



• THE NEXT STEP •

IN FOLLOWING

JESUS

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We heard some great news! You asked Jesus to forgive you of your sin and give you the free gift of eternal life. That's really wonderful! It's the best decision you'll ever make in your life.

This booklet is to help you understand a little better what you did and what it means, and what to do next.



Just who is a Christian, anyway?

Is it someone who goes to church?

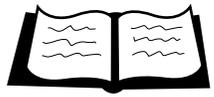
Is it someone who gives money to poor people and is a really nice person?

Even though these are good things to do, being a Christian is more than these.

What does the Bible tell us?

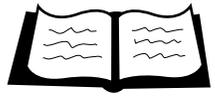


1. God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life! Isn't that great!



John 3:16 says: *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

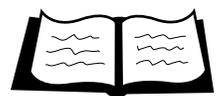
God wants us to have the best life possible here on earth. Jesus told us so in John 10:10:



I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

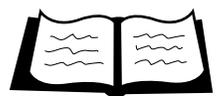
So why doesn't everyone have a full, happy, and joyful life?

2. All of us have sinned... we've chosen to have our own way, instead of God's way.



Romans 3:23 says: *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*

and



Romans 6:23 says: *For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

What are some sins you can think of?

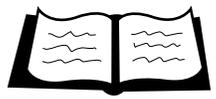
Who has sinned?

What are the wages (the price) of sin?

What is the gift of God?

And now comes the good news!

3. Jesus Christ, God's Son, came to earth, lived a perfect life, died on the cross, rose from the dead, and is in heaven now, offering us the free gift of eternal life. Jesus was punished for our sins. He took our place.



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

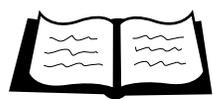
But it's not enough
to just KNOW
these things.



4. To become part of God's Family (that's what a Christian is) we need to receive Jesus as our Savior.

That means just telling God you know you have sinned, and you are sorry.

Tell Him you accept His gift - Jesus - as His gift of love. Jesus took the punishment for sin. He will help us live a new, clean life, if we make Him the boss of our lives.



John 1:12 says: *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

Maybe you've already prayed to God and asked for His forgiveness. That's great! You are a member of God's Family - one of His children!

If you have never actually prayed this way before... why not take time to do so now?



Here's a way you could say it:

Dear God,

I know I've sinned. I'm really sorry. Will you please forgive me? I want to live a clean, new life.

I receive Jesus, your gift of love, into my life as my Savior. I want to live the way you want me to live.

