NOW WHAT

A GUIDE BOOK FOR NEW BELIEVERS

By Ralph Harris

Get connected

Every week, Watoto Church hosts cell groups in peoples' homes all over the city. Typically hosted with 5-10 people, each cell is a great place to make friends and connect with people. To get connected into a home cell please fill in this section and return it to the Cell Table or in the offering bag at any of our weekend celebration services.

Date: _____

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Residential address: _____

_____

Age: ☐ 11-18 ☐ 19 - 25 ☐ 26 - 35 ☐ 36 - 45 ☐ 46+

Other comments: _____

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Please take time to draw a map to your place of residence at the back of this card. Thank you

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Congratulations!

I understand you have taken Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour. If so, this is the greatest, wisest, best decision you have ever made.

Now what happens? This is the beginning. This book will help you become a successful, happy Christian.

The next seven days can be the most important week of your life. You are starting a new life, and this will call for a number of changes. You will need help. The questions I answer in each chapter involve all the areas related to successful Christian living.

You are establishing new patterns. During the next week I will help you do so, if you follow my suggestions.

This is more than a book; it is a plan of action for the next seven days. Each chapter covers one day. I urge you to follow through on every suggestion.

The suggested bible reading each day will take you through the gospel of John during this week, (it will take less than fifteen minutes a day). This Gospel was written to strengthen the faith of new converts.

The suggested Bible study at the end of each lesson will take very little time, but it will help you learn how to study the bible. The total time needed each day is less than an hour. Not much time to ensure having a happy Christian life!

Do your best and God will bless you.

What has happened to me?

Today's Bible reading: John 1, 2 and 3

Just what happened to you today? That's a good question and an important one too. Knowing what it means will help you the rest of your Christian life.

It happened in a church, in home, or somewhere else. Someone helped or perhaps you were by yourself. But wasn't it something like this? You felt a need, learning somehow that Jesus Christ would help you, and one way or another, asked Him to come into your life.

Now, what does it all mean? Let's put it simply. Two things have happened:

Jesus has become your saviour
You have become a child of God

We call this salvation. Perhaps someone has already mentioned that you are now "saved". Maybe you wonder what that means. Saved from what? Why did you need to be saved? God wants you to know three things.

You are a sinner
You cannot save yourself
Only Christ can save you

The Bible says, "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). That includes you and me. The bible also says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). This kind of death is spiritual and eternal.

We cannot save ourselves from this death by our good works, by church membership, or trying to be good. The only way to be saved (there is that word saved) from the penalty is to get rid of our sins.

Now how can we be saved? Jesus provided the way by dying on the cross. In doing this, He took our place and

suffered our punishment. When we ask God to forgive our sins and believe Jesus died for us, God accepts us for Jesus' sake, our sins are forgiven and Jesus becomes our saviour.

But something else happens . **You become a child of God**. A child of God what does that mean? Look at it this way. When you were born as a baby, you received natural life from your parents. Because of this, you are like them, you have many of their characteristics. When Jesus became your saviour, He brought to you new life, spiritual life from God. The bible calls this the new birth (John 3:3). By your first birth, you became a child of your earthly parents, your heavenly father. **This is important!** You have two natures.

> The old nature you received when born the first time. This we call the **self-life**
> The new nature you receive with the second birth. Since Jesus Christ is now living in us by the Holy Spirit, we call this new nature the **Christ life**

As far as your first, or natural birth is concerned, you may be an adult, a youth, or a child. But as far as your new spiritual birth is concerned, you are a baby. You have received new life, but it is just the beginning. Your spiritual life has to grow. You don't want to remain a spiritual baby; you want to become a mature Christian. During these next few days I will show you how to grow spiritually. I cannot emphasize too strongly how important these days are. You are determining the kind of Christian you will be. If you follow each suggestion carefully you will have a happy, successful Christian life.

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words)

John 1:12 What happens to those who receive Christ?

John 1:29 What did John the Baptist call Jesus?

John 2:5 What advice did Jesus' mother give to the servants?

John 3:3 What is necessary to "see the kingdom of God"?

