



NOW THAT YOU'RE
SAVED

STEVE GAINES PH.D.



**BRO.
STEVE
GAINES**

Author &
Senior Pastor
Bellevue Baptist Church

Steve Gaines pursues the Vision God has given Bellevue Baptist Church to be a catalyst for spiritual awakening in Memphis and beyond. A man of prayer and a preacher of God's Word, he has pastored churches in Texas, Tennessee, and Alabama before coming to Bellevue in 2005. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Preaching and a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and is the former President of the Southern Baptist Convention. Bro. Steve and his wife, Donna, are both published authors, leading others to have a fervent and growing walk with Christ. They have four children and 16 grandchildren.

Bro. Steve



NOW THAT YOU'RE **SAVED**

Congratulations! You've given your heart to Jesus Christ. You are now a child of God. Your sins are forgiven, and you are a new creation in Christ. Old things in your life have passed away, and new things are on the way. You now possess a new nature and a new heart. Jesus Christ has come to live within you through the person of the Holy Spirit. Your body is now the Spirit's temple. Your name has been recorded in Heaven in "*The Lamb's Book of Life*" (Revelation 21:27). Jesus Christ is building a dwelling place for you in Heaven reserved for all eternity. When you consider all that has happened to you, it's enough to cause anyone to shout, "Hallelujah!"

This booklet is designed to help a new believer in Jesus. It is not meant to be a comprehensive work on Christian discipleship. Rather, it contains helpful information that can assist you in getting a good start in the Christian life. The booklet asks and answers some of the most common questions new Christians often grapple with. Let's look at those questions and see how the Bible answers them.

BIBLICAL

ANSWERS TO COMMON QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1 ONE

Can I Know That I'm Saved?

New Christians often wonder, “How can I know for certain I am really saved? Is my salvation based on the way I feel? Is there any chance I could lose my salvation if I sin? How can I be certain I am a child of God?”

When we consider questions such as these, it is good to know that the Bible says we can know that we are saved.

“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life”
(1 John 5:13).

Did you notice the word “*know*”? It means we can be absolutely certain that we are saved. But how can we know?

SIGNS OF SALVATION

You Know You're Saved Because the Bible Says So.

The Bible is God's Word. God is holy and perfect and cannot lie. Consequently, every word in God's Word, the Bible, is true. When it comes to the subject of being saved, the Bible clearly states that whoever repents of his/her sin, believes in the Lord Jesus, and receives Him into his/her life, has the gift of salvation. The apostle John affirmed this when he said, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name"* (John 1:12). Jesus Himself taught this when He said, *"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life"* (John 6:47). Likewise, the apostle Paul said, *"For 'WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED'"* (Romans 10:13).

The Bible teaches that if you have sincerely done these things, you are indeed saved!

You Know You're Saved when You Love Other Christians.

When you become a Christian, God places you in a worldwide family. Every Christian believer in the world is your brother or sister in Christ. When God saves you, He gives you a genuine love for other Christians. The apostle John affirmed that when he said, *"We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death"* (1 John 3:14). Love for other Christians is a sign of the life of salvation.

You Know You're Saved when You Sense the Presence of the Holy Spirit.

The moment you become a Christian, God sends His Holy Spirit to live within your physical body. Your body literally becomes *"a temple of the Holy Spirit"* (1 Corinthians 6:19). Paul tells us we can know we are saved because *"The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God"* (Romans 8:16). Another translation of that same verse says, *"His Holy Spirit speaks to us deep in our hearts and tells us that we are God's children."* The Spirit within you will cause you to have an overwhelming realization that God has transformed you and that you belong to Him.

**You Know You're Saved when
You Desire to Obey God.**

When you become a Christian, you do not become perfect, but you do begin to desire to obey God and do what He says. John affirms this by saying, *“And how can we be sure that we belong to Him? By obeying his commandments”* (1 John 2:3). That is, when you begin to enjoy obeying God instead of disobeying God, that is an assuring sign you have been saved.

**You Know You're Saved when
You Desire to Read Your Bible.**

Salvation results in a desire to read and study the Bible. The Bible is God's Word, and a child of God will desire to know what his/her heavenly Father says. Peter talked about this when he said, *“Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord”* (1 Peter 2:2–3). That means a new Christian will hunger for God's Word like a baby craves the taste of milk. Your hunger for the Word of God assures you that you have been saved by the God of the Word!

