

altar

NEW CHRISTIANS
HANDBOOK

YOUR STARTING POINT



CONGRATULATIONS!



Choosing to follow Jesus is the greatest decision you could ever make! The Bible tells us that right now all of Heaven is cheering you on! By placing your life in Jesus' hands, you have begun a brand new journey of faith that is the basis for a fulfilling and meaningful life.

JESUS SAID, "MY PURPOSE IS TO GIVE YOU LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS." JOHN 10:10

In this booklet you will find some thoughts that will help to guide you on your journey. We understand that you may have questions about your decision. You may even have doubts. That's okay. Don't let those questions or doubts stop you from moving forward. Use those things to fuel your new journey with God. Let them help you gain a new perspective on life and what God has in store for you.

We would love to partner with you on your journey and provide you with a few resources to help you live the life that God has called you to. By now, one of our 'Starting Point' team would have already connected with you and prayed with you. We are also excited to give you the gift of a Bible to help commemorate this special occasion, so dive into God's Word, keep in contact with your 'Starting Point Coach,' tell your friends and begin taking some of the specific next steps found in this booklet.

If you have any questions, or would like to talk to someone about your decision to follow Jesus, you can email us at admin@altarchurch.com.au and someone from our team will contact you.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR DECISION TO FOLLOW JESUS

God created you to experience life as He intended - full, abundant, and wonderfully connected to Him. But our problem is that our default mode is to live apart from God. Our sin separates us from God. Our sin damages us, our relationships, and the world around us. But God loves us too much to leave us stuck in our sin. He constantly woos and lovingly pursues us. And the most dramatic rescue story of history is that God came as Jesus and gave His life as a substitutionary sacrifice when He died on the cross for us. His resurrection then decisively proved His victory over sin and death. Jesus alone bridges the gap between God and us.

WHEN YOU CHOOSE TO TRUST THAT JESUS' DEATH AND RESURRECTION WAS FOR YOU, YOU ARE SAVED BY GOD'S GRACE THROUGH FAITH.



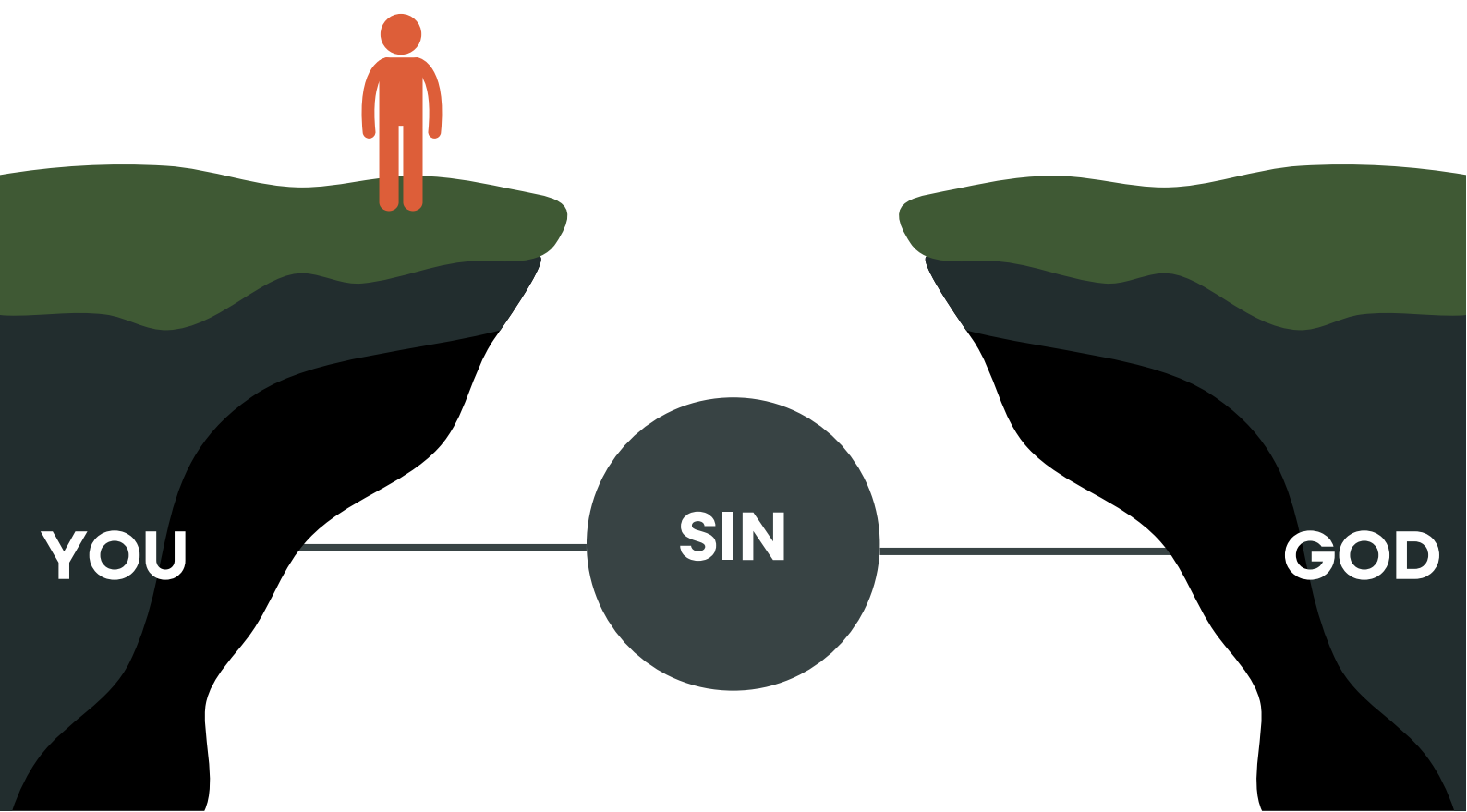
GOD LOVES YOU AND HAS A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
JEREMIAH 29:11

