

« Nations for Jesus »



Some practical advices from
the Evangelist
William THERON

*To take your first steps,
learn to know **Jésus** and walk with him.*

(This booklet cannot be sold. Instead, give it to your friends who need Jesus.)



To become a christian is the most incredible event in one's whole life! You have found peace with your creator. You have found eternal life! You can be sure of one thing: God will never leave you or forsake you. He has brought you to where you are now and he will complete what he has started in you. God knows every single thought of yours, every one of your worries and your deepest concerns.

Before going any further, may I ask you four questions in order to make sure you have fully understood the basis of Christian faith?

1. Have you realized that God became a man in the person of Jesus Christ (1st Timothy 3.16) and that he died for the sins of the world?
2. Did you come to Jesus because you realized you had sinned against God?
3. Did you repent (turn away from your life without God) and decided to trust him from now on?
4. Are you convinced that he suffered, died on the cross and rose again on the third day?

God declares that Jesus Christ paid our debt: Jesus suffered, he died in our stead. Jesus Christ's resurrection proves that his precious blood is sufficient to pay our debt. Let us now reflect on some important principles that will help you grow in your faith;

1. Feed on the Word of God



A healthy baby has a good appetite. If you truly are "born again" by the spirit of God, you will have a good appetite!

The Bible says: "Like new born babies, crave for pure spiritual milk, so that you may grow up in your salvation" (the Bible 1st Peter 2.2).

Make sure you eat every day! Job said: "I have not departed from the commands of his lips. I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread" (Job 23.12).

The more you eat, the more quickly you will grow and the less bruises you will get while facing the trials of life. Accelerate the process and spare yourself some pain: commit yourself to reading the Bible every single day. If you do so, God says you will be like a fruitful, strong, and solid tree (cf Psalm 1). Every day, find a quiet place and impregnate yourself with the word of God.

If you have never read the Bible, you will find stories about the life of Jesus in the New Testament, which you will find in the second half of the Bible. You could start your reading with the Gospel of Luke, for example, and then carry on with the book of Acts, Philippians 1st John. Then you could read the first book of the Bible, Genesis and continue your reading to the end!

It may happen that at some times you really appreciate your reading, and at others it will seem dry and boring. But food is good for your health, whether you find it tasty or not. When you were a child, you probably loved eating desserts. Vegetables weren't as exciting. Normally, you have been encouraged to eat them first. Now that you have grown up, you are used to eating vegetables and they're good for you even though, at the time, you thought they didn't taste good.

2. Develop your faith



One day, a young man told me: "There are some things in the Bible that are very hard for me to believe in..." I smiled and asked: "What is your name?" When he answered: "Paul", I replied: "I don't believe you."

He looked surprised and I repeated: "What is your name?" Again he answered: "Paul" and again I replied: "I don't believe you" Then I asked: "Where do you live?" He answered and I said: "I don't believe it either" You should've seen his reaction. He was really cross!

I said: "You seem confused and offended. Do you know why? You are upset because I didn't believe what you told me. If you tell me your name is Paul and I don't believe you, it means I think you are a liar. I suggest you are trying to fool me by telling me your name is Paul when it isn't"

So I told that if as a simple human being he felt insulted by my unbelief, all the more does he insult the almighty God by refusing to believe in his Word. By doing so, he is saying that God isn't trustworthy, that he is a liar and a deceiver. The Bible says: "Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar" (1st John 5.10). It also says: "See to it brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart" (Hebrews 3.12).

I have heard people say: "It's just that it is very difficult for me to believe in God" without realizing the exact meaning of their words. The same people believe day in day out in weather forecasts and newspapers. They trust pilots they've never seen, every time they take the plane. We show faith all the time! We trust the breaks of our cars. We trust our history books and medicine books and we trust elevators, though elevators can break down, history books can be wrong and plans can crash. We should rather trust the true and unfailing promises of the almighty God! He will never let us down if we trust him.

It simply means that in this world where we are so often disappointed, we can wholly trust and lean on the promises of God. They are reliable, sound, true, trustworthy, dependable, faithful, unchangeable, unfailing, steady, and an anchor for the soul. In other words, you can really believe them and for this reason you can throw yourself eyes shut into the mighty arms of God. He will never let you down.

3. Share your faith



After having committed your life to the Lord, you normally feel the need to share this good news of Jesus to others.

You will probably have very little time after your change to be able to impact your friends and your family with the Gospel. After the initial shock of your conversion, they might label you and keep away from you. Therefore, it is important to take advantage of the time they are still willing to listen to you.