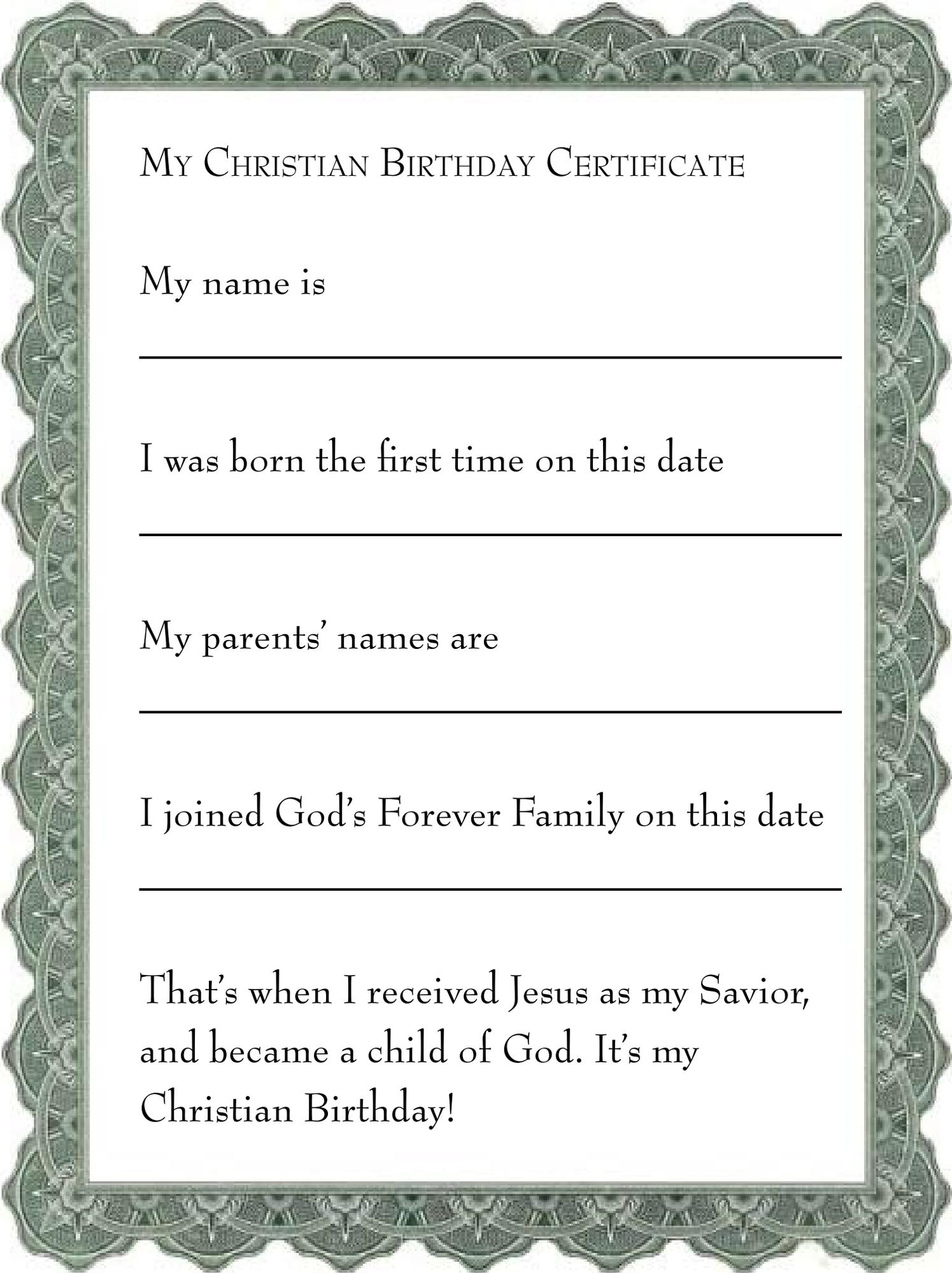
Thank you, God, for forgiving me. Thank you for loving me.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Did you pray this prayer?

Congratulations! You are a member of God's Family!

When people join God's Family, sometimes we call that a Christian Birthday.



MY CHRISTIAN BIRTHDAY CERTIFICATE

My name is

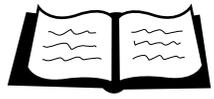
I was born the first time on this date

My parents' names are

I joined God's Forever Family on this date

That's when I received Jesus as my Savior,
and became a child of God. It's my
Christian Birthday!

