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Welcome to the Family of God!

CONGRATULATIONS!! I am so excited for the decision you made today!

By responding during the service at Overflow today, you made a decision to begin a personal relationship with God's son, Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Because of that decision, you are now able to experience life as God always meant for you to live. This little book is designed to help you get started on this new journey. Over the years, I have seen many students make the same decision you did, but I have also seen many abandon that decision. There are lots of reasons why that may have happened, but often it is because they did not have any support or help. This booklet is meant to provide you with that help. It will introduce you to some critical first steps for your next seven days.

Whether you made this decision for the first time or you are deciding again, this booklet is for you. Make a commitment to complete this book, you will be glad you did. I believe in you and most importantly, so does God; after all, He sent His Son to die for YOU!

Blessings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Giroux', with a stylized, flowing script.

Wayne Giroux - Overflow Pastor

FIRST THINGS FIRST: DO THIS TODAY!

Your Salvation Experience:

Feelings???? Describe what happened:

What did you feel after receiving Jesus into your life?

It is okay if you are not feeling very different than before, because this decision should not be based on emotions. You may, however, feel relieved, excited, or overjoyed. Any one of these feelings is okay. It is not that emotions are necessarily good or bad; it's just that you don't want to base your confidence on feelings. If you do, then you risk losing your interest and/or confidence when you eventually feel differently.

Understanding the Decision

*The Bible talks about this decision in **Ephesians 1:13**.*

“And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago.” (NLT)

Decision – de·ci·sion – noun

- 1. *The act or process of deciding; determination, as of a question or doubt, by making a judgment: They must make a decision between these two contestants.*
- 2. *The act of or need for making up one's mind. This is a decision, a very important decision.*

How did this decision happen? Who was involved? What happened?

Is there anything about this decision that you are confused about?

What does your decision to follow Jesus mean to you?

What led you to make this decision? Describe the order of events that lead up to it.

Jargon: What does that mean?

As a new believer, you will hear some commonly used terms while you are in church, or around other Christians. Here is a quick guide to understand what they mean:

Saved – You may hear someone ask you, “When did you get saved?” This is a phrase that Christians use to describe the act of God saving you by His grace when you put your faith in Him. He saves you from the curse of sin and from an eternity in hell.

Born Again – A new spiritual birth occurs when you choose to live for Jesus and you are reborn in your Spirit.

Salvation – This is the free gift God has offered to everyone who will receive it. It’s a form of the word salvage. It means to rescue and recover.

Christian – Christian (also called Christ-Follower) means little Christ and refers to a person who is a follower of Jesus Christ.

Repentance – Basically this means to make a 180 degree turn. Living for God requires you to go in a different direction. Literally, it means: change your mind.

Soul – Not everyone realizes this is different from spirit. Soul refers to your emotional self, your thinking ability and your self-will.

Spirit – This is the part of you that is eternal. Your spirit is dead until the Spirit of God enters your spirit, then it is made brand new. This happens when you accept the free gift of salvation. The Spirit of God dwells with your spirit in a most holy and intimate way.

Fruit of the Spirit – This refers to the quality of life and character that God's Spirit produces in your life as a result of His dwelling within you. It includes things like love, joy, peace and much more.

Let's Get Started!

What you do in the next seven days is very critical to getting a good start in your new journey. Living your new life is not automatic, so follow along each of the next seven days!