**You Know You're Saved when
You Experience Answered Prayers.**

Another way to be assured that you are saved is that when you have received the gift of salvation, God begins to answer your prayers. Jesus said, *“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you”* (John 15:7). When we pray according to His will, God will answer our prayers (1 John 5:14–15). God will not always answer our prayers by saying, “Yes.” He might say, “No” or “Not now; wait.” But He will always answer us according to His perfect will. These are some of the more obvious ways you can know you have been saved. But how can you be sure that once you are saved, you will not lose or forfeit your salvation?

THREE REASONS YOU WON'T LOSE YOUR SALVATION

No One Can Snatch You from God's Hand.

Jesus said, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand”* (John 10:27–29). Once you become a Christian, God puts an eternal hold on you. Your salvation does not depend on you being able to “hold on to God.” Rather, your salvation continues because God is holding on to you! Jesus' words tell you that you are “under double-lock-and-key.” To steal your salvation, the devil would have to pry open both the hands of Jesus and the hands of God the Father and snatch you away. Rest assured, that will never happen!

Nothing Can Separate You from God's Love.

When you were saved, God placed His love into your heart. He loves you with an everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3). Paul guarantees us that nothing will ever disconnect us from God's love when he says, *“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:38–39).

Nothing Can Sever the Seal of God's Spirit.

When God saved you, He “sealed” your salvation with His Holy Spirit. The Bible says, *“In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory”* (Ephesians 1:13–14). The seal of God's Spirit acts as a sort of spiritual “down payment” (i.e. “pledge”) that guarantees the completion of the reward of salvation in Heaven. The Spirit's seal cannot be severed or broken by anyone or anything. Thus, our salvation is absolutely secure in Jesus Christ!

If you have asked Jesus to come into your life to save you, He has done so. You are saved because the Bible says so. Take a moment right now and pray this simple prayer: “Thank You, Father, for I know I am saved!”

QUESTION **2** TWO

Is Baptism Important?

What is the first commandment Jesus gives a new Christian? Is it to read the Bible? Pray? Witness? Give money? While all of these are important, none of them is the first thing the new believer is told to do after he/she gets saved. Jesus told us what we are to do immediately after we are saved when He said,

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20).

He says that after we become disciples (i.e. believers in/followers of Jesus), we are to be baptized. What does the New Testament say about baptism? Basically, it says this: (1) Baptism is for those who have already believed in Jesus, (2) it is by immersion, (3) it is to be done in the name of the triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and (4) it is a symbol of one’s salvation.

Baptism is for Those Who Have Already Believed in Jesus.

In the New Testament, only those who had already accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior were baptized (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:38, 9:18, 10:48, 16:15, 16:33, 18:8, 19:5). Babies were never baptized. The reason infant baptism is not mentioned in the New Testament is because baptism is for believers only, and babies cannot believe! If you were sprinkled as a baby (or immersed for that matter), you have not been scripturally baptized. Also, if you were baptized before you were saved (when you were a nonbeliever), you have not been scripturally baptized. Biblical baptism is believer’s baptism.

Baptism is by Immersion.

The word “baptize” means “to immerse, plunge, or dip.” By definition, baptism by immersion was the exclusive mode of baptism practiced in New Testament times. When Philip baptized the eunuch from Ethiopia, the Bible says, *“And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way rejoicing”* (Acts 8:38–39). It is clear that the eunuch was baptized by immersion. Why? Because immersion is the only mode of baptism that is capable of visually portraying the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (cf. Romans 6:3–4). Anyone who has merely been “sprinkled” has not been scripturally baptized. You should be baptized the only way the New Testament affirms—by immersion.

Baptism is in the Name of the Triune God.

Jesus commanded us in His “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:18–20) to baptize new believers *“in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.”* Why is this important? Because each person of the Trinity is involved in our salvation. The Father draws us to the Son (John 6:44), the Son (Jesus) saves us and gives us eternal life (John 5:24), and the Spirit regenerates and indwells us (1 Corinthians 6:19–20; Titus 3:5). While it is true that some believers in the New Testament were baptized only in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38, 8:16, 10:48), it is equally clear from the command of Jesus in Matthew 28 that our Lord expects us to baptize new believers in the name of the triune God.

