



new testament, psalms & proverbs

THE JOURNEY

Steps of Faith



THE JOURNEY

Steps of Faith

This Bible is a gift to:

From:

Date:

A note about your Journey Bible:

This Bible is a gift to get you started on your journey with Jesus Christ. It may not be your first Bible, but it will help you remember what you have learned about yourself and God while at Young Life camp. As you move ahead in your journey, you will want to obtain a full Bible. When you reach that point, talk with your parents, pastor, priest or Young Life leader about the best choice.



THE JOURNEY

Steps of Faith

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THE JOURNEY

Steps of Faith

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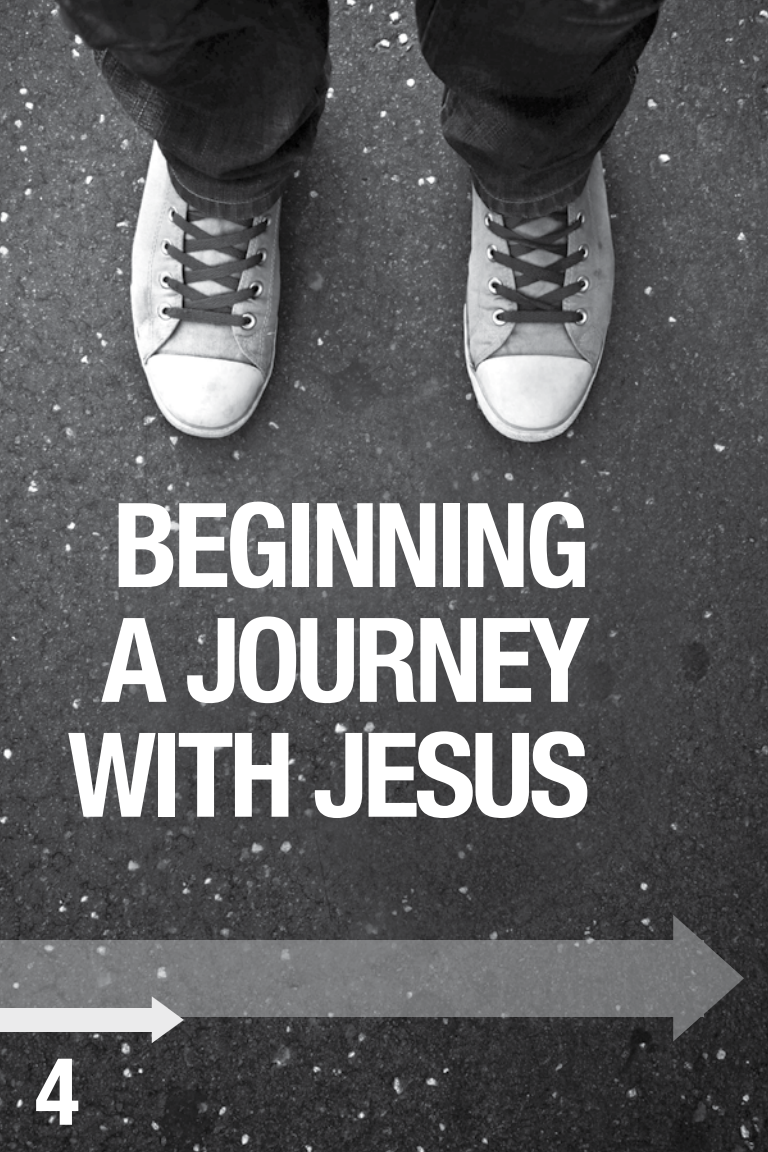
“I believe in Christ
like I believe in
the sun, not just
because I see
it, but because
by it I can see
everything else.”

— C.S. Lewis

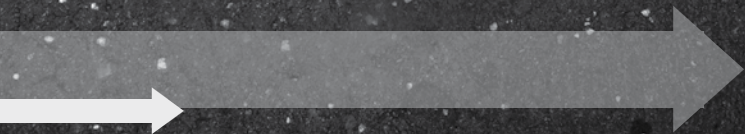
“When you read
God’s Word, you
must constantly
be saying to
yourself, ‘It is
talking to me and
about me.’”

