

Growing into the fullness of his stature.

A discipleship Guide booklet.

Introduction

The start of a new journey.

The journey of Adam in Eden was suddenly brought to an end because of sin.

Adam's life began and ended at one spot-Eden.

But God proved with Enoch-a descendant of Adam, that life can in fact extend beyond the temporary existence on earth. God "took" him, from the earth, up to Heaven. (Genesis 5:24)

In effect, the life of a Child of God that has received Christ- "born again" should not end up at a spot like Adam's. If he "walks with God", like Enoch did, the believer will ultimately dwell with God forever (John 14:1-2)

The believers journey is a progressive journey, starting from "birth"- when the person becomes "born again" to the glorious point when believers in Christ, go to meet God and thereafter live in His presence forever.

While on earth God' supreme plan is for all His children to aim at "something"-desiring and working towards being Christ-like.

Christ is the model of the Christian faith. As God instructed Moses to build the Ark after the pattern that was shown him in the wilderness-with attention to details and specific instructions, so would God want all His children to follow after a pattern- Christ.(Exodus 25:8-9)

Christ is the supreme pattern. Discipleship, therefore- is God's own spiritual school, that teaches believers in Christ, the principles and the lifestyle of Christ, on a daily, life-long basis, with the ultimate vision of making them become like Christ.

To follow after Christ entails watching and observing His "footsteps" and putting ones foot in His. A close relationship with Christ through the Holy Spirit, and the word of God, will ultimately warm the believer into an affectionate, intimate life of fellowship with Christ.

This kind of deep association is not without an aftermath-it engrafts the nature of God, instils the godly character into the believer, naturally.

The believer, just like you, reading this booklet, becomes a living portrait of Christ- one that looks, speaks and acts like Him.

God's plan is not for us to be like our pastor, even though he may have some desirable and gracious attributes. But only like Christ.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"- (Ephesians 4:13).

This great and exciting journey begins with a desire and a personal determination to make the most of God's grace already at work in our lives as believers.

It then becomes a daily desire, and a passionate goal, that one can attain as a child of God.

This booklet is chaptered in twelve outstanding topics, which touch off on some fundamental, yet crucial ingredients of the discipleship walk.

Chapter one

Assurance of salvation.

As you stepped forth to receive Christ, an exchange took place in your life. Your sins were taken away-you were forgiven, and your old nature of sin was replaced by a new nature-the life of God.

You were “born again” by the Word and Spirit (John 3:3). The word of God you heard, and received by faith, made it possible for the Holy Spirit to carry out the work of regeneration in your life.

God created the world by His word and Spirit. At conversion-the word of God and His Spirit brought about the change you now experience in your life. (You were recreated spiritually)

While it may not be obvious just yet, that something extra-ordinary has happened in your life, is because it was an experience that took place in your spirit, not in the physical. It was your spirit that was awakened to a new life in Christ. Prior to this experience, your spirit-man was dead. We all died to sin as a result of the fall of Adam, and our spirit was no longer able to relate to God.

The spirit of man is the part of our being that speaks and receives from God, because God is a spirit (John 4:24). At the time you received Christ (Born again), you became spiritually-alive once more, your spirit-man became connected to the life-giving spirit of God, and you were now “spiritually aware” and can talk to God as a new “Child-father” relationship is born.

Sometimes because we are still in the flesh, we often may doubt that experience because we are basically still the same people physically since after we gave our life to Christ. The question is what was that, that changed?

Something really changed. It was by faith that you received Christ (Romans 10:9-10).

But God’s spirit bears witness that you are now a child of God.

How can I tell that I am really born again, and not just following after a religious illusion? Even though I can’t physically “see” and “touch” God, can I still be sure of His abiding presence and Love?

Would that experience produce a proof that is obvious and indisputable to all around me?

Let’s consider the following Bible passages for a discussion:

1. ***“If any man be in Christ old things are passed away, behold all things are become new”***- (2cor 5: 17). Did you ever feel new? It’s like a big weight was laid off your life-

you felt joy and something new and wonderful. You felt a deep inward peace that you have never felt since you were born. Peace is one of the substantial gift of God, given to one's soul and spirit at conversion (John 14:27)

It's often difficult to explain in plain words that experience. But one thing is sure- your spirit is now alive, and you are a new creature.

