

STARTING OUT WITH JESUS



Jerry
Conner

Jerry Conner
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All scripture is in the New International Version unless otherwise noted

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Jesus said:

Revelation 3:20

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 him, and he with me.

He also said:

John 1:12

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-



STARTING OUT WITH JESUS



If you have, honestly and to the best of your knowledge, open up your life to God and received Jesus as the Saviour and Lord of your life, then according to God's word, you have become a child of God, in whom Jesus now lives. This marks and starts a whole new direction for your life. This decision has begun a new and dynamic relationship with God.

Often people make a mistake of measuring the certainty of their salvation and relationship with God based on their feelings. Don't make this tragic mistake. Believe God. Take Him at His word:

1 John 5:13

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.
NIV

I can not, in this short discussion, describe all that happened in the transaction that occurred when you received Jesus into your life.

When you use a credit card to purchase something, what seems like a simple transaction actually places into motion many financial aspects that all appear to be hidden from the customer that allows them to walk out the shop door with what they need. In the same way, the salvation that Jesus provides us, and we receive, is a rich and completely encompassing reality and we can spend the rest of our lives discovering that significance.

When a child is born into a wealthy family, that child automatically becomes an heir to the wealth and resources of the family. The child will over time discover they have loving parents, brothers, sisters, houses, businesses, lands and fortunes; but at the time of their birth it is not necessary for the infant to be informed of all these things. There are more important matters at hand, the child needs protection, care, nourishment. There are germs and forces out in the world that must be dealt with so the child can grow in a healthy way.

You have become a child of God; you have been born into God's family as a spiritual babe. This is a significant and strategic point in your new life. It is important to share with you some important truths that will help strengthen you for the battles that lie ahead.

1 Peter 2:2

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,

Acts 20:32

"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

Food is important for everyone, but it is especially essential for babies. Babies have to eat often in order for them to grow healthy. Babies need plain food. It does a baby no good to set a steak dinner in their crib and expect them to be satisfied for several days. They need milk, over and over and often. And over time they grow and begin to enjoy mashed peas.

God's Word will serve as your spiritual food and it will build you up in your new faith. You will need a Bible, or at a minimum a New Testament and you need to read it daily, or even several times a day. Read it as often as you are able. When you begin to feel the pangs of life throughout the day, like hunger pangs, begin to think back to what you have read in the Bible; remember and rely on what you have read in God's Word. God's Word will begin to nourish your soul and restore the strength in your life.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, NIV

Regular intake of God's word will begin to build the strength of Jesus in your life.

Psalms 119:11

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. NIV

The writer of Psalms discovers the strength of God's word as it is hidden in our hearts. When we memorize God's word, it becomes ours, it is hidden in our hearts and it can not be taken away. God's Word will begin to provide strength for us to withstand temptations that will certainly come.

As you continue to build God's Word into your life, you will begin to be able to discern what is right and what is wrong

Hebrews 5:14

But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. NIV

In this discussion, we will look at five key passages that will be great places for you to begin memorizing God's Word.

In Hebrews, God's Word is described as a sword. This vivid image reminds us there is an opponent who faces us. You will encounter a new enemy in your life that while he was always there before you became a Christian, he had no reason to work against you, because you had been on 'his side'. You most likely did not recognize this real foe, or that you 'belonged to him'. The most willing and compliant captive is the one who does not realize he is captive.

Before you trusted Jesus, Satan may not have bothered you much, but now he has 'lost' you to his arch enemy, our Father, whom he hates. Satan realizes he cannot gain you back, and he cannot kill you. You are no longer in his 'domain' because you now belong to the One who has bought and paid for you, with a price, the price of His own blood at the cross. While the enemy cannot take you, he can cause lots of trouble for you, trouble you previously did not have in your life. His attacks can come in many different forms, but they come in fairly common and predictable themes, and we can and should be prepared for them.

This is a spiritual battle, and we overcome him only as we use the weapons that God has provided us.

Ephesians 6:16-17

In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. NIV

God's Word is not only a sword, but also manner in which our faith is built

Romans 10:17

Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. NIV

God's Word is our defensive weapon that we stand behind, as well as our offensive weapon to overcome temptation and advances by the enemy.

Jesus knew the power and necessity of God's Word, and when he was tempted by Satan three times Jesus defeated the enemy each time with scripture, saying "it is written..." (see Matthew 4). If Jesus relied on God's Word to overcome Satan, how much more should we also!

By regularly reading Gods Word, then we know what it says. When we memorize God's Word we have it ready to be able to respond accurately and with authority and say to Satan "It is written..." or "God's Word says..."

Our physical bodies have a variety of systems that need to develop as a baby grows. Muscles and bones, circulation and nervous systems, respiratory and reproduction and others, each of these systems are necessary for a healthy life. Similarly, our new spiritual life grows in strength as we gain in confidence in various areas. There are common areas Satan tends to attack new believers and these five areas will help equip you to meet his challenges when they come.

ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

One of the first areas often challenged shows up in questions of doubt upon the work that God has done in your heart. While you will not hear his audible voice he will whisper to your heart:

"You don't think you are saved and your sins are forgiven just by believing and receiving Jesus? Surely that is not enough! Not for your sins!"

What will your answer be? Your only hope will be to stand on God's Word, and so your first memory verse should be:

1 John 5:11-12

And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

This passage must be written on the walls of your heart, so you will be able to see it regularly and use it often. Every time a doubt arises rely on the record, the testimony of what God has done. You are thoroughly convinced that you now have the Lord Jesus Christ, and with Him comes eternal life, salvation.

