



HOW TO WALK WITH GOD

BY JOSHUA GOODLING

A MESSAGE FROM JOSHUA

Hello! I hope and pray that this short booklet will be a helpful tool in your Christian life, and you will see from these "How to's..." what an amazing experience we can have when we walk closer and closer with God. As a way of introduction, allow me to share briefly about myself and my own walk with God. Both of my parents were Christians, and had a love for God and a desire to see their children know Him and walk with Him. And, when I was only four years old, I prayed with my father, giving my life to Jesus Christ.

When we make that life-changing decision, our lives completely become the sole property of God, and God can do with them whatever He wants. One of the great things about realizing that, is the fact that we no longer have to worry about anything - we can just simply follow Him and watch Him work in our lives every day.

Another life-changing experience that happened when I was four years old, was that I was diagnosed with Rhabdomyosarcoma, a deadly type of cancer. In fact, the doctors told my parents I had

only one week to live, and my chances of survival were zero! That was almost 50 years ago, so I always tell people "It's been a long week!" After over a year long battle with cancer and treatments, the cancer was gone. However, it had left me with many problems and difficulties I would face every day for the rest of my life. My vocal chords were partially paralyzed, my growth was stunted, I had lost my hearing in one ear, and there were other problems that would surface in the days, weeks, and months ahead.

I was still alive, but I had a very difficult life ahead of me. I would face people laughing at me because I was short, I talked funny, and I was different. I would be turned down for jobs and overlooked for other opportunities because I looked too young or people didn't know if I could handle it. I would never have a girl friend or a wife (at least not yet). And I would have to deal almost daily with the side effects of cancer and its treatments. Let's face it - life wouldn't be easy.

So, I had two basic choices. 1. I could feel sorry for myself and just give up, wasting my life. Or 2. I could remember that the Bible tells us "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good..." (Romans 8:28), and that God has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5). I learned

that no matter what happens, God is in complete control. And I learned that the closer I walk with Him, the happier I would be, and the more I would see His hand at work in everything in my life - even the cancer!

God never promised us an easy life. However, He does promise us, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13), and the closer we walk with Him, the more of His strength we'll find in our lives each day!

Make it your daily goal in life to walk close with God! Even when it seems no one else wants to. You'll have an awesome and amazing life as you see God work, and get to know Him more!

Get To Know GOD!
Joshua Goodling



HOW TO KNOW GOD

It is such a great privilege to be able to know God. Just to think that Almighty God, the creator and ruler of everything even desires to have a personal relationship with us is amazing! What better relationship could we possibly find than the one He offers us?

Knowing God is the most critical thing in our lives. Until we really know Him, nothing else matters! And notice I said “Knowing God”, not “Knowing about God”. There is a major difference!

You see, knowing about God only gives us information. Good information, yes, but still just information. Personally knowing Him gives us a relationship that will impact and change our lives. Psalm 34:8 tells us, “Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed [happy] is the man who takes refuge in him!”

So, how do we come to know Him? Well, John 3:16 tells us, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” That is the basic truth of salvation. However, let’s stop here and try to understand and realize what this means.

The words “whoever believes in Him” are important. You see it is easy to say “I believe in Jesus” or “I believe in God”. But, what are we believing? It's much more than just believing about Him or simply believing He exists. In order for us to begin a relationship with God, the Holy Spirit must convict us of our need for a Savior. In other words, we must realize that we are hopeless and helpless without God! That all starts when we are convicted of our sinfulness, we realize that without Christ we have no hope for this life or for eternity, and we see that He alone is our only means of salvation.

To experience this salvation, we have to believe in what He offers. You see, the Bible tells us in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”. If we're guilty of just one sin in all of our lives, we're guilty before God. And someone has to pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus Christ has already paid the penalty through His death on the cross, but we have to believe in Him and accept this free gift that He offers.

That free gift is found only in Jesus Christ, so we must trust and believe that He paid the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross, and that He arose again from the grave in victory. Jesus said,

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 5:3) Those who understand and realize that without God's gift of salvation, we have no hope are the “poor in spirit”. We know we can do nothing to save ourselves! We can only come to God through Jesus Christ.

