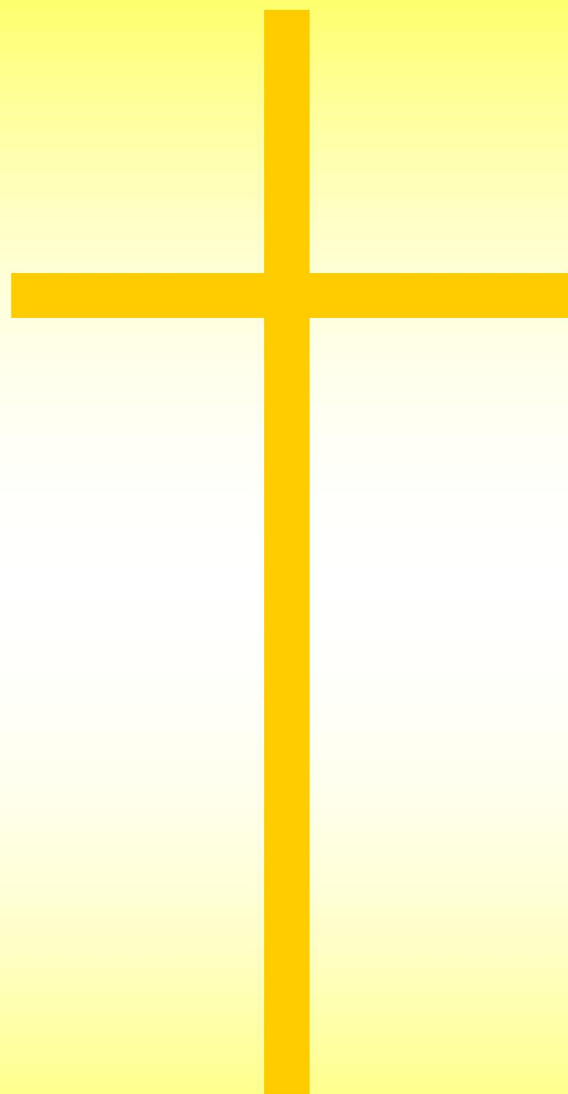




Get Started!

**Making your connection
with God.**

The mini book!

Jesus is Lord.

The question is 'are you aware of this'?

If you have asked Jesus into your heart, acknowledging that He died on the cross and rose again, then the answer is 'Yes' you are a Christian, in which case Well Done and Congratulations. Many have heard, but not received, thankfully you have heard and received the Good News – this is cause for celebration and I urge you to celebrate as well as mark on the calendar the day you become a Christian so you can remember the day you gave your life to the Lord.

You may have been a Christian for some time, or only just come to Jesus recently, either way the good news is that you are both (i) a Christian, and (ii) have a chair in Heaven with your name on it, waiting for you to claim when God calls you from this World.

Wow, some heavy words there.

If you haven't become a Christian yet, don't wait for tomorrow. On average around 155,000 people leave this world each day, which means that by tomorrow, with regret, 155,000 people living now won't be in the morning. If you haven't made the move to becoming a Christian, don't wait for tomorrow, in the words of the famous sports brand Nike, 'Just Do It'.

If you are new to knowing Jesus, you will probably know very little about Him and how been a Christian works. Rest assured, by the end of this short book you will know what to do next to grow in knowing Jesus more and why it's important to knowing God.

There are many misunderstandings of what makes you a Christian, for example many people who help and care for others or do charity work, or give money to the poor could be considered Christians - these acts of love are great, but don't make you a Christian. It is through Faith alone. Giving your life to Christ makes you a Christian.

Another misconception of what makes you a Christian is going to Church, though going to Church is very important and something all Christians need to do, going doesn't necessarily make you a Christian. For example, a person might go to the Manchester United football stadium; it doesn't mean that they are automatically a fan of the team. The same can be said for a church goer.

You can only become a Christian through FAITH alone. No act of kindness or visit to Church will make you a Christian necessarily, though they might lead you to becoming one.

So let's clear up these myths. To be considered a Christian is to know Jesus Christ in your life.

If you think about the word 'Christian' for a moment, remove the letter 'a' and separate the word in two like so "Christ Ia~~N~~" becomes **Christ IN**. That is what been a Christian is, to know Christ **IN** your life, and the only way you can do that is by asking Him **IN** to your life, which you have most likely done already.

Asking Jesus into your life is great, but that is just the beginning.

So how can you know Christ more?

The first thing to do is Pray. Before reading the first chapter, I would urge you to read this book a minimum of two times, ideally somewhere quiet, reading it slowly and enjoy learning how to take things to the next level.

Chapter One: Prayer

Praying is easy. Some people find Praying difficult and liken it to what is known among writers as ‘writers block’ – basically you can’t seem to find the words to get started, but when you do, you will find pace like possibly never before.

Thankfully God knows this, which is why Praying can be made very easy. Follow this one step and you won’t go wrong – ‘whatever is on your mind and in your heart, take it to the Lord in Prayer’. Here’s an illustration and example;

“Joe has just become a Christian and wants to get started on talking to God and having a relationship with Him. Joe has officially become a Christian by asking Jesus into his life but now struggling to start Praying as he doesn’t know what to say. This is what Joe needs to start with...”