— Soren
Kierkegaard





BEGINNING A JOURNEY WITH JESUS



What does it mean?

It means you've decided to walk through the rest of your life with Jesus, listening for His direction and acting on it. The Bible calls this process "walking by faith" (2 Corinthians 5:7). Walking by faith means taking steps based on what you believe. What facts do you believe when you begin a journey with Jesus? On what facts do you take your first steps? These are the basic facts of faith in Jesus Christ:

- 1. God loves you and created you to walk through life hand in hand with Him.**

"All things were created by him and for him"
(Colossians 1:16).

- 2. Each of us has let go of God's hand. We have said, "Sorry, God. I want to go my own way." The Bible calls this self-centered attitude "sin."**

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"
(Romans 3:23).

- 3. The trail we forge for ourselves without God leads to death and destruction.**

"For the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23).

The death the Bible talks about in Romans 6:23 is spiritual death. This spiritual death inside of us expresses itself outside of us through the destruction of our relationships, our dreams and our self-respect. Sadly, the path we forge on our own never leads back to God. We are cut off from God and the life He offers us. We have chosen a path that leads to a dead end.



JESUS EXTENDS HIS HAND TO EACH OF US

6

4. But there is incredibly good news. God loved us so much, He sent His only Son to get us. Jesus came to earth, stepped right in our path and once again offered us God's hand.

"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" (John 3:16).

5. The hand Jesus offers us is a nail-scarred hand. We deserve to be punished for our sin, but Jesus took the punishment for us. He died on the cross to set us free to walk with God.

"But God demonstrated his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

Death, however, could not get a grip on Jesus. The third day after His death on the cross, Jesus broke out of death's clenched fist – alive (1 Corinthians 15:3-7).

This proves Jesus wasn't any ordinary man. He was God in the flesh (Colossians 1:15) and the very source of life itself (John 14:6). It also proves that God the Father accepted God the Son's payment for our sin (Romans 4:25).

Jesus extends His hand to each of us and invites us to begin walking through life with Him. He wants to lead us to the kind of life that springs up from inside a person and never runs out — to eternal life.

“That everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:15).

How do we take the first step in our journey with Jesus? We reach out to Him so He can grab hold of our hands. We call out to Him for help. There are no magic words to use to begin a journey with Jesus. God hears the silent language of the heart. Here’s an example, however, of something a person might say:

“I was wrong, God. Please forgive me. I’ve been going my own way. Now I want to follow you. Please take hold of my hand and lead me.”

If you’ve reached out to Jesus, He has taken hold of your hand, and you’ve taken your first step down the path of eternal life.



WELCOME TO THE JOURNEY

If you like adventure, you will love what God has in store for you. “The Journey” is more than the title of this introduction to your Young Life Bible. It’s also your journey. You have started a lifetime of adventure with Jesus Christ.

From this point on, you will never face life alone. Jesus is closer to you than your own heartbeat. From now on, you are walking through life with the best friend you could ever want. He not only loves you, He also wants to teach you, forgive you, strengthen you and lead you on this journey. Now here’s an adventure worth living!

Are you ready for it? Let’s get started.



What You'll Need for the Trip

Like any other journey, there are some things you will need for this trip.

A Guide:

You'll be going somewhere you've never been before, so you'll need someone to help you on your way: Jesus has been there before, and He knows the way.

Directions:

The Bible's purpose is to direct us through life. It contains the thoughts and instructions of God Himself. It also records the lives of hundreds of others who set out on this same journey.

Companions:

It's not safe to travel alone. You need some companions who are on the same path as you. Jesus has a name for you and all your fellow travelers: His Church. You will need to seek out these traveling companions as soon as you get home.

A Destination:

Who goes on a trip with no destination in mind? Your new journey with Jesus has a destination as well. This life is just the beginning of all our Lord has eternally in store for us. Jesus once said the greatest thing we can do now is love God and love our neighbors (Matthew 22:37-39). We get to practice now what we will enjoy doing for all eternity — loving God and His creation.

Your Guide

Jesus is your guide for the journey. He will walk with you and direct your steps each day. What kind of guide is Jesus?

He's a compassionate guide.