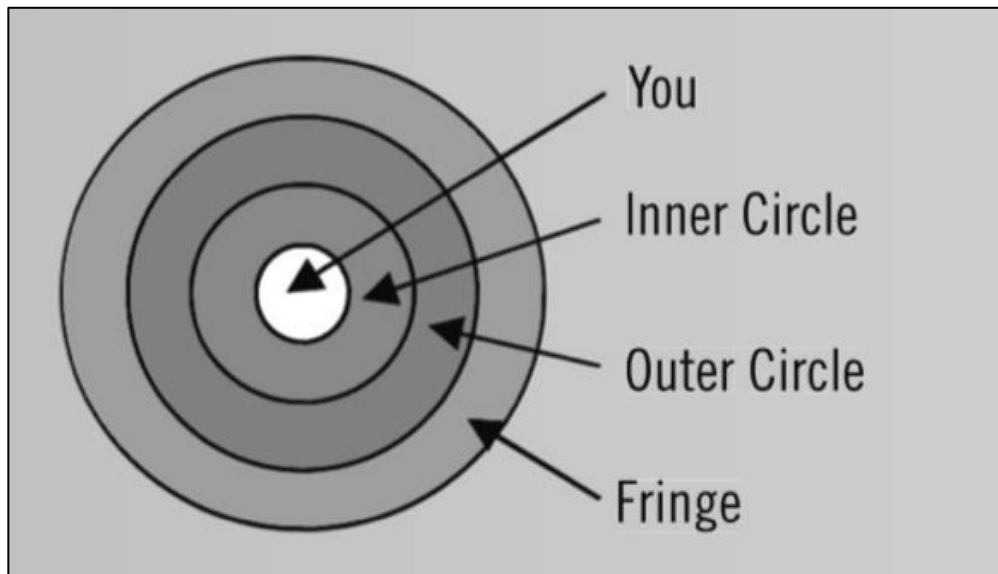
The Next Seven Days:

1. My Circle
2. My Relationship with God
3. My Bible
4. My Church
5. My Future
6. My Choices
7. My Battle

DAY 1 – My Circle (friends, family, acquaintances)

Think about “My Circle” as something that represents those who are in a relationship with you.

Take a look at the diagram below.



The first circle, the “Inner Circle” represents your closest friends, relatives, etc. This is a small group of people (usually ten or less) that you are with on a daily basis.

<i>List those in your “Inner Circle”</i>	
1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.

The second circle, the “Outer Circle,” represents those relationships that are somewhat close, but not necessarily really tight. This could be quite a few people or just a handful.

List those in your "Outer Circle"

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

These are people you come in to contact with through social or non-social settings. These might be the people you work with, see at school, or those you see occasionally.

List those in your "Fringe Circle"

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.
7.	8.
9.	10.
11.	12.
13.	14.
15.	16.
17.	18.
19.	20.

Now begin to look at the circles and the names of those you put in the various circles. Think of how these people are influencing you. As you look at each name ask yourself the question, *“Will this person help me or hinder me in my new life as a Christian?”*

Take some time to think about any changes you need to make. Refer to and update these lists as you go forward so you can evaluate how your circles of influence change.

Remember that it is normal to lose some friends when you decide to live for Christ. This is because some people whom we call friends are not really true friends.

The Bible talks about what a friend is in **Proverbs 18:24**.

“There are ‘friends’ who destroy each other, but a real friend sticks closer than a brother.”

You will find that there is a big difference between a companion and a friend. Companions will come and go in life; these are like casual “friends.” True friends, however, will stay for a lifetime. As you begin to make some hard choices in the days, months and even years ahead, you will see which friends will stick close to you.

Remember, a true friend will respect you for your morals and convictions. A false friend is only around when things go their way or when you do what they want you to do.

One goal is for you to influence your friends so they can come to know Christ just as you did. This will happen as you pray for them and share with them what has happened to you. The opposite would be to have your non-Christian friends influence you in a negative way.

The Bible talks about this in **1 Corinthians 15:33** where it says,

“Don’t be fooled by those who say such things, for ‘bad company corrupts good character.’”

Some of you who are reading this booklet may have people in your own family who are not Christians. It can be very difficult to live in this type of environment, especially if they are not open to hearing about the Bible and about your life with Christ.

Sometimes it is discouraging when you share something you are excited about with someone close to you only to discover that they are not excited for you. You may even find that people will be negative and make you think you made the wrong choice.

When or if this happens, it is important to find at least one person you can talk to about it so they can help you through these times and even pray with you.

Write down three friends you can share your story with below.

Now, commit to pray for them and ask God to give you an open door to speak with them. Tell them the “good news”— they can accept the free gift of salvation and have eternal life.

DAY 2 – My Relationship with GOD

HE LOVES YOU!!

The Bible talks about this in **John 3:16**.

“For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

God’s love is unconditional because it is His nature to love. He doesn’t love you because you have done something good. In fact, He has always loved you, even while you were still sinning. The Bible talks about this in **Romans 5:8**.

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

HE CHOSE YOU!!

It may seem as though you chose Him, but really, He first chose you to be in relationship with Him. The Bible talks about this in **Ephesians 1:4** where it says,

“Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.”