John 3:6 List the two kinds of birth:

a)
b)

John 3:16 How can we keep from perishing?

John 3:36 What does a person have if he believes in Jesus?

Good verses to memorise:
John 1:2; 1:29 (Last part) 3:3; 3:16; 3:36

Where do I go from here?

Today's Bible Reading: John 4, 5 and 6

On the last page of chapter one I told you that you're a spiritual baby and that you need to grow. Where do you go from here? I could have asked, "Where do you grow from here?"

You see, you are a child of God all right, but you're a baby. You need to grow spiritually.

Isn't it tragic when, because of physical affliction, a child fails to mature and remains a baby all his life? Actually it's even more tragic when a person becomes a child of God through salvation and then fails to grow up spiritually.

This doesn't have to happen to you. If you follow these suggestions, you can quickly become a strong mature Christian.

First of all, remember that your spiritual life comes from Jesus Christ, the son of God. "He that has the son has life" (This is the epistle of John towards the end of the bible, not the Gospel of John). The preceding verse says, "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."

Christ lives in you. Don't forget it. Receiving life is not enough; you must feed that life. When a baby is born one must feed it and nourish its physical life so it will grow.

This is also true in relation to your new spiritual life. If you feed it, it will grow; if you neglect it, it will die. It's as simple as that. It depends on you. Now what will cause you to grow spiritually?

The Bible

Tomorrow we'll talk more about the bible. Your use or neglect of the Bible will determine the kind of Christian you

will be. This is why we are suggesting that you read three chapters each day of this week. Get in the habit of reading the bible everyday. “As new born babies, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye grew thereby” (1 Peter 2:2).

Prayer
In chapter four, we'll talk about the various kinds of prayers and how to pray effectively. The simplest way to describe prayer is that it is talking to God and letting Him talk to us. Make time everyday to pray. The best time is first thing in the morning, before you get involved with other activities.

Witnessing
Tell others what has happened to you. A witness is someone who testifies about something he has learned for himself. If you have learnt that Jesus satisfies, let others know about it.

Regular Church Attendenance
If you take live coal from the fireplace and put it by itself, it will soon go out. In the same way, Christians need the encouragement of other Christians. Hearing the word of God, praying with others, singing together, making Christian friendships – these will help you to grow.

Obedience
When God asks you to do, or not to do something, obey quickly. Jesus is your master as well as your savior. A good rule for deciding what is right or wrong is: will this be pleasing to God? Make this the ruling factor in all you do or say.

I'm glad to tell you that spiritual maturity doesn't depend on how long you have been saved. If you will follow these simple steps, you will become a mature Christian, one of whom God is proud, one He can use.

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words)

John 4:10 What did Jesus offer to give this man?

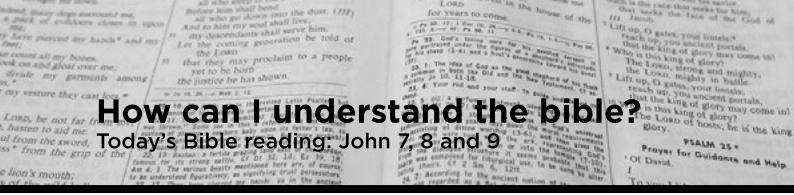
John 4:14 What will be the result if a person drinks of the water of Jesus?

John 4:24 How are we to worship God?

John 5:39 What advice about the bible did Jesus give

John 6:35 What did Jesus call himself?

Good verses to memorise:
John 4:14; 5:14 (Beginning with "Behold"); 5:24; 6:37.



How can I understand the bible?

Today's Bible reading: John 7, 8 and 9

As I told you before in the previous Chapter, the Bible is one of the best ways in which one can grow spiritually. There are five ways by which the Bible can become a part of your life.

Hearing the Word

Notice that I often refer to the Bible as "The Word". This is because it is God's way of communicating with us. We use our words to express ourselves to others; God uses his word to express Himself to us.

Because hearing is one way of receiving the word of God into our lives, in these first days and weeks of your Christian experiences form the habit of attending every church service if possible. There you will hear the word of God.