We express our faith in Him through prayer, but it must be words from our heart, not just words we copied or heard someone say. Too often we hear people tell us, “If you just say these words, you'll become a Christian.” However, that's not completely true. We must also believe the words we are saying. They have to come from a heart of repentance. Romans 10:9 tells us, “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” With our mouth we confess, but we also must believe in our hearts, and God knows our hearts.

So, we must believe Jesus is the Son of God, and that He died for our sins. And, when we have begun a real relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ, then we can begin to grow and learn how to walk as we each Christian should desire to do.

HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

We read in 2 Peter 3:18, “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” So, how do we grow in that grace and knowledge? The Bible tells us, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.” (Proverbs 9:10) It is only when we truly know God for Who He Is, that we can begin to walk with Him. Becoming a Christian is just the beginning! And, just as we have manuals for computers and other things in life, we have a manual for being a Christian - it's the Bible. Psalm 119:105 tells us, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” God’s Word, through the Holy Spirit instructs us in how to walk with God.

2 Peter 1:3 tells us, "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence" In other words, we have all the information we need to know about life and godliness - it's by knowing God through His Word! The more we read it, the more we understand Who God is, and how we should live.

As we read God's Word, we should pray and ask the Holy Spirit to open our eyes and our understanding. The Bible isn't just a lot of words to fill up space, it is important that we study it and seek to understand it. I often pray Psalm 119:18 "Open my eyes, that I may behold Wonderful things from Your law." before I begin reading the Bible, because He must give us the wisdom that we need, to daily follow Him.

It is important that we read the entire Bible, not just a few verses now and then. I realize that seems like a big task at the beginning, because there are 66 books in the Bible, so there are a lot of words. However, don't let the size keep you from reading it all. Take it slowly, and try to understand what you are reading. And obviously, I don't mean all in one day (although that wouldn't be a bad way to spend a day!) The more we read it, the more we understand it!

Remember, as you read, pay close attention to whom the passage is written to, and what the verses and chapters around that passage talk about. Too often, we just grab a couple of words or part of a verse that we like and use them to claim a promise from God or something. There are many many promises in God's Word, but all of them aren't written to every single person in the world. Some of them were written to specific people, and then others were

written only to those who have a real relationship with God, so we should seek to understand and know God's Word as we read it. There are many helpful books written by good men about the Bible that we can use to better understand it. I will put a list of helpful books that I recommend inside the back cover of this booklet.

HOW TO TALK WITH GOD

Having a conversation involves at least two people. And that is how prayer and Bible reading go together. It is like having a conversation with God. God speaks to us through His Word, and we speak to God through prayer. It's not complicated or anything, it's just like having a conversation with anyone else, only we are talking with Almighty God.

Now, some people seem to think that all prayer is useful for is to get what we want from God. However, prayer is really for us to seek God and HIS will for our lives. When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray in Matthew 6, He said to pray that GOD's will be done. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) That is the first critical part we must understand about prayer...we should seek God's will in our

lives. So, we shouldn't just go to God and say "God, give me a million dollars!", and then get upset when He doesn't give it to us. We should rather go to God and pray, "God, I want to know Your will for my life, I want to seek and honor You!"

Prayer is our way of asking God for wisdom on how to live in this world. James wrote in James 1:5, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." So, when we don't know what to do, when the road we are traveling seems difficult, when we have troubles - go to God and ask Him for wisdom, ask Him for help, ask Him for advice. And then, spend time reading His word. God has promised to meet and supply all of our needs as long as we trust Him, obey Him, and seek Him with all our heart. When our main goal in life is to please Him, we will also want only what He wants for us, and that will reflect itself in what we pray for.

Obviously we all have daily needs, and God has promised to meet and supply all of those, we just have to ask and trust Him! "When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles." (Psalm 34:17)

HOW TO WALK DAILY WITH GOD

Once we know God, start reading His Word, and daily spend time with Him in prayer, it's just a matter of letting Him do with our lives whatever He wants. You see, Jesus said, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matthew 16:24) As a Christian, our life is no longer about what we want, our opinions and desires don't matter any longer. We have to learn to deny self. That's not easy, but the more we focus on God, the less appealing everything else becomes.