Lord, thank you that I have acknowledged You as Lord. As you know Lord, I am now a Christian and very young in knowing how to Pray, please help me to find the words, access my heart so that you can change me inwardly to live in accordance with your Will. Show me how to Pray. Show me how to love others. Show me how to live. I would like to start my Prayers by Praying for some people I know who need your help. I too need your help and will ask for your help at the end of my Prayers. I ask and beg you to hear my Prayers, and I ask them in your Son’s name, Jesus Christ

Our Lord, and Saviour...”

The interesting thing about Prayer, is God knows what you are going to ask Him before you do, He did create you after all, so He knows what’s on your mind, He knows your troubles, He knows where you are going wrong, and also where you are going right, so just go to Him, speak from the heart and let the words roll out.

Be respectful in your words and tone in which you Pray – remember that when you Pray, it’s not going on a voicemail or something which may be heard by some random man or woman; you are talking to **T-H-E** God, and as you Pray to Him He is listening to your every word as you say it. That is how real Prayer is.

When you begin to read the Bible, particularly the life of Jesus, when Jesus healed someone or did something that people consider a ‘miracle’, these things happened almost immediately, there was no delay from God granting the request, that’s because God hears your Prayer word for word as you speak it.

It’s also important to know that answers to your Prayers will come, sometimes immediately like Jesus found, sometimes it may seem a long time before an answer comes, other times it might seem like God ‘didn’t hear’ your Prayer and no answer comes. Be assured He heard you **EVERYTIME**.

The answers we get are not always what we want, but when reading the Bible you will find that God is one thing for sure, ‘LOVE’ – knowing that God loves you should give you complete confidence and comfort in the answers He gives, even when the answer might be the opposite to what you were hoping for.

Something I like to do when Praying at the end of every request, I add the words 'If You Will Lord', meaning that I only want my request granting IF God is *cool* with it and that His seal of approval is there. The reason being, because He knows what's best for me (even though I might **think** that I know better) – He **knows** for **sure** what is best for me, and everyone that I Pray for.

God Answering Prayer!

When you start reading about Jesus' time on earth you will find God answered Jesus' Prayers every time, but not even His own Son was guaranteed the answer he wanted, simply because God knew what was right to do. Let me give you an example of when God refused a request of Jesus.

The night before Jesus was due to be crucified (an horrific torturous death) He went to a place called Gethsemane in Jerusalem, and in particular a garden which has come to be known as 'The Garden of Gethsemane' because it is famous for where Jesus Prayed and went with His Disciples the night before the crucifixion. Jesus knew that not only was death coming to Him, but that it was coming in a matter of hours in the worst way imaginable.

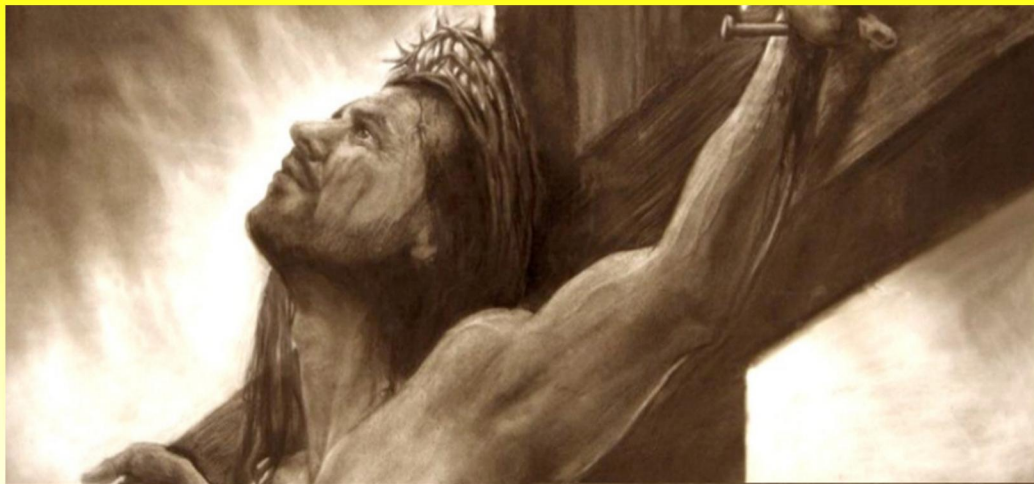
Jesus knew that if God didn't answer His Prayer in Gethsemane (to take this death away from Him) that the crucifixion would take place and Jesus knew the pain he would suffer which would start with the placing of a 'crown of sharp thorns' taken from thorn bushes which was designed to be placed on Jesus' head to both mock Him and cause intense pain.

After the crown of thorns been placed on His head, and been mocked, he would then be flogged beyond recognition, to within an inch of His life. If you think about the words 'beyond recognition' it means that after Jesus was flogged you would hardly recognise that it was Jesus because the flogging was so terrible and horrific.