Form the habit, too, of sitting near the front of the church so you will not be distracted. Always take your bible and look up the passages the speaker refers to. Take notes; It will help you remember helpful points.

Reading the Word

Another way to get the word of God into your life is to read it regularly. The kinds of habits we form determine our character, and one of the best habits you can form is to read the bible everyday. Set a reasonable pace for yourself. Start by reading fifteen minutes in the morning, and perhaps the same amount before going to bed at night. Carry a new testament and read it during lunch time.

For your devotional reading, use a bible which you can underline with a pen and perhaps with notes in the margin. See page 27 for suggestions about where to read after you have read the Gospel of John this first time.

Study the Word
This will take more time, but it has more value too. A little later in this chapter, you will find help on this. For studying, you will need a longer period, an hour at least – perhaps some evening you have free.

Memorizing the word
If you have heard, and read, and studied, and memorized the bible, you have something to meditate on. In the many spare moments during the day – working around the house, waiting for an elevator, driving down the street, you can put your mind in gear. If you can't sleep at night, try thinking about a passage or verse from the bible.

Understand the bible
There is nothing mysterious about the bible. Just think of it as God's way of talking to you. However, this outline will help you understand any part of the bible, long or short points. What does this passage mean or verse say? What are the various parts? What are the subjects it speaks of?

Problems. What does this verse or passage say that you don't understand? Write down the problems and find the answers later, by your study or by asking an older Christian.

Parallels. What similar thoughts and needs are found elsewhere in the Bible? The more you study the more you will have help here.

Promises. What blessings and helps are stated or implied?

Perils. What warnings do you find?

Precepts. What commands are stated or implied, for you to obey?

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words)

John 7:17 What attitude will help a person to know if certain teachings are true?

John 7:37-39 What happens to the one who believes in Jesus?

John 8:1 How can we really be Jesus' disciples?

John 8:32 What will the truth do for people?

John 6:35 What did Jesus call himself?

Good verses to memorise:
John 7:37; 8:12; 8:32

How can I pray effectively?

Today's Bible reading: John 10, 11 and 12.

If the Bible can then be likened to food, because it nourishes our spiritual lives, then prayer can be likened to our breathing. There are two parts to breathing – breathing in and out. So it is with prayer – the out – reach after God, and His response to us. The person who said "I can't find time to pray" was correct. You must make time for prayer. A good way is to do it along with your Bible reading. In fact, I know some people who read their bible on their knees; then if some truth grips their hearts, they stop and pray about it.

You will never become a solid mature Christian without a consistent prayer life.

What to Pray About

This is one of the first problems you will meet. You think of your family, friends, associates, own needs – and in five minutes, you have run out of subject matter. One way to solve this problem is to channel your prayer life into certain directions, a different direction each day. On page 28 of this booklet are suggestions for doing this.

Kinds of prayer

Another solution to the problem of what to pray about is to recognize that there are several kinds of prayer. Basically, it is simply talking to God.

Petition. This simply means asking God to meet certain needs. Though some people never progress beyond the 'give me' stage, always asking God for something. There is nothing wrong with asking the Lord for His help. In fact, He encourages us to come to Him with our needs.

Thanksgiving. Remember, prayer is a two-way street. Don't forget to thank God for what He has already done for you.

Praise. This is something like thanksgiving but deals with what God is instead of what He has done. Sometimes you can use one of the Psalms, reading it aloud to express how you feel.

Worship. Is very close to praise, but is almost an attitude. There will be times when words cannot fully express your feelings and you can only say praise words like "Glory" "Hallelujah". You may even become silent as you kneel or sit, overwhelmed at the sense of how great God is.

Intercession. You may even become gripped with the need of someone else, until you feel burdened to keep on praying until you have the assurance that God has answered your prayer, for in it you are thinking of others. We need more of this kind of prayer.

How God Answers

This is an important lesson to learn: God answers every prayer. Sometimes He says, "Yes", sometimes He says "No" and often He says "wait". But time spent in prayer is never wasted. You see, even more than what He does for you, God is interested in what He can do in you. Prayer changes things – also people.

