

# New believers' "Grow in Christ" to do" list"

1. **Think through your decision to grow in Christ.** As you think, or meditate, ask yourself: "What could be God's purpose for my life?" Do not discuss your decision with many people until things become clearer for you. Take time to think and meditate.
2. **Rest, or wait upon God in silent prayer (listen) as you think it through.** Listen for God's voice. Get to recognize HIS voice and be able to distinguish It from other voices which are NOT His. Allow Him to speak to your heart. Pray, and search the Scriptures (Holy Bible) often. Think about what you read in His Word... Ask Him to illuminate your mind. Do not be confused by peers, seers or other voices. Listen for God's voice.
3. **Seek God in prayer.** As you seek Him, you can pray silently or aloud. Consider the acronyms ACTS, or CATS, to help you remember how to pray or what to pray about. Each letter of these words stands for an attitude or aspect of prayer.

☞ **A is for Adoration of God.** Learn to praise Him in your prayer life. Tell Him how wonderful He is to you. Adore and worship Him with thoughts and words of praise, admiration, and love. You could make or review a list of His names and attributes.

☞ **C is for Confession.** Keep very short accounts with God, confessing all your known sin(s) and shortcomings. He knows all about it, so nothing will surprise Him. Confession means "agreement." We agree with God about the shortcomings we have. Our ears need to hear our lips say, "Lord, I have sinned against You in these ways...". We need not confess the same sin(s) over and over again to Him, since He knows them already. (If you repeatedly apologise to parents for an act of disobedience as a small child, they will soon tire of hearing your voice and ask you to stop, won't they?) You can know this: Once we have confessed sincerely and honestly repented, God is satisfied. If we feel the need to continuously confess the same thing(s) over and over, our enemy, the accuser of our brethren (satan) has fooled us into thinking that either God cannot hear our confession, or else He will not, or has not, forgiven our sin. Two passages, Isaiah 59:1-2, and 1 John 1:8-10 speak clearly to this subject:

📖 First: "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:1-2 niv), and,

📖 Second: "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives." (1 John 1:8-10 niv)

**Have you** sincerely confessed and repented of known sin in your life? The Lord tells us in 1 John 1:9 HE "... will forgive ... our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." In Isaiah 59 the Lord addressed an UNREPENTANT Israel, who refused to confess their sin, and therefore their "...sins have hidden his face from [them], so that he will not hear...." If you are repentant and have confessed, He does HIS part!

☞ **T is for Thanksgiving.** Thank God for saving you and for His many blessings in your life. Learn to be a grateful Christian. At the very least God has forgiven all. At the most, He has paid for all our sin(s) with the blood of Jesus. Thank Him.

☞ **S is for Supplication, which means to make requests of God.** Ask for that which will please the Lord, not just material things which may make your life easier.... It is insulting to greet someone we love with a long list of demands for things we need or want. Why greet God in such a way? Seek Him often in prayer. One thing you can certainly request is daily guidance for your life. Also ask Him to give you a very sen-

# New believers' "Grow in Christ "to do" list"

sitive spiritual "ear" to "hear" His voice as you pray and wait upon Him by reading your Bible.



**CATS** merely changes the order of prayer, beginning with Confession, then Adoration, Thanksgiving and finally, Supplication.

## Some Guidelines for Biblical Prayer – God answers prayers that are prayed

1. according to His will (1 John 5:14}
  2. based on the word of God (John 15:7)
  3. from a pure heart (Psalm 66:18-19)
  4. in tears (Psalm 6:8)
  5. in faith (Matthew 21:22, James 5:15)
  6. in the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:26)
  7. in the spirit of forgiveness (Matthew 6:15)
  8. with thanksgiving (Philippians 4:6-7)
  9. with an attitude of humility (2 Kings 20:5; 2 Chronicles 33:12-13; Isaiah 38:5)
4. **Keep a daily Prayer Journal**, consider a format like the abbreviated one below. Write down your request of God, when you asked, and when and how He answered. (He could respond "Yes," "No," or "Wait"). Over time you will be able to see His answers.

### Sample Prayer Journal

Person asking, and their Request	Date		Answer
	Requested	Answered	
RAJ – Parents would accept my faith in Christ	Jan 15	Aug 3	Father invited whole family to my baptism. PTL!
R – Lord, please send us a pastor for our church	Jan 20	May 2	New pastor came!
R – Please bring my sister home from hospital	Jan 24	March 10	She is home again, but not yet completely healed
R – Help me gain control over my tongue	Jan 25	June 30	Mother complimented me on how I've improved...