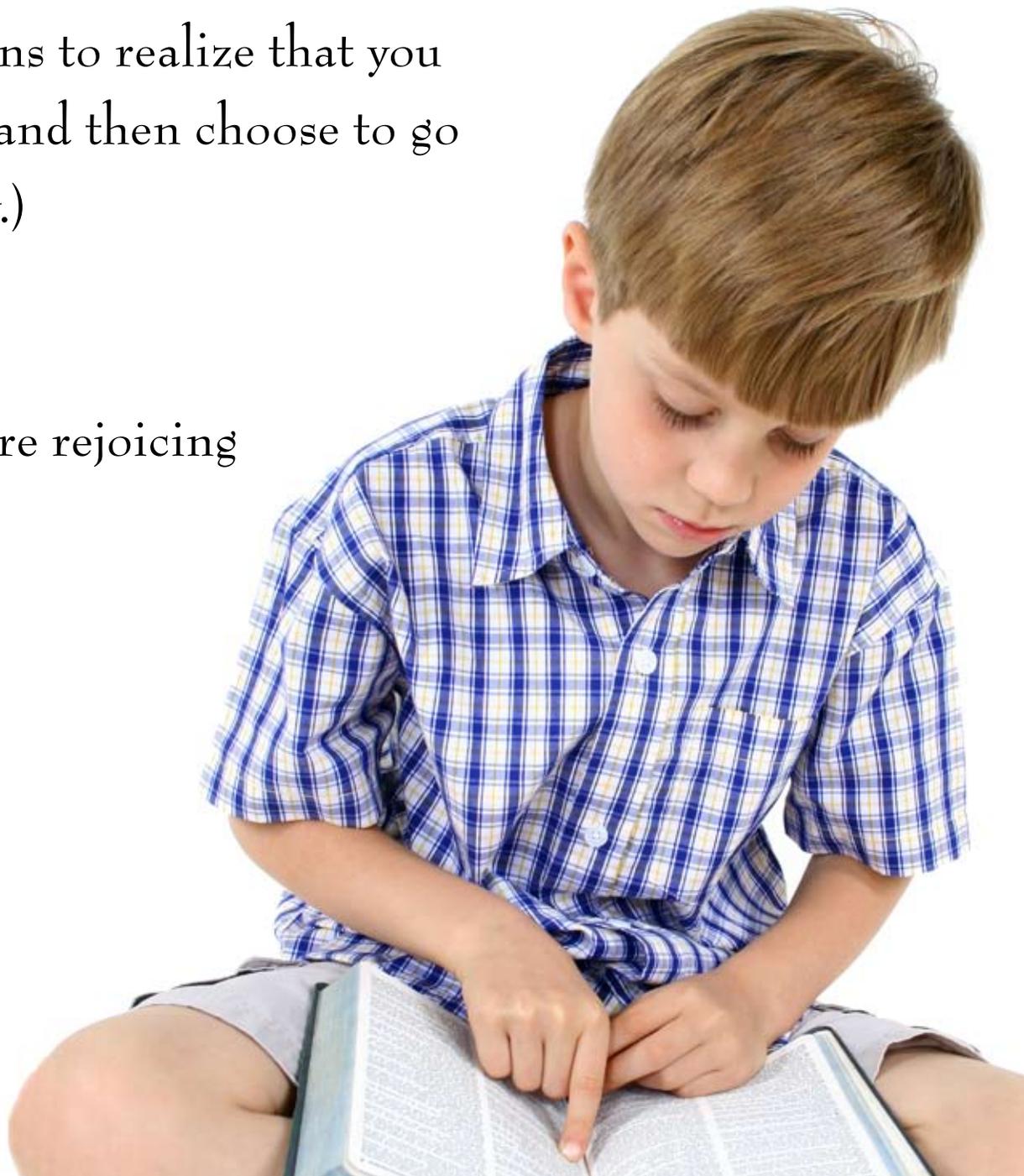
This is such great news, that there is even a celebration in heaven. Jesus said in Luke 15:10:



In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

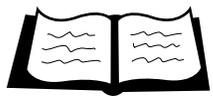
(Repent means to realize that you have sinned and then choose to go the right way.)

The angels are rejoicing over you!



Did you know that God has gifts for all of his children? It's true! They are not things that you work for, earn or deserve. He gives them because He loves us.

1. God gives us the gift of life. He gives us a wonderful life here on earth. Sometimes we call it abundant life, that's life that is lived to the full. Jesus told us in John 10:10b:



I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

That means that He gives us joy in our lives, in happy times and even in difficult times. God gives us His peace, even in tough times. God's love is so great that we will never know the end of it. He gives us hope in all situations as we trust in Him.



