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# **CHRISTIAN STARTER KIT**

*Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think,  
according to the power that works within us. Ephesians 3:20*

12 BASIC STEPS FOR BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

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# **MICHAEL CLOKE**

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## What About Heaven And Hell

### *The Bible Describes Judgment Day*

**(Matthew 13:47-50 NKJV)** "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, {48} "which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. {49} "So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, {50} "and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

**(Revelation 20:10-15 NKJV)** {10} The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. {11} Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **(Revelation 20:12-15 NKJV)** And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. {13} The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. {14} Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. {15} And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

### *The Fixed-Up & Made New World*

**(Revelation 21:1-4 NKJV)** Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. {2} Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. {3} And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. {4} "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away."

### *Heaven & Hell*

God is holy and must deal with sin. Sin can be dealt by us through repentance and faith and following Jesus in the pursuit of holiness. This way of dealing with sin leads to heaven. Or sin can accumulate and "store up the wrath of God for the Day



of Judgment". People who have not dealt with their sin by repentance, faith and following Jesus will be destroyed - cast into the lake of fire. They are not deserving of, or fit for, heaven. They do not have a sinless "real self". Their real self is still sinful and wicked. Therefore it is destroyed and punished. Hell is not a sort of debauched party full of sinners having a good time; it is unrelenting anguish without any place for or possibility of rest and relief.

Heaven is the absolute enjoyment of the presence and power of God. It is where God's love is perfectly understood and where absolute total blissful happiness is normal. In heaven there will be no more crying or pain. It is ended. The days of suffering, meaninglessness, misfortune and calamity are over.

It is a world ordered for good and for the very best. Should you go to heaven you will dwell in unimaginable wealth - yet without coveting, you will reign with Christ - in humility and meekness, you will have a life that goes on for all eternity full of purpose, love and meaning. It will be a place where every scar on your soul is healed, where every tear is forgotten and where the life of God flows through you like an ever flowing stream. **(Revelation 21, 22)**

## What About My Non-Christian Friends?

### *When Friends Lead You Astray From God*

Sometimes our non-Christian friends can be leading a lifestyle that is sinful, and they will want us to join in and pressure them to "go along" and compromise our values. We should still love our non-Christian friends and we definitely should share Christ with them, but we should not give in and conform to their lifestyle. This article deals with the problem of pressure from non-Christian friends who ask us to do something wrong.

**(1 Corinthians 15:33-34 NKJV)** Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." {34} Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.

**(James 4:4-5 NKJV)** Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. {5} Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

**(2 Corinthians 6:14-18 NKJV)** Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? {15} And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? {16} And what agreement has the



temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." {17} Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

These verses are amongst the hardest in the Bible and they are there for a purpose. It is very easy to end up in relationships or alliances that are really counter productive to our Christian faith. We are heading one way and they are heading another. Let's review these verses carefully.

1. Bad company corrupts good habits. This is an easily observed commonplace fact. Many new Christians try to keep company with people who are sexually immoral or drunken or greedy or ambitious and the pressure from these friendships soon draws them away from their relationship with Christ and back into the world. Recognise bad company - and avoid it.
2. Friendship with the world is enmity with God. There are three main enemies of God - and of Christians. Those enemies are "the world, the flesh and the devil". By the world the Bible means "Vanity Fair" the place where people clamber to get up the ladder, gain honors and be thought of as special without any reference to God or to eternity. **(1 John 2:15-17 NKJV)** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. {16} For all that is in the world; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; is not of the Father but is of the world. {17} And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." Living for material gain, worldly status or sensual pleasure is what we call worldliness. It is incompatible with the Spirit of God. You cannot think and act "like everyone else" and be God's friend. **(Romans 12:1,2)** You cannot live for this world and for heaven at the same time. Possessions are not the stuff of the Kingdom of God.
3. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. This passage is often quoted to say that Christians should not marry non-Christians. That is certainly true. We should only marry "in the Lord". However it is of broader application than that. This passage says that we are not to "yoke ourselves with" that is get into partnerships or close friendships with unbelievers where it is necessary that we "pull in the same direction".
4. This may include boyfriend-girlfriend relationships, close friendships, some business arrangements and anything where we could be compromised by the friendship. The spiritual nature of unbelievers is that they are controlled people. **(Ephesians 2:1-4)** They are controlled by "Belial", the Devil, and he can "push their buttons" from time to time so that they do what he wants 'despite themselves". This makes the partnership very unwise for Christians. Satan wants



