



**Your New Life**

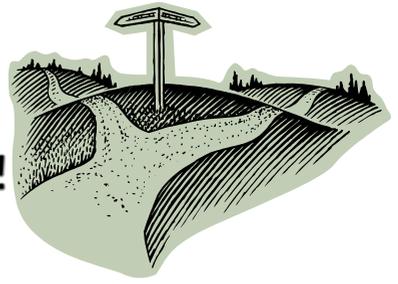
# Your New Life

2013 Tea Tree Gully Community Church

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# Your Best Decision!



Let us congratulate you on making the most important and best decision of your life!

When you accepted Jesus Christ you became a child of God. You became part of God's family and received not only forgiveness for your sin but also eternal life. Eternal life is not something only to be enjoyed in heaven, it starts now. It is a new, abundant life of relating to God as his child.

Knowing God brings peace, joy, strength, and understanding. You will come to experience all the blessings of a relationship with God as you walk with Him and grow in your relationship with Him.

Let's take some time to review the decision you have made to invite Jesus into your life and to go over again the basics of God's plan of redemption and why we need a savior.

# Why we Need a Saviour

God is both powerful and loving.

Because He is powerful He can help us with all our struggles and problems in life. Because He is a powerful God He can heal our bodies, heal our hearts, and work in and change our circumstances. He can transform our life.

Because He is a loving God He wants the best for us. He wants us to look to Him for the answers we need to our life problems and He is ready to help us. God also has a plan for our lives. He wants to help us reach our full potential as the person He created us to be. Because God loves us He desires a relationship with us.

God is also a holy and just God. Because of this He cannot overlook sin. God himself is without sin so to overlook or tolerate our sin would be to deny his own character. The Bible tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) *Emphasis added*

Sin is not just all the bad things we do, or even the terrible things some people do such as murder. Sin refers to our state before God. We have all sinned even if we think we have lived a perfect life. We cannot be holy to the standard that God is holy by our own efforts.

God knows this and this is why, as a loving God, He made a way for us to be made righteous through the death of His son Jesus Christ.

So we need to recognize our state before God as one of sin. This is also sometimes referred to as 'the fallen state of man' or 'Adamic sin'. Sin entered the world that God created when Adam disobeyed God and ate from the tree in the garden of Eden which God had forbidden him to eat. You can read the story in Genesis 2:8 and Genesis 3.

So from Adam on, man is born in a state of sin. This is why the Bible tells us that all have sinned.

We also have sins that we commit. They can be bad things such as murder or other crimes but they can also be more subtle. We desire to live our own way, to have independence from God. We can be self-centered, say and do things that hurt others, we can be rebellious, dishonest. Or maybe there are things or people in our life that are more important to us than God. The bible calls this idolatry. Sin can be things we do that we shouldn't but it also can be things we don't do that we should.

The Bible tells us in Romans 6:23 that "*the wages of sin is death*" In God's eyes sin has to be paid for. This verse also goes on to say, "*The gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

This verse points out the penalty for our sinful state but also shows us how God has made a way for us to have our sin paid for, through His gift of His son Jesus Christ!

We cannot pay for this sin ourselves. Nothing we could do would reach Gods standard of holiness. All our attempts to save ourselves fall short. Isaiah 64:6 tells us,

*“We are all infected and impure with sin. When we display our righteous deeds they are nothing but filthy rags. Like autumn leaves, we wither and fall, and our sins sweep us away like the wind.” (NLT).*

This is why God sent us a savior.

## Jesus our Saviour

God sent His own son to be a saviour for us and to pay the penalty for our sin. God doesn't condemn us and leave us in our sin, He provides a way out of it. This demonstrates the two sides of Gods nature; holy and just, whilst loving and compassionate.

John 3:16 is probably the most well-known verse in the Bible.

*“For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

This is God's plan of redemption for mankind.

Jesus died in our place. He took the penalty for our sin upon himself. As a result when we receive Jesus as our Lord and Saviour, we receive forgiveness for our sins and eternal life.

This means that we have the assurance that when we die, we will go to heaven. We have been saved from an eternity in Hell through believing in Jesus and the message of his gospel.

Ephesians 2:8 says , *“For it is by grace you have been saved, by faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works so that no one can boast.”* Salvation is a gift from God that we receive through faith. We cannot earn it.



*“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

Romans 5:1

# What it means to be a child of God

When you prayed and accepted Jesus as your Lord and Saviour you received the gift of salvation and eternal life.

This is the beginning of a whole new way of life. Salvation is not only the forgiveness of sin and freedom from the penalty of sin, it is a work of redemption or renewing of your spirit, soul and body. It renews your purpose, your potential , your relationship with God and others.

As you let God work in your life you become a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5:11 says :

*“This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! (NLT)*

Jesus now lives within you through the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:12-13 tells us:

*“When you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. The Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people.” (NLT)*

So you are now God's child and part of His family, you have His Holy Spirit within you . You have eternal life and the assurance that when you die you will go to heaven.

Eternal life however, begins now not in heaven. It is a life of knowing God and relating to Him as His child.

Your new life has just begun! God wants you to have abundant life. As you grow in your relationship with Him you will come to know Him as your strength, your peace, your joy, your counselor and friend. Just as our natural friendships and relationships have to be grown and nurtured, so does our relationship with God. As you do this you will experience more and more the rich blessings that come with being a child of God.

