



## **Understanding and enjoying your life with God**

Thank you for sharing with us that you responded to God's offer of assurance of salvation on Sunday. Congratulations! Whether you are feeling it or not great changes are taking place in your life. Very quickly I would like to remind you of what has taken place in your life and then help you take the next steps into experiencing the abundant life God has for you.

### **What God has done FOR you in Christ**

#### **1) You are loved by God.**

*"But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us".*

**Romans 5:8**

#### **2) You are forgiven by God.**

*"If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

**1John 1:9**

#### **3) You are alive in God.**

*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the son of God does not have life.*

**1 John 5:11-12**

### **How to enjoy YOUR new life in Christ**

#### **1) Mark this day as your beginning.**

Every great event in our lives has a beginning. So many of us have been in church for most of our lives we can become confused about our relationship with God. Having a concrete time and place where you know for sure you asked God for forgiveness and salvation brings clarity to our the decision and provides strength during the inevitable times of doubt and discouragement. One way or another as of October 9, 2011 you are a loved, forgiven, protected person with a new life in God!

## 2) Stop anything that is keeping you from God.

When people encountered Jesus and gave themselves to follow Him there was always something they had to “turn away” from. The “go and sin no more” that Jesus encourages is not so that we can earn what God has already given us but because there are certain things that draw us away from God rather than closer to God. Take a few minutes right now and ask God to show you what if anything you need to stop or drop in order to fully experience God’s love. Then keep your heart open from here on to God’s gentle nudging about other “things” you may need to turn away from.

## 3) Start practices that will draw you near God.

As you begin to stop certain things in your life, you will begin new practices that will enhance and increase your relationship with God. Just like when someone marries they stop certain behaviors that were appropriate as a single person, they also adopt new behaviors that are appropriate for a marriage relationship. These practices or “habits” are not difficult or burdensome. Here are some examples:

- **Read the Bible every day:** This is God’s love letter to you and through reading and study you will learn how to walk closely with God.
- **Pray as often as you can:** Prayer is merely a conversation with God. Start your day with prayer and end your day with prayer and pray as often as you can throughout your day.
- **Develop community with other believers in Jesus:** We were meant to live our lives in relationship with God and with others. Join a small group. Seek out someone who you admire and respect who is walking with Jesus and ask them out for lunch or coffee and talk about the journey of faith. Ask God to provide you with other people who can encourage you. Worship regularly with the Church.

## 4) Tell others about your new life.

For some of us this is the most frightening. Our culture has “privatized religion” in such a way that we are afraid we might offend others if we tell them about our faith. But the reality is if done in the right way most people are not only open to hearing about your spiritual experiences but will often want to follow up with their own questions and experiences once the door is open! You are not “preaching” here you are merely asking, “Can I tell you what happened to me the other day at church?” I don’t know of anyone who would say no to that. The reasons to share your experience are several:

- **As you tell others about the commitment you have made, it establishes the experience in your own heart and life.** Imagine getting married but never telling anyone about it.
- **It opens the door for God to use your story to bless someone else.** Multitudes of people have developed their own relationship with Jesus after hearing another person’s story. Just read the Bible!
- **It provides for personal accountability.** It seems for the last 15 years I have been trying to get rid of the same old 20 pounds. The times I have been most

successful in losing weight were the times when I told someone what I was doing. There is a natural accountability built into voicing your commitments to others.

I can't tell you how excited I am about this new life of faith you have entered. While I know it won't always be easy, I trust that you will look back on this time as one of the most significant experiences of your life. Remember you know have the Holy Spirit living inside you. You have power over sin and power for victorious living that you have never had before. The Apostle Paul said to the church in Corinth, "No temptation has seized you except what is common to all people. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, God will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under every temptation."

My hope is to check in with you in a few weeks and see how you are doing. But if you would like to something more right now please let us know here at Oakdale and we will do all that we can to "strengthen your faith" and walk alongside of you in Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

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