

Becoming. *New in Christ*

Discovering the Assurance of Life after Death

Most people believe there must be something beyond the grave. They just don't want to accept that their last breath here will be the end of them! These are good intuitions, but it sure would be nice if they could know for sure.

The Christian faith claims that **you can know**. Jesus Christ is the only person in the history of humanity who demonstrated before eyewitnesses the reality of a resurrection to new life. He also said He would make each person who has faith in Him new, just like Him. The Bible says it this way: *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). A person who is “in Christ”—a believer in Christ, or a Christ follower, commonly called a “Christian”—is a new creation!

To help you understand what it means to be a new creation, and how to become one—with the personal assurance of eternal life—*FaithSearch* has designed this brief study for you. By completing it you will learn...

- How a person becomes a Christian
- How to know that you will have life after death
- What changes occur when you confess faith in Christ
- Where your feelings will fit in with your faith

We believe you will find these discoveries to be life-changing. New life in Jesus Christ is a true adventure.

What's New

It is easy to see and measure “newness” in the physical world. We will notice a different hair color, a shiny new car, a stylish new piece of furniture. In the spiritual realm, newness may be less obvious.

How does the Bible describe the “newness” of a person who has faith in Jesus Christ? (John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:23)

The expression *“born again”* literally means to be given new life from above. It is conception of spiritual life resulting from God's supernatural action. We are not necessarily a Christian because we believe in God, because we are basically a good person, because we attend church or because we pray. These are good, but do not lead to new life. Rather, God makes us new when we believe in and confess faith in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of our sins.

What are new Christians called in 1 Peter 2:2? _____

What thoughts does this metaphor bring to your mind about a believer's new life in Christ? _____

Now look up the “new creation” verse in your own Bible (2 Corinthians 5:17). What has “passed away”?

What has come in its place? _____

When the Bible says “the new has come,” it means some very significant and meaningful changes will occur in how you experience life, both now and eternally. Let’s identify four such changes. In each of the following references in your Bible, write that change in the space provided.

Change #1 (Colossians 2:13): _____

What has God done to make this possible? (2 Corinthians 5:21) _____

What is one result of this change? (Romans 8:1) _____

Change #2 (John 1:12): _____

What are you before you confess faith in Jesus as your Savior for forgiveness of sin? (Ephesians 2:19)

Change #3 (1 John 5:11-13): _____

Highlight or circle the word “know” in the above passage to realize that anyone who professes faith in Jesus and follows Him as Lord can be certain, here and now, of life after death.

Complete the following passage (John 3:16) by writing your first name in each blank: “For God so loved _____ that He gave His one and only Son, that if _____ believes in Him, _____ shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Change #4 (John 14:16, 17): _____

As a result of this truth, to whom do you belong when you confess faith in Jesus? _____

Summary: When you confess your sin and turn in faith to follow Jesus, God promises these four supernatural changes will become new in your life

- All your sins are forgiven—you need no longer fear God’s judgment.
- You become a new creation, adopted into the family of God.
- You will receive the free gift of eternal life after death.
- God the Holy Spirit will reside within you to be your Guide and Helper.

What's True?

Becoming a Christian is exciting and very meaningful. But later we may wonder if anything really changed. At times you may not feel a close relationship with Jesus. At such times it is important to recognize the difference between faith and feelings.

In the questions you completed in the "What's New?" section, where did you find what new changes will come into your life? _____

In reality, whose words are recorded in the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16a; 1 Thessalonians 2:13)? _____

The Bible is God's Word to man. Can or does God lie (Titus 1:2)? _____

If God cannot lie, and if His words are recorded in the Bible, we can be certain that His promises recorded in the Bible are true.

Read Revelation 3:20.

Who is knocking? _____

What is the door at which he is knocking? _____

What must we do in response to his knocking?

1. _____

2. _____

Are you willing to do that? _____ * If "yes," and you are not sure what to do or say next, use the prayer below. It is only a guide to confess your sin and to talk with Jesus about your desire to be forgiven and to follow Him in your life.