YOUR SIN CAUSES A COSMIC CHASM BETWEEN YOU AND GOD

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
ROMANS 3:23

For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus
Christ our Lord.
ROMANS 6:23



GOD SENT JESUS TO DIE ON THE CROSS

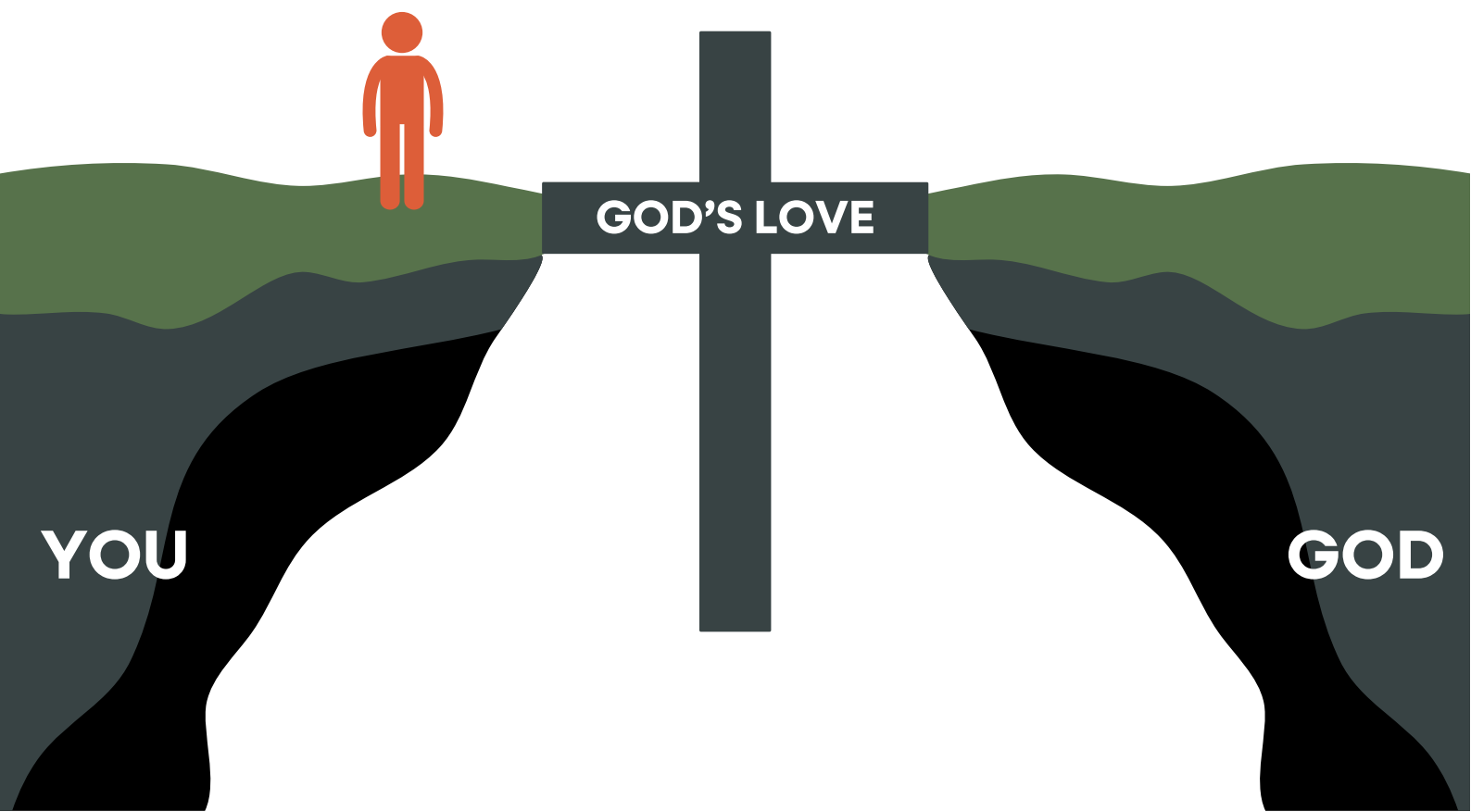
But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