If that wasn't enough, Jesus would then have to carry His cross (something the Romans were keen on making the victim do because they believed it showed submission to the Roman empire and authority) to the place where Jesus was to die (Golgotha which was just outside the walls of Jerusalem called 'Calvary'). Then both Jesus' hands and feet would be nailed to the cross and then Jesus left to hang until death (a movie of recent called '*The Passion of the Christ*' depicts as accurately as possible the kind of death Jesus went through for You and I. If you can bare to watch it please do, it will give you a glimpse of what Jesus suffered because of the Love He/God has for You and I).

When Jesus was in 'The Garden of Gethsemane' in Prayer to His Father (God), He asked that if it was possible, that the death He was going to face would pass Him by, but **ONLY** if it was what God wanted i.e. God's Will prevailing. God answered His Prayer with a **'No'**.

Though I am sure God would have loved to have granted Jesus' request, had God done that, He would have granted **US** subsequently complete separation from Him because of our sinful ways, and as you may have heard, God so loved the world (You and I) that He not only allowed the death to go ahead, but He actually sent His son to do just that – it was no coincidence Jesus been here.



FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. KJV (JOHN 3:16)

The question I sometimes ask myself is could I give up an only son or daughter to die for people like you and me who are sinful i.e. full of sin – my answer was a resounding no, I couldn't, but God could and did. That's why at the end of your Prayers by adding the words '*I ask these Prayers in Jesus Name*' you are showing acknowledgment of the huge sacrifice God made for us along with Jesus ultimately giving His life for You and Me.

If an answer comes to your Prayers that you feel is a 'No', or maybe wasn't the answer you were hoping for, don't be disheartened, but 'Do' acknowledge that in God you will trust, because if you do, things will turn out right, no matter what the circumstance and remember, even Jesus got the odd No, but whatever the answer, God knows it will be the right one – the hard bit is trusting, as well as your Faith been tested, but remember that when you are feeling untrusting and likely to fail a test of Faith, that GOD IS LOVE and knowing that He loves you, should give you enough strength to allow yourself to trust Him. If you feel you haven't got the strength, **Pray for it.**

I try not to look for a 'result' or 'answer' when I Pray, because I know that if I have brought my Prayer to God, that I can leave it with him and whatever happens will be in accordance with His will, and in time you will come to know that God has the best of intentions and motive for you too, he didn't create you to not look after you when you need His help or guidance so just **Trust In Him**. Also keep on Praying, it might be the second, third, fourth time you find the answer, don't let up, keep on Praying.

Just a final thought on Prayer, I remember once asking God to let me win the lottery. A foolish thing to do but I was young at the time and young as a Christian.

Though my intentions were good i.e. I was going to give money to charities, the poor and so on, God answered my request with a 'No'. Now that I am a little more grown up as a Christian, I am sure if God had let me win the lottery, my time would have been focussed on holidays, fast cars, along with lots of material possessions distracting me away from God like a 100mph in a Ferrari, a purchase from my wishful lottery win. 😊

To be distracted from God in this way would have resulted in me having a poor relationship with Him and I can honestly say that if I had the option knowing what I know now, of a healthy bank balance (lottery win) or a healthy relationship with God, I would choose the latter any day.

Growing in Love for God is amazing and something that can't be compared to money and certainly wouldn't happen if I was living the 'High Life' on a lottery win – the truth is I am living the 'High Life' been in touch with the most 'High' and Powerful Being and resource ever, and ever will be.

You too are now connected with Him and the ‘High Life’, especially if you have just begun your journey in knowing The Lord. It might be hard to grasp if you are a new Christian, but in time you will find the same to be true i.e. that a healthy relationship with God is great, very much needed and without doubt no comparison to a bank balance (or lottery win).

Now we have looked at the basics of Praying to God, it’s important to know more about Him. Prayer will help you with that, but knowing what God wants in your life has already been given to us in the form of his Holy Word, which takes you into the next chapter, ‘The Bible’ (God’s Word).

Chapter Two: The Bible

The Bible is a book I like to refer to as **T-H-E** Book, not just because it’s the best selling and most popular book in the world, but because it is full of words that God Himself has spoken. There is no other book like it.

It is a big book with so much ‘depth’ of content that it’s the kind of book you will learn something new and different every time you pick it up which is why I have it close to hand so I can read it when I have a spare minute as well as in my **‘set time’**.

(Keep your Bible close to hand at all times – it’s a good tip).

My **‘set time’** is something I set up, so that each day I have some time ‘set’ aside to learn more of God’s Word and His Will. If you can work out what God likes and dislikes (i.e. His Will), applying more of what He likes in our lives is sure to show Him love as well as doing less of the things (or if possible none of the things) that God dislikes. Easier said than done, but in theory it is that simple.

I feel this is an appropriate time to mention that God has an arch enemy who loves everything that God hates, whom is known by many different names such as the ‘evil one’ or ‘Satan’, but most commonly known as ‘the Devil’. The Devil will do everything he can to take you away from the Bible, away from God’s word, and away from God in general.

The Devil is very powerful and works in many different ways. Thankfully God is the ultimate power and can overrule the ‘evil one’ anytime – the hard bit is spotting the ‘wolf in sheep’s clothing’, i.e. when the devil is preparing to try and snap you away from God.