Whatever you may go through in life, Jesus understands. He has been through it too.

"Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin" (Hebrews 4:14-15).

He's a powerful guide.

Not only is Jesus familiar with the hazards of this journey, He has the power to carry you over the rough terrain as well.

"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13).

He's a personal guide.

When Jesus takes hold of your hand, He comes to live within you through the person of the Holy Spirit. This means Jesus can speak to you and guide you from within.

"On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me and I am in you" (John 14:20).



He's an adventurous guide.

He'll take you places you could never get to on your own. He knows the peaks that offer the best view of life and the clearings with the biggest blanket of stars to dream under. Most of all, He knows the perfect path for bringing out the best in you.

"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"
(1 Corinthians 2:9).

He's a challenging guide.

Sometimes it's difficult to follow Jesus. He calls us to let go of our old habits, our old ways of thinking and acting, to move out of our comfort zones.

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it'"
(Matthew 16:24-25).

He's a reasonable guide.

He walks with us at a pace that's perfect for us. And when we begin to get tired, He sits down beside the path, clears a spot next to Him and says:

"Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light"
(Matthew 11:28-30).

What kind of guide is Jesus?

He's the perfect guide for your journey.

Your Directions

Have you ever tried to find your way around a new place without directions?

It's not pretty! Most of us just drive faster. All that does is help us get more lost. If we have directions, we are in much better shape. The Bible serves as our directions through life.

You are normal if you look at your Bible and wonder where in the world to start. Think of it as a small library with books containing the thoughts and directions of God Himself. It also records the lives of hundreds of others who set out on the same journey you are now on. You will learn much about your life by reading, pondering and obeying the words in this book.

If you have never read the Bible before, there are a few things you will need to know. *The Journey* is a New Testament. This means that it starts with the life of Jesus and goes on to tell about the teachings of His closest friends. The Old Testament starts with the creation of the world in Genesis and records all that God did through the Jewish people that prepared us for the coming of Jesus. *The Journey* also includes two books from the Old Testament — Psalms and Proverbs.

If you look at the Table of Contents, you will notice:

- **Matthew, Mark, Luke and John** — called the Gospels. These tell the life and teachings of Jesus.
- **The Acts of the Apostles** — records what the friends of Jesus did after He left them.
- **21 Letters or Sermons** — written by the close friends of Jesus and leaders in the early church to help those desiring to follow Christ in various communities.
- **Revelation** — a series of visions on how all of life will find its true meaning in Jesus.



YOU WILL LEARN MUCH ABOUT YOUR LIFE



- **Psalms** — a collection of prayers, songs and poems that covers the whole range of human emotions and life situations.
- **Proverbs** — a collection of wise sayings and instructions for those seeking to live for God.

When you want to refer to a verse in the Bible, give the name of the book you are referring to, the chapter of that book and then the verse (the little numbers that you find at the beginning of the sentences). John 3:16 (John, three, sixteen) refers to the Gospel of John, chapter 3 and verse 16.

Whenever you take time to read, it helps to ask yourself these questions:

- What do I learn about Jesus?
- What do I learn about myself?
- What do I need to act on, change, or be thankful for?

Take Time Out on Your Journey

Take time each day to quiet your heart and spend time with Jesus. Many Christians call this a “quiet time.” It’s a time to:

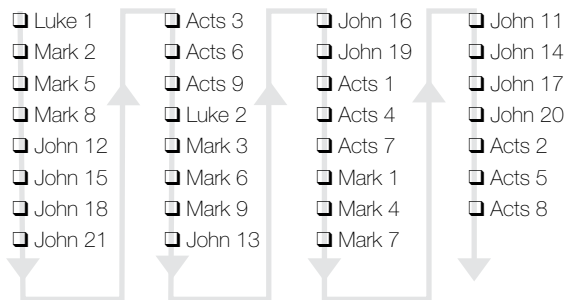
- **Read God’s Word.**
- **Think about what it means.**
- **Resolve to apply it.**
- **Tell the Lord how much you love Him.**
- **Pray for yourself and others.**

“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).