Baptism is a Symbol of Salvation.

Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a gift of God that no one can earn or merit. We are not saved by participating in either of the two Christian ordinances: baptism or the Lord’s Supper. A person is not baptized to be saved. He/she is baptized because he /she is already saved. If a non-Christian is immersed in water, he will come out of that water just as he/she went in—lost and unsaved. Water does not save—the blood of Jesus does. Paul was saved because he called on the name of the Lord, not because he/she was baptized (Acts 22:16). If you have been baptized in a church that teaches that baptism in some way saves you, you have not been scripturally baptized.

You should follow the Lord in New Testament baptism as a symbol of your salvation.

It should be noted at this point that a Baptist baptistry is not the only place someone can be scripturally baptized. If a person who has genuinely been saved has been baptized scripturally (see above) in a non-Baptist church, there is no biblical justification to require that person to be baptized again. If someone's baptism is scriptural, it is good enough for God, and if it meets His standards, it ought to be good enough for us.

QUESTION 3 THREE

Is Church Membership Necessary?

The Church is very important because Jesus founded it. The Church is referred to in the New Testament in several ways. Paul called it **Jesus' Building** (Ephesians 2:20–21). Jesus is referred to as the Foundation of the Church (1 Corinthians 3:11), the very stabilizing Rock upon which it is built (Matthew 16:18). He is also called the Church's Cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). Paul also speaks of the Church as **Jesus' Body** (Ephesians 5:23). Christ is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18), and Christians constitute the members of His Body (Ephesians 5:29–30). We function together as a unit under His leadership. Finally, the Church is pictured as **Jesus' Bride** (Ephesians 5:26–27). The husband is told to love his wife even as Jesus loves His Bride, the Church, having given His life for Her (Ephesians 5:25). Jesus is married to us by means of salvation. He loves us as a faithful Bridegroom (Mark 2:19–20).

The New Testament Greek word for “Church” is “ecclesia” meaning, “those who have been called out.” Christians have been called out and set apart (i.e. sanctified) from this world. We are Christ's “peculiar” people (1 Peter 2:9)—in this world but not of it (John 15:19). We are to be delightfully different, holy unto Him because He is holy (1 Peter 1:14–16).

Usually when the word “church” appears in the New Testament, it refers to a specific congregation of baptized believers located in a particular geographical area. These believers had united themselves together under Christ's Lordship to be the Body of Christ and to minister to those around them for His glory. A church is made up of people who have been saved.

The local church is at the heart of Christian activity on Earth. The Universal Church (i.e. all Christian believers) is made up of individual Christians who should belong to local churches. Every believer should be an active member of a local church because if you love Jesus, the Head of the Church, you should also love

other Christians who are the Body of the Church! If you love the Foundation of the Church (Jesus), you should also love the Building (other Christians)! If you love the Groom (Jesus), you should also love the Bride (the Church)!

Generally speaking, the two primary requirements for joining a Baptist church are: (1) knowing that you have been saved (see question 1 above), and (2) being scripturally baptized (see question 2 above). You should only consider joining a church that believes basic biblical doctrines such as...

- The entire Bible is the inspired Word of God.
- Jesus is the divine, virgin-born, sinless, sacrificial, resurrected, returning, and saving Son of God.
- Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone.
- Jesus Christ is the only way to God.
- Christians should witness to lost people, so those who are lost can be saved.

QUESTION **4** FOUR

How Can I Understand the Bible?

The Bible is the inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3:16). It not only contains truth; it is truth (John 17:17). Baptists believe in the “verbal plenary” inspiration of the Bible. “Verbal” means we believe that the very words of Scripture (not merely the ideas behind the words) are inspired and God-breathed. “Plenary” means we believe all the words of the Bible are inspired. We believe that every word of the Old and New Testaments, from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21, is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, and authoritative Word of God.

Baptists place great emphasis on the Bible. That is why when you walk into the worship center of a Baptist church, you will notice that the pulpit is located at the center of the platform. This signifies that the primary aspect of a worship service is hearing what God has to say through the preaching of His Word.

Here’s how you can understand your Bible:

Read the Bible.