A lot don't see it, and it doesn't get easier the more developed you become as a Christian, but with God on your side, God is not going to allow you to face any temptation or pull from Himself that you can't handle, no matter how hard it might seem, God will give you the power you need to resist the 'evil one' and assist you in spotting the evil one coming.

We all face tests like this every day, but don't be worried when it happens and in fact enjoy the test, it's a great opportunity to show your commitment to God and to tell the Devil to politely get on his bike and go cycle off a cliff.

Why mention the devil in this chapter? Doing what God likes will be hard sometimes because the evil one is hard at work pulling you towards the opposite of what God wants – it's how the evil one gets his kicks and pleasure.

Question; Have you ever found yourself in a situation where you know the right thing to do, but the wrong thing seems to be more tempting? That is a perfect example of how the evil one works – he makes the wrong thing look so attractive it's hard to resist, but by resisting and doing what God wants feels great when you manage to achieve it, as well as giving the Devil a good kick. 😊

It's easier to choose the 'right and good' option when you have God in your life, because by His Holy Spirit working in you He will guide you to knowing and feeling what's right and wrong, will help you differentiate between the correct roads to follow as well as the roads to keep away from.

Stay with God and you will stay Good, go with the Devil and you will follow what's evil.

One of my hobbies is words and their definitions. Something I found interesting not so long ago was that if you put an extra letter 'O' into **God**, you will get the word '**Good**'. Remove the letter 'D' from **Devil** and you will get the word '**Evil**'.

The choice is yours which way you go when a test comes, my advice is when that test comes, turn to the Lord in Prayer. Ask for Help loud and clear. He **WILL** come and rescue you.

*(note to reader - I would not be surprised if there is some distraction or interference going on right now whilst you are trying to read this book, simply because reading this book will help lead you more towards '**God's Way**' and the '**Good Way**' which is of course the opposite to which The Devil wants you to go which is why the Devil will do his best to distract you and even get you to 'leave this book on the shelf' – just be aware).*

So, back to the book in question, The Bible. Some interesting facts for you (which you don't need to know, but might find interesting, and then we will get to the main reason for having a Bible as part of your Christian journey).

- About 50 Bibles are sold every minute
- The Bible was written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Koine Greek.
- The Bible is the world's best-selling book.
- The oldest almost-complete manuscript of the Bible is still in existence in the Vatican library.

- There are 66 books in the Bible, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament.
- The 66 books of the Bible are divided into 1,189 chapters consisting of 31,173 verses. The Old Testament has 929 chapters, the New Testament 260. (King James Version).
- The Old Testament (King James Version) consists of 592,439 words, consisting of 2,728,100 letters and the New Testament 181,253 words consisting of 838,380 letters (3,566,480 letters in total).
- The longest line in the Bible is Esther 8:9 - 89 words, 425 letters.
- The shortest verse in the NIV Bible is John 11:35: "Jesus wept."
- The longest book chapter in the Bible is Psalm 119, the shortest is Psalm 117.
- There are 594 chapters before Psalm 118 and 594 chapters after it.
- Psalm 118 verse 8 is in the center of the Bible: "It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man."
- Obadiah, with 21 verses consisting of 602 words, is the shortest book in the Old Testament, and the third shortest in the Bible.
- II John has the fewest number of verses of any book in the Bible - it is the shortest book in the Bible.

- III John has the fewest number of words of any book in the Bible.
- Job is the oldest book written in the Bible - it was written by an unknown Israelite around 1500 BC.
- Malachi, written about 400 BC, is the youngest book in the Old Testament.
- James, written around 45 AD, is the oldest book in the New Testament.
- Revelation, written about 95 AD, is the youngest book in the New Testament.
- The verse in the exact middle of the Bible is Psalm 117:8.
- Saint Paul wrote 14 of the 27 books in the New Testament.
- The word "Lord" appears 1855 times in the Bible.
- In Old Testament times the Mediterranean Sea was called the Great Sea.
- There are 7 different Jeremiahs in the Bible: 1 Chronicles 5:24; 12:4, 10, 13; 2 Kings 23:30; Jeremiah 1:1; 35:3.
- A chariot imported from Egypt cost around 600 shekels of silver (1 Kings 10:29). That would be around £50,000 or \$77,000. One shekel was 4 days wages.
- Methuselah is the oldest man on record: 969 years old (Genesis 5:27).

Some interesting facts, but there's one fact missing from the list above.

·The Bible will help you grow to know the Lord, and knowing the Lord is key to been a good Christian as well as keeping in constant contact with Him through Prayer and Chatting to Him.

Choosing a Bible

Choosing the right kind of Bible for you is important, as it is going to help you understand more about God, so it's best to find a Bible that you feel comfortable with as there are many different types. All the Bibles listed are good Christian Bibles for various reasons. One of them will appeal to you.

When you have picked the one that will suit you best, be sure not to delay in buying one. There are many good Christian shops around selling these Bibles, or if you prefer online shopping Amazon is a good option, just remember to type in specifically the Bible you want as some books may claim to be The Bible, but actually have been re-written by sects, cults etc so be accurate in your typing if you go online shopping.

So let's have a look at the four main versions of The Bible that I recommend you look to buy at least one of.

