



# Adopted into the family of God

Next Steps for the New Christ Follower

# INTRODUCTION

Congratulations on your decision to follow Christ. We celebrate the commitment you have made and want to walk alongside you in this journey. While the decision you made might have been deeply personal, once you said yes to Jesus, you were adopted into His family known as the Church.



This resource is meant to help you understand what your next steps are as a Christ follower and what it means to be part of the family of God. You may have basic questions of the faith such as who God is or what it means to grow in spiritual habits as a Christ follower. This resource will guide you in those questions and in how you can live on mission in your community.

If you have more questions along the way, please email us at [connections@transformationchurch.tc](mailto:connections@transformationchurch.tc). We would love to have a conversation and get to know you.

# SALVATION

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When we put our faith in Christ, it triggers a spiritual chain reaction. We become the temple of the Holy Spirit and our names are written in the Book of Life. We become citizens of heaven and are given eternal life. We are adopted into His family and become children of God. Our sins are forgiven and forgotten. We are credited with the righteousness of Christ. We are born again and become new creations. We are transformed into the image of Christ.

Here we will explore the different aspects of salvation, from how we receive forgiveness to knowing that we have assurance of salvation always.

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus*

*Christ from the dead 4 and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you. 5 You are being guarded by God's power through faith for a salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 You rejoice in this, even though now for a short time, if necessary, you suffer grief in various trials 7 so that the proven character of your faith more valuable than gold which, though perishable, is refined by fire—may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen Him, you love Him; though not seeing Him now, you believe in Him, and you rejoice with inexpressible and glorious joy, 9 because you are receiving the goal of your faith, the salvation of your souls. - 1 Peter 1:3-9*



Repentance is an integral part of the salvation process. The word repentance within the context of the Bible means, "to turn or return." The idea is that we are turning away from sin and returning to God. Repentance leads to faith, which is central to the Christian experience. It's important to remember that central to our faith is Jesus. Without Jesus, faith is meaningless.

Once we accept forgiveness of our sin, which God offers to us through Jesus, we experience justification, reconciliation, and regeneration. We also begin to go through sanctification and eventually will one day reach glorification.



**JUSTIFICATION:** God has declared you to be righteous. He credits the righteousness of Jesus to us. This has to do with our standing before God.

**RECONCILIATION:** Restoration of the relationship between you and God. We now have harmony and fellowship with God.

**REGENERATION:** A "new birth." The passing from death to life ascribed by the Holy Spirit, which we experience when we begin to follow Jesus.

**SANCTIFICATION:** A process of becoming more like Jesus, more holy. This has to do with our ongoing growth, discipleship. It continues as long as we live.

**GLORIFICATION:** This is the future part of our salvation. While we have been saved from the power of sin, we will one day be saved from the presence of sin. We will be perfect and free from all sin. This will occur when God creates the new heavens and the new earth, and we see Him face-to-face.

Another way to think of this is: I have been saved from the penalty of sin. I am being saved from the power of sin. I will be saved from the presence of sin.

One last note about salvation – we have assurance of our salvation. This is also known as eternal security. All true Christ followers are eternally secure through the Spirit's power.

Everyone the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. 39 This is the will of Him who sent Me: that I should lose none of those He has given me but should raise them up on the last day. 40 For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I will raise Him up on the last day. – [John 6:37-40](#)

This does not mean that Christ followers should take advantage of the gift they've been given. Instead, we heed the words of the Apostle Paul in Galatians:

*For you were called to be free, brothers and sisters; only don't use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love.* – [Galatians 5:13](#)

Although baptism is not necessary for salvation, the Bible teaches that all who repent and believe in Jesus are to be baptized by immersion. Baptism is a public profession of our faith. Baptism is symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It's a declaration to the world that we have died to sin and have been raised with Christ to walk in newness of life

## THE ————— TRINITY

The Trinity is a difficult concept to understand. Our finite brains cannot fully comprehend the infinite nature of God. In one sentence, the Trinity is this: God is one being, but He exists in three persons; God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.

