

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and

about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

ACTS 2:41 (ESV)

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, ‘See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?’ ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him.”

ACTS 8:35-38 (ESV)

“But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.”

ACTS 8:12 (ESV)

“Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.”

ACTS 18:8 (ESV)

CONCLUSION

If you have not yet been baptized in water then speak to someone at your church about it or even a good Christian friend. Let them know you would like to be baptized and then just take the plunge! You will notice the spiritual difference it makes in your life straight away.

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of being baptized in water?

3

BE BAPTIZED IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

How can we get to know God better; know how much he loves us; know his will for our lives and be empowered to live a life for him? It is simple – we need to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Just after Jesus' resurrection and right before he was taken up to Heaven, he told his disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to stay there until he sends the Holy Spirit to them.

“And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, ‘you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now... ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

ACTS 1:4-5&8 (ESV)

We then see this taking place in Acts 2:

“When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all

together in one place. ²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. ⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

ACTS 2:1-4 (ESV)

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit is a wonderful and powerful thing. It is where the spirit of the living God comes and takes up residency inside of us so that we can walk in his love, power and wisdom.

THERE ARE MANY REASONS WHY GOD WANTS YOU FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

To Help You

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, ¹⁷even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.”

JOHN 14:15-17 (ESV)

To Teach You

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring

to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

JOHN 15:26 (ESV)

To Guide You in God’s Truth

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”

JOHN 16:13 (ESV)

To Reveal Jesus to You

“He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

JOHN 16:14-15 (ESV)

To Fill You with God's Power

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you...”

ACTS 1:8 (ESV)

To Reveal that You Are a Child of God

“For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God...”

ROMANS 8:15-16 (ESV)

HOW DO YOU RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

There are a few different ways this can happen.

As You Believe in Jesus

“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

ACTS 2:38 (ESV)

“While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. ⁴⁵And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, ⁴⁷‘Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?’ ⁴⁸And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.”

ACTS 10:44-48 (ESV)

When Spirit Filled People Lay Hands on You

“Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, ¹⁵who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷Then

they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.”

ACTS 8:14–17 (ESV)

“And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. ²And he said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ And they said, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ ³And he said, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ They said, ‘Into John’s baptism.’ ⁴And Paul said, ‘John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus.’ ⁵On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying.”

ACTS 19:1–6 (ESV)

As You Ask the Father

“And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹²or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”

LUKE 11:9–13 (ESV)

There is so much to learn about the Holy Spirit. The first step is to just be baptized in him. After that you can begin the wonderful journey of discovering more and more about him.

CONCLUSION

If you have not yet been baptized in the Holy Spirit, then speak to one of the leaders in your church or a Christian friend. This is something you do not want to miss out on and will make a huge difference to your spiritual growth and your life in general. Do not see it as a weird thing. It is actually one of the most important and wonderful things you can do!

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of being baptized in the Holy Spirit?

4

BE ADDED TO A CHURCH

What did the very first church on earth look like?

“So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. ⁴²And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

ACTS 2:41-47 (NIV)

In the New Testament when people became believers in Christ

they were instantly added to his Church. When we come to Christ, we also need to become part of a local church. This is a community of believers who meet together regularly and walk out their Christianity with one another.

There is no such thing as independent and isolated Christian in the Bible. Christianity is all about walking together with other believers. This is because God wants us all to be in a church community made up of people who love each other, care for each other, encourage each other, build each other up, worship together, grow in the Word of God together, use our talents to serve others and reach out to the world together. Together we are better!

The church should become a very important part of your life now. Not only for you to grow in Christ-like maturity, but also to serve and bless others by using the talents and gifting that God has given you. The church is where you live out your Christianity and walk in your destiny. You need the church and the church needs you!

THE CHURCH IN SCRIPTURE

The Church is described in a few different ways in Scripture. Each metaphor reveals a different aspect of the Church.

The Church as a Body

Significance: Every believer, though an individual, is a part of the Church and has a specific and important role to play. We need each other and everyone is needed!

“Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its

many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. ¹⁴Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵Now if the foot should say, ‘Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁶And if the ear should say, ‘Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,’ it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. ¹⁷If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.”

²⁷“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–20 & 27 (NIV)

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, ¹²to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. ¹⁵Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to

become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. ¹⁶From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

EPHESIANS 4:11–16 (NIV)

The Church as a Flock of Sheep

Significance: Sheep that are isolated are vulnerable to wolves and other dangers. Therefore, they need to be part of a flock that is cared for and protected by shepherds – God’s leaders in a church.

“Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

ACTS 20:28 (NIV)

“To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ’s sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; ³not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

1 PETER 5:1–3 (NIV)

A Spiritual House of Living Stones

Significance: We are all being built into the Church together with God’s people for a purpose – to proclaim the greatness of

God to the world.

“So put away all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. ²Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation – ³if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. ⁴As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, ⁵you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

1 PETER 2:1-5,9-10 (ESV)

CONCLUSION

If you are not already part of a church then start looking for a good one now. If you were recently saved in a church then a good place to start is there. Otherwise, look for a church that honors Jesus, loves people and preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ and his grace. Also, know that there are some weird churches out there, so let the Holy Spirit help guide you to a good one.

“So those who received his word were baptized, and

there were added that day about three thousand souls.”
ACTS 2:41 (ESV)

“And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.”

ACTS 2:47 (ESV)

“Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”
ACTS 5:14 (NIV)

“So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.”

ACTS 16:5 (ESV)

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of being added to a church?

5

DEVOTE YOURSELF

Athletes who want to become great at their sport, need to devote themselves to it. If they are casual and half-hearted they will only be average at best. To become great and successful it requires focus, discipline and commitment. If we want to become good at our life destiny in God and great at loving the world around us with the love of God, it is going to require devotion and commitment to God, his Word, his Church and prayer.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

ACTS 2:42 (ESV)

No one can force you to be a committed Christian, you have to devote yourself. God won't even force you. You have free will. The Early Church realized the importance of living a devoted life to Christ and his Church and, therefore, committed themselves to walking in covenant relationship with Christ and with each other.

There were four main things the Bible says they devoted themselves to:

- Apostles' teaching – the Word of God
- Fellowship – whole church gatherings
- Breaking of bread – home group gatherings
- Prayer meetings – praying together and individually

APOSTLES' TEACHING - THE WORD OF GOD

The Word of God builds us up and brings us to maturity. It reveals God's truth and wisdom. It is our ultimate reference of authority concerning what is truth and what are lies and, therefore, is the perfect guide for building our lives, values and purpose upon. The Early Church apostles were teaching the Word of God.

The Bible is often referred to as the Word of God, which is true, but we must remember that it is not the words on paper that is the Word of God, but it is Jesus Christ who is the Word of God. It is the message and reality of Christ the King and Savior of the world that is the Word of God. Everything in the Bible ultimately points to this! It is this Word that builds our faith and brings us to maturity so that we can walk in the authority and faith of Jesus and impact our world. Every believer needs to grow in his or her knowledge of the Word of God. In order to exercise the wisdom of the Word we first need to know the Word. Therefore, devote yourself to studying the Bible and getting it into your heart. It will powerfully transform your life.

Jesus is the Word

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

JOHN 1:1-5 (ESV)

His Word Brings Faith

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.”

ROMANS 10:17 (ESV)

His Word Brings Maturity and Equips Us for Serving God

“All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17 (ESV)

“And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.”

1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 (ESV)

Further Reading

Ephesians 6:16-18

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

Hebrews 4:12-13

FELLOWSHIP – WHOLE CHURCH GATHERINGS

The original Greek word for fellowship is the word *koinonia*. It refers to the Church meeting together. This is not in a superficial or impersonal way. Instead, it is a deep and meaningful way of sharing life together, building each other up and being equipped to partner in the purposes of God together.

Whole church gatherings are important because they help a church to walk in unity of vision and common purpose. To be built up and equipped through the teaching of the Word of God so each person can serve in their part in the body of Christ.

“All the believers were one in heart and mind.”

ACTS 4:32 (NIV)

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, ¹²to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, ¹⁴so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. ¹⁵Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to

grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

EPHESIANS 4:11-16 (ESV)

THE BREAKING OF BREAD — HOME GROUP GATHERINGS

The breaking of bread refers mostly to smaller group fellowship where it was more practical to get together and celebrate the communion meal (the breaking of bread). The Early Church met corporately as one community as well as from house to house in smaller, more intimate settings. This is where you can develop closer relationships with other believers, be discipled and disciple others, encourage each other, pray for each other, discuss the Word of God together and grow in it, worship Jesus together and celebrate His grace in each others lives.

“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts...”

ACTS 2:46 (NIV)

“Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.”

ACTS 5:42 (NIV)

PRAYER MEETINGS – PRAYING TOGETHER AND INDIVIDUALLY

This refers to praying together as a church. The Early Church actually met together every day to pray. Here is what happened in one of their prayer meetings just after encountering some persecution for preaching the Gospel:

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. ²⁴When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God...²⁹ ‘Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. ³⁰Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.’ ³¹After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

ACTS 4: 23,24 & 29-31 (NIV)

The life of a believer is one of prayer. Prayer declares our ultimate trust and need for God. Not praying is a sign we feel we can do it all on our own and do not need God. But prayer brings God into our situations and allows him to rule in them. Prayer is us partnering with God to see Heaven coming to Earth all around us and God’s purposes being fulfilled through our lives. The Bible is full of references to prayer and testimonies of the powerful things that happen when people pray!