When you become a Christian, you should begin to systematically read the Scriptures. You do not need to randomly open the Bible and read it haphazardly (i.e. open the Bible and read “wherever”). It is far better to follow some sort of systematic reading plan that calls for the reading of entire books of the Bible from beginning to end. You would do well to begin reading a chapter a day in the New Testament. You could start with the Gospel of John. When that book is completed, go to another book in the New Testament and read it at the same pace (a chapter per day) until the entire New Testament is completed. After that, you might want to read the entire Bible through in a year’s time. Reading the Bible slowly allows the meaning of the text to soak in. Likewise, reading the Bible out loud helps concentration and prevents mental wandering.

Study the Bible.

There are a number of ways to study the Bible. One is to look up cross references that are referred to in the margin of your Bible. These additional verses will shed insight into the meaning of the text you are studying at that time. There are also excellent theologically conservative Bible commentaries that can offer valuable information by explaining the meaning of the biblical text. Also, you would be well advised to join a weekly Bible study with a mature believer teaching the Word of God.

Hear the Bible Preached/Taught.

You should join a church that has a pastor who preaches and teaches the Bible on a regular basis. As you listen to sermons, take notes and study them in more depth after the sermon is delivered. You should also join a small group, such as a Sunday school class, that provides additional study of the Scripture on a regular basis. Hearing God's Word taught and preached will help build your faith (Romans 10:17) and cause you to become more aware of God's will for your life.

Memorize Bible Verses.

One of the best ways for you to get a better grasp on the meaning of Scripture is to memorize Bible verses. It is best to memorize Scripture from the same Bible version you regularly read from. Try writing out a verse of Scripture you desire to commit to memory on a blank business card. Carry your memory verse(s) with you throughout the day. Consider memorizing one or two verses a week and reviewing each verse daily for six weeks while you continue to add new verses. After six weeks, review those original verses once a week for the next six months. Then, review them once a month for the next two years. Soon, they will be yours for life!

Sing the Bible.

You should sing "Scripture songs." There are many Christian hymns and choruses that use entire verses of Scripture for their text. Singing Scripture has helped children memorize Scripture for years, and it works for adults as well! Listen to music that is based on the Word of God.

Display the Bible.

Christian artists have provided us with the opportunity to display beautiful pictures with Scripture verses written on them in our homes and offices. Why not display at least one such picture with a verse of Scripture in every room of your house? Over the years, these verses will serve as a silent, yet constant reminder of the truths of God's powerful Word!

Meditate on the Bible.

You should meditate on the Scriptures you have read, heard, studied, memorized, sung, and displayed. As you mull over God's Word again and again, the Holy Spirit will unlock the truths of the text and guide you into all truth (John 16:13).

Whoever reads, studies, hears, memorizes, sings, displays, and meditates on the Word of God will definitely *“grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ”* (2 Peter 3:18).

QUESTION **5** FIVE

How Do I Pray?

Prayer is honestly conversing and intimately communing with God. It is not merely talking to God but also talking with Him. It is a two-way conversation—a dialogue, not a monologue. How can we talk with God?

We Must Learn to Listen to God.

God speaks to us in several ways. The primary way is through the Bible. After all, it is God's Word. As we spend time reading and learning the biblical text, the Holy Spirit who inspired it will begin to use it to change the way we think about life. We will begin to think biblically. We will learn that if we do what God's Word tells us, we will be blessed by Him.

God also speaks to us as Christians through the promptings of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us. Once you give your life to Jesus, you begin to have desires that you have never had before—desires to share the Gospel with non-Christians; to help needy people financially; to perform acts of kindness, sometimes to total strangers. Those desires are simply the promptings of the Spirit of God within you. He is the One leading us to reach out to be a blessing to others. When we have those promptings, we must obey Him. He will continue to speak to us and guide us in service to others. You and I can remain in a constant state of prayer as we walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16, 25), listening to His still, small voice.

We Must Learn to Talk to God.

Prayer is also talking to God. He wants us to come to Him as a child comes to a loving father. There are several types of prayers we can offer up to the Lord:

Prayer of Adoration.

Spend time praising and worshiping God for who He is. Stand before Him in awe and reverence. Bask in His majesty and glory. We should let His praise be continually on our lips (Psalm 34:1). The Lord has given us breath, so we can praise Him (Psalm 150:6).

Prayer of Thanksgiving.