The main four Bibles people choose are the;

- 1) '**King James Version**' which is known as the KJV.
 - 2) '**New International Version**' which is known as the NIV. Both Bibles are the same in scripture (God's Word i.e. no one has messed with what is said) but they are written in ways that people like to read, for example the King James Version (KJV) is written in traditional English (thou, thee etc) where as the '**New International Version**' (NIV) is written in plain modern day English.
 - 3) The '**Good News Bible**' which is known as the GNB. This is my favourite as it is written in modern day English, similar to the NIV (New International Version). There is no right or wrong answer on which of these Bibles you choose.
 - 4) '**New Living Translation**' (the NLT). At the bottom of each page gives the reader a little information and context behind each passage on that particular page. This is to help the reader picture what is going on in the verses and give some background information. Once again this Bible is true to God's Word less I would not recommend it.
- All four options are true to God's Word – just go with the one you feel is more suitable for you, some people buy more than one of the above versions, but the choice is yours.

(note to reader: There are some false religions which claim to use the Bible as their guide, for example the Jehovah's Witnesses claim to use the Bible – be careful not to get one of theirs - what they don't tell you is that their Bible has been “doctored” by their “committee” (known as “The Watchtower”) where by they have changed events and truths to help reflect their ‘own’ thoughts and beliefs).

Something I like to recall (which my Bible says in the book of Psalms 118 verse 8) "It is better to trust in the Lord than put confidence in man." Basically that verse is saying to **trust God, not human wisdom**. With regret the Jehovah's witnesses use “Man” in the form of the ‘Watchtower’ group to “help” explain to their followers what the Bible “really says” - they even hand out books with this very title. The truth however is that their version of events do not run inline with what is exact and true.

There are other false religions, sects and cults which also have similar ways of **manipulating** the Bible, some you may know such as ‘The Church of Latter Day Saints’ (better known as the Mormon Society).

What Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons etc choose to believe is of course up to them, that is their freedom to do. It is important though to point out that there are many forms of ‘wolves in sheep's clothing’ (as earlier mentioned about the ‘evil one’) and if you were to find yourself in possession of one of their Bibles (Jehovah's Witnesses/Mormons etc), you would not be in possession of God's Word but in possession of something which will lead you down the ‘wrong’ road.

Once again, some heavy words outlined, but important for you to hear at this stage of been a Christian. Through the Grace of God you will progress in knowing God more and more when getting into **your** Bible.

The last part of this chapter is what I like to call the ‘best bit’ – I have saved the best till last, which answers the following question; ‘Why is the Bible so important, and why do I need to read it each day?’

Apart from the obvious (i.e. that this book is God's Word showing you how He would like you to live, treat others, treat yourself and so on) along with some amazing past events that only happened a short while ago, it is T-H-E book which will bring you closer to God than anything else.

Praying ‘grows’ your relationship with God and gives Him a chance to talk with you, but the Bible gives you the ‘seed’ to grow your relationship. Without the seed, there is no fruit to bare, by that I mean it's great to Pray and talk with God, but if you are genuine in wanting to have a relationship with God (like Praying), you first need to know how he ‘ticks’.

For example, when you first saw your spouse, you will have most likely felt the attraction, and had love at first sight, but without getting to know how they ‘tick’ would not help you to develop your relationship making it grow.

This is why the Bible is key to your Faith. Once you learn about how God started the world off (‘Genesis’ the first book of the Bible) through to the last book of the Bible (‘Revelation’ - which tells you how things are going to end in this world), you will understand the big picture. But the bits in the middle of the Bible will help you find the ‘purpose’ of your life, how to ‘forgive’ and be ‘forgiven’, how to ‘love’ and ultimately how God would like you to ‘live’ – the reward been (apart from it been the best thing for you anyway) is that going with God and His ways gets him on your side and shows Him love and worship.

In due course you will find why you should love and worship Him (more on this in the next Chapter – ‘Church’) and how to do it.

Please buy one of the Bibles mentioned as soon as possible, it is KEY to you progressing as a Christian and every day you wait to get a copy is a day of opportunity missed of knowing God that bit more.

Chapter Three: Choosing A Christian Church

A friend once said to me (who was ill at the time);

‘I wish I knew the best doctor in the world’ – my reply was ‘You’re a Christian – you do know the best doctor in the world!’.

I went on to explain to my friend;

‘If I could speed dial you to the world’s number one doctor, would that make you happy?’

Their reply was a clear ‘Yes’.

I went on to say;

‘If I could speed dial you to the Guy who not only made that doctor, but also gave him the wisdom he has, surely that would make you even more happy?’.

Their reply was ‘Yes’.

I said;

‘Well God is on speed dial 24/7 and waiting for your call, he’s the ‘Guy’ you need to speak to’.

My friend not long after this ‘phone call’ (Prayer) got better.

It was this conversation that occurred when talking with a fellow believer about ‘Church’.

Before we look at ‘God’s House’ (Church), let’s have a quick recap on the main things to be a Christian;

The **first** is giving your life to the Lord.

