

Growing

DEEP

Taking the next steps in your new
relationship with Christ



David P. Dowling

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By David P. Dowling

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About The Author

SECTION 1 - CONGRATULATIONS

Yes! **Congratulations** are in order because the decision you made to trust and follow Jesus Christ will be the most important decision you will ever make; I guarantee it! It will be more important than who you will marry, where you will live, what house you will buy or what you will do for a living.

So what do you do next with this new relationship?

Well, first off, let me say that following Jesus Christ and making Him Lord of your life is simple, but it is often not very easy. As most of us grow up, we have a tendency to do things our own way, which most of the time is not God's way. That is why we wind up in most of the situations we do and why sin is so common in our lives. Now that you have received Jesus Christ as your Savior, you have become a new person and that new person (YOU) has a chance to start life fresh all over again. Here is what it says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, verse 17:

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new created has come. The old has gone, the new is here!
(NIV)

This new relationship with Christ is just like one you might have with a best friend. It starts by willingly sharing about yourself with them, and they with you. As the relationship deepens, so does the depth of honesty and sacrifice. You share important things and give of yourself more and more, so that you and your friend can grow closer! Your new relationship with Jesus is no different. God loves you so much! For some of you that may be hard for you to understand as there may not have been much love shown to you growing up. Don't worry about that. As you grow closer to Jesus in your new relationship, you will begin to see all the ways He loves you, and come to know that there is nothing you can do to stop Him from loving you! Just like it says in Romans Chapter 8: verses 34–39:

³⁴Who then is the one who condemns? No one, Christ Jesus who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (NIV)

SECTION 2 - GETTING STARTED

What do I do next?

Well, if you look in the Old Testament (the part of the Bible written before Jesus came to earth) in the book of Genesis chapter 6, verse 9 (Genesis 6:9) we read about Noah. Noah was the one God called upon to build the Ark (boat) to rescue all the animals and his family from the flood that would destroy the world.

Now God called Noah to do a very important task, which was building the Ark and save mankind and all the animals. This is what it says in Genesis 6:9:

This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. (NIV)

In looking at the really big things he did for God, I think the most important one was that he “Walked with God”. You see, he couldn’t have done all those great things for God if he wasn’t walking with God.

So what does **walking with God** mean? Well, walking with God is nothing more than to remember to spend more time with God than serving God. Let me explain: Many people decide to trust Jesus like you did, but they start listening and doing everything people tell them to do instead of what God wants them to do. It’s like you start this great new friendship with somebody, but instead of spending time together, other people tell you what they think this new friend might like you to do for them. So you start sending them presents, clearing the snow from their sidewalk, walking their dog or picking up their groceries.

Now those are all wonderful things, but in doing all those things, when was the last time you actually spent time talking to or listening to your new friend? When was the last time you sat down and watched a football game together? Or went shopping? Or laughed together, or consoled each other? You see, the thing God wants from you more than anything else, is YOU! That’s it! I know many of us can never figure out why God would want someone like you or me,

but He does! We are His creation, and whether we sin or walk blameless, God still love US!

You see there is nothing we can do as service to God to earn His love, because **the thing He wants most from us is US!** Isn't that great news? I hope you never forget it! I am not saying we shouldn't serve God. But what I am saying is that we should make sure we serve Him for the right reasons and with the right heart, and while doing so make sure we make a conscious effort to remember to walk each day with God!!!

SECTION 3- WALKING WITH GOD

The art of not running ahead of Him

People make walking with God harder than they need to. As I said earlier, walking with God is just like having a relationship with your best friend. Only your best friend is God. I'm going to tell you the **secret key** to having an awesome and close relationship with God. This key will make all the difference in whether you walk with God or run ahead of Him (distancing yourself from God, and doing things your way, again). Are you ready for the secret? Well here it is – it's TIME!!! That's the secret! Not just time, but spending it with God.

Now there are some people that will tell you that you must spend a specific amount of time with God each day and that you have to do things this way or that way or at a certain time of the day or that you must read this or that.

In order to spend real time with God, there are some principals that you need to always keep in mind to help you get the most from this time. But, let's face it - God created us all different. Some people are morning people, other are night owls. Some like country music, others like louder music. People are all different in so many ways: they're outgoing, they're soft spoken, some like to be upfront, and others like to be behind the scenes. Some are artistic, while others are mechanical or athletic.

What I am trying to say is that you need to treat the time you spend with God like you would with your best friend. Maybe you text each other, maybe you like to talk on the phone, or write letters, or sit on a bench together and just share the moment.

Aside from the few key things we all need to do to keep that relationship tight with God, when or how you do it is up to you and Him. Although having a set time to spend each day with God is a good idea, and even better one is to stay in constant communication with Him all day long as it talks about the verses below from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, verses 16 - 18:

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray continually, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

So what are some key principles and why are they important?