God also promises to give us eternal life... that's life that never ends. Jesus told us that He is preparing a place for us in heaven. We don't have to worry about what will happen after we die. We know that Jesus will be there waiting for us, and it will be more wonderful than anything we've ever imagined.

2. God gives us the gift of his Holy Spirit. When you asked Jesus to forgive you and be your Savior, He came into your life by His Spirit, the Holy Spirit. Jesus promised to be with you forever. He will never leave you. Through the Spirit, Jesus is our friend who will never leave us. That's really great news!



3. God gives us the gift of prayer. We can talk to God anytime, anywhere. He hears us and answers us when we pray. He may answer with a “yes” or a “no” or a “wait for a while,” but He always listens and answers our prayers. God wants us to talk with Him.

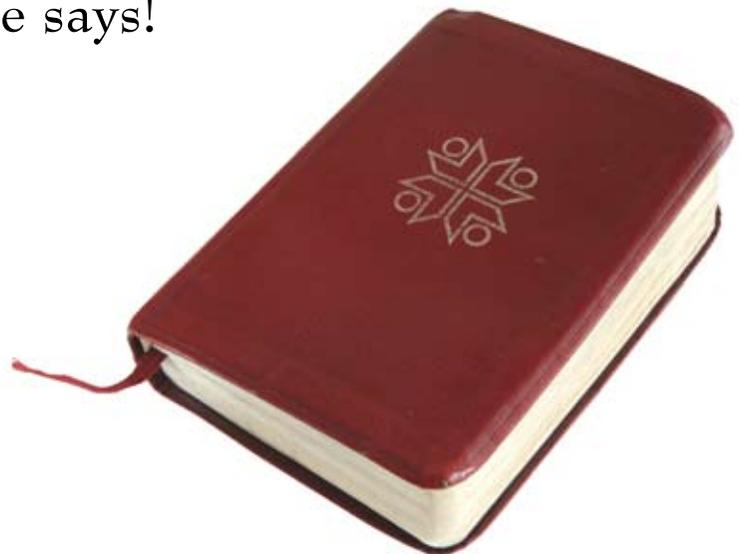
- We can tell Him about our sin and ask for His forgiveness, and He will forgive us.
- We can thank Him for all the wonderful things He has given us and done for us.
- We can tell Him how great and awesome He is.
- We can ask Him for help.
- We can tell Him about our family and friends who need help.
- We can ask for Him to be the boss of our lives, and give Him our heart.



4. God has given us the gift of the Bible. The Bible is God's message to people. In the Bible we read how much God loves us. It tells us how God wants us to live. The Bible tells how God created the world and has worked in people's lives.

The Bible is like God's letter to us. It is important to read it. Try reading the Bible each day. You can start in the book of John or Mark. Before you read, pray and ask God to show you something through reading His Word. Then read several verses. You might even want to underline some verses that are important to you.

God speaks to us through the Bible. You won't want to miss what He says!



5. God has given us the gift of Christian friends. God didn't mean for us to live out a Christian life all alone. Not only will He be with us, but He will give us friends to learn and grow with, as well. It is a good thing to find other people who believe in Jesus, too. We can share our joys and hard times together. We can encourage each other to keep living for God. We can help one another, pray for one another, and care about one another. Having friends who are Christians makes it easier to be a strong Christian, yourself. We really do need one another.

Ask God to give you some Christian friends.



6. God has given us the gift of the church. Christians all over the world gather together with other believers to worship and pray.

The church is not just a building.

The church is not just classrooms.

The church is not just tables, pretty windows, and musical instruments.

The church is God's people meeting together.

When we are at church we can worship God together.

We can learn more about God.