to "steal, kill and destroy" the people of God (John 10:10) and you have foolishly placed yourself right alongside someone who the Devil can control to do you maximum harm. That person may not will you any harm now but their weakness and vulnerabilities mean that they can "fall into sin" and take you with them. They do not have the strength to resist a strong temptation from the Evil One.

5. This is a hard lesson to learn because many unbelievers are nice, attractive people. Older Christians have often learned this lesson the hard way and many will tell you of the pain they have suffered. You are not judging the person by denying the relationship. You are obeying God and He promises you an even better relationship if you follow Him.

**( 2 Cor 6:16-18 NKJV )** "For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." {17} Therefore "Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you." {18} "I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty."

The application of this requires courage and wisdom. Courage to make the break from damaging relationships and wisdom in how and when to do it and with what words. Putting distance between yourself and the person does not mean an entire rejection of their personality. You are not to hate anyone. You are to love them with a cautious and wise love that refuses to get involved beyond the boundaries set by God.

## Loving Your Neighbor

### *The Story Of The Good Samaritan*

**(Luke 10:25-37 NKJV)** And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" {26} He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" {27} So he answered and said, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbour as yourself.'" {28} And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." {29} But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" {30} Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. {31} "Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. {32} "Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. {33} "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came





where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. {34} "So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. {35} "On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' {36} "So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" {37} And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

## *Love Of Neighbor*

Love of God and love of neighbour are the two great commandments. They are repeated dozens of times in the Scriptures e.g. **(1 John 3:16-18 NKJV)** By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. {17} But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him? {18} My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." There is a compelling weight to these exhortations. We **MUST** do the good works that God has prepared beforehand for us to do **(Ephesians 2:10)**. This page is devoted to showing you how to fulfil this commandment. From the above parable we can see that the Good Samaritan a) perceived the need b) bothered to get involved in the mess c) paid the price of following it through to completion d) did so in an open-hearted attitude full of mercy and generosity. The Good Samaritan also got on with his business and let the person recover in peace. He was not a busybody or a sanctimonious do-gooder. There is something brusquely practical about him, almost businesslike.

**Step One** When we see a brother or sister in need we can give whatever immediate help we can from the resources we have available (and God always gives you enough to meet the need once you start using it "the loaves and fishes" principle - Matt 14:14-21). We must never ignore the need. To "close our hearts" is to squelch the love of God in us. **(1 John 3:17)**

**Step Two** We can then refer them to someone more able to help ("the innkeeper") but be prepared to still be involved and pick up the tab if necessary. This may mean taking them to AA or Social Security and standing with them until things are sorted out.

**Step Three** Check our attitude. Are we being generous or are we resenting "having to get involved"? Are we merciful and gracious or do we view the person as foolish? Are we helping out in order to boost ourselves or because we had compassion on that person? We should still help even if though our motives are very mixed and pride creeps in. It is better to meet the need because that way we



are keeping our hearts open to the love and mercy of God - these will, in time, correct our attitudes.

May I suggest a set of priorities for Christian compassion -

- 1. Your spouse
- 2. Your children
- 3. Your aged parents
- 4. The church
- 5. The basic needs of the world.

Here are some verses that underlie my order of priorities:

**(Ephesians 5:28 NKJV)** So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

**(1 Timothy 5:8 NKJV)** But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

**(Mark 7:9-13 NKJV)** He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. {10} "For Moses said, 'Honour your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' {11} "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"; ' (that is, a gift to God), {12} "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, {13} "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."