Let's take a look at them:

The Word of God (The Bible) –

First is the Word of God [the Bible]. Time in the Bible is spending time with God because it is one of the ways He communicates with us His love for us, His direction for our life, and many other things that will not only protect us from the bad situations of life, but also keep us close to Him.

Some people like to read through the Bible in a year, others study one book of the Bible through till its end, others like to look up a specific topic like love, sin, forgiveness, money or something else, and others take a passage or a verse and read it over and over for a week to learn it and find out what it means. The one key thing to remember is that the Bible says to meditate [think, ponder] on God's word, not just read it. Psalms chapter.1: verses 1 - 2:

¹Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, ²but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. (NIV)

You see the Bible is God's love letter to us and it is so important to us because it is where we learn to have faith, Romans 10:17:

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. (NIV)

The Bible is where we come to know how much He loves us, John 3:16–17:

¹⁶For 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. (NIV)

The Word of God is also where we learn how to deal with sin, James 5:16:

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. (NIV)

And so much more.

In essence, the Word of God will go deep into your life and change you if you read it and meditate on it and do what it says. Like in Hebrews 4:12:

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. (NIV)

So before you do anything make sure you purchase a good Bible to be your companion. Pick a translation (New International Version, New American Standard Version, King James, New King James, etc.) that is easy to read and that you enjoy using.

Next is take the time to write in the inside cover of your Bible a proclamation of your new decision of accepting Christ as your savior. It can read something like this:

I (Your Name) on this day (Put the date you accepted Christ in here) gave my life and heart to Jesus Christ once and forever. Receiving his free gift for me of dying on the cross for my sins! (Sign your name here)

By doing this you cement your commitment to follow Christ, and it also will give you a reassurance in times when you doubt your decision. Whenever that happens you can open your Bible and read what you wrote and know the commitment you made to God was real and actually happened.

Prayer (Talking and Listening to God)

Picture yourself going out on this date with someone you have really fallen for. You meet them at a nice restaurant and they are dressed really nice. It is hard for you to take your eyes off them. They ask you questions about yourself, but for some reason you never hear them or respond. Let me ask you a question? How long do you think that relationship is going to last? NOT VERY LONG!

It is the same with God. Prayer with God is just talking to Him, and, yes, listening to Him. So often people just dump their prayer request list on God and walk away. What's with that? How would you feel if someone did that with you?

Prayer is your opportunity to ask God to help you or to give you something you need, but it's also your opportunity to pray for others, to tell God how you feel about what you are going through, to ask Him for direction, and a whole lot more! One of the keys to praying though, is to

be specific in your prayers to Him. Don't be so general that even if God does answer your prayer you would never know it. So often people just pray like this: "Lord bless my friend." What does that mean? If you don't know, how do you expect God to answer it and even if He does, how will you know if He does? A more specific prayer might be: "God please help my friend through this financial problem they are facing. Please send someone to help them or show me how I can be of help to them." I love to pray this way because when I do, I'm looking to see how God is going to work and when He does, I know how powerful He is and that He answered my prayer. But however you pray, make sure you do it often. God wants to stay in touch with you and you with Him. Take time to listen to what God is saying to your heart after you pray. Don't just leave your grocery list and then hang up the phone. I think you'll see a difference if you do!

Church (Moving from spectator to player)

²⁴And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds, ²⁵not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching. (NIV Hebrews 10 24 - 25)

Many people have had a bad experience with church at one point or another, but now that you have received Christ as your Savior, you have the Holy Spirit inside of you and your reason for going to church should be different.

Many people who don't have the relationship you do now with Jesus often go to church because they feel they have to. Or they think that this will make God happy and He will allow them into heaven. But the real purpose of church is the following:

1) To worship the Lord! It is our opportunity to come before the throne of God and to give thanks and praise for who He is and what He has done in our lives. It is our opportunity to get off the bench and into the game. Going to church is not a spectator sport.

2) Encouragement: We should go to church because it is our opportunity to encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25, the verse written out above). This is our chance to build into someone else's life when they are going through a hard time. Maybe God just took you through what they are going through and you can give them the push they need to make it, by praying and sharing with them. Church is important to God and it should be important to you. Make sure that whatever church you go to is one that preaches that Jesus Christ is the only way to have your sins

forgiven and the only way to heaven. There are some churches that do not preach the Word of God truthfully. Make sure the one you attend does, and make sure they don't just preach it, but that they follow it too!