It is kind of like LeBron James picking you to be on his basketball team. Wouldn’t that be amazing? Well, that is what God has done for YOU. He wants you to be on His side. Pretty cool, huh?

HE REDEEMED YOU

Redemption means to pay the price on someone else’s behalf. He paid for your sins. The Bible describes this in **Ephesians 1:7** where it reads,

“He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.”

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It is like a judge letting you off the hook for a crime you committed. Beyond that, the judge gives you a million dollars. You only need to receive it. The truth is, what you have received is worth much more than one million dollars. Salvation is something that cannot be bought. It's priceless. This is what the grace of God is all about. It's about YOU getting what you do not deserve!

The Bible describes this in **Romans 6:23** it reads,

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

DAY 3 – My Bible

Think of your favorite possession. Now think of the most expensive thing you could own if you had unlimited finances. Believe it or not, the Bible is more valuable than whatever it is you just thought of. This is because it contains the truth of God for your life.

The word Bible literally means “a book.” Although it is a book, the difference between this book and any other book is what it contains – the words of God. The Bible is the #1 best-selling book of all time. It has passed the test of time. Many have tried to destroy the Bible over the centuries. They could not. This book can be a blessing to your life—if you read it and apply it. You may be thinking, “It’s sooooo BIG, where do I start?”

Begin small.

Start with books that are easy to read like Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. You can also read through the books of Psalms and Proverbs. Basically, the most important thing to do is something each day. Then you can begin to increase. Get a journal and begin writing down your thoughts. Pray to God each day and just talk to Him like you would talk to a friend.

Talk to youth leaders, pastors and other Christian peers to get advice and help.

We recommend downloading an App called “YouVersion.” It is available in your app store (Apple, Google, Android). It looks like this:

If you do not have a Bible, we would love to give you one!



DAY 4 – My Church

This is another word for the family of God. What does the word 'family' mean to you? Think about your family for a minute. Here are some questions to get you started:

What is it like? Do you have a mom and a dad? Has there been a divorce in your family?

How many brothers and sisters do you have? How has your family helped you?

What are you appreciative of concerning your family?

The family of God is made up of all the people throughout all time who have said yes to Jesus. God's family is comprised of the people from all the different Christian churches throughout the world. Find a local church where you can get plugged in and meet people that can help you. This is important because you need others and they need you. There are no two people alike in God's family.

In **Matthew 16:13-20**, Jesus was the first one to mention the word church.

*When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" "Well," they replied, "some say John the Baptist, some say Elijah, and others say Jeremiah or one of the other prophets."
15 Then he asked them, "But who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."*

Jesus replied, "You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being. Now I say to you that you are Peter (which

means 'rock'), and upon this rock I will build my church, and all the powers of hell will not conquer it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

The church started after Jesus left. You can read about this in **Acts chapter 1 and 2**. Go ahead and read these chapters and write below what you observed. Here are some questions to ponder:

What was the church doing? What kind of people were in the first church? What impact did the church make?

(write your answers below)

Because the church is made up of people, it is not perfect. There will be people in the church that may say hurtful things to you or do things that hurt you. You will see people acting selfishly and even people trying to make themselves look good. You will even observe people who are hypocrites because they act a different way outside of a church service or event. I want to prepare you for this so that when it happens you do not get hurt and want to leave the church. When this occurs, ask God to help you forgive these people and remember to not let people ruin your perception of the church as a whole.

Fortunately, the church is largely made up of those who truly do love others and really do their best to walk with God. You will see people making a positive influence on others. You will see those willing to sacrifice their needs for the needs of others. You will also experience people investing in your life and loving you despite your own weaknesses and shortcomings.

You will experience people in the church comforting you and loving you through difficult and discouraging times and rejoicing with you through joyful times.

List anyone you know who is a part of the “church.”

DAY 5 – My Future

What do you do from here?

The coolest thing about being a follower of Christ is the adventurous life he has prepared for you. This is something you will discover as you live on. Your future not only includes the rest of eternity, but also the rest of your life here on earth. While you are here on this earth you will feel like you are on a journey. Like any trip you have been on, there is a destination. The destination is when you leave this earth and meet Jesus in heaven. At that time, you will hear precious words from Jesus which are written in **Matthew 25:21**,

“Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Although you know the destination, there are a lot of unknowns between now and then. This is why I use the word adventure because you do not know what is around the next corner.