Hereafter, a few advices that will spare you a lot of suffering. As a new Christian, acting like a bull in a china shop, I have caused a lot of damage, almost beyond repair. I tried to force my mom, my dad and many of my friends into taking a “decision for Christ”. I was sincere, zealous, kind and stupid. I hadn’t understood that salvation doesn’t come from making ‘a decision’ but from repenting, and repentance is a gift of God (2nd Timothy 2.25). The Bible teaches us that no one can come to Jesus unless God attracts him. If you are able to have someone make a decision without him being convicted of sin, it is a stillborn baby you will end up with.

With my zeal “not based on knowledge” I ended up driving away those I so desperately wanted to reach. Nothing is more important to you than your loved ones being saved and you don’t want to waste an opportunity. Pray for them and thank God for their salvation. Show them your faith. Show them your kindness, your true love and your gentleness. If you have never helped washing the dishes, do so spontaneously. Purchase flowers for your mom or your sister. Offer them sweets when it isn’t their birthday. Put yourself in their position. You know you have found eternal life. Death has lost its power! Your joy is great but in their sight you have just been brainwashed. You have joined a mysterious sect. Your actions will therefore be more expressive than a thousand persuasive sermons!

For this reason, you should avoid verbal confrontations until you have the knowledge that will guide your enthusiasm.

Pray for wisdom and sensitivity to the timing of God. If you don’t know how to share the Gospel, you can invite your friends to read this testimony along with the following words:

“Hello! I would like to invite you to read this testimony on the following site

<http://wp.me/p8FpW3-y> where you will be able to download it in English. Have a nice day! ”

It is important for you to realize that we have to share our faith with someone every time we can. The Bible tells us we have to do so “in season or out of season” (2nd Timothy 4.2). The apostle Paul asked everyone to pray for his personal testimony. He said: “that words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly as I should” (Ephesians 6.19-20)

Remember the huge responsibility (and above all the privilege) which is yours to tell your loved

ones about your encounter with Jesus. Most of the time, when you open your mouth to share the Gospel, you are the answer to the fervent prayer of another Christian. He might have cried to God for him to use a faithful witness to talk to his beloved mom or dad, and you are the answer to his prayer. You are this true and faithful witness that God wants to use.

4. Pray



It has been rightfully said that God always answers prayers. Sometimes he says “yes” Sometimes he says “no” Sometimes he says “wait a minute” and for God **“a day is like a thousand years”** (2nd Peter 3.8). Which means that, for God, **ten years of delay represent 14 minutes and 24 seconds...** So ask with faith, then sit back and wait patiently for the answer.

You would be surprised to learn that many people pray every day. They probably pray for health, wealth, happiness and so forth. They also pray when the grandma falls ill and if she doesn’t get better (or dies), many end up disappointed and hardened. The reason is they don’t understand what the Bible says about prayer. It teaches us that if we doubt while we pray, we can’t expect an answer (James 1.6-7).

Here is what to do in order to be heard.

1. Pray with faith (Hebrews 11. 6).
2. Pray with innocent hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24.3-4).
3. Pray genuinely and sincerely rather than mechanically (Matthew 6.7).
4. Make sure you are praying the God who revealed himself in the Scriptures (Exodus 20.3-6).

How to pray "with faith"? People sometimes tell me: "You are a man with great faith in God!", thinking they are congratulating me. They wouldn’t do so if I were saying: "I have faith in my doctor." The compliment would then be for the doctor. My great faith in him simply means I think he is honest, competent and trustworthy. I “give glory” to this man when I put my faith in him.

The Bible says that Abraham “did not waver through unbelief, regarding the promise of God but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he promised” (Romans 4.20-21).

Abraham was a man of great faith in God. Remember this isn’t a compliment in favour of Abraham. He has simply had an idea of God’s incredible capacity, his perfect integrity and his wonderful faithfulness in keeping his promises. His faith gave “glory” to the faithful God.

For God, if you belong to Jesus, you are a V.I.P. You can come boldly before God’s throne of grace (Hebrews 4.16). You are able to enter the presence of the great King because you are the King’s son or daughter. When you were a child, did you have to beg in order for your mom or dad to meet your needs? I hope not.

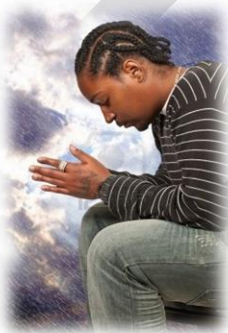
So when you pray, don't say "oh God, I hope you will meet my needs" Instead, say something like this: "Father, I thank you for keeping every one of your promises. Your Word says that you will meet all my needs according to the riches of your glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4.19) so I thank you for doing (this or that) for my family. I ask you in the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen."