We should also thank God for what He has done for us. We should thank Him for His Son, Jesus, who died for our sins on the cross. We should thank Him for material blessings such as food, clothing, and shelter, as well as for answering our prayers. Keep alert in prayer by maintaining a thankful heart (Colossians 4:2).

Prayer of Confession.

When we sin after we are saved, we should confess our sins to God, repent of them, and forsake and renounce them. When we do, God is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). Confession keeps us walking closely to God in uninterrupted fellowship.

Prayer of Intercession.

We must pray and intercede for the needs of others. As the Lord brings people to mind, we are to pray on their behalf and ask God to work in their lives in specific ways. We can pray a specific verse of Scripture for them. For instance, if they need guidance, we can pray Psalm 32:8: “Lord, I pray that you will instruct and teach _____ in the way that he/she should go and guide him/her with your eye upon him/her.” We can also customize other verses to fit various needs.

Prayer of Petition.

God also wants us to pray for our own needs to be met. Jesus taught us to pray, “*Give us this day our daily bread*” (Matthew 6:11). Instead of worrying about what challenges face us in life, we should pray (Philippians 4:6). As we acknowledge Him in prayer in all matters, He will direct our paths (Proverbs 3:5–6).

Prayer of Protection.

Jesus taught us to pray, “*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one* (i.e. Satan)” (Matthew 6:13). We should ask God to help us avoid temptations whenever possible and also to help us withstand the temptations that do come our way. We should stand firm against the schemes and attacks of the devil and continually dress ourselves in the protective armor of God (Ephesians 6:10–18) seeking to live holy lives for His glory.

One other suggestion: One of the best ways to learn to pray more effectively is to spend time praying with other Christians who can teach you how—Christians who are veteran “prayer warriors.” Ask the Lord to link you with one of them and learn all you can about prayer. Praying is as essential to the Christian’s life as breathing is to one’s physical life. The old saying is true: “A day without prayer is a wasted day.”

QUESTION **6** SIX

Why Do I Need Christian Friends?

When you became a Christian, you joined the family of God. Every other Christian in the entire world became your brother or sister. Now that is a huge family! You need to spend time with other believers to help you grow and mature in the faith.

The Bible says that believers in Jesus Christ must not neglect assembling together with other Christians because in that setting of fellowship, we are able to encourage and stimulate one another to obey Jesus and be better disciples of His (Hebrews 10:24–25). Jesus said that whenever two or three Christians gather in His name, He is present in their midst (Matthew 18:20). You will benefit by consistently meeting with other Christians for fellowship, prayer, accountability, and also just to enjoy one another's company.

When you are saved, you might have to sever relationships with some non-Christians you knew prior to salvation, particularly those who tempt you to live as you did before you met Christ. The Bible says two cannot walk together (i.e. fellowship together) unless they agree (Amos 3:3). Paul asked some early Christians this question: *“What fellowship has light with darkness?”* (2 Corinthians 6:14). After you become a believer in Christ, you can still have friends who don't know Jesus as Savior and Lord. But the primary purpose of those friendships must be to share the Gospel with them, so they can be saved. Your best and closest friends should be believers in Jesus who will encourage and strengthen you in your walk with Him.

QUESTION **7** SEVEN

How Can I Share My Faith with Others?

You should begin to share your faith with non-Christians immediately after you are saved. Many new Christians mentioned in the New Testament did just that—Andrew and Philip (John 1:40–45); the demoniac who had the “*legion*” of demons cast out of him (Mark 5:20), and Saul, also known as Paul (Acts 9:20).

Here’s how you can become a verbal witness for Christ:

Make a List of Non-Christians.

Start with your immediate family members and relatives (i.e. extended family) who don’t know Christ personally. Next, make a list of your lost friends, neighbors, classmates, co-workers, associates, and acquaintances.

Begin to Pray for Them.

Pray they will be convicted by the Holy Spirit about their need for salvation in Jesus (John 16:8). Ask the Lord to give you the opportunity to share the Gospel with them.

Build Bridges with Them.

Use events such as birthdays, anniversaries, or even tragedies such as illnesses, death of a family member, loss of a job, etc. to reach out to them in love. Meet their immediate needs, so you can share the Gospel with them.

Share the Gospel.

You are to establish relationships with lost people for the purpose of eventually having the opportunity to witness to them. God does not only want you to be friends with them; He wants you to tell them about Jesus. When the right time comes, share with them that...