Paul E. Little says it in this way, "God is one in His essential being, but the 'divine essence' exists in three modes or forms, each consisting a Person, yet in such a way that the divine essence is wholly in each Person."

While the Bible does not explicitly use the word "Trinity," we can see evidence of the Trinity throughout. It's important to remember that there is no hierarchy when it comes to the three Persons of the Trinity. They are all one and they do not act independently or in opposition of the others. God is a unity, one in essence, personality, and will.

Let's look at each Person of the Trinity:

## GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the source or origin. He is super-dimensional and eternally self-existent. God is love, sovereign (in control), omniscient (knows everything), omnipresent (in all places at all times), and omnipotent (all-powerful). He is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is infinite, unlimited, and unchanging.

## GOD THE SON

Jesus the Messiah (Christ) is the second person of the Trinity. The eternal Son of God became man without ceasing to be God. He was born of a virgin, lived a sinless life, and died for us on the cross. He rose from the dead and was exalted to the right hand of God the Father to now function as our High Priest, Representative, Intercessor, and Advocate. Jesus will come again, and we look forward to His return.

## GOD THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is as much a person as God the Father and God the Son. He is not an apparition or phantom. When we become Christ followers, we receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. In the Bible, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Comforter or Counselor. He also gives spiritual gifts (Ephesians 4:7-8) and spiritual fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). The fruit of the Spirit are the by-product of a Spirit-filled life and are evidence of spiritual maturity.

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# UPWARD INWARD OUTWARD



The Vision of Transformation Church is to be a multiethnic, multigenerational mission-shaped community that loves God completely (Upward), ourselves correctly (Inward), and our neighbors compassionately (Outward). To make our vision memorable we say, "Upward, Inward, Outward" because what's memorable is portable.

Loving God completely involves all of us – our intellect, emotion, and will. The more we know God, the more we will love Him. He loved us completely first, which enables us to love Him.

Loving ourselves correctly means to see ourselves as God sees us. This comes from grace, which “humbles us without degrading us and elevates us without inflating us.” (Ken Boa, Conformed to His Image)

Loving our neighbors compassionately comes from our vertical relationship with God. Loving God completely is the key to loving ourselves correctly; and this in turn is the key to loving others compassionately. We are freed to love and serve others in our horizontal relationships.

# THE ————— BIBLE

## WHAT IS THE BIBLE?

The Bible is made up of various books and divided into the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old and New Testaments are verbally inspired by God, the only written revelation from God to man. The Bible is infallible and the authoritative rule of faith and conduct for mankind.



## WHO WROTE THE BIBLE?

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The New Testament was written largely in Greek. The Bible originated in the mind of God and was given to us by inspiration. The inspiration of the Bible applies only to the text as originally written by the writers. Those original writings are without error.

As for who physically wrote the Bible? There are many different authors spanning over a period of 1500 years. Most of these authors you meet within the pages of the Bible itself.

*All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*

– 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

## HOW TO READ THE BIBLE?

When reading the Bible, it's important to know that the 66 books of the Bible have different literary forms. The Bible uses poetry, allegory, narrative, and parable. The Bible was also written at certain times in history and in certain cultures. Keeping all of this in mind will help in your reading to interpret what the passages are saying. Always consider the context and the literary form when reading.

Since the Bible is God's revelation of Himself to us, this is a crucial part of our sanctification. We'll talk more about that in the section on spiritual habits.

# THE ————— CHURCH

Often when people picture the word "church," they see a pretty building, perhaps with a steeple and pews lined inside. The Church, however, is not a building, it's a people.

The Church is the body of Jesus Christ and has a threefold purpose: to evangelize the world as His missionaries, to worship God, and to equip God's people for ministry. The Greek word that is used for church in the Bible is *ekklesia*. This word means, "a gathering of believers," or, "the called-out ones." We have been called out by God to be His representatives on earth. We embrace community with other Christ followers and shine the light of Jesus wherever we go. All of this means that we don't stop being the Church when we walk out of the building on Sundays. We are always the Church everywhere we go. Sunday mornings are simply the "huddle" before we get out and "play the game" in everyday life.