ASSURANCE OF ANSWERED PRAYER

Another attack that Satan often uses is to challenge you to doubt the effectiveness of prayer. He may whisper:

“You don’t think that God is really, personally interested in you? He is far off and concerned about much more important things than your problems. Surely you don’t think he will hear you or answer your prayers?”

The reality: Now that Jesus is in your life, you have the unique opportunity to speak directly to your heavenly Father, through Christ. Scripture says he wants us to come confidently into His presence (Hebrews 4:16), and talk to Him about everything (Philippians 4:6). He is intensely interested in you and your needs, the second memory verse is:

John 16:24

Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete. NIV

Jesus did not say that the disciples had not asked before; and perhaps you have asked God many times for things before, especially in the midst of trouble, but now we can ask in *Jesus name*, because we belong to him. There is power in his name, not like a magical incantation, just because we say these words God will all the sudden respond. Instead, by praying in Jesus’ name we are associating ourselves with him in God’s presence and relying on the account of Jesus.

When my earthly father asked me to call a business associate and ask him to do something, my father told me to tell him that I was his son. The business associate responded not because of me or my ability but because of the relationship he had with my father, it really had nothing to do with me at all. God responds to His Son and he delights to meet your needs. This is a wonderful promise that we can rely on as we pray.

ASSURANCE OF VICTORY

Another way the enemy can discourage you is to whisper to your heart: “You may have life, but you don’t have much strength; you’re weak, you have always been weak and you will always be weak.”

He will remind you of some sin which has gripped you in your past. He will point to something that you are keenly aware of and say: “You are weak, you can not stand up against this particular temptation, perhaps others but not this one. This temptation is stronger than you are and it will always be part of your life.”

How will you answer him? Will you reason with him? Will you try

to develop your own arguments? Will you rely on what this person or that person says? Or, will you resort to the invincible Word. When Jesus was tempted in the desert, he relied on God's written word to help him overcome Satan and gain the victory, and we can too. God's Word says:

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. NIV

This verse promises us that the victory is not only possible but is personally realized. As you stand against temptation in the belief that God is providing the ability to withstand the temptation you will also begin realizing that all the things that seem impossible with men are entirely possible with God. It is exciting to see the chains of lifetime habits broken by His mighty power. This is a great verse to memorize and have written on the walls of your heart.

ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

This leads to the next attack that Satan often brings. Even though the victory is rightfully yours, you will likely fail at some point. Sin will suddenly crop up and instantly your enemy will be right there to say: "Now you've done it. Aren't you supposed to be a Christian? Christians don't do these things."

All children make mistakes and fail along the way as they grow up. But, we have a loving and faithful God who makes provisions in His Word for the failures of His children and the next verse that would be great to memorize is:

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. NIV

To confess sin means we uncover it and call it exactly what God calls it. Implicit in honest confession is the willingness to honestly forsake the sin. God promises not only to forgive us, but also to purify us, or cleanse us, from all our sin. What a great provision and promise that defeats the enemies lie and allows us to live in God's truth.

ASSURANCE OF GUIDANCE

“What is God’s will for my life?” Will God really lead our lives in the day-to-day activities we deal with? It is not unusual to have questions about the future and this fifth verse to memorize will help us maintain God’s perspective regarding our life and our future:

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

NIV

God promises to lead you and direct your path as you trust him with your life. You have just entered into the most amazing relationship of your life and God is not going to abandon you or leave you on your own to figure it out. He wants to be an active participant in this relationship and will guide you in the right path. As you continue to engage with Him and acknowledge that He is leading you in every area of your life then you will experience your heart grow as you trust in His guidance.

You have just embarked on the most exciting and satisfying path of your life, experiencing the strength and joy of a relationship with the very God who made you, loves you and desires a relationship with you. You were made for Him and as you live the rest of your life pursuing Him and His ways you will discover all that He has planned for you.

I encourage you to make every effort to memorize these scripture passages and many others that will help you experience God’s life that comes through His Word.

I pray God’s richest blessing will be upon you. That you will know the fullness of God’s love for you and enjoy the life He desires for you.



How to Memorize God's Word

It is not uncommon for people to struggle to memorize God's word and often it is because they have not been trained in how to do it. Here is a simple and effective method to memorize passages of scripture.

1. Read the passage aloud several times, each time you read it say the topic (what it relates to); the reference; the verse; then repeat the reference. Try to understand what the verse means and how it applies to your life.

2. Break the passage into natural phrases, e.g.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge him,
and he will make your paths straight.

3. Memorize the topic and reference **first**

4. Then add the first phrase, repeating the topic, reference and phrase until you can say it easily. Each time you go over the phrase say the reference before and after, that way you will more easily recall the location.

Then add the next phrase, adding the subsequent phrases as you can easily recall the topic, reference and phrases.

It is most helpful if you can work on your verses audibly. This way you say the verse and hear the verse. Other times it is also helpful to write the verse over and over several times. Each time you say or write the verse be sure to include the topic and reference and as you say the verse think through what it means in your life. The more you can interact with the verse the more memorable and meaningful it becomes.

The secret to mastering memory verses is **REVIEW**. Each day as you work on your newest verse, review the ones you have already learned. One of the best ways to do this is to have the verses handy. Some have used cards, the size of business cards works well, with the reference on one side and the verse on the other. The cards can be clipped together or you can get business card holders at any office supply store. Others have used electronic tools that work on their PDA. Another idea is to use sticky note pads with the verses written on them and then stuck wherever they often spend time, on the computer monitor, or desk, sink, locker, or mirror.



The Bridge
A church that connects

www.bridgechurch.ca
202-2515 Burrard St
Vancouver, BC

Phone: 604-327-4330
E-mail: info@bridgechurch.ca