Praying in Public

Sooner or later, someone will call you to lead in Prayer. Don't panic. Simply remember we are praying to the Lord, not to the people. Pray as a representative of the group and express what you feel are their general desires in that meeting. Don't worry about using exactly the right words.

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words.)

John 10:11 Who is the good Shepherd?

John 10:15 What has Jesus done for the sheep?

John 11:27 Who did Martha say Jesus is?

John 11:40 What is needed in order to see God's glory?

John 11:42 How often did the father hear Jesus' prayer?

John 12:32 What did Jesus mean by higher "lifted up?

Good verses to memorise:
John 10:9; 10:10; 11:25-26; 11:40; 12:25; 12:32.

How can I become a strong Christian?

Today's Bible reading: John13, 14 and 15

As a Christian you need strength for two reasons:

To live an overcoming life;
To serve the Lord.

You may feel inadequate. Good! You must feel your need before the Lord can help you.

Power for Overcoming

The first time you fail you can expect the devil to tell you, "it's no use you can't live the Christian life. You might as well give up". This is one of Satan's favourite tactics.

You may even feel defeated – even though you don't yield. Remember this: temptation is not sin. Even Jesus was tempted.

Know your weak points. You have read or will read about Peter today. When the apostle learnt Jesus would be betrayed, he boldly said he was willing to die for the Lord. But before the night was over, he had denied the Lord three times. If you have trouble with temper or some other human weakness, be on guard.

Co-operate with God. Rely on Jesus to help you overcome. A little girl said," Jesus is stronger than the devil, so when the devil comes to the door of my heart, I will send Jesus, and when the devil sees Jesus he will go away."

Christ lives in your heart through His Holy Spirit, who is called "the Comforter", meaning one who is called along side to help. "He will develop in you the fruit of the spirit",

(see Galatians 5:22, 23) which together are the characters of Christ. Remember in chapter four I mentioned God's purpose is to make you like Christ. Try understanding in John 14 and 16 the things which Jesus promised the Holy Spirit will do.

An obedient attitude will help you. Obey the Lord when He suggests something to you. Listen to the pastor and other mature Christians. They have faced similar problems so they can help you.

Cultivate a sense of the Lord's presence. This is the abiding Jesus mentions in chapter 15. Let your thoughts go out towards Him throughout the day.

Don't get discouraged. You don't need to give up, and you shouldn't. A baby starting to walk often falls, but it must not give up. Simply come to the Lord as you did the first time, ask Him in sincerity to forgive you and go on.

Power for Service

The Holy Spirit has work to do for you, after salvation and different from it. It is called Baptism in the Holy Spirit and is the same experience we read about in Acts chapter 2. Before he went away, Jesus told His disciples He would baptize them in the Holy Spirit. As a result, they would receive power to witness unto Him. This happened on the day of Pentecost and changed the lives of all who received. Ask your pastor to tell you more about this.

Jesus is the Baptizer. How do you receive? The simplest way to put it I can think of is to get just as close to Jesus as you can. Move toward Him in worship and praise. Then yield completely to Him. Your experience will be just like that on Pentecost.

The baptism is a beginning. Sad to say, some stand still spiritually after they have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. This should not be. It should be the beginning of a wonderful new kind of life. Through you God can work supernaturally.

Stay Spirit Filled. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not a once for – all experience. As you continue to stay close to the Lord in prayer and reading His word, you will receive from Him and more of His life and Blessing.

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words.)
John 13:34, 35. What was Jesus' new commandment?

John 14:6 What is the only way to come to God?

John 14:13, 14. What is the secret of receiving answers to our prayers?

John 14:15. How do we show our love for Jesus?

John 14:27. What has Jesus promised to give us?

John 15:18, 19. What attitude can we expect from the word (unbelievers)?

Good verses to memorise:
John 13:35; 14:6; 14:14; 14:27; 15:5

What does God expect of me?