5. **Realize that satan, the enemy of our souls, that old serpent, will not like your drawing near to God.** (Come near to God and he will come near to you ... James 4:8 niv) The enemy will attempt to distract you through many enticements to prevent prayer or quiet time in the Word of God. Do not be surprised if you experience very strong temptations to turn back from following the Lord. Satan is desperate, and a master deceiver. He will do anything to divert you from the Bible. Be on guard! It is something to expect, but not something to fear.
- 📖 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings. (1 Peter 5:8-9 niv),
  - and,
  - 📖 ... Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (James 4:7 niv).
6. **Make a plan to meet with like-minded believers for quality fellowship.** Find people who will encourage you in your walk with Jesus Christ. Do not abandon your home church all at once, even if you meet others who are very excited about their own churches. You have a role in your own church. As you mature, you will be better informed and better able to make any needed changes.
7. **Develop a life-long daily habit of studying God's Word, the Holy Bible, and maintain a Bible reading Diary.** As one reads and meditates on what was read ("study" means to read and get in our mind what we have read, "meditate" means to think deeply about it) one

# New believers' "Grow in Christ" to do" list"

"hears" His inaudible voice. Some guidelines for Scriptural meditation are a) Memorize God's Word (commit key verses to memory), b) Mobilize God's Word (apply HIS Word to your life), and c) Minister God's Word (use God's Words to encourage others who have like faith. Do not force your witness on people, just let your light shine. In The Pursuit of God ([www.cpi-horizon.com](http://www.cpi-horizon.com)), A. W. Tozer, says, on pp. 77 and 78:

"I think a new world will arise out of the religious mists when we approach our Bible with the idea that it is not only a book which was once spoken, but a book which is *now speaking*. The prophets habitually said, "Thus *saith* the LORD." They meant their hearers to understand that God's speaking is in the continuous present. We may use the past tense properly to indicate that at a certain time a certain word of God was spoken, but a word of God once spoken continues to be spoken, as a child once born continues to be alive, or a world once created continues to exist. And those are but imperfect illustrations, for children die and worlds burn out, but the Word of our God endureth forever.

If you would follow on to know the Lord, come at once to the open Bible expecting it to speak to you. Do

not come with the notion that it is a thing which you may push around at your convenience. It is more than a thing; it is a voice, a word, the very Word of the living God."

\* \* \*

*Lord, teach me to listen. The times are noisy and my ears are weary with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them. Give me the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to Thee, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth." Let me hear Thee speaking in my heart. Let me get used to the sound of Thy voice, that its tones may be familiar when the sounds of earth die away and the only sound will be the music of Thy speaking voice. Amen.*

While studying God's Word, He may reveal His voice through the example of Bible characters whose lives may parallel our own, and we may realize their life is an example to us, or an encouragement, or an exhortation or warning to us. Or, we may come to understand God is telling us through what we read to stop or to start doing something. (i.e. You may realize you are to stop losing your temper, or to stop swearing, or smoking or lying. Or He may direct you to begin controlling your impulses, or to forgive someone, or to begin tithing, or to begin seeking ways in which to serve HIM.) God has answers for your deepest need(s) and as you search the Scriptures, you will be able to draw from HIS well, which never shall run dry. As you discover His answers through your study, record them in a **daily Bible Reading Diary**.

 **Bible reading Diary:** Every day, record your impressions as you study your Bible, using the "application finders" below.

## **Bible Reading APPLICATION FINDERS (applying God's Word to our lives)**

What is the "big picture" in the passage(s) I read today? What is God saying to me?

What does He want me to learn from His Word in these verses?

Is there one thought for me to carry through the day?

Is there something in my life that I need to change?

My behaviour? My speaking? My thinking?

What does this passage teach me about God?

As I read, **what do I see? Is there...**

*a WARNING to heed?*

*a PROMISE to believe?*

*a BLESSING to enjoy?*

*a COMMAND to obey?*

*something to DO (or STOP doing)?*

*an EXAMPLE to follow?*

*SIN to avoid?*

*Instruction about PRAYER?*

 **Some Scriptures to search out immediately are:**

1. Assurance of salvation (1 John 5:10-13)
2. Attacks from the enemy (1 Peter 5:8) and spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:10-18)

