



 **new believers**
guide

6 Day Devotional for New Believers

the rock church cv 2014

CONTENTS

You need to know- YOU ARE NEW page 4

How did this happen? page 5

Grace and Faith page 6

Our Father page 8

The Holy Spirit page 10

Baptisms page 12

It all starts at church page 13

MONDAY AM (DAY1)

"You need to know- YOU ARE NEW!"

While there are many things to learn about God, here's a thought right out of the Bible that will help you to begin to understand what happened at that moment when you connected with God.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 NKJV

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new** creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become **new**.

God sees you through His eyes, not yours. This means that He sees you as practically perfect in every way. Sins forgiven. Past issues wiped out. Brand new!

Perhaps, in your thinking you have a problem with this, but God doesn't. Even now your thoughts may be about your *past*. In your mind you may know all too well that you've blown it or have failed in some ways. You may even think that this is all a trick, or that, if true, maybe you '*did it wrong*' when said those words to invite Jesus into your life. But here's the good news-God sees you with His eyes of love through Jesus and all that he has done, declaring, "*...all things have become new!*"

Tomorrow, you will learn more about this, but for today let your thoughts stay on this:

You are a new creation because of Jesus, and God loves you like He loves Jesus. Mind-blowing, but true!

TUESDAY AM (DAY 2)

“How did this happen?”

Yesterday you read about being a new creation, but you may still be asking yourself, “*How did all of this really happen?*” Everyone that becomes a Christian (*that is, calls on Jesus as Lord*) wants to understand more about how God saves them. Truthfully, most Christians are still learning this, and that’s okay. God is more than willing to be patient with your growth. And keep in mind that He’s pleased with you as well. So take a look at these two scriptures that will help you build an understanding of salvation and what you did that caused this to become true for you.

ROMANS 10:13 NKJV

For “**whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved**”.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:3b NKJV

“...no one can say that Jesus is Lord except **by the Holy Spirit**”.

The “*whoever*” in the first verse is **you**. How you became a “*whoever*” is found in the second verse, “*by the Holy Spirit*”.

These are important truths for your life because you (*and everyone else for that matter*) could never save yourself. Even in the salvation that is provided for all of us it is God who did the work. It was Jesus who died. He paid the price for forgiveness and justification and salvation and life when He, the innocent One, died for us—the guilty (*or imperfect ones*). You will see more about this later in the week, but be sure to add this to your thinking. Even when you came to that moment when you knew that you needed God’s love, mercy and forgiveness it could only happen because the Holy Spirit was bringing a sense of peace and truth to your inner being, your heart, your thoughts. God came in contact with your spirit and you responded. That’s what happened! This is not a matter of being simple— it’s not simple. God did everything you could not do, and there’s a whole lot to what He did. But for the present moment what you did, as far as your involvement was concerned, was to believe and call out to Jesus. By doing so you received all of the benefit of what God did for you through His grace.

Tomorrow you will be learning about Grace and Faith, but for now reflect on this:

You had an encounter with God –the One who created you.

WEDNESDAY AM (DAY 3)

Grace and Faith

Recently, you submitted, or in other words, you yielded to the Holy Spirit who was spiritually tugging at your heart to receive all that God has done for you by calling (*or speaking, as in the bible term 'confessing'*) Jesus, as "Lord". Today's word for you is on the subject of Grace and Faith.

EPHESIANS 2:4-10 NKJV

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

These verses are talking about the things you've been reading about thus far. There is a whole bunch of things to see here, like God being rich in mercy and having great love toward us, but for today we are going to focus on verses 8 and 9. Your salvation came by grace, but through faith. There is so much to learn about grace, but here is a description of His grace—the power of God's mercy, favor and love to break through any problem, challenge or need for those who love Him; simply trusting in him, by faith. The greatest example of grace is our salvation through and in Jesus Christ.

This is a lot for anyone to understand, so hang in there. You see, for you to be saved a price for sin had to be paid because everyone is guilty of being unrighteous. In order to pay the price for man's unrighteousness (due to sin) God had to do something that was totally against His nature—to suffer, take the punishment for sin, and die. The effects and stronghold of sin demanded death, because no one is righteous apart from God. The Bible says (in John 3:16) that God loved us so much that He sent Jesus (grace) to die in our place. Since God cannot die, Jesus came to earth as a real human. Still all God, and yet all man.