The **second** is Praying to Him. Doing this regularly and as often as possible – even if just for a minute whilst at work or stuck in a traffic jam or waiting in a queue at the bank or supermarket or whilst on ‘hold’ trying to speak to someone in a call centre. You would be surprised at how many opportunities we have each day to say a quick hello to the Lord. We might find time to say quick hellos to our spouse or close friends via texts, emails, phone calls and Facebook pages, so maybe we could do the same to our Lord, though of course no phone or computer is required.

The **third** is to buy a Bible, and ‘set’ some ‘time’ aside to learning God’s Word.

The **fourth** brings us on to choosing a Church. So how do you choose a Church that is right for you? Simple. The first step is to Pray to God to lead you to the right Church. The second step is to have a think about the kind of service you would like, i.e. a loud and ‘happy-clappy’ service, a less noisy ‘time to be quiet’ type of service etc, and then going for the Church which will give you the kind of service you might enjoy, but the main thing (as in most cases) to do in choosing a Church is to rely on God in Prayer – and trust He will guide you to the Church that will be for you.

You should repeat this Prayer to God regularly to lead you to the right Church until you FIND the right Church. I remember going to a Church which didn’t feel right for me, but I chose to persist in going for two more months so that I could afford enough time to either get comfortable or choose to move on to the next option. Thankfully after two months the Church I had been going to become the one that was right for me, but the important thing to remember is ‘Pray’ about it.

A myth that is sometimes mentioned about Church is that ‘You can be a Christian and not need to go to Church’. This is something I felt at one point when I was in the early days of been a Christian, I remember feeling like this because I was developing my relationship with God mainly from my home (particularly in Prayer) so didn’t particularly feel the need to go to Church. It was only through reading the Bible and actually going to Church that The Lord told me otherwise – it didn’t take long to realize that going to Church as a Christian is very important.

I’ll explain why a little later. First I want to explain a little about the Christian Churches out there.

Some Churches will be right for you. Some won’t. Once again don’t be disheartened if you don’t feel a Church is right for you. After you have given a Church sometime (maybe 6-8 consistent weeks) to ‘feel right for you’, if it doesn’t then trust in The Lord to lead you where **IS** right for you.

I will just mention again that Praying for The Lord’s help on leading you to the right Church is paramount, don’t rely on your ‘Gut feelings’, rely on ‘God’s feelings’ and they will lead you the right way and to the right Church.

Finding the right Church comes down to Praying as well as your preference of which service you might feel most comfortable with, similar to choosing a Bible – there are various styles.

So what denominations or ‘styles’ of Church are there;

- Church of England
- Gospel Church (*Pentecostal*)
- Methodist Church
- Baptist Church
- Catholic Church
- New Life Church
- United Reformed Church

All of these Churches are Christian. Though there are some differences, the main similarity is they all follow the Word of God (The Bible) as The Lord intended, and acknowledge Jesus as Saviour and God. The Christian Fundamentals.

I have outlined some statistics over the coming pages as well as an ‘order of service’ to show how a service is carried out in the Churches, but neither the statistics or order of service is really that relevant to the importance of going to Church.

So why is going to Church so important? I have answered this question in three parts.

Part One – God’s Family

Been a part of a Church is to be a part of a Christian family. By that I mean everyone looks to care for one another and share in one another’s trials (i.e. Praying for one another if there is an illness or something important coming up like a job interview). It is also about sharing in one another’s celebrations – for example if you know of someone in Church having a big anniversary, a birthday, getting married and so on, these are times to share in the joy of those occasions.

When you become a Christian you entered into God’s family with immediate affect. This means you now have Christian Brothers and Sisters which is why the term ‘family’ is used – we are all God’s children and therefore all related and ‘one’ family, simply because God is **OUR** Father.

God created us to be his Children so that he could Father us, Protect us, and be our God. More “heavy” words, but all true.

It is also important to remember that we all make mistakes, we all sin and just like a brother and sister, as much as we love siblings, they can annoy us, upset us, hurt us - sometimes on purpose, sometimes unintentionally so be ready to forgive and love your Christian ‘Brothers and Sisters’ if that happens.

I have been going to Church for some time now, and have noticed that sometimes we can offend one another by something we say, sometimes we can show a lack of love if we are not in the best of moods but I tend to say to myself ‘Hey, we are all human’ so remember that though having Christian brothers and sisters and been a family in Church, that from time to time you might fall out or get hurt, if that happens remember to ‘Take it to the Lord in Prayer’, forgive any wrong doings, and remember to love the “wrong doer” as hard as you can.

I like to reflect on occasions of where one of us goes wrong with a fellow believer because it reminds that just like any ordinary family where there is love (and the occasional fall out) that it’s being part of a family, and it reminds me that I’m in the family of God.

You may not necessarily know it yet, but God is great, He is Holy, He is **T-H-E** True God, and He is full of Love. These are good reasons to worship Him, but one reason we should worship Him is because He chose to create a 'You'. There is no other person like you, you are unique and special because God chose you to have in His World and the next (Heaven). The fact that you have come on this journey is no coincidence. God is working in your life to help you 'smell the coffee' i.e. know that He is Lord which is why you having this book and becoming a Christian was no coincidence.