Just as our body needs food to be nourished, our souls need this time with the Lord for spiritual food. Pick a time and a place to meet with the Lord in this special way. You will need your Bible and notebook or journal. Thank the Lord for joining you (He is always waiting gladly for you), tell Him you love Him, renew your commitment to Him above everything else and ask Him to lead you in this time. Then read a short passage, asking what the Lord is trying to say to you. Think about this for a while, and write your thoughts in your journal. Share the concerns of your heart with your Lord. Close by praying that what you’ve read will become a part of your life.

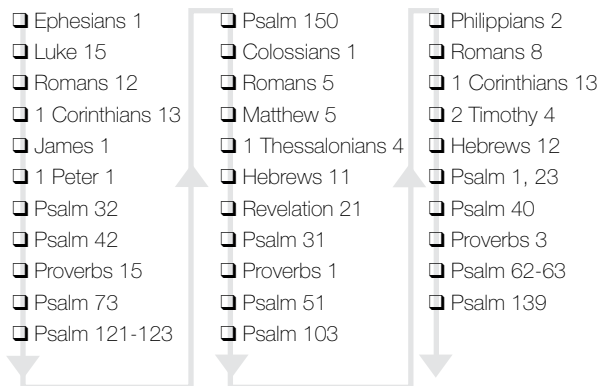
Your First 31 Days of Reading

Below is a suggested schedule for reading, designed to give you an overview of the life of Jesus and what His friends accomplished after He departed.



Your Second 31 Days of Reading

Below are selected passages from *The Journey* to help you read a sampling of the Bible's great chapters.



Traveling Companions

Even though you may have started your journey with a personal and intimate encounter just between you and Jesus, you will soon discover God expects you to travel with other people.

The beauty of God's love and purpose comes alive in a group. When you decided to follow Jesus, you became a part of a community of people, a family — His Church. Walking with Jesus means walking with others in His family who are on the same path. Sometimes we call this "fellowship." Fellowship simply means we are in the same boat, and this boat is captained by Jesus.

"And let us think of one another and how we can encourage each other to love and do good deeds. And let us not [avoid] church, as some do. Let us do all we can to help one another's faith"
(Hebrews 10:23-25, *Philips*).



**WALKING
WITH OTHERS**

Discovering Church

Church may not have been an exciting part of your life before you met Jesus, but now things can change. Most attend church for something they intend to get from it. However, church is a place where we can give as well as receive. In church we give honor, worship, praise, prayers and service as we grow in our love for Jesus and His people. We now have a place where we belong.

In church we also discover that God has a lot of family members who come in all shapes, colors and sizes. In this family we get to live out our love for all different kinds of people.

"Let me give you a new command: Love one another. In the same way I loved you, you love one another. This is how everyone will recognize that you are my disciples — when they see the love you have for each other" (John 13:34-35, *The Message*).

How do I find a church?

- If your parents attend a church, go with them.
- If your family does not attend a church, ask your Young Life leaders where they attend and go with them.
- Find out where other followers of Christ you know attend church, and go with them.