Write down some things about the future that you wish you knew the answer to. What is it about the future that causes you to worry or be concerned?

A big part of this journey with Christ is leaning on Him and coming into greater relationship with Him. He has promised that He will always be with you. In fact, He lives inside of you through the Holy Spirit.

Being a Christ-follower does not guarantee a life free from trouble, pain, or problems. In fact, you will still experience these things. The main difference is that you have the Lord to walk you through these times. He will comfort you in times of grief and mourning. He will carry you through times of trouble. He will

rejoice with you in times of joy. He will sustain you through times of challenge. He will walk with you through times of discouragement. He will bless you in times of need. He wants to experience these things with you.

Here are a few promises for YOU.

Jeremiah 29:11 says,

“For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Hebrews 13:5 says,

“I will never fail you. I will never abandon you.”

2 Samuel 22:3 says,

“My God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety.”

DAY 6 – My Choices

You've made the most important decision—to follow Jesus. You still have to make other choices each day. You have probably heard the terms Lord and Savior in reference to Jesus. Let me explain what these terms mean. Savior is the term that describes Jesus as the one who saved you from eternal death or the curse of sin.

This happened when Jesus died on the cross and thus paid the price for all people to have forgiveness forever. In other words, He died in your place. Once you accepted this forgiveness you received Jesus as Savior. You are saved; it is a done deal. It is not necessary for you to do this over and over again every time you mess up.

Here are some verses in the Bible about Jesus as Savior:

John 4:42 says,

“We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”

Titus 2:13 says,

“While we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed.”

Lord is defined as “master.” Because we do not use this term in our society, it can seem confusing and strange, but this really is who Jesus is to you. You need to allow Jesus to be Lord over every situation in your life. You need to make this choice over and over again. You will learn how to do this. Basically, the way this happens is by making every effort to please Jesus in your choices.

Jesus does not want us to live in fear of making a wrong choice. Instead, He wants us to look to Him in all things. We do this by reading the Bible and by asking questions of more mature believers.

Here are some verses about the Lord:

Luke 10:27,

“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your mind. And love your neighbor as yourself.”

1 Corinthians 15:57,

“But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Think of some choices you need to make in the days or weeks to come. Make a list of your choices below.

What do you think Jesus would want you to do in these choices? What are you unsure about?

Take the next step by asking a mature believer to help you with these choices.

DAY 7 – My Battle

You may be thrown off by this title. That's okay, I will explain what this means.

Another aspect of being a Christ follower is that you share in the responsibility of the cause that Jesus started over 2000 years ago. This cause is described in **Matthew 28:18-20** and is known as the Great Commission. It reads,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

The Bible even talks about how Christians will share in Jesus' sufferings. This means that just as Jesus endured suffering, so will you. This may or may not include physical suffering. The world is under Satan's rule and control. Christ-followers are those who choose not to live as the world does. The Bible says that we are to live in the world but are not of the world. Jesus prepared His disciples for the persecution they would endure. After Jesus left the earth the disciples endured much persecution and hatred.

In fact, eleven of the twelve disciples were killed for their faith in Jesus. Although we live in a free country there are still people who will oppose us. There are also forces that we cannot see that are opposing us. This means that you are in a battle. You also have a part to play in the battle. You will learn more about this as you are around other Christ-followers and as you learn more from God's word.

Here are some scriptures that talk about the battle:

Ephesians 6:10-18

“A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹ Put on all of God’s armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. ¹² For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.

¹³ Therefore, put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ¹⁴ Stand your ground, putting on the belt of truth and the body armor of God’s righteousness. ¹⁵ For shoes, put on the peace that comes from the Good News so that you will be fully prepared. ¹⁶ In addition to all of these, hold up the shield of faith to stop the fiery arrows of the devil. ¹⁷ Put on salvation as your helmet, and take the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

¹⁸ Pray in the Spirit at all times and on every occasion. Stay alert and be persistent in your prayers for all believers everywhere.”

Romans 12:21

“Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.”

What concerns do you have about being a part of this battle?

You do not need to be fearful of this battle. The result of the battle is already written in the Bible. Guess what? We win. This means you are already on the winning side. You only need to live out the victory. This happens by getting stronger in your relationship with Christ every day.

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