**(Galatians 6:9-10 NKJV)** And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. {10} Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

From Galatians we see that "doing good" is "especially" to Christians. From Mark we see that church comes behind parents, **1 Timothy** says that providing for one's family is absolutely basic to being a Christian and Ephesians that spouses hold a very high place indeed - as high as our own bodies.

This is a common sense order and may help you sort out your helping role. Do not use it as an excuse though! Remember we are exhorted in Galatians to "do good to all". **(Gal 6:10)**





## How To Release The Holy Spirit Into Your Life

### *Bible Verses*

**(Ephesians 5:18-21 NKJV)** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, {19} speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, {20} giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, {21} submitting to one another in the fear of God.

**(Luke 11:11-13 NKJV)** "If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? {12} "Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? {13} "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

**(Matthew 3:11-12 NKJV)** "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. {12} "His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

**(Acts 2:33 NKJV)** "Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

### Overview

The aim of this article is to inform you of the transforming power of the Holy Spirit and to encourage you to live a life that either suddenly or gradually increases in victory and power. It is not the aim of this article to turn you into a charismatic or a Pentecostal. I want to show you some of what is available in the Kingdom of God and encourage you to lay hold upon it. There is a lot more to church and the Christian life than hard work and duty. There is joy, there is peace of mind, there is a whole new fresh way of living in the gentle power of the Holy Spirit.

**Here is a quick tour:** We can ask God to give us the Holy Spirit **(Luke 11:13)** and to fill us with the Holy Spirit **(Eph 5:18)**. Scripture tells us that Jesus "baptises" us with the Holy Spirit **(Matt 3:11,12, Acts 2:33)**, that is He pours it out in power on believers so they can function in the body of Christ **(1 Cor 12:13)**. The prime work of the Holy Spirit is making believers like Jesus **(Romans 8:26-31)** and enabling them to minister to one another in love and truth **(Ephesians 4:11-16)**.



This involves spiritual gifts (**1 Cor 12:1-11**) being used in love (**1 Cor 13:1-7**) for mutual edification. Being filled with the Spirit is God's will (Eph 5:18) and is also a CHOICE we can make as an alternative to a lifestyle of dissipation (Eph 5:18). It produces true spiritual joy (**Eph 5:18-21**) and can be sought through prayer (**Luke 11:9-13**).

### *Asking God For The Holy Spirit*

Sometimes very precious spiritual things can be lost or "unclaimed". At one time the book of Deuteronomy itself was lost! Until it was discovered in the Temple by Josiah. Life in the power of God with the infilling presence of the Holy Spirit was a New Testament reality that, like the book of Deuteronomy, got "lost in the attic" for a long while. It is now being rediscovered by countless Christians. So they go searching, and those who seek, find and those who ask, receive and to those who knock the door shall be opened. We need to press into God for more and more of His Kingdom realities and a deeper filling with the Holy Spirit.

Believers receive the Holy Spirit at conversion and then ideally deepen their relationship with Him over the years. The "linkages" between the believer and the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit grows stronger and more effective.

The believer grows in wisdom grace and power and from time to time experiences breakthroughs in their walk with God that I shall call "releases" of the Holy Spirit. We don't get "more of" the Holy Spirit in a quantity (you cannot get more of a person and the Holy Spirit is personal) but we get "more" in the sense of relationship and power. Love relationships can, in a way, be measured. Have you ever heard a wife say to her husband "I want all of you ..." Thus from our perspective we can get "more of the Holy Spirit" that is sense the reality of His Presence with us more deeply and with greater reality.

We can move into a deeper, stronger and more committed relationship full of peace, joy and power.

### *How Do We Do This?*

The release of the Holy Spirit into your life involves seeking, repenting and asking. There are many obstacles in our hearts that choke the Spirit's work. These include bitterness, anger, wrath, clamor, unbelief, being too controlling, immorality and involvement in pornography or the occult. You cannot have the fullness of Holy Spirit and bitterness. You will have to choose between the two.