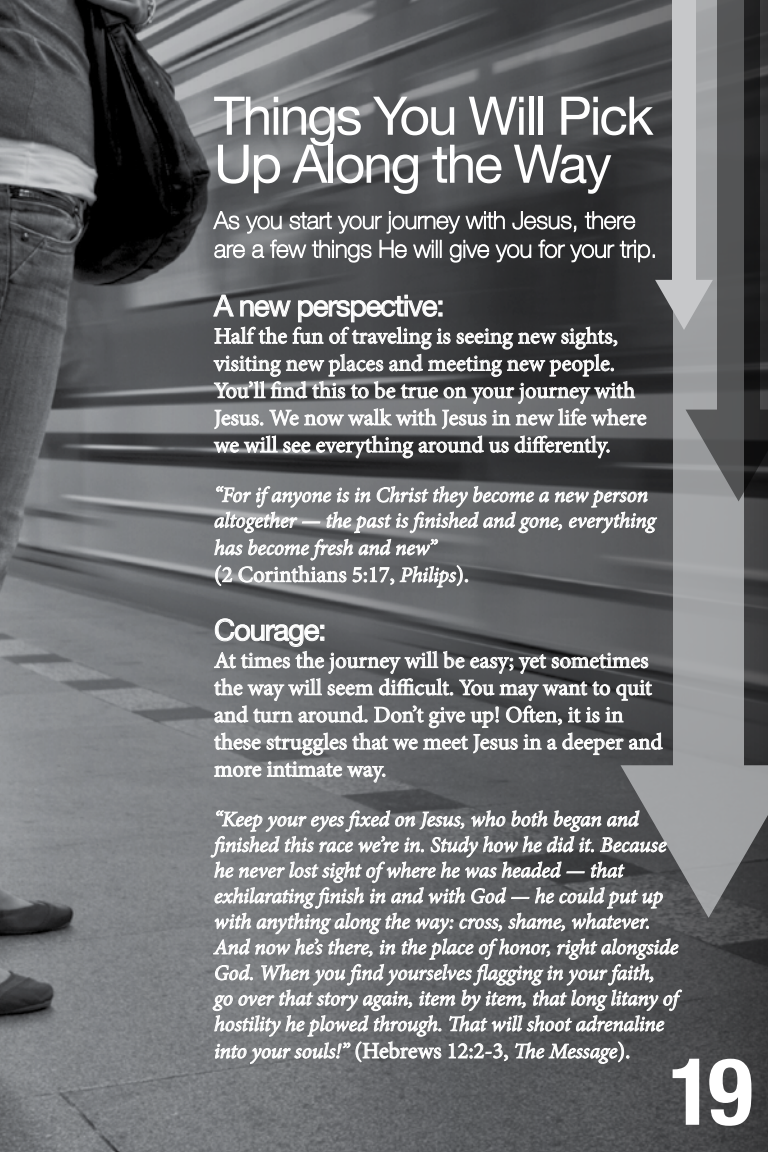
What to expect when you visit a church:

- **Music:** Songs and hymns that praise God.
- **Prayer:** Words and thoughts expressed to God.
- **Worship:** Reverent adoration offered to God.
- **Preaching:** Inspiring challenge to apply the truth of God to your life.
- **Teaching:** Instruction from the Word of God.
- **Sharing:** Understanding and support from those who love God.
- **Giving:** Opportunities to give back to God from what He has given to us in time, money and service.

*"I rejoiced with those who said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the Lord'"*
(Psalm 122:1).

*"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue
righteousness, faith, love and peace,
along with those who call on the Lord out
of a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22).*





Things You Will Pick Up Along the Way

As you start your journey with Jesus, there are a few things He will give you for your trip.

A new perspective:

Half the fun of traveling is seeing new sights, visiting new places and meeting new people. You'll find this to be true on your journey with Jesus. We now walk with Jesus in new life where we will see everything around us differently.

"For if anyone is in Christ they become a new person altogether — the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new"
(2 Corinthians 5:17, *Philips*).

Courage:

At times the journey will be easy; yet sometimes the way will seem difficult. You may want to quit and turn around. Don't give up! Often, it is in these struggles that we meet Jesus in a deeper and more intimate way.

"Keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed — that exhilarating finish in and with God — he could put up with anything along the way: cross, shame, whatever. And now he's there, in the place of honor, right alongside God. When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. That will shoot adrenaline into your souls!" (Hebrews 12:2-3, *The Message*).

Convictions:

If you set out on a journey and change your destination every 10 minutes, you end up getting yourself and others confused and frustrated. It's far better to set a course and stay on it.

"If you don't know what you're doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You'll get his help and won't be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without second thought. People who 'worry their prayers' are like wind-whipped waves"

(James 1:5-6, *The Message*).

Convictions come from watching those who have been on the journey longer than you. They come from asking yourself, "What would Jesus do in this situation?" The more you get to know Jesus, the more you will discover the things that are near and dear to Him.

Conditioning:

Your journey is more like a marathon than a casual "road trip," so you will need to be prepared and in shape. As you daily take time to get to know Jesus and seek to obey Him, you will grow in spiritual strength.

"So let's not allow ourselves to get fatigued doing good. At the right time we will harvest a good crop if we don't give up, or quit"

(Galatians 6:9, *The Message*).