People around you certainly can tell that something new has happened in your life. If you had a "notorious" lifestyle-one that everyone could tell, your new life in Christ definitely will come as a sharp contrast to your former life, as you gradually drop old sinful habits, and begin to adopt and grow a godly character, one that will be a testimony to the world around you.

2. *"The holy spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God"*

(Romans 8-16)

Sometimes as new believers there are moments when we seem to have doubt of about what has taken place in our lives. There is also a tendency to feel "empty", or "ordinary"-even casting doubt on the rationality of being "born again" itself. Did it actually happen, is it really real? When you begin to feel this way always remember not to walk by your feelings.

But live and walk by faith (Hebrews 13:8)

Satan through one's flesh may also come to tempt believers like he tempted Jesus. Some new believers in Christ at times like this may be laid away by the lies of Satan or even by the negative suggestions of friends and associates, urging them to consider discarding their faith- "since it's not proven". The Holy spirit is given to believers as a "comforter"(John 16:7)-to comfort them at such times when they are feeling awkward, lonely, disturbed, unsure-He assures them that in spite of how and what they feel-God is real and ever present with any and every child of God.

3. *"As many as receive Him to them gave He the power to become children of God"*(John 1:12)

One of the manifest outcomes of the new life of the believer in Christ is the inclination to be godly. Inwardly you begin to feel the hunger for righteousness (Matthew 5:16).

Don't be surprised or even alarmed about this. What is happening to you is that God has given you a new spiritual appetite. Your spirit-man having received a new life is beginning to lead you after God. You notice, involuntarily, there is now a growing passion to please God, to be holy and to seek for more of His knowledge, and things that will promote your growth in the things of the spirit.

This kind of urge to please God is rather a gift that every believer receives- "An inward enabling" (DIVINE POWER) that helps you God obey God unlike the old times when you were in the world.

4. ..."lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen(28:20b)

One way that God assures us that He is with us is by His presence. That should give us confidence that we are secure and protected in Him. David, God's anointed king of Israel, in the Old Testament, understood this secret. He wrote: *"Yea though I walk through the valley and shadow of death... I fear no evil, thy rod and thy staff they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).*

Always be assured as a new believer that God has made a promise, which He is always able to keep- that is, to always be by you forever.

Chapter two

Fellowship with God.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even by the spirit of the lord”(2cor. 3:18)

The greatest privilege one can ever experience as a child of God is to come into the presence of God in fellowship, and this is the foundation of our relationship with God.

God loves fellowship (Isaiah 1:18)

God’s desire is to always draw us into a fulfilling, intimate fellowship with Him. It is in the atmosphere of His presence and glory that brings about the much-desired transformations in our lives, as He exchanges for our weaknesses and flaws with some of His divine natures.

Moses indeed was no longer the same after He gazed upon the glory of God in the mountain of Sinai (Exodus 34:34-35)

Moses’ encounter with God made the glory of God to shine on His face. This is testament to the wonderful transformation that takes place any time believers encounter God in genuine fellowship.

Our fellowship with God can come in songs and praise worships (Psalms 95:1-2)

David was a Master worshipper. He knew how to open the door of fellowship with God. In worship and praise-God takes delight in our hearty, deep reverence of His works and Mightiness. God loves the exclusive worship we give to Him and to no other person or gods (Exodus 20: 3-5).

God will always come down in the fullness of His glory when genuine praise and worship is offered to Him (2Chronicle 5: 13-14).

We can also fellowship with God in the word by meditating upon His word Joshua 1:8)

Prayer is another way we come into fellowship with God (Mark 1:35)

In each of these, God’s presence is made abundantly manifest. The most important aspect of our fellowship with God is the fact that there is an atmosphere of God’s presence that can affect our lives with tangible, real spiritual changes.

Jesus had a strong and regular habit of coming to commune with God. His life and Ministry was empowered daily by the virtues and grace he derived by His consistent engagements with God in the quiet place.

All believers should develop a fellowship-centred habit that revolves around making the most of ones relationship with God. Every minute and hour of the clock counts for us in

eternity and that's why, our time must be spent well in God's presence. Because it is in Him we live, move and have our being (Acts 17:28)