SECTION 4 - RUNNING THE RACE

Finishing what you start

The Bible often compares your new walk with Jesus to running a race. There are all kinds of races: sprints, marathons, cross-country, and many more. Always try to remember that walking with Jesus is more of a marathon than anything else. It is a race where *consistency* is key.

So often I see people start like a forest on fire only to fizzle out in a matter of months. The best way I have found to live the Christian life is by living deliberately as if I were a bricklayer building a chimney. It is so important that each brick be laid square and level, otherwise your chimney might wind up crooked, twisted, or might even fall down.

Remember God is in no rush. He holds the world in His hands. Remember as I said earlier what God wants is not your works as much as He wants YOU!

Let's go back to the chimney story again. When I think of building a brick chimney (which I have), I think of keeping my eye on the goal. Walking with God is no different. The chimney I built was 154 rows of brick high and was about 2 feet wide and 4 feet long, and weighed about 13 tons. I learned early on that I had to pace myself and enjoy the journey, but I also had to stay diligent as well. I had to find a pace that kept me moving forward, but didn't force the progress and have me start over.

I remember that I could really only lay about four rows of bricks each night, because more than that would cause the weight of the bricks on top to squeeze out the mortar of the bricks below. But laying less than that would keep me from reaching my goal on time.

You see living and walking with God once you trust Christ as your Savior is nothing more than **staying close to Him** and resting when He tells you to rest and going when He tells you to go. Learning to surrender the areas of your life He asks you to and trusting Him with the things He asks you to. The rest depends on Him.

The key to finishing the race is to start slow, keep God's pace, and finish strong. Let Him carry

you when you can't keep going and remember the race is more like a long walk with God and the greatest thing about that is He said this so we would remember:

“Never will I leave you, never will I forsake you.” (NIV Hebrews 13: 5)

Welcome to the family of God and remember God loves you more than you know and He has a plan and a purpose for your life.

For I know the plans I have for you, “declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. (NIV Jeremiah 29: 11)

The more time you spend with Him the closer the two of you will be and the closer you are the more you'll know who God is, how much He loves you, and what that plan is that He has for you as He unfolds it before you.

SECTION 5 - PROBLEMS

What is just around the corner

One of the things you must remember as a new Christian is that you will have problems. Becoming a Christian doesn't make all your problems go away. In fact, sometimes you will even find yourself with more problems.

The truth of the matter is this, now that you belong to Jesus, Satan [the Devil] will do everything he can to cause you to fall away. From this point forward, you are in a spiritual battle. He wants you back on his side and wants to destroy your life and your hope of salvation with Jesus, but Jesus wants you to experience life, all of it, and to its fullest! John 10:10:

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. (NIV)

Even Jesus said, *"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* (NIV John 16: 33)

He wanted you to know that trouble is just around the corner; it is a fact of life. But the good news is that when you have received Christ as your Savior, He doesn't leave you alone. He gives you power to handle all your problems, no matter how big or how small.

One of the ways He helps us through our problems is through the Word of God. Within the Bible are not only principles to handle problems that arise, but also examples to follow from others who have already gone before us. There is advice on exactly what God thinks of certain issues and topics, including: What do you do when someone hurts you? How should you handle money? Is it OK to get a divorce? Is being prideful wrong? Does God still love us when we sin? And a whole lot more!

Sometimes we are looking for a specific answer to a specific problem. Many times we can only know that answer by continued prayer and waiting and sometimes fasting [denying ourselves of food or something else so we can concentrate on seeking God about the problem]. When we do

those things like pray and fast and wait, God works on our behalf through the Holy Spirit to answer our prayers and give us direction!

SECTION 6 - THE HOLY SPIRIT

Your everyday companion

The Holy Spirit is the person of God who comes as your Counselor, Comforter, and will guide you in all truth

But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own, he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. (NIV John 16:13)

When you trust Jesus as your Savior you are no longer dealing with just the physical aspects of life. Now you are dealing with life in a spiritual realm.

And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, (NIV Ephesians 2: 6)

There is a constant battle, taking place around you. The results of some of these battles show forth in physical troubles and problems others can appear in emotional issues or problems like depression or hopelessness.

When you receive Jesus, the Holy Spirit takes up residence within you. Your body becomes His temple and God is now actually living and acting inside of you

¹⁹Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (NIV 1 Corinthians 6: 19 - 20)

I know this is a mystery, but it is true, and as you begin to listen and follow the prompting of the Holy Spirit in your life, He will be able to lead and guide you in that truth we talked about earlier.

You will notice that there may be things in your life now that bother you that didn't before you were a Christian. That is the Holy Spirit convicting you, and as you listen and yield to His desires for you, change will begin to happen in your life. One of the things that you will find is

that the bad fruit in your life that often leads to a spiritual death and emptiness will be replaced with fruit that leads to life and hope.