Today's bible reading: John 16, 17 and 18

In John 16:17, you will read that the Holy Spirit "will guide you into all truth." Some phases of this truth will be very pleasant, but some will emphasize your responsibilities as a child of God. It is all part of growing up spiritually. In the natural a child has a very carefree life, but as he matures, he must assume some responsibilities. You don't want to remain a spiritual baby. Let's see some of the responsibilities which are now yours.

Make Christ the Master

To express their loyalty to Jesus when he was living on earth. His disciples often called Him "Lord" or "Master." Jesus accepted this position and said, "if you love me keep my commandments" John 14:15. You see as a believer you now belong to Christ. You did belong to Satan, but Christ has bought you with His blood. When we realize how much Christ has done for us, how he died for us, how he saved us from hell, we are glad for opportunities to show our love for Him, by obeying Him.

Put Christ First in Your Life

Actually, this will include anything else I could say to you. Cultivate a sense of His presence. Talk to him in prayer at definite times, and also when you are by yourself throughout the day. When reading the Bible, think of it as Jesus talking to you. Make Jesus the center of your life.

Give Christ of Your Time

There should be a change in your life and habits. If you really want to be a successful Christian, you will want to attend church services regularly. You will want to have a definite time of private devotions – and of family. You will want to participate in the church activities. All this takes time but it will be worth it.

Give Christ of Your Abilities
"What abilities?" you say. Everyone can do something. If you have special talents, dedicate them to the Lord's work. You may want to take training to develop some talent activity. Besides the jobs which call for special talent, there are many, other tasks where you can help. Your pastor or other church leaders will be delighted to have you volunteer. Here is a suggestion I've found helpful: Promise the Lord you will try anything that you are asked to do.

Give Christ of Your Mental Possessions
I said earlier that you belong to the Lord. That means all you own too. It's not really giving to the Lord since He owns it already. What we give is an investment in the greatest venture in the world – the gospel. You will want to begin tithing – contributing a tenth of your income to the work of the Lord. It looks hard to do. I promise, you will find nine-tenths going further than the whole.

Become a Member of a Church
You belong to a new family by joining a Bible – believing church. It will give you an increased sense of belonging; and will provide an increased opportunity to help others. Through your church and its ministries, you can reach to the ends of the earth. You will find your church ministering to your own needs too.

Tell Others of Your Faith
Someone told you about Christ, probably, or you would not be saved today. Don't you think you have an obligation to help others too? As you witness at every opportunity, you will be constantly more effective. Next to your salvation, your greatest thrill will be leading someone else to Christ. Talk to someone to Christ.

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words.)

John 16:7 Why was it necessary for Jesus to go away?

John 16:13 – 15. Tell 2 things the Holy Spirit will do?

John 16:33. What will we have in the world?

In Christ?
John 17:9 What is Jesus doing for us?

John 18:38 What did Pilate say of Jesus?

Good verses to memorise:
John 16:24; 16:33; 17:3; 17:15

How can I know the will of God

Today's Bible reading: John 19, 20 and 21

How to know the will of God – that's a big enough subject to write a book in itself. And it's important. After all, if Christ is now your Master, and you want to obey Him, you must know what He wants you to do.

When It's a Matter of Conduct

It's obvious the Bible doesn't cover every detail of modern living. Matters of everyday activity now were unknown when the bible was written. But of one thing you can be sure: the Bible contains principles which cover every situation. I'll mention some of which you will find helpful. Look for others and make a note of them.

Some can, others cannot. This doesn't refer to acts of sin, of course, but in matters about which the Bible is silent. Remember God deals with people as individuals. Don't expect people to fit your mold.

Consider others. Some things which you would find acceptable might cause other Christians to fail. Paul said that if acting a certain way causes another Christian to stumble, he'd be willing never to do it again, even though he saw no wrong in it himself.

Is it glorifying God? You are now Jesus' representative in the world. You should do nothing to bring shame or reproach upon you Lord or His cause.

There are many principles, of course, but the most is to be guided by your love for Jesus. Above all else, ask yourself, "will this be pleasing to the Lord?" If you make that ruling question in your decisions, it's difficult to go wrong.