## What's next?

In order to grow and develop your relationship with God you need to spend time with Him. You do this by spending time reading the Bible and praying.

If you don't already own a Bible ask someone to help you choose one that will suit your needs. There are many different translations and styles available including Bibles that have extra devotionals or application notes to help you apply what you are reading to your life. There are study Bibles and also Bibles in other languages.

## Reading the Bible

The Bible can be a daunting book and you may not know where to start.

Try and set aside time each day to read your Bible. A good place to start is the gospel of Mark. You will find out more about Jesus' life and teachings.

Ask God in prayer to help you understand what you are reading and that He will show you what He wants you to see.

God can and does speak personally to us through His Word, the Bible. It is not just a book, it is a dynamic, living Word that has power to change lives because it is God's Word to us. God wants nothing more than to reveal to us the truths that are contained in His Word so pray and ask Him to do that for you as you read.

We recommend that you get a copy of the booklet "HOW TO READ THE BIBLE" which will really help you get an overall idea of the structure and purpose of the Bible. It also shows you how to approach reading the Bible and will take you through reading a few of its key books.

Ask a Lifegroup leader or Pastor to get you a copy of this booklet.



# Prayer

Prayer is talking to God just like you would talk to anyone else. You don't have to use particular words or a particular format. Just tell God what is on your heart. Tell Him your struggles, your fears, your problems. Ask Him to help you with decisions and to know what His plan is for your Life. Pray for yourself and pray for others.

We should always approach God with a heart of thankfulness for who He is and what He has done for us. We shouldn't always come with just a list of our own needs and problems without stopping to take time to be thankful. Just as our natural relationships need us to give as well as receive for them to be healthy, so does our relationship with God.

He wants us to give back to Him in praise, worship and service as well as receive from Him.

We also need to daily confess our sins to God. This is an ongoing process that we need to continue. We don't need to re-confess sin we have already received forgiveness for. The Bible tells us that God has removed those sins from us.

*" As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us" Psalm 103:12*

Set aside a time each day to pray and read your bible. You will find that you grow in your relationship with God. This is something that needs to be a lifelong habit. Without it our relationship with God suffers and becomes dry and we cut ourselves off from the life that He intends for us to have through our ongoing relationship with Him.

## Being part of the Community of God

God never intended for us to live our Christian life in isolation from other Christians. Just as He created us to be in a natural family, He has given us the family of God, His Church.

This is where we grow and learn to serve, using the gifts, talents and abilities that God has given us for His Kingdom.

## Church

It is important that you come to church each week. It is where you worship God with fellow believers and you hear teaching from His Word that can impact and change your life. It is also where you develop relationships with other Christians.

The people that make up your local congregation become your 'family'. They support you, encourage you and mentor you.

This is a really important part of your new life.



## Lifegroup

At Tea Tree Gully Community Church we encourage people to attend a Lifegroup. These are small groups that meet together during the week in homes. There are morning groups and evening groups available.

We really encourage you to join a Lifegroup if you haven't already. In this smaller setting you can get to know a smaller group of people in a deeper way and build deeper relationships. They can provide a greater level of support and encouragement to you when you need it. You will learn from each other how to apply the Word of God to your life.

A typical meeting consists of Welcome (an informal, relaxed start to the meeting), Worship (a time to worship God together) Word (a time focused on applying God's word to our lives) and Works (a time to pray for others and any needs of those in the group).

Lifegroups are interactive and discussion based, and have an outward focus. Praying for and sharing God's love with others is an integral part of their focus.

Lifegroups grow together and serve together. We are sure that you will find Lifegroup an enriching experience.

Ask a Pastor or Lifegroup leader for more information about joining a Lifegroup.



# Baptism

Water baptism is an important part of a person's decision to follow Christ. It is a public demonstration of their new decision.

Just as Jesus himself was baptized before beginning his ministry here on earth, the bible also tells us to *"Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins."* Acts 2:38

Baptism itself does not make you a believer nor does it save you, that happens when you make a decision to follow Christ.

Baptism shows that you already believe. It is like wearing a wedding ring - it is an outward symbol of a commitment that you have made in your heart.

Talk to a Pastor or Lifegroup leader and they will arrange for you to be baptized. This is usually done as part of our Sunday service and is a wonderful time of celebration to which you can invite your family and friends.

# Continuing your journey

So, you have made a decision to follow Christ, you are reading your Bible and learning to pray. You are coming to church regularly and have joined a Lifegroup.....What's next?

As we have said, this is just the beginning. You have an exciting journey ahead of you.

In order to help you continue your journey we have a number of other booklets that have been designed for you to work through with another person that can help you on your journey.

This should be another Christian who is a bit further along in their journey than you are. You can ask them questions and they can help you based on what they have come to know and experience in their own journey with God.

This person is often your Lifegroup leader or someone else within your Lifegroup. It may even be with the person that gave you this book and helped you start your journey.

The relationship you form with this person, your mentor, often becomes a very valuable one.

If you are keen to continue your journey, and we hope that you are, talk to someone (a Lifegroup leader or Pastor) about what might be a good next step for you. If you don't already have a mentor they will help you find one and set you on the next stage of your exciting new journey in God.

We pray God's rich blessing on you as you continue to grow in your relationship with Him.