²²*But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,*
²³*gentleness and self control. Against such things there is no law. (NIV Galatians 5: 22 - 23)*

God in the form of the Holy Spirit is the One that has the power to change you, and as you surrender those areas of your life He makes known to you that need to change, He will make you more and more like Jesus, which is what God wants most for you!

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. (NIV Romans 8:29)

SECTION 7 - LIVING THROUGH CHRIST

Learning to trust Jesus

So what does all this mean for you? Well it is quite simple. Always think of your new decision to trust Jesus as your Savior as a relationship. Relationships deepen as you trust one another. The great thing is God already believes in you, and He loves you so much. But you on the other hand may have trusted Jesus with your salvation and your ticket to heaven, but maybe you're not sure about trusting Him with the other parts of your life.

If I can give you some encouragement, remember "BABY STEPS!" This is not to imply that you are a baby, but that you should move slowly and deliberately in your walk with Christ. As you surrender to Him the small areas of your life, He will prove His faithfulness to you...trust begins to develop and you will trust Him in the harder areas. Let the Holy Spirit prompt you in this. Stay in the Word of God, and remember to talk to God every day. He knows everything about you, so who better to listen to in learning in your heart what to yield when. When we think of surrender we actually might think of giving up something. But in reality, when we surrender our ways to God we in a sense **give up a burden and let Him carry it** from then on.

Always remember God has BIG shoulders and can and is willing to carry anything you are willing to give Him. God loved you enough to die for you while you were still a sinner.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.
(NIV Romans 5: 8)

That means that God is willing to accept you with all your successes and failures as well. Like the sneaker commercial goes, "JUST DO IT!" That is what walking with Jesus is - learning to trust Him with the small things at first and growing in that relationship. But you have to start somewhere and with something. Just do it and start today. By asking Jesus what He would have you to do and then JUST DO IT!!!!

SECTION 8 - IF YOU NEED HELP

We're here for you!

If you ever have questions or need help in this new walk with Jesus, we want you to know that we are here for you! We know that this new relationship can seem overwhelming, so if you have any questions or need prayer please don't hesitate to contact us! (See about the author for contact information). Remember God loves you and so do we!

God bless you and I hope these tips will help you draw closer to God than you have ever been before!

“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes, its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” (NIV Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8)

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



David P. Dowling has been ministering to teenagers and adults for over two decades. He served as a volunteer staff person with Youth for Christ in the Pocono/Slate Belt area of Pennsylvania starting in 1980 with Dave serving as the Executive Director from 2001 to 2008.

It was during his time at Youth for Christ that Dave had his first experience in short term missions, traveling to Jamaica to work on an addition for a school. Through that trip and others Dave gained the experience to go on to lead short term mission teams in the U.S. and to Honduras, and both Ghana and Kenya, Africa.

He is presently the Executive Director of [Inheritance World Ministries inc.](#) a ministry that trains and equips God's people to perform various types of ministry, as well as lead short term mission trips. He and his wife Gail have also come along side of [Through the Storm Ministries](#) to help in the building and support of their ministry of an orphanage in Kenya, East Africa. Dave plans on continuing to lead short term mission teams there to help both physically and financially.

Dave struggled for over two years with severe depression. It was only when he hit rock bottom

that he turned back to God and found the answers that led him back out of his sickness into healing. As Dave sought after God, God revealed to him not only the steps that led to his depression, but also the path that would lead him back to health in a period of just a couple of weeks. It was what he learned on that journey that he decided to place between the pages of a book in order that others might find the same freedom he now has.

Dave has the ability to make God's Word real to people, and feels right at home whether he is speaking to 20 Junior High teenagers at a winter retreat or closing with a Gospel presentation at a Michael Card concert to hundreds.

Dave is extremely professional in engaging people, both from the stage and one on one. His desire is to see people understand God's Word so they can apply it to the way they live, and live a life in a way that brings glory to God.

Dave lives with his wife Gail in the Pocono Mountains of Northeast Pennsylvania. They have one daughter Sarah, and three sons, Jeremiah, Joshua, and Caleb.

You can also connect with Dave online at [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com) or through [Inheritance World Ministries Inc.](http://www.inheritancewm.com)

For more information and to contact the author, or to check out his other books please visit our ministry website at:

www.inheritancewm.x10.mx

Check out the author's other writings on our website, Amazon, Barnes & Nobles, Itunes and other places:

“Freedom From Depression In Less Than A Month”

One Christian's transformation through the power of God.

“To The Brink & Back Again”

A Christian's Journey With God Through Cancer And

What It is Like To Come Out The Other Side.
“Real Life Devotions For Real Life”
Living The Transforming Power Of God’s Word.