- God loves them (John 3:16).
- They are a sinner (Romans 3:23).
- The penalty for their sin is spiritual death (Romans 6:23).

- God paid their sin debt already through the sacrificial death of His sinless Son, Jesus (Romans 5:8).
- They need to repent of their sins (Acts 3:19), believe in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:31), and receive Him as their Lord and Savior (John 1:12).

Seek to Lead Them to Accept Christ.

Ask them if they want to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior by calling on His name then and there, on the spot (Romans 10:13). If they agree to do so, lead them in a simple prayer in which they repent, believe, and receive.

Give Them Assurance.

Share verses such as John 5:24 and John 6:47 with them that if they truly repented of their sin and believe in Jesus, they are saved!

Sharing one's faith is a privilege and also a tremendous responsibility. Even though they are not aware of it, lost people are depending on us to take the initiative to share the Gospel with them—offering the way of forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus. We must not fail the Lord Jesus or them by remaining silent.

QUESTION **8** EIGHT

How Do I Worship God?

Someone once said the word “worship” means “to ascribe worth-ship.” That is a good way to think of worshipping God, for He is indeed “worthy” of our praise! Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength (Mark 12:30). One of the primary ways to show our love for God is to worship Him. Jesus tells us *“God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth”* (John 4:23–24). To worship God “in spirit” means worship is a spiritual experience. We revere Him and extol His greatness and goodness. When He said we are to worship Him in “truth,” He meant that we are to worship Him according to the guidelines set forth in Scripture.

How does the Bible tell us to worship God? One way is to sing praises to Him. One of the Old Testament books (the book of Psalms) is actually a collection of worship songs. In Psalms, we are told to sing unto the Lord, exalt His name, clap our hands in praise, lift our hands in His honor, play musical instruments to bless Him, etc. The Israelites in the Old Testament utilized all of these forms of worship, and they are still valid in our day as well. In the New Testament, additional elements of worship such as preaching biblical sermons, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, baptizing new believers, collecting financial offerings, and praying are also mentioned.

When you worship the Lord alone (Matthew 6:6) or with a congregation of believers (1 Corinthians 3:16), you are simply ascribing to the Lord how awesome and glorious He is. In doing so, you are imitating the angels who worship the Lord continuously in Heaven (cf. Isaiah 6; Revelation 4). In order for you to grow as God desires, you must worship Him. Worship will attract God’s manifest presence and will also lift the believer to new heights of spiritual growth and maturity. It will prepare you for eternity in Heaven.

QUESTION **9** NINE

Can I Serve the Lord?

After we worship God, we should also seek to serve Him. We serve Him by serving others. For instance, when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit those who are sick or in prison, Jesus said we are really doing it unto Him (Matthew 25:31–45).

Such selfless service to others is not a burden. In the Old Testament, God’s people were told to “*serve the Lord with gladness*” (Psalm 100:2). Christians are told in the New Testament to serve the Lord (Colossians 3:24). A Christian is simply a joyful “*servant of Christ*” (Ephesians 6:6).

God has gifted every believer with at least one spiritual gift that will enable him/her to minister effectively to others. Those spiritual gifts (listed in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4) create the desires, passions, and abilities necessary for serving the Lord in particular ways. For instance, if you have the gift of teaching, you will have the desire, passion, and ability to study and effectively communicate God’s Word to others. Likewise, if you have the gift of exhortation, you will desire and become effective at encouraging others and building them up spiritually. You should discover what your spiritual gift is, ask God to help you develop and sharpen it for His glory, and then seek to serve Him and other believers accordingly.

Every Christian is important to the Body of Christ. Some members in Christ’s Body might appear to be more prominent than others in their service for Jesus, but the truth is that every member is significant and valued by the Lord and should be valued by the other members of the Body of Christ as well. We really do need each other! Jesus said the greatest Christian among us is the one who is the greatest servant of all (Matthew 23:11). As believers in Christ, we must avoid selfishness and learn to think of others, putting their needs ahead of ours (Philippians 2:3–4). The Lord can use something as small as a child’s lunch (John 6:9) or a glass of cold water (Matthew 10:42) to minister to other people. And yes, the Lord can even use you to serve Him if you are willing to humbly serve other people!

QUESTION 10 TEN

What Does the Bible Say About Giving?