# New believers' "Grow in Christ "to do" list"

3. Resisting the enemy: (James 4:7, and 1 Peter 5:9)
  4. Love: 1 Corinthians 13. Excellent passage to memorize.
  5. The Great Commission: Matthew 28:18-20. Memorize this, too.
  6. Psalm 119, particularly verses 11, 105, and verse 130.
8. **Meet regularly with a good and godly counselor who can and will encourage you in your walk with Christ.** Meet in a place where others are in view or can observe you both but cannot overhear your conversations, so no false accusation can be made against either you or the counselor. This may mean that you walk near your home or you make some other provision where you can be seen, but not overheard. A counselor should guard your privacy, and only break confidence if you intend to do something life-threatening to yourself or another person or if you intend to do something illegal in the sight of God and man. It is only reasonable that any counselor would then seek help from others.
9. **Begin to actively memorize Scripture.** When the Lord speaks to you through a particularly significant verse or passage, memorize it. Some memorize entire chapters of the Bible, such as 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 6, all of a gospel, etc. Write down memory verses in your Bible Reading Diary.
10. **Is there anyone you need to forgive?** Or does anyone need your apology? Seek out those people and take care of it. Matthew 18:15-18 tells how to settle matters. Get these weights off your back and off your mind in order to get on with your life in Christ.
11. **Try to learn what is your particular spiritual gift.** There are many spiritual gifts, including the gift of helps, mercy, prayer, administration, leadership, preaching, service, evangelism, teaching, pastor, discerning of spirits, prophecy, exhortation, giving, knowledge, faith, hospitality, celibacy, martyrdom, missionary.... There are several different ways you can try to discern your spiritual gift. One effective tool is the modified Houtts questionnaire. The answers do not tell you DEFINITELY what your spiritual gift(s) is (or are), but such a tool can be very helpful to point you in the correct direction.
12. **At some point you should begin thinking about the following question: "What do YOU think the Lord wants you to do with your life?"** God has a plan for each person's life, and we are most happy when we are fulfilling His purpose(s).
- ? **How can you best begin serving God right where you are?** By completing your education? (The Lord needs very qualified people to do His work, and He also needs very dedicated ones who can begin now.)
- ? **Whether you continue your education or not, is there some way you can begin to gain experience by serving Him right now in your church?** Have you spoken with your church leaders about how you could serve?
1. Could you accompany the pastor or an elder when they visit the sick, the poor, or those in prison, or if there is no such present activity, could you initiate it?
  2. Could you serve as an usher in the church?
  3. Is there a need for church repairs or maintenance work, which you are able to do?
  4. Could you buy new hymnbooks, or provide paint for the building, or add to the sound system, or pay for a musical instrument needed in the church, or pay for a new roof or care for some similar need?
  5. Does the pastor or elder need someone to be a "runner" during the week to carry messages to members of the congregation? Could you be a runner?
  6. Is there some elderly person in the congregation, whose family is unable to assist them, and you might occasionally help that person to do housework or to care for other needs?

# New believers' "Grow in Christ" to do" list"

7. Does the church need a person to order tracts or other literature, or do secretarial work (sending out letters or a newsletter)?
  8. Can you help with children's ministry or some other ministry in the church?
  - ? **What can you do in HIS Name where you live?** Find a need, then go and fill that need. Seek service opportunities in cooperation with your church leader. Or search for a community need where you could be a testimony or a witness to the community by serving as a servant of Christ. Is there a particularly dirty or unsanitary area, which needs to be cleaned up? You could volunteer to do it, or you could form a group of others and serve the community by doing this service in Christ's name. Such "good" works do not save anyone, but our desire and motivation to serve comes from our gratitude to God for what He has done for us, through Jesus Christ.
  - ? **Does the Lord want you to assume a leadership role?** Who can teach you what to do and how to begin? Assist whoever in your church has leadership responsibility, and look for someone who can train you.
  - ? **Does the Lord want you to begin studies to become a pastor?** Assist your church leaders and look for a Bible school where you could train to become a pastor.
  - ? **Does He have some other role for you?** Ask Him what is His desire for your life, then listen through prayer, study of the Bible, sermons at church, godly advice and counsel, for His answer. If you do not have any ideas after some long time, do not become discouraged. The Lord may be saying: "Wait. I have a work for you to do, but you are not yet fully prepared. You need more time." When the time comes, He will make it clear to you. In the meanwhile, prepare yourself, keep your ear tuned to His voice, and be obedient when He calls. Just be certain, CERTAIN, HE is calling, and not another. (Look in the Old Testament at 1 Samuel 1:1-10)
13. **Try to end each meeting with some kind of decision.** It may be only a very small decision such as "let us meet again (and set a date and time), or it could be "we shall cease these counseling meetings." It might be a major decision such as "I am going to take a new job in another place," but each session should try to end with a decision. Learn to make life decisions using wise counsel. Sometimes, particularly when deciding very important, life-changing, matters, it will take time to arrive at a conclusion. But at least decide at each session when, where, etc., to meet again.
14. **Become JESUS' disciple, not a disciple of anyone else.** Avoid the temptation to lift anyone, whether pastor, counselor, or Bible teacher, to "hero" or "guru" status. Jesus is the shepherd. HE is the bridegroom. HE is our hero. The Holy Spirit is our teacher. A counselor is meant to be a tutor, friend and guide, called to assist you to mature into Jesus' disciple. Jesus is protective of His sheep and jealous of His bride. Do not bring condemnation on yourselves. Always remember, the devil is prowling....

Be encouraged: In Matthew 13:3-23 Jesus tells a parable where some soil produced 100-fold, some 60-fold, and some 30-fold. Not every believer will be as fruitful as every other, but all can and should bear fruit if the heart is in the right place. The Lord has a marvelous plan for your life, and He wants to demonstrate Himself and His love to the sick, corrupt and dying world of people all around us... through YOU!

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03/2001, revised 07/24/09