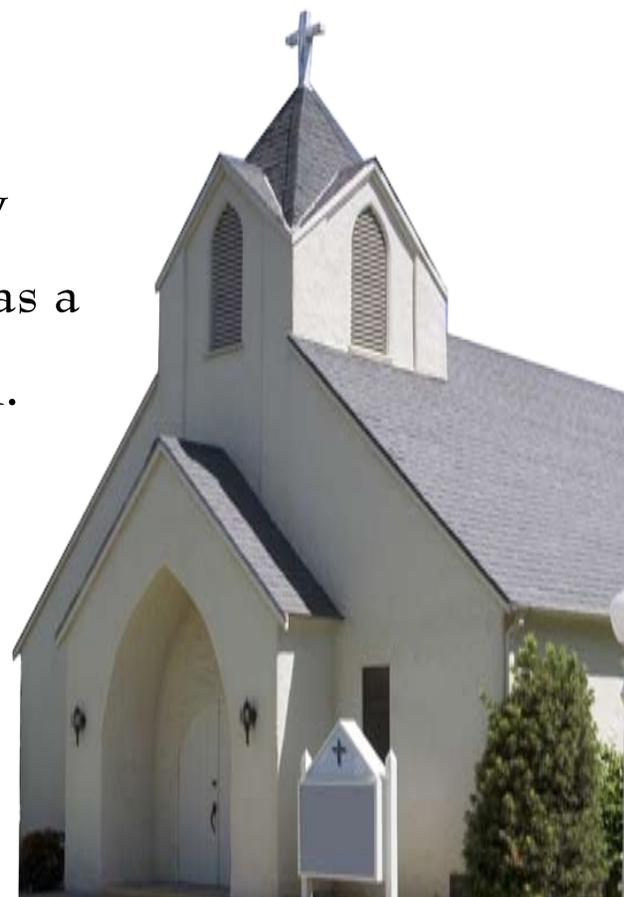
We can enjoy friendships we make with other Christians.

We can give of our money and time so that even more people will come to know God.

Find a church that you can go to every week. You will find that you will grow as a Christian as you are a part of a church.

It's a gift from God. If you do not already have a church to go to, you are invited to come to our church!

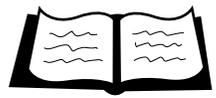
We would love to have you join us!



7. **God helps us when we are tempted to do wrong.** God loves you very much. Once you join His family He will never kick you out. However, God does have rules to follow that will help us lead a clean and holy life. If we sin, God is sad. If we sin, there are three things we must do:

1. Ask God's forgiveness
2. Ask God's help to say "No" to temptation.
3. Make things right with others.

Look at this verse in John 1:9:



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

So what should we do if we sin?

Just try to forget about it? NO

Do a good deed to cover it up? NO

Try to sin again to see what happens? NO

We should confess it to God.

When we admit to God we've sinned and ask for His forgiveness, what will God do?

Tell us He doesn't love us if we're going to act that way?

No

Make something bad happen to us to punish us?

No

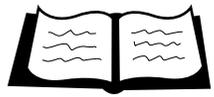
Figure that it was not big deal and ignore our sin?

No

God will forgive us and purify us - that means to make us clean and holy.



Here's another great verse found in Hebrews 2:18:



Because he himself (Jesus) suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

What will Jesus do when we are tempted to do wrong?

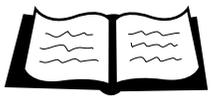
Will He make fun of us? No

Will He ignore us and not do anything? No

Will He wait and see if we do it again? No

Jesus will help us!





1 Corinthians 10:13 says: *No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*

Are bad people the only ones who are tempted? NO

When God's people are tempted, do they always give in and sin? NO

Everyone is tempted sometime, but God helps us resist it and say NO to sin. RIGHT!

Think of something wrong you are sometimes tempted to do. Ask God to help you be strong. He will help you say

NO to wrong, and
YES to right!

You are treasured
by God
and by your friends here.

It is our prayer that these next steps in following Jesus will
continue for a lifetime of knowing Him and serving Him.

Welcome to the family of God!