ROMANS 5:8

IT'S YOUR CHOICE
TO RECEIVE THE GIFT OR NOT

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

ROMANS 10:9-10



UNDERSTANDING YOUR IDENTITY IN JESUS

Simply put, you are a new creation and child of God. You have been lovingly rescued, forever forgiven, inwardly renewed, and called to join God and His Church in the movement of restoring the world around you. While a free gift of grace, Jesus' rescue compels our full devotion.

REFLECTION:

Our primary identity is built on a relationship with Jesus and not this world. Life is better with Jesus at the center. Take a moment to reflect on these powerful statements of truth around your new identity in Jesus.

THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST HE IS A NEW CREATION. THE OLD IS GONE AND THE NEW HAS COME.
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.
GALATIANS 3:26

Don't copy the behaviour and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

ROMANS 3:26



BAPTISM

DECLARING AND CELEBRATING YOUR DECISION TO FOLLOW JESUS

Baptism is an important step of your journey that shows others that we have personally trusted Jesus for our salvation. Jesus himself was baptised when He was on the earth, and we do this to follow His example.

When Christians are baptised, they are submerged under water to identify with the death and burial of Jesus and raised out of the water to identify with His resurrection. We believe that water baptism is a public declaration of three important things: you are a follower of Jesus, you are beginning a changed life in Jesus, and you are part of a new family.

Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20



WHAT IS THE LOCAL CHURCH AND WHY DOES IT EXIST?

When you stepped over the line of faith and chose to follow Jesus, you became part of the movement. But this movement, Christianity, is not a solo sport. That's why the local church exists. Each week, when we gather together as a church, to hang out, worship God, discover His plan for our lives, and learn how to live out His priorities.

SINCE OUR FOUNDING, THE MISSION AT ELEVATION CHURCH HAS BEEN TO CREATE ENVIRONMENTS THAT INSPIRE INTIMACY WITH CHRIST, RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS, AND INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD.

When the church lives and moves as God designed us to, then we embody our deeply held core conviction:

**THE LOCAL CHURCH IS NOT WHERE
WE GO, IT IS WHO WE ARE.**

Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another-and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
HEBREWS 10:25

Now you are the body of Christ.
1 CORINTHIANS 12:27

SERVING

Jesus himself said that He did not come to be served, but to serve others. When you volunteer your time and talent in the local church, you discover the key to unlocking a life of influence and change.

As a new Christian, one of the most powerful steps you can take is serving in the church; it's stepping outside of your comfort zone and stepping up to be used by God.

Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms.
1 PETER 4:10



PRAYER

Prayer is one of the most crucial aspects to a vibrant relationship with God. It's not reserved for spiritual superstars. Prayer is simply having a conversation with God; something everyone can do.


Don't worry about what to say and how to say it; just talk to God in the way that comes naturally to you. Like any relationship, it blossoms when you spend time with each other and suffers when you don't. God is always ready to listen and won't be shocked by anything you tell him.

IT'S A TWO-WAY THING

Because a relationship is a two-way thing, God will want to speak to you too. So it's important to listen during your prayer times (and at other times too). God wants to encourage you in prayer, so be bold and ask for what you need. You may also want to keep a prayer diary to record answers to prayer. Don't forget to thank Him when the answers come!