How to gain "innocent hands and a pure heart". Simply by confessing your sins to God in Jesus Christ. His blood cleanses of all sins (1st John 1.7-9) When you confess them to God through Jesus, God will not only forgive all your sins but he promises to forget them (Hebrews 8.12)

How to make "genuine and sincere" prayers? Simply by remaining in God's love. If God's love is in you, you will never make hypocritical or selfish prayers. Actually, you just can't if you have a loving heart. When your prayer life is pleasing to God, the Bible says he will reward you (Matthew 6.6).

How do you know you are praying "the God of the Holy Scriptures"? Study the Word, the "Bible". Don't accept the portrait of God that the world conveys, even if it is naturally attractive. The image of a loving and kind father with no sense of justice or truth, attracts sinners. Reflect on the thunder and lightning on Mount Sinai. Fix your eyes on Jesus hanging on the cross of Calvary in a terrible agony because of the justice of a holy God. God is not only love but also justice and truth.

5. The three obstacles to our growth



The Bible says that three things can hinder our spiritual growth: **the world and its values, the flesh (or selfish nature) and the devil.**

Fighting them didn't matter much until you became a Christian. But now that God has filled you with his life, you find yourself going against this triple tide. Let us study these three obstacles to your growth:

a. First of all **the world**. When the Bible talks about the world, in this context, it refers to the guilty and rebellious system of the world. It is the world which likes darkness and hates light (John 3.20), the world ruled by the devil also called "the god of this age" (2nd Corinthians 4.4), the ruler of the kingdom of the air (Ephesians 2.2).

The world is covetousness: appetite for sinful sexuality outside marriage, for power, for money, for material possessions. Covetousness is a monster that can never be satisfied so don't start feeding it. Otherwise it will never stop growing until its weight on your shoulders destroys the life of God in you. There is nothing wrong with sex, power, money or belongings but when they take precedence over God, the Bible calls it idolatry (Colossians 3.5). The Bible says: "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them" (1st John 2.15., James 4.4)

b. The second hindrance to your growth is the devil. As we have seen, we know him as "the god

of this age". Jesus calls the devil a thief who comes to steal, kill and destroy (John 10.10)

The way to beat him is to make sure you are equipped with God's spiritual armour described in Ephesians 6.10-20. Become intimate and close with it. Sleep with it. Don't ever put down the weapons of God.

c. The third hindrance to your growth is what the Bible calls "**the flesh**". It's your selfish nature. The battle takes place in your mind.

If you have a greedy mind you will be attracted by the world and all its sin. What enters through the eyes and ears is then dealt with in the mind. It is the centre of your appetites. Every sin finds its root in the « heart" (Proverbs 4.23, Matthew 15.19). We make a choice before committing sin. Sin occurs because we don't think before acting. The Bible warns us about covetousness preceding sin and about sin leading to death after being conceived by lustful desires.

6. Share with other Christians



After having entrusted Jesus with your life, you will feel the need to meet people that have done the same!

Pray in order to know where to go. Here are some suggestions to help you make your choice:

Is there balance between love and justice in the teaching? Do they believe in the promises of God? Do they show love? Does the pastor treat his wife with respect? Does he know the Bible well? Does he have a humble heart and a gentle spirit? Listen carefully to his teaching. It should glorify God, magnify Jesus and build up the Christians.

When you have love for the other Christians it is a proof that you are really saved (1st John 3.14). You will want to have fellowship with them. You will gather to share the bread and wine (the Holy Communion), for the teaching of the Word and for fellowship. You share the same aspirations, wishes, temptations, trials, desires and motivations. You work together to achieve the same purpose, the progress of the kingdom of God on earth. It's for all these reasons that you go to church. Not because you have to but because you want to.



7. Thank God

A Christian should be giving thanks to God every day. We should be grateful even in the midst of our tribulations. The apostle Paul said: "In all our troubles my joy knows no bounds" (2 Corinthians 7.4) He knew God was steering all things for his good, even if he was facing trials (Romans 8.28)

You will go through trials. God will personally make sure that you grow as a Christian. He will allow storms in order for you

to put down roots in the ground of his word. We pray more when in trouble and it has been truthfully said that one has a better vision of things when he is on his knees than on his feet.

Once, a man was watching a butterfly struggling to get out of his cocoon. Wanting to help, he cut the edge of the cocoon with a razorblade. The butterfly didn't need to face its problem... and died instantly. This struggle would have allowed its small heart to beat faster and send blood and thus life to its wings.

In the same way, God takes us through the butterfly's struggle. Trials have their purpose. They cause us to fight, they bring us to our knees. The trials of life are like cocoons in which we are often stuck. It is in these moments that the blood full of life of our faith in God helps us unfold our wings.

