

Getting Serious About God

By Pastor Randy Royston

INTRODUCTION

I am excited that you have made a decision to get serious about God! You may have been a very religious person but you realized that you never really had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Maybe you never knew much at all about church or religion, but you realized through the preaching of a message or the witness of another believer that you needed to find God's plan and purpose for your life.

You could have responded and visited this page because you are aware that you are living in a backslidden condition. A person who is backslidden is someone who once was wanting to follow the Lord, but for whatever reason has drifted away and is now more concerned with following their own desires than God's will.

Whatever the reason, if you are ready and wanting to start "Getting Serious About God", the links below will help you take the steps that will prove you are "Getting Serious About God" Each step is important if you want your walk with God to be secure.

- Step One - Starting New & Clean

If you're getting serious about having a relationship with God the first step is you need to deal with sin. Simply defined, **sin is anything that is not pleasing to God**. There are things that are always right and things that are always wrong.

The Bible talks about people who do what is right in their own eyes. When a person lives their life with no concern for God's plan and purpose for their life they will end up living a life that is filled with sin.

*But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
And your sins have hidden His face from you,
So that He will not hear. - Isaiah 59:2*

If you're ready to get serious with God then you need to find the answer to the same question asked by the Philippian jailer in Acts 16:30-31, "**what must I do to be saved?**"

The answer, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.**"

To be saved means that, you have by faith, believed in Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Savior.

To be saved is to admit that there is sin in your life and that Jesus Christ came to live and die on the cross to take the penalty for your sins.

This first step is very important because if you have not put your faith, your belief, and your trust in Jesus Christ you are not yet a sincere follower of God,

And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. - 1 John 4:14

When you are getting serious about God you not only need to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, but you need to be willing to get clean and stay clean, as you follow God.

Jesus told a woman who was living in adultery to "**Go and sin no more.**"

The Bible uses the word "repent". To repent means to be sorry for your sins and desire to turn away from them and not have them be a part of your life any longer. If you have not made that confession to the Lord, you need to do it right now. Here is a prayer for you to say to God:

"Dear God, I admit that I am a sinner. I ask you to forgive me. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and that he rose from the dead. I ask you Lord to

come and live in me and to help me turn away from anything that is not pleasing to you. Amen."

If you are getting serious about God, you need to clean not only your heart, but you need to clean all the junk in your life.

Pour out the alcohol, flush the drugs, trash the pornography, and destroy any videos or music that would be offensive to Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what needs to be removed from your life so that you can start new and clean.

If you are not sure about keeping or doing something, ask if Jesus would come and watch, listen or do it with you. If not, then you shouldn't do it either.

- Step Two - Tell Someone

When you are getting serious about God, it is very important that you let other people know about your decision. This helps you by verbally reinforcing your decision and it also fulfills part of God's plan for your life.

"Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you." - Mark 5:19

Jesus wants us to share the "good news" with everyone that will listen. You may not have all the answers to their questions, but you can share your experiences about what has happened in your life.

You will probably be very excited about what has happened. You may find that some will share in your excitement while others may show little or no interest at all. Don't argue with people. Let your testimony show God's love and pray before, and after, that God will touch their hearts.

Phone or visit a friend, or family member, and tell them about how you have asked Jesus to be the Lord of your life. Let them know that you want to start living your life according to God's plan and purpose.

- Step Three - Establish a Quiet Time

Getting serious about God means that you are getting serious about your relationship with Him. Jesus used the term born again when referring to your new life in Christ. As a new born believer, you need to grow in this new life with Christ. The way to grow is to spend what I like to call, quiet time with God and His Word.

God gave His Son, the Living Word, to save us; He gave us His Written Word, to guide us.

The Bible (also called God's Word) takes on new meaning and importance once you become a serious follower of God. As a believer, the Holy Spirit helps you understand and apply God's Word into your life.

*I seek you with all my heart;
do not let me stray from your commands.*

*I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.*

*Praise be to you, O LORD;
teach me your decrees.
- Psalm 119:10-12 (NIV)*

There are several different versions of the Bible that make it easy for you to read and understand. Originally the Bible was written in Hebrew and Greek. The need came for people to have a translation in a language they could read. The King James Version (KJV) was translated about 400 years ago. Because it is written in the Old English, it can be difficult to understand. The New King James Version (NKJV) has been updated to our modern English and has been well accepted. The New International Version (NIV) is another common translation that is used in many churches to day. Unless noted, I will be using the New King James Version here.

I want to encourage you to try to daily spend some quiet time with God. Just as you need to eat each day to stay healthy, you need to eat daily from the Word of God to stay spiritual healthy.

But Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'"
- Luke 4:4

Here is a plan to get you started. Don't be overly concerned with the amount of time spent. When your starting something new, begin slowly and let your time develop naturally. As you establish this daily quiet time, the minutes will not be important. The time spent just being with God will become more and more precious.

FIFTEEN MINUTES (Or So) WITH GOD

Relax (1 minute): Be still and quite.
Take a few deep breaths and slow down.

Start With Prayer (1-5 minutes): Acknowledge your need to meet with Him. If there is something in your life that you know is not pleasing to Him, confess it and accept His forgiveness. Don't allow anything (sin) to hinder your time with God. Ask Him to speak to you through His Word and by His Spirit today.

Read God's Word (1-5 minutes): Read a verse or a few verses until God speaks to you through His Word. It is best to read certain portion of the Bible instead of just jumping all over. The Gospel of John is a good place to start, as well as Psalms and Proverbs. The goal is not how much you read each day, but what does God say to you as you're reading . When God speaks to you, stop reading and read it again.