There is one other main reason for worshipping Him. As mentioned earlier, from the time when the World began (as the book of Genesis explains in the Bible) we have been sinning ever since the start of creation. Human nature is sinful and it is why we can be tempted toward doing the wrong thing in a situation, rather than doing the right thing.

Can you imagine how many sins have occurred since the world began? Most likely hundreds of billions. God has seen them all, and it is true to say all of His Children (with the exception of Jesus) have hurt one another and sinned against one another.

Because God is **Holy** and wants nothing to do with sin is the reason He needs us to be cleansed of our wrong doings (sins), which is why he sent His only Son to take our sins out of the world once and for all – no more rituals and no more sacrifices required because Jesus was to be the One, Only, Last and Lasting sacrifice for every person, no matter what the sin or how bad that sin was, all sins can be forgiven **and have been** for those who choose to rely and believe on the Lord Jesus.

In Jesus' last time on Earth, he suffered terribly and bled so that our sins and dirty ways could be washed clean away. It was mentioned earlier that I have asked myself in the past 'Could I give up my only child, to die for people who were sinners like You and Me'. I now put that question to you, could you give up your only child? Most of us couldn't. God however could and did out of Love for us and now we are (as Christians declare) "Saved" and put right with God which is why we should come to God and worship Him, and give thanks, not only at home, or at work, or in queue in the shops, but also in His Holy Temple, His Home, more known as The Church.

The Church could be described as the body of Jesus simply because we all have Jesus in our hearts and lives, and therefore as Christians when we attend Church all represent a part of His Body i.e. the Body of Christ, which is why we partake in the Bread and Wine to remind us of the last supper where Jesus used the metaphors of the Bread been broken (his body been broken and crucified for us) and in the Wine been poured out (his blood spilt for us). When you receive the Bread and Wine the Minister will most likely say to you on giving the communion 'Body and Blood of Christ'. So been a part of the Church, in respect, is to be a part of Jesus.

Part Three – Group Prayer

In the Bible, Jesus said to His Disciples that ‘wherever two or more people meet in my Name, there I will be’.

What did He mean by this? He was saying that through the Holy Spirit, He would be with everyone who meet in His name at their group meeting together in Prayer, in Worship and so on.

If Jesus will be there among groups as small as one or two people, how much more will He be there in a group of 10, 20, 50, 100, 1000 like the numbers we get in a Church? Answer, no more and no less, but as a congregation will be Praying together as one voice, we can humbly come before the Lord, in the Name of Jesus and be sure to have the presence of The Holy Spirit with us. To have The Lord’s Presence in the same house (Church) as we all sit, Pray and Worship together must be as enjoyable for God to witness from us, as it is for us to witness Him being there with us.

I often find in the Church I go to a deep sense of The Holy Spirit – it feels like a beautiful peace, and not only prepares you to come to God but also lifts you and guides you with everything going on in your life. To know The Lord is the biggest gift, and to come together and meet in His House with other Christians is not only the biggest privilege but it’s an opportunity for us to get straightened out with God and learn more about what He wants. Reading the Bible is great and helps us to understand His Word, but having someone like the Minister of a Church explain the Bible, gives us the meaning and understanding of what is happening in the various books in The Bible which in turn, helps us grow in Faith.

Been a family, Worshipping together, Praying together are three good reasons for going to Church. There are many others but these are key to growing as a Christian.

In some countries around the World, people meet together and do all the things outlined above (Pray, Worship, Share) the only difference is they must meet in secret for if they are caught could face horrific consequences and persecution, but even with this risk and danger of been caught, they still meet and get together as a Church because it is THAT important to do as Christians, hence them willing to risk persecution and even death.

Please don’t waste your opportunities to meet.

We have understood the reasons for going to Church, now as promised some statistics on the Churches people enjoy going to, as well as an itinerary of a Church service you will find in most Churches.

Some facts;

There are over 3 million people in England and Wales who regularly go to a Christian Church each **week**. Of the 3 million people;

- 28% are **Roman Catholic (RC)** or **Church of England (C-of-E)**.
- 9% are Methodists
- 9% are Pentecostal
- 8% are Baptist
- 6% are Independent
- 6% are part of the ‘New’ (i.e. New Life Church)
- 2% are United Reformed
- 1% are Orthodox

A brief look at the differences and style of service;

The **Church of England** (also known as 'C-of-E'), is likely to be the most seen Church in England as it's regularly on the television for services on Sunday mornings, and on most channels at Easter and Christmas.

'Songs of Praise' on BBC1 features a lot of Churches from the 'Church of England' diocese (as well as other denominations), and when the Archbishop makes statements and is asked for comment on various head line topics, most news networks will show the Archbishop of this Church.

So taking this Church for example ('Church of England') a service will normally last around 50-60 minutes, some additional services are held mid week, but all meet every Sunday morning, typically between 9am and 11am, some on evenings too.

The order of service normally consists of;

- Starting with a popular Hymn
- A greeting and welcome from the Minister
- A short Prayer is then said by the Minister
- One or two short Bible readings follow
- A short sermon (i.e. a quick chat from the Minister) to Everyone
- A popular Hymn and a collection (for those who wish to give a donation)
- The offertory (where the bread and wine are brought to the Alter)
- Everyone offers each other a 'sign' of peace.