Now, seeing that Jesus was a man (yet still God), He could surrender His life and die for us. But that's only part of it. The greatest news is that God the Father raised Him from the dead (*after he suffered and died a horrible death*) through His grace. Sin and death no longer had power over Him, that is, could no longer stand in the way of Jesus saving us.

Now this is where faith (*found in verse 8*) comes in. Your faith is more than just believing in God. It is trusting in the One who could do for you what you could never do for yourself. That's what being saved by (God's) grace through (your) faith means! Saved by His merciful love and demonstrated in Jesus's completed work on the cross and His resurrection from the dead. The birth of your faith came by a Spirit-led influence of God's demonstrated love causing you to respond, "Yes, I believe." That's your faith!

Tomorrow you will be learning more about prayer and connecting with God on a daily basis, but for today reflect on this:

Your faith is in the One (who by grace) saved you from sin and death-making you a new creation- His name is Jesus.

THURSDAY AM (DAY 4)

“Our Father”

Already this has been a great week. Becoming a new creation, learning how you came to be a Christian, and tackling grace and faith is a big enough task for anyone. Therefore, you may want to go back to the previous days several times and reflect on them again. SO BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF as you are learning about God, it's okay!

Today's subject is on prayer and while prayer is “*talking to God*” there are some things that are important to know so that you can begin praying with a sense of connecting with God.

MATTHEW 6:9-13 NKJV

9 In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.

10 Your kingdom come.

Your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts,

As we forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

Unfortunately, this prayer is often overlooked by many practicing Christians today as a religious exercise or robotic prayer. This is not a robotic prayer. It is a model of how to approach God, what priorities should be given, and it was taught by Jesus as a heart-felt prayer.

Notice the importance of the first two words—Our Father. These are words of honor and words of identity.

When you pray, “*Our Father, in heaven, hallowed (holy) be your name*” you are identifying with your own faith (as a new creation) and declaring that you are a son or daughter of God even if you don't feel like one yet.

When you pray, “*Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven*” you are putting God first and declaring that His purposes have priority in your life today. You are saying, “*Let your will in heaven come to earth where I live and through my life.*”

When you pray, “*Give us this day our daily bread*” you are declaring that today, this day, you are my provider saying, “*I look to You for my every need, not just food.*”

When you pray, *“And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors”* you are saying, *“In the same way you have forgiven me, I forgive others who owe me or have hurt me.”*

When you pray, *“And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one”* you are saying, *“Let your Spirit guide and give me wisdom and insight of the things around me that are evil; things that are important for me to avoid.”*

When you pray, *“For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever”* you are saying, *“I am not the creator, you are!”*

Finally, when you say, *“Amen”* you are saying, *“For sure this is my prayer, so be it, according to my faith.”*

Tomorrow you will be learning about the Holy Spirit and about how He will help you live each day. For today remember this:

Prayer is your connection with God that causes you to identify with Him– His Kingdom, His purposes and His provisions.

FRIDAY AM (DAY5)

The Holy Spirit

Hopefully, you prayed that very prayer that you read about yesterday, if not go back and re-read it again. In doing so you will begin to actualize (*or in other words, live and walk*) a life of faith. Again, don't allow discouragement to come in. God values even the smallest of attempts that you make to live by trusting Him (*faith*). Therefore today, in order to live a life of faith, it is important that you are introduced to the Holy Spirit. For example, if your family was heading out for a vacation there would be a lot of things you would need on a road-trip, but perhaps the most needful is gasoline. Your vehicle won't go anywhere without it. In a similar way you need the Holy Spirit, or you won't go anywhere; at least not successfully in the things of God. So, let's hear what Jesus says about the Holy Spirit and His way of introducing Him.

JOHN 14:26 NKJV

26 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 things that I said to you.

There are many things to see in Jesus's words of encouragement, but for now three things stand out. **First, that the Holy Spirit is described by Jesus as our helper.** We don't need to make this complicated, a helper is someone nearby who helps. But help to do what? He administers grace, which means He helps you do those things that are beyond your reach. There are things that happen in life that are just beyond your control, yet you know that you need to break through. That is why you need the Holy Spirit to help you. *"How does the He help?"* This question brings us to our next point.

The second thing is that the the Holy Spirit is a teacher who teaches truth. He makes you to understand new things in a personal way. By personal we mean spiritual; He brings it to your heart.

