

Did You Know . . .

The Bible was written by various divinely inspired writers over a period of 1500 years. Amazingly, it all points to Jesus and His work in our behalf.

• *Serve Like Jesus*

The Salvation Army is a worldwide organization dedicated to helping those in need. Years ago they held an international convention that their founder, General William Booth, could not attend because

of his physical weakness. So he cabled his convention message to them. It consisted of one word: "OTHERS."

Becoming more like Jesus means caring for others with the same focus and determination that He demonstrated. Your new commitment to Him involves action. His followers are to help "loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens," to "deal thy bread to the hungry," and to "bring the poor that are cast out to thy house" (Isaiah 58:6, 7, KJV). God's people are His hands and feet to help meet others' needs.

Ultimately, the growing friendship you now have with Jesus Christ is the most important thing you can offer others. It is a profound truth that every new believer will grow in faith as they share their faith. Ask God to point out needs you can help meet, both physical and spiritual, and take a first step toward meeting those needs. You will be amazed how—and where—God leads you!

May God bless you as your exciting new journey with Him continues!



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Guide

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Welcome to God's Family!

So you've decided to follow Jesus. That's the best choice you could have made! But now what? Here are four simple things you can do to keep growing in your Christian faith.

• *Depend on God's Grace*

When you asked Jesus Christ to be your Savior, His grace became a part of your life. Grace is God's power at work in your behalf. His grace saved you, and this same gift can help you live the kind of life that will make you happy now and forever.

God's powerful grace can help you through even the most difficult situations. Are you discouraged? Are you tempted to do wrong? Do you need guidance for the future? Just ask Him through prayer, and God will work in your behalf—through His grace.

God wants you to clearly understand that His grace is always there for you. That's why the Bible contains this amazing promise:



Let _____ therefore come boldly unto the
(Write your name here.)
throne of grace, that _____ may obtain
(Write your name here.)
mercy and find help in _____'s time of
(Write your name here.)
need (see Hebrews 4:16).

Claim this promise every day and you can face any situation or evil power that Satan might bring your way.

● **Worship Every Week**

A story is told about François Fénelon, the court preacher for King Louis XIV of France in the 17th century. The king and his attendants had arrived at the chapel for the regular service, but no one else was there except the preacher. King Louis demanded, "What does this mean?" Fenelon replied, "I had published that you would not come to church today, in order that your Majesty might see who serves God in truth and who flatters the king."

It's important to worship for the right reasons: to honor and thank our Creator and Redeemer for His work in our lives and in the world—not merely to make a good impression on someone. God's day of worship, the seventh-day Sabbath (see Genesis 2:2, 3; Exodus 20:8-11), is to be a wonderful time of gathering each week as God's family. It helps bind us together in "one accord"

and serves as a joy-filled reminder that we need not try to work our way to heaven: "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his" (Hebrews 4:9, 10, KJV). Honoring the seventh-day Sabbath brings not only physical but spiritual rest as well.

Did You Know . . .

Along with the biblical account, Jesus is mentioned by several other ancient writers. One example is the Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus (55-120 A.D.), who wrote, "Christus [Christ] . . . suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus" (Annals, 15.44).

So how do we "keep" the Sabbath in modern times? Setting aside our weekday work, concerns, and activities is a good place to start. Doing this helps clear our mind to ponder God's amazing love for us. Worshipping, spending time in nature, praying, reading the Bible, enjoying Christian friendships, and caring for those in need are just a few ways we can honor God on His special day, the Sabbath.

● **Be a Responsible Family Member**

Just as with an earthly family, becoming a member of God's family brings privileges and responsibilities.

What a joy to know that we can turn to our new church family for love, support, and care! The Bible calls this "fellowship," and it basically means sharing in our fellow believers' joys and sorrows.

While Christians are to care for all humans, the Bible is clear that we're to give special attention to our fellow believers: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10, KJV).

Has your experience as an earthly family member fallen short of your hopes? A healthy church family can provide a powerful healing experience as you share openly with and demonstrate unconditional love toward one another.

It's important to remember that our church family is made up of people like ourselves, human beings who are growing and imperfect. Occasionally both kinds of families may let us down in some way. That's why we must always keep our eyes on Jesus as our only truly perfect Example.

Your church family needs you. Do your part in sharing your love, time, talents, and financial resources with your brothers and sisters in Christ.

