

FIRST STEPS

6

Your personal guide to understanding the essentials of following Jesus.

6 | NEW PURPOSE



FIRST STEPS | Book 6 – “New Purpose”

Every child loves to be read to and hear great stories. Many fairy tales that you have heard even contain glimpses of the gospel (good news) of what Jesus came to do. For example, you and I were trapped as a “beast” with an anger problem but were then transformed by the “beauty” of Christ. You and I were once rendered unconscious by the poisonous apple of sin but awakened by the kiss of the “Prince,” Jesus Christ. You and I once had “ice” in our hearts and were “frozen” in certain patterns but were saved by the true love sacrifice of Christ.

You may not have even realized it, but because of what Jesus has done in your life, you have an equally amazing story! Whether your story is dramatic or in your opinion, ordinary - Jesus is still the hero!

1. What do you notice about the following men's stories?

- **Paul** | Acts 26:4-18

- **Timothy** | 2 Timothy 3:14-15

Are You Talking to Me?

If you had the greatest mission in the world to accomplish & you needed a partner to help you accomplish it, would you choose *you*? That is exactly what God has done! He has chosen you & me to join him. Jesus is on a mission to rescue sinners & change their stories just as he changed Paul's, Timothy's, and yours. We are it! There is no Plan B. We have been entrusted with an incredible opportunity & responsibility to be on a mission with God.

2. What is our role in this partnership according to Mark 16:15?

The word "preach" probably makes you a little uncomfortable because you don't see yourself as a preacher. Most people think a preacher is someone that stands up front in church or on a street corner. But the word "preach" means to simply proclaim, show, or reveal. You've experienced the Good News, so **you have good news** to proclaim, show, or reveal. If you knew the cure for cancer, would you share it? Better yet, you know the cure for sin. We can't keep that to ourselves.

So to be clear - **our job is to proclaim, show or reveal what God has done in our life. It is God's job to change people's lives.** Phew, aren't you glad? We don't have to have all of the answers or try and convince people of anything.

3. What can we learn from the blind man in John 9:1-25?

What If I'm Nervous?

In a minute we will look at some practical ways that you can partner with Jesus, but let's be honest - you might be nervous or unsure about all of this. That's entirely normal. You might have many questions but **the most important thing in our Christian life is obedience to God.** We can say to God: "Yes, I'm available - even if I'm nervous or still have questions."

4. Read Acts 1:8 & 4:31 - What does God give us when we are obedient to follow Him? What is the result?

Good Things Come in Threes

Finally, we are going to look at 3 practical ways that, regardless of your age or personality, are completely in reach for you to get involved in partnering with Jesus to change other people's story.

- **PRAYER** - We have already spent time looking at how prayer changes people & circumstances.

5. According to 1 Timothy 2:1-4 *who* should we pray for and *what* does God want to do in their lives?

Let's pray right now for 3 people who need to know Christ. Pray also for God to give you an opportunity to help them move closer to Christ. Write down their names here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

- **CARE** - To proclaim, show or reveal the good news about Jesus is possible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. How? We let our changed life speak in a variety of ways.

6. According to Matthew 5:13-16 how does our life speak?

Wherever Christians have gone in the world, so does the compassionate heart of God. You won't find many hospitals or orphanages started by atheists but you will find thousands of Christian ones. **The point is that God calls us to get involved in caring for the hurts & needs and injustices of those around us.**

7. What is a practical way that you could show God's love for one of the people on your prayer list in #6?

- **SHARE** - To share our faith with others obviously involves opening our mouth at some point. It's exciting to see how God uses our little steps of obedience to help people get closer to Jesus. The following are three practical ways that anyone can share their faith out loud.

- **Be ready to give credit to Jesus** | like the blind man you read about earlier, simply give credit to Jesus for the changes & hope He has brought into your life and share how you asked Jesus into your life. How does 1 Peter 3:15 say this?

- **Be an inviter** | Share an invitation to church and other Christian functions so people can meet Jesus for themselves. How did Andrew do this in John 1:4-42?

- **Share your story with someone** | Nobody can take away from what Jesus has done in your life. It is your story. More about this in just a minute

Putting it All Together

**This final section was adopted from "Start to Follow" by Greg Laurie*

Your story or testimony is a resource to help you build bridges instead of burning them. It lets others see that you were once in their shoes but have no been transformed by the power of Jesus! Let's spend a few moments writing your story down, but fear not - you aren't writing a book. In fact, it is helpful to condense your story down to about one minute when you share it.

8. Complete the following section:

- **My Life Before Christ** | Don't glorify your past, but mention how you were before you gave your life to Christ. Use simple words to describe how you felt like empty, hopeless, guilty, lost or self centered. *Write your short description of your life before Christ here:*

- **My Life Changed by Christ** | Summarize how you came into a relationship with Christ. Be sure to mention some of the key elements like: I realized I was a sinner, I recognized that Jesus died for my sins, I turned away from my sins & received Jesus as my Savior. *Write how you became a Christian here:*

- **My New Life in Christ |** Tell how your life has changed now that you have a personal relationship with Christ. Use phrases any person can understand, like, "I now have peace" "I have found purpose" "I no longer feel empty" "I am forgiven & free" or "I have learned where to go with life's problems" *Write here how your life has changed since Christ has entered your life:*

9. With a friend, try & share these 3 parts of your story in about one minute. Have fun with it! :)

Congratulations! In one sense you have finished these First Steps, but in reality you have just begun. Babies are cute when they are first born, but after a few years if they are still acting like babies it ceases to be cute. Your destiny is Christian maturity: Day by day becoming a little more like Jesus. These were your First Steps in the maturing process, but now you need to ask the Lord and possibly a friend, "what is my next step with Jesus? Some possible ideas: make attending church a priority, join a small group or a Bible study, start a daily time to pray and read the Bible, be baptized, etc.

10. My Next Step with Jesus Is: _____

Bible Verses Used in this Lesson

Acts 26: 4-18 | “The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion, living as a Pharisee. And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

“I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord’s people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’ “Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ “‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. ‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

2 Timothy 3:14-15 (NLT) | But you must remain faithful to the things you have been taught. You know they are true, for you know you can trust those who taught you. You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation that comes by trusting in Christ Jesus.

Mark 6:15 | Jesus said to them, "Go into all the world & preach the gospel to all creation.

John 9:1-25 | As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."

After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. "Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam". So the man went and washed, and came home seeing. His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" Some claimed that he was. Others said, "No, he only looks like him." But he himself insisted, "I am the man."

"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked. He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see." "Where is this man?" they asked him. "I don't know," he said.

They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see." Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided. Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened." The man replied, "He is a prophet."

John 9 Cont | They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. "Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?" "We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him." A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"

Acts 1:8 | But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea & Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 4:31 | After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit & spoke the word of God boldly.

1 Timothy 2:1-4 | I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

Matthew 5:13-16 | "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

1 Peter 3:15 | But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

John 1:40-42 | Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus.

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