And lasty, He is a reminder who will cause you to remember things that you have forgotten. Faith filled things that you have read or heard. It is through the Holy Spirit (helper, teacher, reminder) that we learn, know and live out our personal Christianity. He uses all that Jesus did and said to lead us.

Jesus clarified His ultimate commandment to His disciples when He said, *"If you love Me keep my commandments. And this is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."* (Jn 15:10-12)

The Holy Spirit will prompt you in much the same way as He did during those moments that you responded by faith to God's love in what Jesus did for you. You remember, it was that moment that you knew you needed God. It was not harsh. It was not done with a lot of confusion. Instead, the He brought a peace, an agreeing sense within you, a movement of the Holy Spirit that prompted you to act in faith. You may not have even recognized at first that it was faith. And in that same way the Holy Spirit wants to help you live a big, wonder-filled life.

Tomorrow you will be learning more about the Holy Spirit. Here is what you need to remember:

The Holy Spirit is your helper, teacher and reminder. When you recognize His actions, acknowledge them by thanking Him for His leadership. It brings God glory and you strength.

SATURDAY AM (DAY6)

Baptisms

Congratulations, you've done a great job and now you are on the final day of the new believer guide. Today is about getting a basic understanding of the baptism of Jesus Christ and how it relates to you. Here you will see something special about the Spirit-led life that will help you in everything you do. First, a little background. John the Baptist was actually born six months before Christ. For clarity, Jesus has always existed eternally and His birth has everything to do with what we call Christmas. More about that later. John's main purpose in life was in paving the way, so-to-speak of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. He went all through Judea preaching that the kingdom of God was near and baptizing people in a baptism of repentance. He was sent ahead of Christ to prepare the people for their coming salvation—they needed to have their minds and hearts washed, or rather renewed.

MATTHEW 3:11-17 NKJV

11 I (John the baptist) indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He (Jesus) who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. **He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit** and fire. 12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. 14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us **to fulfill all righteousness.**" Then he allowed Him.

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. 17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "**This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.**"

As with the earlier subjects, there is much to learn here. So in order to stay focused on what is most needful about the baptism of Jesus let's sum up what to take away from all of this.

The baptism of Jesus was significant in three ways:

1. He set an example that righteousness is of God and is always in season (good any time, anywhere).
2. His baptism showed that the Holy Spirit came upon Him in a gentle manner (not by force).
3. That His Father called Him "the beloved", from which he began doing great things.

First, let's begin with Jesus setting a good example. Jesus was already righteous. By being baptized He would not become more righteous. He is righteousness. So why a baptism of repentance?

This is so simple that many believers overlook it; Jesus was baptized to endorse that repentance (or *in-other-words turning to God's way of life instead of mankind's way of life*) is for everyone. You see, Jesus was baptized, but didn't need to be.

Therefore, His purpose was not to obtain righteousness, but to display that righteousness was good, thereby displaying His leadership for the world to follow.

The second thing that should be important for you to notice is the gentle nature of the Holy Spirit must be clearly seen here as One who never forces Himself on people. Remember what the scripture said, *"Behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."* Another aspect of great importance is that many of the workings of the Holy Spirit in scripture are associated spiritually with fire. For example *warmth for comfort, light for revelation, coals of fire on one's head for conviction, and a burning fire for purification.*

The point here though is clear, the Holy Spirit never forces Himself upon you which is why we are encouraged not to quench, or put out the flame of Spirit, so-to-speak which comes to transform and renew.

Lastly, we see is the Father declaring, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Jesus was and is the beloved Son of God. Notice that He called Jesus His beloved Son *"in whom"* I am well please and NOT *"by whom."* It was not what Jesus did that caused the Father to be well pleased, it was simply who He was, His Son. This is My Son, the beloved. In this same way God loves you simply because you exist.

One last note about this moment of recognition and acknowledgement of baptism; it was after this baptism (*both physical and spiritual*) that Jesus began to complete the mission that the Father gave Him to do. Don't miss this! Jesus displayed no miracles or great works (*as far as we can see*) until after this baptism and after the Holy Spirit came upon His life.

We all need the help and encouragement of the Holy Spirit in order to do great things in the world we live in.

It all starts at church

**Sundays 9am and 11am*
Wednesdays 7pm**

Livestream <http://therockcv.churchonline.org/>

Nursery- 5th available for every service

Youth Wed Nights after Praise & Worship

*See our Lobby Info Counter for more information on church events and activities or call us at (760) 340-1537
www.therockcv.com*

