

PASS IT ON

New Christians have special needs. The following suggestions for getting them started in spiritual growth have been gleaned in part from a past issue of *Our Hope*, a magazine edited by Arno C. Gaebelein. These salient points are appropriate not only for new Christians but for any believers, young or old. Pass them on!

1. *Renounce any thought that your acceptance before God depends on anything you do or can do, or anything you are or can be.* When you put your trust in Christ, He clothed you with His righteousness. You now stand forgiven and accepted before God because of what Christ did for you. Read: Romans 4:24,25; 5:1,2; 8:1-4; Ephesians 1:3-7.

2. *Remember that you are now a Christian.*

“Christ’s one,” and as such you should seek to honor “that noble name by which you are called” (James 2:7). Read: Acts 11:26; Ephesians 3:14- 21.

3. *Be careful to have a good conscience.* Such a pure and sensitive conscience is gained as you are instructed by Scripture. If you sin, confess it at once, not as a sinner to God but as a child to the Father. Read: Acts 24:16; 1 Timothy 1:5,6; Hebrews 13:18; 1 John 1:9,10; 2:1,2.

4. *Be as lenient concerning the faults of others as you are hard on your own.* You’ve heard of the three R’s in education. Well, here are three important F’s in the Christian life: Forbear- Forgive - Forget. If you detect in your heart the smallest grain of malice toward another, do not rest until it is removed. Read: Romans 12:9-21; Ephesians 4:1-3,30-32; Philippians 2:1-18; Colossians 3:12-17.

5. *Keep a large heart as you walk the narrow way.* What do I mean by *a large heart*? One that includes all believers. The path through the ruin of this world becomes increasingly narrow, but a heart filled with the love of Christ expands and embraces those who are members of His body. Read: Ephesians 1:15; 3:17-19; Colossians 1: 4.

6. *In any difficulty, let the Lord be your first re- source.* No wiser, kinder, or stronger friend do you have than the Savior. Whatever the care of your heart, a burden about your home, school, business, church, go to Him alone about it. He

delights when you come to Him. And He can give you the peace you desire. Read: Philippians 4:4-7; 1 Peter 5:5-10.

7. *Learn and grow in the school of secret prayer.* You can be sure that when you feel least inclined for prayer, your soul is most in need of it. The more you pray, the more you want to pray. Soon prayer will become an ongoing state of mind as well as a specific act in time. Read: Matthew 26:36-46; 1 Thessalonians 5:17,18; 1 Peter 4:7.

8. *Never refuse any teaching just because it is new to you;* but never accept anything new till you see it for yourself in the Word of God! Be slow and certain as you acquire truth. Although

you may get truth through a human channel, seek truth from God. Learn at the Master's feet and you will have no need to learn to unlearn. Read: John 16:12-15; 2 Peter 3:1,2,17,18.

9. *Learn from the Bible* by reading (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16,17), searching (Acts 17:11), finding (Psalm 119:162), meditating (Jeremiah 15:16), and practicing (James 1:22-27).

10. *Never look for a perfect example of Christianity from Christians.* If you want the perfect and the real, get your eye on God's perfect One, Christ. Spend time learning about Him and from Him. Jesus said, ". . . without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). Seek God's help to abide in Him so that you will intuitively follow in His steps and walk as He walked (1 Peter 2:21-24).

When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, he said, "as your faith is increased." This little phrase in 2 Corinthians 10:15 should speak volumes to us also. The apostle anticipated and expected the continued spiritual growth of the believers in Corinth.

At every stage in the Christian experience, there is the need for growing faith. This will be accomplished in us as we take in the Word of God and then appropriate that Word. If we know the Word but do not make it a part of our thinking and living, we will never develop or increase our faith. It is true, without question, that we need to be doctrinally correct. But unless the Word of truth becomes part of our daily practice and lifestyle, no increasing, working faith will be produced in us.

What diverse fields of service await believers as they make themselves available to God!

He has equipped everyone to be His special servant, each in his own unique manner. He did not intend for all of us to be pastors, missionaries, committee chairmen, ushers, or church janitors. But He does have important work for each of us to do. One such task is mentioned in Acts 4.

Among the many people mentioned in this chapter is Barnabas. The Holy Spirit was careful to record

that his name means "Son of Encouragement."

Bitter trials are a part of life for God's people. Needed: more Christians who will be "sons of encouragement." You may not be called to engage in public ministry, but you may stand by fellow believers quietly and prayerfully in the time of testing. God's children need the encouragement of other travelers on the earthly pilgrimage. A loving touch, a spoken word, a breathed prayer. Pass it on!

by Paul Van Gorder