Still, there may be times when you want to quit. Remember that when you took Jesus' hand, He also took yours. He won't let go.

"My grace is enough; it's all you need. My strength comes into its own in your weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9, *The Message*).

**FOR MORE OF *THE JOURNEY*, TURN TO
PAGE 21 AT THE END OF PROVERBS.**



**WHEN THE
JOURNEY
GETS
DIFFICULT**



Challenging Circumstances

“My parents are getting divorced. I don’t think I can deal with it.”

“I’m tired of living in a ‘bad’ neighborhood, working two jobs just to survive. How come life’s so easy for everyone else but me?”

“My friends say my new relationship with God is just a phase. I’m beginning to feel left out of the group.”

Remember who your guide is.

When the journey seems too hard, it helps to keep our eyes on the guide. He is powerful enough to pick us up when we stumble and knows how to bring out the best in us.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

Lean on your guide.

Talk with Jesus. Tell Him everything. Write Him a letter, if it helps. Read His letter to you, the Bible.

“Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7).

Never travel alone.

Experienced travelers never go alone. You will need other followers of Jesus to help find your way from time to time. That's part of the beauty of God's family.

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Look for signs of those who've gone before you.

Ask other followers who are farther along the journey than you to share how they made it through hard times.

"Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise" (Proverbs 19:20).



Destructive Habits and Temptations

"I really want to go to the party tonight, but I know my parents won't let me. The only way I can go is if I tell them I'm going somewhere else. It's a harmless party. And what my folks don't know won't hurt them."

"I didn't get to study enough for this test. It won't hurt if I cheat just a little."

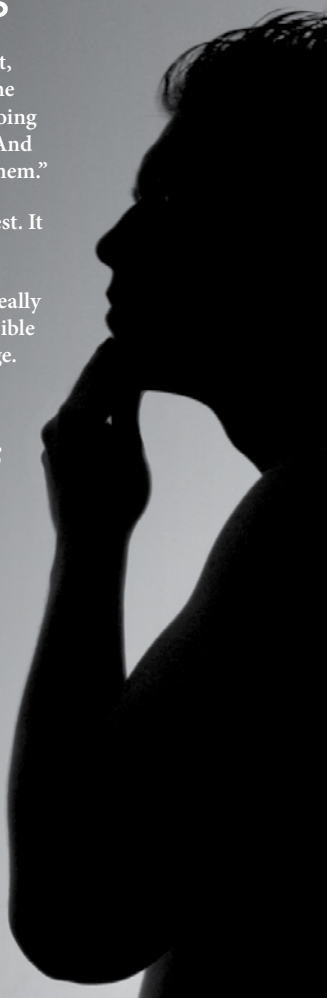
"My date wants me to have sex, and I really want to. But I was just reading in my Bible where God says to save sex for marriage. Yeah, right. How do I do that?"


Prepare Yourself Ahead of Time

Study the path.

Where does this particular path of temptation lead? For example, lying to your parents eventually leads to a loss of trust and communication. Considering the consequences at the end of the road will help you take a detour before you hit trouble.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death"
(Proverbs 14:12).





Get busy going the right way.

Read God's Word. Know it. Act on it. Going the right way is half the battle in avoiding the wrong way.

"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart"
(2 Timothy 2:22)

"Flee," "pursue" and "with." Three key words. You run away from the temptation, toward goodness, with other followers.

Travel with the right people.

It's hard to veer off the path when you're travelling with others who are going the same way.

"He who walks with the wise grows wise, but a companion of fools suffers harm"
(Proverbs 13:20).

Avoid taking unnecessary risks.

Don't put yourself in situations where you're bound to make bad choices. Think ahead. If you don't want to drink, then don't go to parties where you know kids will be drinking. If you don't want to cheat, study and don't take a cheat sheet to class.

"Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil"
(Ephesians 5:15-16).

When you're caught off guard ...

Someone may tempt you when you least expect it. A friend may slip you a cheat sheet during a test. You may go to a friend's house to watch movies and find instead a tournament of drinking games under way. Now what do you do? God has a simple answer.

Find the nearest exit.