MAKE IT PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

You may find it helpful to have a regular time each day that you build into your routine to pray and read your Bible. Making a regular time like this will help you become established as a new Christian. We're all different, but most people find it helpful to start the day with God rather than leaving it until bedtime. That way, you don't fall asleep!



12 DAY READING PLAN

The Bible is the supreme source of truth for Christian beliefs about living. God's words (the bible) give us every frame of reference we need to live this life.

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. PSALMS 119:105

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realise what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. 2 TIMOTHY 3:16

Below is a 12 Day Reading Plan to start your journey in the Bible. As you read through these passages of Scripture from the life of Jesus, you may find it useful to ask the following questions to help you live out what you're learning: What can I learn from this Scripture about God and people? How can I live this out in my life? What do I need to pray for?

DAY 1 - Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-21)

Jesus' miraculous birth was a fulfilment of prophecy and a reminder that God loved us enough to come to us so we could have a relationship with him.

DAY 2 - Baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:13-17)

Jesus was baptised to mark the beginning of his ministry. When we are baptised, it represents the beginning of our relationship with God. It's our first step of obedience and a symbol of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ that made our relationship possible.

DAY 3 - Temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:1-13)

Jesus faced the same temptations we face, but stood up against them by focusing on the truth of scripture and relying on the strength of the Holy Spirit within him. A relationship with God gives us access to the same resources.

DAY 4 - Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

When God speaks to our heart, it's like a seed planted in soil. The condition of our heart determines how much growth will happen.

DAY 5 - Jesus Prays (Luke 11 :1-13)

Prayer is one of the primary ways we communicate with God. It helps us to align our plans and perspective with his. Don't be afraid to share your needs and concerns because he cares for you.

DAY 6 - Woman at the Well (John 4:1-30)

When Jesus encountered the woman at the well, her thirst was satisfied, her life was changed, and she immediately began to invite others to come meet Jesus. Be willing to share your story and invite others to experience what you have experienced.

DAY 7 - Holy Spirit (John 14:16-27)

When we receive Christ and our relationship with him begins, the Holy Spirit comes to be our counselor and teacher.

DAY 8 - Ultimate Servant (Matthew 20:20-28)

If we want to follow Christ's example, then we need to serve as he served. Find a place to serve within the church and watch how God uses your gifts to impact the lives of others!

DAY 9 - The Last Supper (Matthew 26:17-35)

Jesus celebrated Passover with his disciples. Even he, the perfect leader, had people who turned against him. Don't be discouraged if some people don't understand your relationship with Christ!

DAY 10 - The Crucifixion of Jesus (Luke 23:26-56)

Jesus' death was the ultimate expression of his love. His sacrifice provided forgiveness for our sin and paved the way for us to have a relationship with him.

DAY 11 - The Resurrection of Jesus (Luke 24:1-49)

Jesus' resurrection was final evidence that he was truly the Saviour of the World. The power of God that raised him from the dead is the same power that is at work in you.

DAY 12 - The Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20)

Jesus' last recorded words to his disciples were a challenge to go throughout the world and share their story. This small group of people changed the world with their boldness and commitment to tell others about Christ!

NEXT STEPS

Your new journey of faith is an exciting adventure as you begin to grow and discover all that God has for you. Here are a few suggested ways that you can explore. Are you ready to grow? It's your move.

DISCIPLESHIP

Begin your journey with a mentor that can help you navigate your new life and learn about all the ways Altar can help you in your spiritual journey. A Mentor is someone who is further on in their faith walk and someone who knows their bible.

BAPTISM

Baptism is an opportunity for you to go public with your decision to follow Jesus, to identify with Jesus and to follow His example. At Altar Church, we celebrate with those being baptised at one of many our Baptism services throughout the year.

DISCOVER COURSE

Begin to understand the God given purpose for your life by coming along to our Discover course. You will be encouraged in serving and being part of a team at Altar church. Serving on a team at church helps you meet new friends and helps you grow in your relationship with Jesus. There will always be something you can do that will suit your personality and availability.

CONNECT GROUPS

In Christianity we need like minded people around us to help us on our journey. Become a part of a group within the church, where you can meet new people, be encouraged in your faith and get to know the bible and also have some fun!

For more information, email us at admin@altarchurch.com.au





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