(note to reader ~ a 'sign' of peace is typically a hand shake with those around you and normally people will say to one another 'Peace Be With You').

· Bread and Wine consumed by the congregation.
(note to reader ~ if you haven't become a Christian, the Church will give you a Blessing if you go forward. This is where the Minister will come and say a short Blessing (5 seconds or so) for you. You would normally indicate you want the Blessing (rather than the Bread and Wine) by placing your arm across your body to touch your shoulder).

- After communion (the Bread and Wine), a Hymn is sung.
- Then a short Prayer is said to close the service
- A final greeting and any announcements given
- A closing Hymn is sung.

(note to reader ~ normally after the Service there will be tea/ coffee and biscuits where you can mingle and chat with the Minister and congregation or if you prefer to leave after the service that's also fine, but I would urge you to stop and enjoy having a chat with other fellow Christians, they are your brothers and sisters in Christ after all).

Most the denominations of Church mentioned have a similar outline to their Service, but sometimes in a different order, also some will have longer sermons than others.

Churches in the 'Church of England' will normally be well decorated, particularly have stained glass windows and the Minister, Choir, and Alter Men & Women will wear Priestly Robes which are highly visible and decorated, where as Gospel Churches, Baptist Churches tend to keep the focus on the message (God's Word) than things that could distract for example like stained glass windows.

All the Churches I have outlined I highly recommend and are safe Christian Churches to go to (i.e. true to God's Word). It is rare you will find any of the above Church's going against what the Bible says, though sometimes Ministers can get it wrong too, though generally they will always hold to the Word of God.

If the Church is a Christian Church, you are in the right place.

A Closing Word

I would like to close by repeating to you how great it is that you have become a Christian. If you are yet to give your life to The Lord, as I said earlier 'Just Do It' – start the life of a Christian today and let the Lord in from outside, He is waiting at the door for you to let Him in. If you don't know how to let Him in, just go to The Lord and say 'Please come into my life and make me a Christian'. Let's get on the road and enjoy the journey.

There is a lot of heavy content in this book, but knowing God in your life is worth the work and will make you richer than you could ever wish for, because having the riches of been a Christian cannot even be compared to earthly riches or possessions because the riches you possess as a Christian (i.e. to know God in your life) is far too valuable to be compared with earthly things, money, possessions and so on. When we leave this world, all of our earthly "riches" and possessions will remain and most likely end up on ebay. Been a Christian you will take away from this world the richness of God's love and your Spiritual riches will continue in Heaven.

Been a Christian and knowing God in your life gives 'true' happiness and a 'true' rich which money cannot buy.

A friend of mine was telling me of a close friend he knew who was a multi millionaire and had every possession money could buy, from fast cars to the biggest houses etc but felt the whole time something was missing, and he couldn't find out what it was – his thoughts were if he could find out why he felt something missing he would buy the remedy or fix required. He later became a Christian and said that it wasn't until he gave his life to The Lord that he found what was missing in his life. He is now 'complete' and said he would gladly give away all his money and possessions without a seconds thought, but there was one possession he wanted to keep, and it was The Lord in his heart and life. This is a true and clear example of how Knowing The Lord changes your life and it costs you nothing, but it did cost Jesus his life for you to have this relationship with God. Remember this and give thanks as often as you can.

And lastly, Heaven!

I like to think that answers can be found to most questions, but one question I struggled with answering for sometime was 'How would my life be, without God in it'? After sometime I worked out an answer.

I realized that without God in my life, there is no life and that living in this world without Him would not be living, but merely existing. I am glad to say that because You and I know Jesus in our hearts and God in our lives, that we will never taste death. Yes, we will leave this world in due course but it would be untrue to say we have died, because when we leave this world and God calls us 'home' – we will be doing just that, going to His home forever and I am confident that Gods home is going to be good, simply because He is there for starters.

How we get to Heaven, well the moment you gave your life to Jesus you just got an immediate ticket which gets you in.

Though we will need to leave this world to get there, and go through a funeral service and so on, I tend to think of a funeral for a Christian as not a funeral ceremony, but as a 'Handing Over Ceremony'. Let me explain.

Think about the Olympics. When an Olympics ends, the torch is passed over to the next country to hold on to. The torch remains lit. It never goes out. Now that you are a Christian, when we leave this world, we too will be passed over to the next place to live (Heaven), and our lives will remain alive and alight, and just like the Olympic torch, the light **never** goes out. Your life will carry on been alive and alight in Christ Jesus, and after this world you are **guaranteed** a place in heaven, **forever**, living with Him in Heaven.

Thank God tonight that you will experience this, but also thank Him that you will have Him in your life from now and forever more **lighting** up your world and in the next (Heaven), it is a gift that some people choose not to receive. Gladly You and I are not excluding ourselves from God's Love or His Gifts to us.

I will close with something some Churches use to close their service, I felt it apt considering you are about to close this book;

"Go In Peace To Love and Serve The Lord".
And Thanks Be To God, in Jesus Name, Amen.

'Jesus is Lord'.



A "Start-Up" Manual to
getting your relationship "Started"
with God.