The Church is the multiethnic family of God. Way back in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, God made a covenant with Abraham. God promised to create a single multiethnic family that would be the people of God, who exist for the glory and mission of God. This new family was to teach the world what it looks like to be human as a result of God's grace and indwelling Spirit.

In God's family there are no ethnic, socioeconomic, or gender barriers. We have unity within our diversity. We can celebrate our differences instead of being threatened by them.

*27 For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. 28 There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.*

– Galatians 3:27-29



# SPIRITUAL — HABITS

As Christ followers we practice spiritual habits which aid in our discipleship. We must be intentional in developing these spiritual habits in order to grow and mature.

**CORPORATE WORSHIP:** This is when we gather together to exalt Jesus through worship; singing about Him, praying to Him, and teaching about His gospel. In corporate worship, we also receive the Lord's Supper and practice baptism. It is during this time that you give your presence and prayers. When God's people gather together in unity, He works in and through us. At TC, we also provide an online service to gather virtually. Your consistent presence in corporate worship matters.

**SCRIPTURE READING:** When we read the Bible, God the Spirit transforms us into the image of God the Son, for the glory of God the Father. Daily Bible reading is essential to our discipleship. Reading in community, as in a small group setting, is vital. The Bible is meant to be read in community.

**PRAYER (JOURNALING, LECTIO DIVINA):** Prayer is how we communicate with God. There are different methods to prayer. One is the ancient spiritual practice of sacred reading known as lectio divina. This involves a process of moving from the mind to the heart through reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation of Scripture. You can also utilize journaling to help you gather and organize your thoughts and write down what God is prompting in you.

**SABBATH:** Having a day of rest and delight is essential for your growth. A weekly Sabbath day reminds us that it is God's grace that leads us, not our own efforts. On this day do what brings you joy, energy, and refreshment.

**SERVING:** Everyone has a role to play in the health and effectiveness of the Church and the world around us. You grow as you serve in a ministry through the Church, your community, and your vocation. There is always an opportunity to serve those around you wherever you are.

**GIVING:** Our financial giving to the local church is an act of worship and discipleship. The greater we grow in grace, the greater we grow in financial generosity. We can also give to other organizations or people in need.

**EVANGELISM:** As Christ followers, we are His missionaries joining Him in spreading the good news of Jesus, the Gospel. We invite people to join the family of God by inviting them to worship with us and by cultivating relationships throughout the week.

At Transformation Church, we often talk about the 5 Characteristics of a Transformer. This is a simplified way of remembering how we grow as Christ followers. They are: **WORSHIP, CONNECT, SERVE, GIVE, INVITE.**

## LIVING ON MISSION

As Christ followers we are called to live on mission. That means that we partner with God to serve others and tell them about the Gospel of Jesus. In order to serve effectively, it's important to know your gifts. Ask yourself what your passions and desires are. Ask yourself what you like to do. Ask yourself what you're good at.

There are several spiritual gifts, as outlined in the Bible:

|                |             |          |
|----------------|-------------|----------|
| Evangelism     | Prophecy    | Teaching |
| Shepherding    | Mercy       | Serving  |
| Administration | Exhortation | Giving   |

Each of these gifts is unique and important. There is no one gift that is better than another. They simply demonstrate the unique ways God made us all.

*Just as each one has received a gift, use it to serve others, as good stewards of the varied grace of God.- 1Peter 4:10*

The gifts you've been given enable you to live on mission by serving those around you.

## CONCLUSION

When you become a Christ follower, you are introduced to a whole new world. Learning how to follow Jesus is a lifelong journey. Saying yes is simply the first step. We hope this resource served as a helpful introduction to life as a Christ follower and what it means to belong to His multiethnic, multigenerational, mission-shaped family. We are here to walk with you and discover all the ways God will work in and through you as you continue to live on mission for Him as part of His family.