Further Reading

Romans 12:12

Phillipians 4:6
1 Timothy 2:1-3
Romans 15:30-31
2 Corinthians 1:11
Ephesians 6:18-19
Phillipians 1:18b-19
Colossians 4:2-3
Colossians 4:12-13

CONCLUSION

God has four main things he wants you to devote yourself to in order to see you growing in spiritual maturity, walking in your destiny and becoming an effective part of his Church: To devote yourself to studying the Word of God; to your church's corporate gatherings; to your church's home group gatherings and to the prayer meetings (and a life of prayer). This is all part of normal Christianity!

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of devoting yourself to the following?

- The Word of God
- To the corporate church gathering
- To home groups
- To prayer meetings

6

GENEROSITY AND CARE

There was such a grace upon the Early Church to take care of each other and to see the church growing up strong, so that many would be reached by the Gospel. This grace of giving is an ability and faith from God that trusts that he is our ultimate source and that he owns all things. It is an ability and faith to go beyond our natural means and limitations and get into God's ability and means. It is a trust in God and a love for other people that releases generosity through us to see the church being taken care of and the Gospel being preached.

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. ³³With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all ³⁴that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales ³⁵and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was

distributed to anyone who had need.”

ACTS 4:32-35 (NIV)

There are four points to note in this scripture:

1. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but shared everything they had.

The truth is that everything ultimately belongs to God. God is the source of all things. We came into the world naked and that is how we are going to leave. We brought nothing in and we are taking nothing out! The Early Church had a revelation that nothing they owned actually belonged to them, but all belonged to God and, therefore, they were unafraid to give. This is a beautiful revelation to have. People who believe that God is their source and that everything they have belongs to him are not afraid to give. Now they can be moved by the love and generosity of God to go beyond themselves to bless others. This was purposeful giving to build the church up to see many people being saved and cared for.

God is a generous God. He loved the world so much that he gave his Son, Jesus, to save us. When we get saved and are born again, we miraculously receive the nature of God inside of us. This means we now have his generous nature that loves to give! We must learn to live by this new nature.

2. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Everyone giving into the church enabled the apostles to get on with the work of the ministry and not have to try find financial ways to take care of everyone. As the whole church together

carries the financial burden for the church, the work of the ministry is accelerated!

3. From time to time those who owned land or houses sold them...

God does not want us to just sell everything and give it away right now. He wants us to rather live a lifestyle of generosity and care for others. This involves doing extremely generous things at times. This is something that should become a part of our normal lives. Regular giving to God through the church to reach and care for others is a new lifestyle we should practice. Also, God is not against us building wealth, but as long as it is done with the heart to bless others and a willingness to obey God when he asks us to give some away.

4. ...and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.

The apostles were the leaders of the church. People brought the money to them and they distributed it. This is simply God's management system. Our giving should be to God, first, through our church and then administrated by good leaders, who are called by God to govern the affairs of the church. When this system works well, people are cared for and the Gospel of Jesus Christ reaches many people!

Some further scripture readings about giving through the church:

The Grace of Giving

“And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ²In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. ³For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, ⁴they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord’s people. ⁵And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.”

2 CORINTHIANS 8:1-5 (NIV)

A Financial Commitment Proportionate to Your Income

“Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. ²On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.”

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2 (NIV)

Giving that Supports those Ministering in the Church

“Don’t you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? ¹⁴In

the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.”

1 CORINTHIANS 9:13-14 (NIV)

“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. ¹⁸For Scripture says, ‘Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,’ and ‘The worker deserves his wages.’”

1 TIMOTHY 5:17-18 (NIV)

Our Giving Sows into the Lives of Other People to Reap a Harvest for God

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. ⁷Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. ⁸And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. ⁹As it is written:

‘They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.’

¹⁰Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

¹¹You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your

generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.”

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-11 (NIV)

CONCLUSION

Become a generous giver and pray about your financial commitment to support the church with regular giving that helps to carry and fund the mission of the church you are in. Do this in accordance with your income. Once you have decided ahead of time in your heart, it is usually much easier to keep your commitment even when times are tough. Develop a lifestyle of generosity that represents God and his nature in you.

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of giving financially to your church?

