

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.  
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (2 Cor 5:17)*

# WELCOME TO FIRST STEPS!

Even a well-planned road trip will face unexpected obstacles, but if you drive without looking at a map or GPS, your hardships will dramatically increase. Your journey from here to eternity is infinitely more important, and we all need directions. Whether your journey has just begun or you've been walking with God for years, He has provided you with a divine navigation system.

The word *disciple* means *learner*, and you must never stop learning about God. If you are a new disciple of Jesus Christ, this study is a good place to begin to get the directions you need for continued growth. If you've already been walking on God's path, you will find directions here that confirm and affirm your relationship with God.

## How Do I Use This?

You can personalize this study to fit your needs, schedule, and ability. If you take this course as part of a group, the accountability and practice with others can make studying these lessons easier and even more enjoyable. You can do this! God will use your investment of time and energy to bless and grow you.

1. Pick a time/day/place to go through this study with your group.
2. Pray before each lesson. Ask God to speak in a way you can understand. Make yourself available to what He wants to say and do.
3. Plan to obey what God tells you.
4. Consider keeping a journal alongside your study. We'll provide you with daily journal prompts. Find an empty notebook or a stack of blank paper, and spend time recording your thoughts as you work through the study. Don't worry about being eloquent or using perfect grammar - God already knows your heart!
5. Be curious. Don't be intimidated by what you don't know! Write down your questions and ask a friend who you know walks with God.
6. Get water baptized. This is an essential step of obedience that shows others we have personally trusted Jesus for our salvation. If you have yet to be water baptized, the opportunity is available every second Sunday of the month in our weekend services.

## Is It Working?

No one will give you a passing or failing grade for how you answer the questions in these lessons. However, there is no sense in expending considerable effort to complete this course unless you have clear, measurable goals. When you finish this course, we hope the following "mile markers" and habits are a part of your life.

1. Consistency in your daily time with God.
2. Growing friendships with other Christians.
3. Effective participation in your local church.
4. Clarity around your personal gifts, ministry, and calling.
5. Growth in your personal impact and ministry.

Never be ashamed to ask for directions. This course is only one step in a life-long adventure of following Jesus Christ. You will always have questions, but God has given you His Holy Spirit, the Bible, and your church family to provide the necessary

instructions. As you begin this study, be encouraged that you will discover specific steps that will lead you down the path of life with greater purpose and significance.

## Navigating the Lessons

Each of the lessons in First Steps is laid out similarly.

### Memory Verse

God tells us to hide his word in our heart. (Ps. 119:11) Memorizing scripture allows us to take God's word with us and have our minds and perspective changed.

### Big Idea

This summary highlights the lesson's main point for that week. This is a single idea for each session that sums up the week's main point or key thoughts. Each "Big Idea" is followed by teaching on a particular topic with supporting scripture.

### Discussion

This section contains questions designed to encourage discussion and interaction, hopefully moving people closer to God and others.

### Dig Deeper

These additional questions will trigger even more thought and discussion around the week's topic. You can use them as you see fit.

### Common Questions

Each week, this section will include some of the questions that might come up and suggested answers to help equip you to respond and consider biblical answers.

### Prayer Focus

Each week you'll find a suggested prayer focus tailored to the part of the journey your group is on.

### Next Steps

Next Steps are your opportunity to take what you learn each week and put it into practice. God's hope for us is not just that we hear His Word and will but that we do them. They are practical, attainable, stretching actions to grow and move forward in your journey following Jesus.

Lastly, to help you start well, we encourage you to take our One Year Challenge. For one year, go all in. That includes attending Sunday services, Midweek, and other events and conferences. Complete Growth Track, join the Dream Team, and build relationships through Small Groups. We believe that if you dedicate one year to this, you will see God transform your life in new and exciting ways!

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