Meditate (1-5 minutes): Think about what you just read. Think about it and let God show you what you need to know. You may not understand all that you read but you can still obey what you do understand.

Request (1-5 minutes): Ask God to help you apply what He has shown you. Bring any concern or need that you have to Him. Thank Him for loving and forgiving you. For teaching you what you need to know.

- Step Four - Pray

The real definition of prayer is "talking with God".

Getting serious about God requires that you realize the importance and the blessings that come as you talk with God. You have asked Jesus to forgive you and to come into your heart. You have asked for understanding and power to live a life pleasing to Him. God's greatest desire is to have a relationship with you. getting serious about God requires that you and God talk with each other. Prayer is simply when you and God are talking with each other. Jesus lets us know that the way to talk with God is not with fancy words or religious speeches. He rebuked those who were doing that very thing. Jesus tells us in John 15:15 that we are His friends. You can talk to God like you would talk to your closest friend.

True prayer is communication, you talking to God as He listens and then God talking to you as you listen.

*Evening and morning and at noon
I will pray, and cry aloud,
And He shall hear my voice.
-Psalm 55:17*

This is telling us that we can pray at any time of the day.

God wants to hear from us and talk to us all the time.

Prayer is when we can pour out our hearts to God concerning our needs, our fears, our desires, or concerning the needs in the lives of others. Prayer is also when God can speak into our hearts and give us comfort, wisdom and understanding concerning all that is on our hearts and minds.

Prayer is not to be seen as our shopping list for God, of things we want changed or done. Prayer is talking with one that we love, that we trust, that we know "works all things for good".

- Step Five - Find a Christian Church

If you are going to get serious about God you need to find a Bible-believing, Bible preaching church to become active in it. There are at least 58 times that the New Testament mentions the concept of "*one another*". This is talking about the need to be with other Christians in order to fulfill what God wants to do in your life and through His church. Phrases like serving, accepting, forgiving, greeting, honoring, teaching submitting, encouraging, and being devoted all talk about doing this to "*one another*".

The majority of the New Testament is written to local churches- the church at Ephesus, the church in Philippi, the churches of Galatia, the church at Corinth and so on. The true church of God is made up of born again believers who meet together as a local body or assembly or church.

When you find a local church you need to remember that the people who go there are not perfect. The church won't be perfect before you get there and it won't be perfect after you get there. What is important is that the people have a love for the Lord and for one another.

"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much more as you see the Day approaching." - Hebrews 10:24-25

Going to church is like making an investment. You can only pull something out if you have been willing to also put something in. You go to church to give praise and glory to the Lord in a corporate setting. You go to celebrate the blessings and presence of God. You go to encourage other believers as you display love and good works.

Going to church helps you to find God's plan and purpose for your life. You will be under the teaching and counsel of godly pastors and mature believers who can help you in your walk with the Lord.

Remember the Bible is the only authoritative Word of God. What I mean by that is, if a church claims they they have other books or further revelation, or

teachings handed down but not found in the Bible, stay away from them. The true church looks to the Word of God, the Bible, as its source for finding God's plan and purpose.

- Step Six - Be Baptized

Getting serious about God is when you're ready to do what He said to do. One of the last things that Jesus said, before He left this earth, had to do with obeying Him in being baptized.

"Go therefore make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." - Matt. 28:19

There are some people who believe that baptism is necessary for salvation. According to the Bible faith is what is required to salvation with no mention of baptism in (John 3:16-18; 5:24; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-14)

The Bible talks about three different baptisms- baptism into the body of Christ, baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism into the body of Christ took place the moment you were born again. You became a member of the family of God.

Baptism in water is an outward way to show others that we have become a follower of Jesus Christ. This symbolic act of baptism refers to death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. When you step down into the water it represents dying to your old life with all of its sin. Being immersed in the water refers to burial of the flesh. We are telling others that we no longer want to live according to the flesh, but we want to live our lives, following the Holy Spirit. Rising up out of the waters speaks about Christ rising from the dead with resurrection power and that we also are going to walk a new life with Christ.

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." - Romans 6:4

You may have been baptized as an infant or young child, or as a part of a religious ceremony. It is important to be baptized after you have understood and personally accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is a promise that God has given to every believer. Jesus told His followers that He was soon going to be leaving but that Father would send the Holy Spirit to be with us forever.

"But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you." - John 14:26 (NIV)

Jesus not only said that the Holy Spirit would come but that those who believed Him should be filled, or baptized, with the Holy Spirit.

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." - Acts 2:2-4 (NIV)

"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." - Acts 4:31

Jesus began His earthly ministry, after the Holy Spirit came upon Him. Jesus was lead and empowered by the Spirit to overcome the temptations of Satan. Jesus did the healings and miracles that He did being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Each and every believer needs to have this same power, this same infilling of the Holy Spirit so that we might be equipped to follow Jesus and live a victorious life. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a gift from God. You can't earn it, you just have to be willing to receive it.

"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!" - Luke 11:13

This baptism of the Holy Spirit is for you. Simply ask God to fill you with His Spirit and then by faith let the Holy Spirit fill you, empower you and enable you to be a positive witness for the Lord.

The followers of Jesus who waited for this promise:

"...were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." - Acts 2:4

This baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is a gift of Jesus to every believer who desires and accepts it.