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Your First Steps *with Jesus*

A guide for new believers and anyone starting over: what happened when you said yes, and what to do next

WESLEY A.M.E. ZION CHURCH
1500 LOMBARD STREET · PHILADELPHIA · SINCE 1820

NEW BELIEVERS

Your First Steps *with Jesus*

A guide for new believers and anyone starting over: what happened when you said yes, and what to do next

Welcome to the family. If you have recently given your life to Jesus Christ — or come back to Him after a long time away — heaven is celebrating. Jesus said there is joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repents. That means you.

You probably have questions. What just happened? What do I do now? Do I have to change everything at once? This booklet answers those questions in plain words, one step at a time. Read it slowly, and talk it over with the pastor or a church member who can walk alongside you.

> *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*
>
> 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 · KJV

THE GOOD NEWS

What *happened* when you said yes

1

God loves you

God made you, knows you and loves you more than you can imagine. (John 3:16)

2 **Sin separated us from God**

All of us have done wrong and fallen short. Sin is not just bad deeds — it is living as if God doesn't matter. (Romans 3:23)

3 **Jesus paid the price**

Jesus, God's Son, lived a perfect life, died on the cross in our place, and rose again on the third day. (Romans 5:8)

4 **You received a gift**

Salvation is a free gift, received by faith, not earned by being good enough. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

5 **You are now God's child**

You have been forgiven, adopted into God's family, and given the Holy Spirit to live in you. (John 1:12)

ROMANS 10:9-13

10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

KING JAMES VERSION

> WHAT IF I DON'T FEEL DIFFERENT?
>
> Salvation is not a feeling; it is a fact based on God's promise. Some people feel great joy, and some feel very little at first. Feelings come and go, but God's Word does not change. If you have trusted Jesus, you are saved because He said so (John 6:37).

You don't walk this road alone.

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Six habits of *a growing faith*

A baby does not grow by trying hard. A baby grows by eating, resting and being cared for. New Christians grow the same way. These six habits are how God feeds and grows His children.

HABIT	WHY	START WITH
Read the Bible	It is God speaking to you.	One chapter of the Gospel of John each day.
Pray	It is you speaking to God.	Five minutes each morning. See *How to Pray* in this library.
Go to church	You were not made to follow Jesus alone.	Sunday worship, every week. Sit near someone friendly.
Be baptized	Jesus commanded it; it shows the world you belong to Him.	Ask the pastor about baptism and membership.

HABIT	WHY	START WITH
Find friends in faith	We grow faster together.	Join a Bible study class or a ministry.
Tell your story	Someone needs to hear what God did for you.	Tell one person this week.

HONEST ANSWERS

QUESTIONS *new believers* ASK

Q I STILL STRUGGLE WITH OLD HABITS. AM I REALLY SAVED?

A Yes. Becoming a Christian does not make you perfect overnight. It begins a lifelong process the Bible calls *sanctification* — being made holy over time. When you fall, confess it to God, receive His forgiveness (1 John 1:9), and get up again. The struggle itself is a sign that the Holy Spirit is at work in you.

Q CAN I LOSE MY SALVATION?

A Christians in different traditions answer this differently. Methodists, including the A.M.E. Zion Church, teach that we must continue in faith — but we also hold the Bible's strong promise that nothing *"shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 8:39). Keep close to Jesus, and you need not live in fear.

Q WHAT DO I DO ABOUT MY FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO DON'T BELIEVE?

A Love them, pray for them, and let them see the change in your life. You don't have to win every argument. Many people come to faith because they watched someone they love become kinder, more honest and more peaceful.

Q Do I have to give up everything I enjoy?

A No. God is not against joy — He invented it. He will gradually lead you away from things that harm you and toward things that are truly good. Jesus said He came that we might have life *more abundantly* (John 10:10).

Q How do I become a member of Big Wesley?

A Talk to the pastor after any Sunday service, or call the church office at (215) 735-8961. In the A.M.E. Zion tradition, new members often join on probation first, attend a new members' class, and are then received into full membership. You will be welcomed.

WHO GOD SAYS YOU ARE NOW

YOUR *new identity*

I am forgiven.
EPHESIANS 1:7

I am a child of God.
JOHN 1:12

I am a new creation.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

I am never alone.
HEBREWS 13:5

I am free.
JOHN 8:36

I have eternal life.
1 JOHN 5:13

A PRAYER FOR A NEW BELIEVER

Lord Jesus, thank You for saving me. I don't know everything yet, but I know You love me. Teach me to read Your Word and to pray. Give me friends who will help me grow. Change what needs changing in me, one day at a time. I am Yours. Lead me, and I will follow.

AMEN.

SIT WITH IT

When did I decide to follow Jesus? (Write the date and the story.)

Which of the six habits will I start this week?

Who is one person I want to tell?

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2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Wesley A.M.E. Zion Church

"Big Wesley" · The Freedom Church · Founded June 6, 1820

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:30 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP	11:00 AM

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