We should submit our material possessions to the Lord and seek to honor Him financially (Proverbs 3:9). Here is some basic biblical advice concerning finances:

Practice “Storehouse Tithing.”

In the Old Testament, God’s people were commanded to bring “*the whole tithe*” (i.e. 10 percent of their earnings) to the Temple storehouse and give it in an undesignated fashion to the Lord’s work (Malachi 3:10). Jesus also taught His followers to tithe (Matthew 23:23). It is more than likely that Jesus Himself tithed. Had He not, His critics would have certainly pointed it out! We should support the ministries of our local churches through such financial giving in a cheerful manner (2 Corinthians 9:7) knowing that our finances will be used to support the spread of the Gospel message at home and around the world. Tithing to your local church is the basic starting point to financial obedience.

Work to Earn Money.

If you are healthy and able, God expects you to work to earn a living. Paul said if a person is able to work but is simply too lazy to do so, he should not be allowed to eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10). If you are a healthy adult, no one (including the church, the government, and your family) owes you a living. You need to get up, get a job, go to work, and not be slothful.

Live Within Your Means.

Christians should not overspend. To do so is dishonoring to God and is a terrible testimony in front of non-Christians. You should establish some sort of budget that will enable you to pay your bills on time. You should also seek to avoid excessive debt. If it is possible and practical, you should save money to pay for future expenses such as college fees, weddings, retirement, etc. (cf. Proverbs 6:6–11).

Be Grateful for what God Has Given to You.

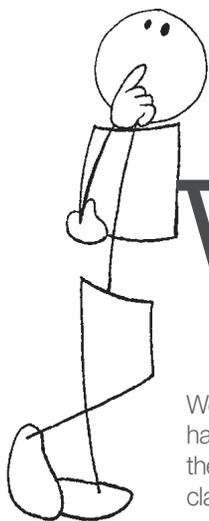
Don't forget to thank God for the material blessings He has already showered upon you. Ask the Lord to help you to not love "*the things of the world*" (1 John 2:15) and to learn to be content with what you already have (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5). It is interesting that in His resurrected state, Jesus would not even put a morsel of bread into His mouth without thanking the Father and asking Him to bless it (Luke 24:30). Indeed, we, too, should gratefully acknowledge that every good and perfect gift comes from our loving Lord (James 1:17).

Be a Blessing to Others through Giving.

Once you have tithed to your local church and paid your bills, be willing to give financially to others as the Lord prompts you. God blesses us to be a blessing. We are to be rivers through which His financial blessings can flow, not reservoirs that selfishly hoard and pile up His blessings to others. We are to give to others just as He has freely given to us. Whenever possible, we should do so anonymously, so Jesus will get the glory, not us (Matthew 6:3).

CONCLUSION

We conclude the same way we began this booklet, by saying "Congratulations!" May your walk with Jesus be one of obedience, fulfillment, and joy. May the Holy Spirit guide you into all truth as you seek to walk according to His leadership. God bless you, new Christian, and again, welcome to the family of God!



Do you know **WHERE** you're going



Welcome! We're on a journey to discover and apply the Vision God has given us. It's where Bellevue's unique gifts and resources meet the unique challenges and opportunities of Memphis. Our Next Step classes will help you find your place on our journey. Let's get started!

Visit bellevue.org/next-steps or call Next Steps Ministry at **(901) 347-5760** for a full schedule of classes.

EXPLORE 101 For Guests and Prospective New Members

Lunch is served, and childcare is provided.

Learn about church membership and hear about the Mission and Vision of Bellevue while enjoying a lunch with Bro. Steve, Bellevue Staff, and other members. Explore 101 is required for church membership.

DISCOVER 201 For Guests and Members

Breakfast is served, and childcare is provided.

Discover 201 is for all Bellevue members and guests who have a desire to get more involved and more connected with all that's happening at Bellevue. At this class, you will enjoy a free breakfast as you learn the ways you can Worship, Connect, and Serve with the Body of Christ.

Baptism | (901) 347-5763

If you have made a decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior but have never been baptized, we want to celebrate this decision with you. Please call to schedule your baptism.



Bellevue
BAPTIST CHURCH

Dr. Steve Gaines, Pastor
2000 Appling Road | Cordova, TN 38016
(901) 347-2000 | bellevue.org