7

REACHING OUT TO OTHERS

GOD'S HEART FOR LOST MANKIND

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ¹⁸Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.”

JOHN 3:16–18 (NIV)

“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”

2 PETER 3:9 (NIV)

Now that you are saved and have come into a relationship with Christ and eternal life, God wants to use you to reach out to

others and see them get saved and added to the Church. Your life now has an eternal purpose! Reaching out to the lost is not an option for us, it is something we must and should do. God loves this world and wants to see it saved. He partners with us in this divine purpose. Snatching others from the flames of hell and seeing them come into a revelation of Christ and eternal salvation is one of the greatest things you can do! Here are some scriptures about Jesus commissioning us to reaching the lost, how to do this and also some examples of the Early Church doing this:

CHRIST'S GREAT COMMISSION TO US

“And then he told them, ‘Go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone. ¹⁶Anyone who believes and is baptized will be saved. But anyone who refuses to believe will be condemned. ¹⁷These miraculous signs will accompany those who believe: They will cast out demons in my name, and they will speak in new languages. ¹⁸They will be able to handle snakes with safety, and if they drink anything poisonous, it won’t hurt them. They will be able to place their hands on the sick, and they will be healed.’ ¹⁹When the Lord Jesus had finished talking with them, he was taken up into heaven and sat down in the place of honor at God’s right hand. ²⁰And the disciples went everywhere and preached, and the Lord worked through them, confirming what they said by many miraculous signs.”

MARK 16:15–20 (NLT)

“Jesus came and told his disciples, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. ²⁰Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’”

MATTHEW 28:18-20 (NLT)

GOD HELPS US TO REACH THE LOST

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8 (NLT)

WE MUST PREACH THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST TO SEE PEOPLE SAVED

“For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’ ¹⁴How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? ¹⁵And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who

bring good news!’¹⁶But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, ‘Lord, who has believed our message?’¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.”

ROMANS 10:12-17 (NIV)

GOD WANTS TO SEE PEOPLE SAVED AND HIS CHURCH GROWING

“Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.”

ACTS 2:41 (NIV)

“And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

ACTS 2:47 (NIV)

“But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.”

ACTS 4:4 (NIV)

“Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number.”

ACTS 5:14 (NIV)

“So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

ACTS 6:7 (NIV)

“When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. ⁷For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. ⁸So there was great joy in that city.”

ACTS 8:6-8 (NIV)

“All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”

ACTS 9:35 (NIV)

“This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord.”

ACTS 9:42 (NIV)

“Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. ²¹The Lord’s hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. ²²News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. ²³When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. ²⁴He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. ²⁵Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, ²⁶and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people.”

ACTS 11:20–26 (NIV)

You have a great purpose in life now: to be a part of a vibrant church that has a passion and a strategy for reaching more and more people! Throw yourself into that and see God do great things through you and the church you are in!

DISCUSS

What are the benefits of reaching out to the lost?

FINAL THOUGHTS

“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, ⁴and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ⁵who 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 (NIV)

Well, you have much to rejoice about and to look forward to! You have been born again and have come into a relationship with God and eternal life in Jesus Christ. This is the greatest news and will give you great hope as you walk through this life and face whatever trials may come your way.

You also have been added to a new family in Christ – his Church. You are now part of the community of God’s people who live to know him and to make him known to the entire world through the power of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

I encourage you to commit to a good church as you devote yourself to following after Jesus. It is vital you get involved in a church, as it is where you will grow and mature in God.

Devote yourself to studying the Word of God for it will build you up and reveal to you all that you are in Christ and all that he can and wants to do through you!

Develop relationships with people in the church that mutu-

ally build each other up and care for one another. Do not expect everyone to be perfect and never to be let down. We are all humans and will most probably hurt or offend each other from time to time. This also means you do not have to be perfect and do everything perfectly in order to belong. We are all growing in maturity and love and are, no doubt, going to make mistakes and get things wrong. But if we all move towards love we will build each other up and contribute to the church being effective.

Look for opportunities to serve the church and bless others with your talents and gifts.

Become a generous giver and pray about your financial commitment to support the church with regular giving that helps to carry and fund the mission of the church you are in. Do this in accordance with your salary.

And finally, get involved in reaching the lost; reach out to others to rescue them and bring them into eternal life through Christ. This is probably the greatest purpose you could have in your life. Its results do not just count in this life, but for all eternity, as people you reached will be there in Heaven because of the work you did! That is ultimate fulfillment and job satisfaction!

Know this, that God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life. The more you discover him and find your place in the Church, the more you will walk in all he has for you.

God bless you!

Ryan Rufus

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What To Do After You Get Saved

The Clear Message of Grace

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