Find God's way out and take it. Excuse yourself from the drinking games and go home or offer an alternative: "I'm going for tacos. Anyone want to join me?" God promises He will always provide a way out so that you can stand up under it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

FIND THE NEAREST EXIT.



Put your foot down, then take the lead.

Refuse to go the wrong way. Insist on going the right way, then lead by example. Do it with tact and respect for the other people involved, and you may be surprised to find who is willing to follow in your footsteps.

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (1 Timothy 4:12).

Take the friendship test.

Ask yourself this question: Does this relationship (a) help me walk with God, or (b) keep tripping me up? If the answer is "b," then you may be in a destructive relationship. If so, find a way out. You may feel insecure. But God has a promise you can count on:

"I tell you the truth," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life"
(Luke 18:29-30).

If you give up an unhealthy friendship because you're trying to follow Jesus, you can count on the fact that God is going to provide many more healthy friendships in its place.



What about when you make bad choices in spite of your good intentions?

When we're learning to walk as toddlers, we spend as much time on our face as we do on our feet. The same is true in our walk with Jesus. But if earthly parents can be patient, then imagine how tolerant our Heavenly Father is as we struggle through our first steps of faith with Him.

"As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him" (Psalm 103:13).

But what about when we let go of God's hand to go our own way?

When we reach out to Jesus at the beginning of our journey and call out to Him for help, He takes hold of our hands, and we take hold of His. We may let go of His hand from time to time, but He refuses to let go of ours.

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).





HE TAKES HOLD OF OUR HANDS

Then why do we stumble and fall if God has a hold of our hands?

God allows us to experience the consequences of our actions in hopes that we'll learn from our mistakes. When we pull away from Him to go our own way, He allows us to experience the resulting stumbles and falls. But He still has a hold of our hands. And the minute we've had enough of the dust, the minute we're ready to follow His lead again, He gladly picks us up, brushes us off and sets our feet back on the path to life. He does this as many times as it takes over the course of our journey with Him.

"He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:10-12).

The End (and Beginning) of our Journey

What about life after death?

We do not live as those who have no hope. We have committed ourselves to the One who conquered death and lives forever. Because He conquered death, He is able to raise us to new life as well. If we live for Him here and now, we will live for eternity with Him after we die. Now there's a reason to shout for joy. Death is inevitable, but it is not the end.

Won't I be bored in heaven?

Most of us have problems when it comes to thinking about heaven. We can't seem to get over those childhood images of playing harps and floating on clouds. But the Bible tells us heaven is where we will see Jesus face to face. It's impossible to imagine what it will be like to fully experience His presence. Still, we can try. Think of the greatest, most satisfying experience you have ever had, multiply that feeling a thousand times, and you are not even approaching the beauty of being with Jesus in heaven.