**(Ephesians 4:30-32 NKJV)** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. {31} Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. {32} And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.

As we seek the fullness of the Holy Spirit we will often become aware of areas that are contrary to His operation in us. As we repent of them then the Holy Spirit is no longer grieved and His joy fills us. In true revivals we see that there is always seeking God, there is always repenting and there is always asking for more and more of his Presence and power.

I do not have a "formula" for seeking, repenting and asking. I cannot tell you how long it will take or exactly what you should do. Some people are greatly assisted by certain forms of worship, others by fasting and self-denial, others by a daily quiet time with God. Whatever the method you use it must involve earnest and diligent seeking, repenting and asking of God.

### *Obstacles*

If it's just that simple why is not revival, at least on the personal level, far more common? Because we tenaciously hold on to certain sins and attitudes that block the operation of God. We distrust the surgeon who can save us.

For instance if we: nationalize certain sins away particularly those involving money or sex. Refuse to forgive people under the banner of "justice". Place limits on how God can work today. Think we are respectable and do not need renewal. Despise renewal and the miraculous. Play around with the Scriptures, believing some and discarding some. Keep idols and occult items in our house "for cultural value" (see Deut 7:25) play with astrology, Wicca, fortune-telling or contact the dead. Think that if we let God in He will "make us missionaries in Tibet" and ruin our happiness. Think we are unworthy of God's love or of him doing anything wonderful in our lives. See renewal as being for "other people in other lands at other times". Give up our pursuit of God far too easily. Invent theologies that have God as remote. Do not acknowledge Jesus as the only way to salvation. (Surprisingly common)

To address all these blockages one by one would be a very long article indeed! What we do need to do however is to stop sinning against God and start loving Him enthusiastically with our whole hearts. As we do this and repent of the above list of sins then a renewed life will become a real and wonderful possibility. God may renew people before they have fully repented of their involvement with the above sins but I have never seen renewal without at least some serious dealing with sin on the part of the person involved.



## *Seven Steps*

To do this is a seven step process:

1. Acknowledge your sin before God. Tell God that He is righteous and just and that you agree with His assessment of your sin.
2. Acknowledge the sin's grip on you and your desire to be free of it forever.
3. Ask for God's forgiveness of your sin.
4. Ask Jesus to fill you with His Holy Spirit.
5. Make restitution and reconcile with those you may have hurt. If the sin is only between you and God then leave it there. If it involves one other person go put it right with just that person. If it involves a group then acknowledge that to the group and seek their forgiveness.
6. Destroy any objects involved with your sin e.g. pornography or objects and books used in witchcraft, astrology, pagan religions, idolatry, masonry, etc. (See Deuteronomy 7:5, 25 and Acts 19:19)
7. Press on to higher ground through obedience, prayer, fellowship and bible study. Get involved in the things of God. God only gives you power and strength so you can use it to bless others.

## *Building On The Blessing*

Once you have received a releasing of the Holy Spirit into your life you need to build on it for ministry and service and growth in Christian character. The blessings of God are not sensual moments to be enjoyed like good music or a meal. They are stepping stones to holiness, Christian character and a blessed and productive life that is useful in building the Kingdom of God here on earth.

When the Holy Spirit comes upon you in power there is a tendency to gain an extra level of functioning known as a "spiritual gift". In Samson's case it was great strength, in Solomon's it was wisdom, in Peter the ability to work miracles, in Paul the apostolic gift and calling. This extra level of functioning needs to be learned and practiced so that it integrates with the whole of life and with God's purposes for His church. Spiritual gifts are not status symbols any more than the servants towel is a status symbol. The spiritual gifts are there for you to use the power of



God in love for the edification and support of other believers and the conversion of those outside the Kingdom.

Do not leave your blessing gift wrapped in a silver box. Take it out and use it. Admiring what God has just done for you is good, but it will soon be time to put your new level of functioning to use in the real world. If the renewal has left you more peaceful it will be time to show that at work when you are under pressure. If it has made you more loving then display that love at home and grow it and strengthen it.