Dear God, I want to know the reality of a personal relationship with you. I admit that I have sinned against you and I am sorry. I confess Jesus Christ as my Savior because He died in my place on the cross so I can be forgiven and be resurrected to new life. I desire the inner gift of the Holy Spirit to direct my life, and enable me to understand and obey Your Word. Thank you for adopting me into Your family. I believe your promise that I now have the assurance of life after death with You forever. Amen.

* If you said "no" above, see "From the Author" at the end of this Bible study.

What does Jesus promise to do in response to your hearing and opening your heart to him? _____

Is this promise true? _____

How do you know? _____

Because this promise is true, where is Jesus right now? _____

Read I John 1:9.

What are we told to do? _____

Have you done that? _____

What does God promise to do if we follow these instructions? _____

Is this promise true? _____

How do you know? _____

Then what is the condition of your sins right now? _____

As you proceed in your Christian life, it is important to base your faith on facts rather than on feelings. Granted, emotions have an important place in the Christian experience. However, it is equally important for emotions to be in proper relationship to facts and faith. The proper order is:

FACTS ► FAITH ► FEELINGS

Do not depend upon feelings or you will experience a spiritual roller coaster. The promise of God's Word, not your feelings, is your authority. If you place your faith in the faithfulness of God Himself and the trustworthiness of His Word, you will go through each day with stability. Likewise, confidence in your salvation and eternal life is based on the facts of God's Word.

What Now?

According to the Bible, our spiritual newness is a fact. It's also something of which we need to be reminded. Why? When a cocoon bursts, and the caterpillar that formed it emerges transformed, it doesn't have to learn to fly. The butterfly waits briefly for the sun to dry its wings, and then launches into flight.

You and I have to learn, however. In Christ we're transformed, yes. We still must learn to fly.

Tragically some Christians have never stretched their wings. They've never launched themselves into their new life. They've never learned how God's statement, "all things are new," can be realized in them.**

That's why continuing this Bible study is so important for you. Jesus said that he came so you might experience abundant life (John 10:10). You will grow in relationship with Him as you fill your mind with His Word.

This brief Bible study is from *Growing Faith*, which was written to help you build a lifelong relationship with God. *Growing Faith* will guide you through a personal study, but we recommend you invite another person or a small group to join you. It will make the learning experience even better.

If you said "Yes" to repent of your sin and follow Jesus through faith for the first time as a result of this Bible study, we would like to offer you a FREE copy of the complete *Growing Faith* study book.

From the Author

My prayer is that everyone who reads and completes this Bible study will say yes to “Believe in the Lord Jesus” (Acts 16:30-31). However, sometimes there are unresolved issues and unanswered questions that hold you back. You may find the rest of the *Growing Faith* Bible study to be helpful and I encourage you to send for the manual.

If you need to understand more fully about the Christian faith before you say “Yes,” I recommend you request a copy of my book, *Surprised by Faith*. In it I share my own skepticism and need for evidence to convince me that God exists, the Bible is true, and Jesus is God whom He claimed to be. I also share my testimony of how I finally came to have a satisfied mind and a transformed heart. That is my prayer for you as well (John 20:30-31).

Dr. Don Bierle, President

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Purchase Copies of *Growing Faith*

If you were previously a Christian and would like to complete the *Growing Faith* Bible study, go online or call to order *Growing Faith* @ \$6 per copy (quantity discounts available). Chapter titles include:

- **Fresh and New:** Experiencing Life from Above
- **Faithful and True:** Experiencing Stability in the Christian Life
- **Planning to Build:** Spiritual Resources and Obstacles
- **Prayer:** Talking and Listening to God.
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While on our Web site, check out our many other ministry resources (including the book *Surprised by Faith*) to help you learn more about the Christian faith, and the evidence supporting it. Our calendar also lists upcoming *FaithSearch* events which you may want to attend—or attend with a friend.

We hope you enjoyed and found value in completing this Bible study. As always, if you have questions, don't hesitate to contact us by E-mail: info@faithsearch.org.