

“Repent, and each of you be baptized 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)



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TRANSFORMATION**

“If you forgive other people for their offenses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive other people, then your Father will not forgive your offenses.” (Matt. 6:14-15)

# ***FOLLOWING JESUS TO FREEDOM***

JESUS SAID, “**FOLLOW ME**” 13 TIMES IN THE GOSPELS – MUST BE IMPORTANT, RIGHT?

## **1. SUPPORT**

When you are just beginning your journey to follow Jesus, it helps to get some support. If possible, join a Bible study, a prayer group, or simply meet with 2 or 3 other Jesus followers who have been at it longer than you. Don't be afraid to ask for support as you grow in your faith – that is the way Jesus set it up.

## **2. THE BIBLE – THE WORD OF GOD**

Did you know that one of the names of Jesus in the Bible is “The Word of God”? You need your own personal copy of the Bible, because it is the very word of God Himself! We recommend that you get a version that is easy to read and understand (some common ones are the NASB – New American Standard Bible, the NIV – New International Version, or the ESV – English Standard Version). Ask your chaplain, a prison volunteer, or a family member to provide you with one.

## **3. GET BAPTIZED**

Jesus told His disciples (and us) that once we become believers in Him and choose to follow Him as our Lord, we need to be baptized in water to show the change in our life. If you have the ability to be baptized where you are currently housed, then do so. If you have to wait until later, be sure to do it at the very first opportunity you get!

## **4. START READING YOUR BIBLE**

If you need a good starting place, we recommend the Gospel of John. It is widely accepted as the best part of the Bible for those just getting started. You should set a goal of reading at least 10 minutes every morning or as your schedule allows. Doing it every day helps make Bible reading into a life-long habit.

## **5. START PRAYING**

Ask the Lord to help you to talk with Him and to hear His voice as He guides you and answers your questions. Prayer does not need to be mysterious or complicated. It is as simple as talking to your friend. One of the best prayers to start with is, “Lord, I never want to go back to my old life. I want all you have for me. Fill me with your new life and give me the power to live for you every day.” You should set a goal of praying at least 10 minutes every morning or as your schedule allows.

## **6. GO TO CHURCH**

One of the basic practices of a follower of Jesus is to worship Him every week with the community of believers in your area. Often times, this is a Sunday morning church service in the chapel. Or it can take other forms, depending on your situation. But Jesus was very clear that we need to form into a community of faithful followers and work to express His love to one another and to a lost and dying world.

## **7. TELL OTHERS ABOUT WHAT JESUS HAS DONE FOR YOU**

Often called “witnessing” or “sharing your testimony”, it is a vital part of your new life to share, in a simple and friendly way, how He has changed your life. You are a changed person now because one of His followers came to where you live and shared the good news about their testimony. You should, too.

## 8. **LIVE THE JESUS KIND OF LIFE**

Jesus calls us to not just “go to church” and “be a good person” but to learn to let Him live His life through us to help heal and save a broken world. The main way we do this is to meet every week with like-minded people (often referred to as “disciples”) and share life’s ups and downs, pray for one another, encourage one another, and watch each other grow in the Lord. When we let the Lord’s light shine out of us, other believers and lost people will be attracted to Him. He told us, “You are the light of the world. Your light must shine before people in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” Have faith in God and expect great things!

So, where are we going with all this? We are going to a place called FREEDOM. If you are bound in any area of your life, here are some steps to follow Jesus to complete freedom, even if you will be incarcerated for many years to come.

- Ask the Lord to take control of your life; trust Him to be your provider, your King, your friend, your source of power and your healer.
- Ask Him to free you from any habits that are not pleasing to Him or are hindering you from following Him freely. Be willing to change!
- Jesus has an enemy: the devil or Satan. When you choose to follow Jesus, the devil becomes your enemy, too. Ask Jesus to protect you and to deliver you from all of the devil’s evil works.
- Ask Jesus to heal you of any and all hurts and wounds from your past. The more time you spend with Him in prayer, quiet time, and studying His Word, the Bible, the freer you will be!

### **YOU CAN LIVE IN SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL FREEDOM EVEN WHILE LOCKED UP!**

*“WHOM THE SON SETS FREE IS FREE INDEED.” (John 8:36)*

The Bible pattern for a true disciple is a person who makes disciples who then go and make more disciples. This is the life-long pursuit of a Jesus follower. He says in Matthew 28:19, “Go and make disciples of all the nations.”

Remember: You are not doing these things to get Jesus to save you. You do them because He has saved you!

Here are some Bible verses that support and explain the points made above:

1. 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:24-25; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Proverbs 27:17; Matthew 18:20; Colossians 3:16
2. John 1:1, Revelations 19:13; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Matthew 7:24; Matthew 4:4; Psalm 33:4; 1 Peter 1:23 & 2:2
3. Matthew 28:19-2; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38, 10:47, 19:5; Romans 6:3-4
4. Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:105; Romans 15:4; Psalm 119:11; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 2:15; Psalm 119:9
5. Mark 11:24; Romans 12:12; Colossians 4:2; Philippians 4:6-7; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 1 John 5:14
6. Acts 2:42 & 9:31; Romans 12:4-5; Ephesians 4:14-16 Hebrews 10:24-25
7. Matthew 5:16; 2 Timothy 1:8 & 4:2; 1 Peter 3:16-17; Colossians 4:5-6
8. Matthew 4:19-20 & 28:19-20; John 1:45; Romans 10:14–15; 2 Timothy 2:2

We want to give a special shout-out to *Think Twice Ministries* with Guy & John Earle, who inspired this article.

#### **A NOTE TO VOLUNTEERS**

Obviously, someone who is new to following Christ is going to do better and grow faster if they have someone to encourage them and walk alongside them. Add your friendship to these steps and watch a miracle happen!

#### **A NOTE TO CHAPLAINS**

This resource is specifically designed for those situations where an evangelistic event happens and people in prison or jail give their hearts to Jesus, often for the first time. Use this “roadmap” to give them practical direction to help them grow, even if their situation means they are alone or isolated. Download it at [www.LoveYourJail.com](http://www.LoveYourJail.com). Other free resources are there, too.

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