We have so many reasons to be grateful. God has made "many great and precious promises" that are "more desirable than gold" Do yourself a favour and believe in those promises. Thank God all the time for them and **"let your joy be complete."**

One day, an old farmer received the visit of one of his non-Christian relatives. After the farmer bowed his head and prayed for the meal they were about to take, his relative rudely exclaimed: "Why did you say that? There is no God! We are living in the age of reason!" The old farmer smiled and said: "On the farm, only one doesn't thank God before eating" The relative held his head up and said: "Who is this wise man?" And the farmer replied: "My pig!"

8. Water baptism



The Bible says: "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2.38) There is no questioning about the necessity of being baptized. The real questions are how, when and by who?

It seems clear in the Bible that those who were baptized were fully immersed in water. "John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was **plenty of water**" (John 3.23) If John had just sprinkled water on the believers' foreheads, he would have only needed a **cup of water**.

In the book of Acts, the jailer and his family were baptized at midnight, as soon as they believed. So what are you waiting for?

Who is to baptize you? In the Bible, it is clear that fellow Christians had the privilege to do so, but check it out with your pastor, he might want to have the honour to do so himself.

9. Offerings



Jesus talked a lot about money. He said that we could not serve both God and Mammon (Matthew 6.24). The word “mammon” is the aramean word for wealth and related to a hebrew word meaning “what we can trust”. In other words, we cannot put our trust both in God and money. Either money is the source of our life, our true love, our joy, our sense of comfort and our way of provision or **it is God**.

When you open your purse, give generously and regularly to your local church. A clue as to how much should be given can be found in the tithing described in the Old Testament, 10% of your income. Even if it doesn't add up to this percentage, make sure you give something for the work of God (cf Malachi 3.8-10) Give because you wish to not because you have to. God loves a cheerful giver (2nd Cor 9.7)

10. Mediator



If you know the Lord, nothing will shake your faith. A man with an experience will never be outwitted by a man with a reasoning. For example, take a little boy who looks at a radiator. His father tells him to be careful because it is hot. The child says; “OK. I believe it is hot” At that point, he has accepted intellectually that the radiator was hot. When his dad leaves the room, he tells himself: “I wonder if it's really hot ...” He stretches out his little hand and grabs the bar of the

radiator with his fingers. As soon as his flesh burns, he stops just believing that the radiator is hot. He knows it is ! He moved from the kingdom of “**belief**” to that of “**experience**”.

Then comes an expert in radiators declaring: “My child, I studied heat and took a degree. I tell you this radiator isn't hot and I can prove it” The child will probably answer: “Sir, I don't care how many degrees you may have had. I know this radiator is hot. I touched it! I don't belong to the kingdom **of belief, I belong to the kingdom of experience**. Good bye.”

If you have touched the hot bar of the love of God and of his forgiveness, if the Holy Spirit has “testified” to you in your inner being that you are a child of God, you will never be bothered by any sceptical person.

When sects tell you that you have to pray and believe in a certain name of God in order to be saved, that you have to worship on a certain day, that an elder of their church has to baptize you again, don't panic. Just come back to the instructions. The Bible has all the answers you need. Look for them and they will make you grow.



Let's summarize, in order to understand things properly:

With the "Word of God", in order to take your first steps with Jesus, you have to:

BELIEVE

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him" (Hebrews 11.6)

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2.8-9)

"If you declare with your mouth "Jesus is Lord" and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As the Scripture says "anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame" (Romans 10.9-11)

ACCEPT JESUS AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOR, THERE IS SALVATION IN NO OTHER.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son" (John 3.16-18)

"The father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life but whoever rejects the Son will not see life for God's wrath remains on them" (John 3.35-36)

"Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life" (John 5.24)

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11.28)

“Jesus told him: I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14.6)

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved” (Acts 4.12)

“For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people” (1st Timothy 2.5-6)

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53.5-6)

“In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace” (Eph 1.7)

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR SINS

“There is no one righteous, not even one” (Romans 3.10)

“There is no difference. For all have sinned and all short of the glory of God and we are all justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ” (Romans 3.22-23)

“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 is not in us” (1st John 1.8-10)

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 6.23)

REPENT

“After John had been handed over, Jesus went to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. He said: The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Marc 1.14-15)

“He told them, This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations” (Luke 24.46-47)

“Peter replied: Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2.38)

“Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out” (Acts 3.19)

STOP DEFFERING YOUR DECISION

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me” Revelation 3.20)

“God again set a certain day, calling it ‘today’. This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 4.7)

If the few advices above have touched your hearts, acknowledge your sins honestly before God, ask him for forgiveness and ask him to change your heart and make you his child:

“Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1.12)

Thank you for taking the time to read these pages. I hope the principles that have been explained will help you grow in your faith and in the acquaintance of God the Father and Jesus the Lord (John 17.3)



Evangelist William THERON
« Witness of Jesus in the Nations »



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