One of the biggest differences between those who truly know Jesus Christ, and those who only claim to know Him should be our denial of self. You see, this world around us is all about Me, Myself, and I. "What I want!", "How I want it!", and "When I want it!", are the attitudes and opinions that drive most people. However, as a Christian, it should be all about God's plan for our lives!

The Bible also commands us to be holy as He is holy! We are to follow Jesus so closely that it affects every part of our lives. I know that sounds impossible at first, but don't worry, we have all the help we will need! Remember what God's Word promises us,

"I can do all things through Him, who gives me strength." (Philippians 4:13) So, the closer we walk with Him, the more our lives will begin to change, our desires will change, our thoughts will change, and everything about us will change, until all that matters is pleasing and obeying Him!

Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." (John 14:23) When we love Him with all our hearts, that will cause us to want to obey Him. And when we start making the right choices in our lives and doing only what pleases Him, He has promised to always be with us and guide us. Such an amazing promise!

The Bible tells us we can only come to know God when we seek him with all of our hearts as the Holy Spirit draws us to Him. Jeremiah 29:13 tells us, "You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart." 1 Chronicles 16:11 tells us, "Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually!" It's not an instant change from doing mainly bad to doing mainly good, it's a process that takes time as we grow in our faith.

I think one of the main problems with many people in today's world is they just want to add God to their life. They don't want to give up anything or make any changes. Well, it doesn't work that way. It's either all about Him, or else it's all about us! Make knowing and walking with God every single day of your life the most important thing, and watch what amazing things only God can do with your life! You'll never regret it - That I promise!

Remember, God only wants what is best for us. And since, He created us, He alone knows what is best.

HOW TO WALK WITH OTHERS

One of the major proofs that we have a true relationship with God is our love for others. Jesus said in John 13:34, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another."

If we truly want to experience Joy in our hearts and lives, we will learn and practice this simple truth: Jesus First, Others Second, Yourself Last = JOY. That's the key to experiencing the peace and joy that only HE can offer us!

Jesus told us that we are even to love our enemies, and those who hate us. One of the best ways for us as Christians to be lights in this world, is in the way we act towards other people. Jesus spent His entire life on this earth living for others, helping others, and then He died for others.

What a huge difference we can make in the lives of those around us, and in our own lives as well, when we care more about loving God and loving others than we do about our selfish desires.

By helping others, putting others before us, and loving other people - we show our love for Jesus Christ. Since Jesus gave His life for us, we owe Him our lives! You'll never find anything more satisfying and rewarding than a life given entirely to knowing, pleasing, and obeying God and making a difference in this world by loving other people.

James wrote, "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world." (James 1:27) Walking closely with God involves loving God, loving others, and not allowing the world around us to drag us down with its selfishness, pride, and sin.

It's not always popular to live the Christian life, and follow Jesus. In fact, Jesus said, "For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few." (Matthew 7:14) But, it is well worth whatever it may cost us!

Thank God, we don't have to rely on our own strength! And, we'll never be alone when we walk with God! So don't give up when you fail. We all fail, we all allow this world to draw us away from God at times. The key is to daily confess and forsake our sins, learn from our failures, and keep seeking Him. As we grow in our faith, with God's help through the Holy Spirit and God's Word, the failures will diminish. He is always with us to guide us, help us, and encourage us in our walk with Him.

"Come, O children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD. What man is there who desires life and loves many days, that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn away from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it." (Psalm 34:11-14)



GOT QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about God, the Bible, or the Christian life, please contact me via my web site or email address. I would also love to hear from any of you who may have been impacted or inspired to walk closer with God by reading this booklet.

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SOME BOOKS I RECOMMEND YOU READ

Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan

Found God's Will by John MacArthur

Advice For Young Men by J. C. Ryle

In His Steps by Charles Sheldon

30 Days To Understanding the Bible by Max Anders

YWAM Publishing - Christian Biographies

C. T. Studd • David Livingstone • Jim Elliot

John Wesley • Brother Andrew • Hudson Taylor

John Newton • Amy Carmichael • George Mueller

And there are many others available



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