When You Must Decide Which Way to Go
I'm talking about life decisions now, not matters of conduct. There will be times when you just don't know which course of action to follow. How can you decide?

Be patient. A Bible verse states, "He that believeth, shall not make haste." Learn to wait on God until He indicates His will to you. Don't be rash. Don't make a move until it is clear."

Seek the advice of others. Don't be a "loner". Let your pastor or some other mature Christian be your confidant. Be sure it is someone who will keep your confidence. Someone who is not involved in the problem can see various angles of the problem more clearly than you can.

Commit the matter to the Lord. A famous Christian used this method: he would list the reasons for and against a certain course of action and prayerfully consider the matter for a time. Then he would decide to move in a certain direction. He would remove from his mind much of his desires as possible, then ask God to block his path if it were not God's will. Over a period of fifty years, he found this approach successful, judging by the way matters turned out.

Getting Along With Others
This is not usually discussed as a matter of the will of God, but it is one of the most important aspects of Christian living.

If you haven't learnt this yet, you will discover that Christians are not perfect. As in your case, God is trying to develop their characters, to make them like Jesus.

Some people you will like instinctively; others will not be particularly attractive to you. Just remember this; there are traits in you which may not be especially attractive to some. The most important gift you can ask from God is

the gift of love – for God and others. Love includes all the other traits God wants to develop in you. Love will keep you walking close to the Lord. Love for others will make you considerate for them. Love will make you want to win others to the Lord. God can give you love for the unlovely.

BIBLE STUDY FOR TODAY
(Answer in your own words.)

John 19:7, 8 Why was Pilate afraid?

What phrase, repeated in John 19:24, 28 and 36, shows that Jesus' death was planned?

John 20:7 What item did Peter notice particularly in the tomb??

John 20:31 Why was the gospel of John written?

John 21:15 How did Jesus answer Peter's curiosity?

Good verses to memorise:
John 10:21; 20:31

What Now?

Well, the first seven days are over. How did you do? Now, what about the future? Let me re-emphasize some points and give you some tips.

Bible Reading. Read it every day and all the way through once a year. It will take only 10 – 15 minutes a day. Read the gospel of John through at least two more times; then start at Matthew through to Acts. Now read the story options of the Old Testament, Beginning with Genesis; then read the New Testament all way through. Finally begin at Genesis and read through the whole bible.

Prayer. This is the life line of your spiritual life. In your private times, make this a conversation with God. Think of Him as great friend you can confide in. Talk to Him about your victories as well as your needs.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit. Seek to be filled.

If you fail. You don't have to, understand, but if you do, ask God for forgiveness, just as you did the first time. He will never give up on you. But determine by his help not to fail in the same way again.

Find a Home Church. Become a member of a good church and help them in every way possible.

Be baptized in water. The Lord has commanded this. It is one of the ways you can give a public testimony to your conversion.

Become a Tither. Give ten percent of your income to the church you regularly attend.

What Now?
It depends on you. If you follow these suggestions, you will have most satisfying life possible.

Pattern for Bible study

Points What does this passage say?

Problems What it says that I don't understand?

Parallels What similar thoughts are found elsewhere in the Bible?

Promises What blessings can I claim?

Perils What warnings should I heed?

Percepts What commands should I obey?

Weekly Prayer Cycle	
Monday	Missionaries
Tuesday	Thanksgiving for special answers to prayer
Wednesday	Workers, the pastors and others
Thursday	Tasks, your particular work for God
Friday	Families, our loved ones
Saturday	Saints, fellow believers
Sunday	Sinners, especially that through the church service God will reach them

Assurance

It is important to learn these principles of a victorius Christian life from the very beginning of your salvation.

The Word
God works in your life on the basis of your confession. He in the same way expects you to act upon His word. So let the word of God richly dwell in you in all wisdom, be reading, hearing, and saying it.

The Cell
God calls each one of us to be part of the life of the cell. You will experience the personal touch of the love of God, which will empower you for life.

The Celebration
God delights and dwells in the praises of His people. So learn to praise Him in all situations, and make up your mind to be part of the celebration services of the church. This will help you realize the greatness of the God you now believe in.

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