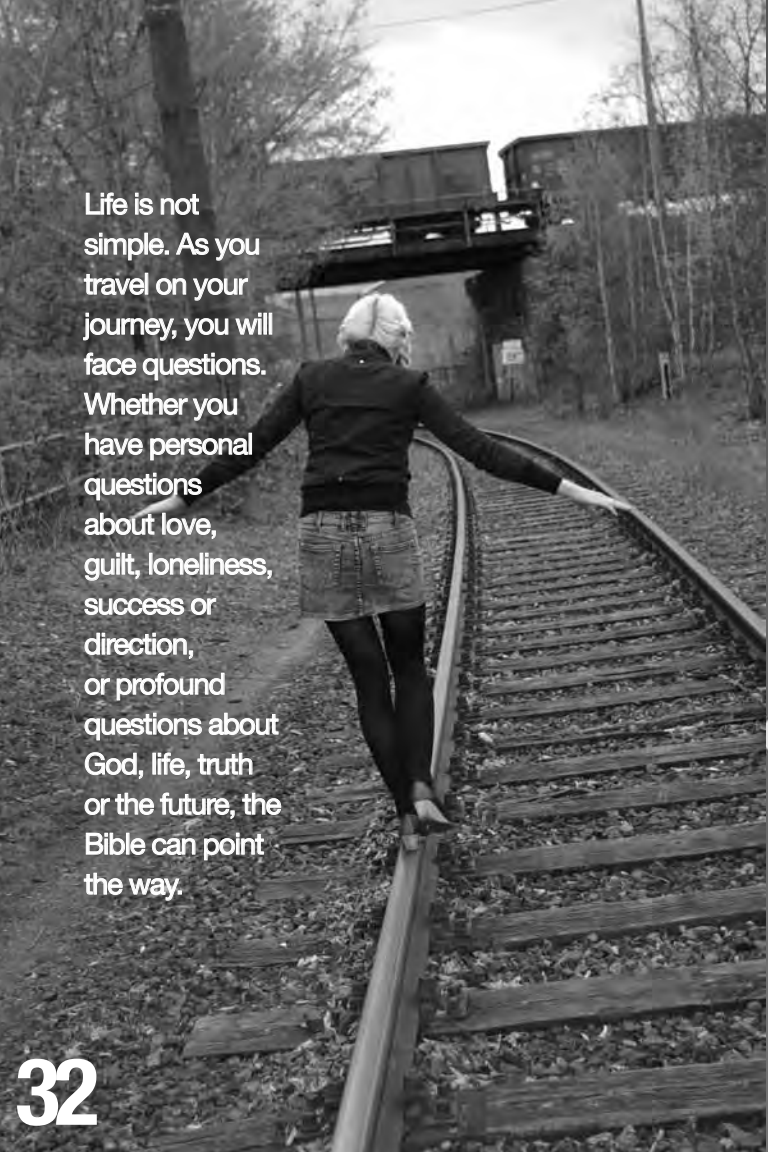
"But, as it is written: 'No one's ever seen or heard anything like this. Never so much as imagined anything quite like it — what God has arranged for those who love him'" (1 Corinthians 2:9, The Message).

You have started on the greatest adventure of your life. Don't give up — ever! Remember that Jesus does not give up on you — ever!

"He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 1:6).



**DON'T GIVE UP
— EVER!**



Life is not simple. As you travel on your journey, you will face questions. Whether you have personal questions about love, guilt, loneliness, success or direction, or profound questions about God, life, truth or the future, the Bible can point the way.



TOPICAL INDEX

Where to turn when encountering ...

Loneliness

John 14:18	Psalms 46:1	Romans 8:35-39
Matthew 28:20	John 16:22	Hebrews 13:5

Temptation (*general*)

1 John 4:4	Romans 8:37	Ephesians 6:10-11, 16
James 4:7	James 1:12-14	Luke 22:31-32

Temptation (*specific*)

Sex	Drunkenness	Rebellion
1 John 4:4	Ephesians 6:10-11, 16	James 1:12-14
Dishonesty	Materialism	Speech
Romans 8:37	James 4:7	Luke 22:31-32

Anger

James 1:19-20	Hebrews 10:30	Ephesians 4:26
Psalms 37:8	Proverbs 16:32	Matthew 5:22-24

Discouragement

Philippians 1:6	Galatians 6:9	Psalms 27:13-14
Psalms 31:24	1 Peter 1:6-9	Philippians 4:6-7

Fear

2 Timothy 1:7 Hebrews 13:6

Psalms 91:1, 4-7

1 John 4:18 Psalm 91:10-11

Proverbs 3:25-26

Needs

Psalm 107:9 Matthew 4:4

Psalms 102:17

Psalm 23:1 James 2:5

Matthew 6:31-33

Guilt

John 5:24 1 John 3:20

Romans 8:1

Hebrews 8:12 Hebrews 10:22

Luke 7:47-48, 50

Worry

Psalm 85:8 John 14:27

Philippians 4:6-7

Psalm 107:19 Romans 8:28

Sadness

Psalm 27:10 Psalm 56:8

Revelation 21:4

Psalm 119:50 John 16:20-22

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

Death

Psalm 23:4 Psalm 116:15

1 Corinthians 15:55-57

John 11:25 Matthew 5:4

2 Corinthians 5:1-4



"Jesus did somethin' tremendous for me, so much that when I think of it the teardrops start; so much that I'll never be able to thank Him; so much that it wouldn't make any difference if I never had another happy moment, if I could just please Him and honor Him and show Him how thankful I am. He suffered for me, the just for the unjust, to free me from the curse of death and give me a new life."

— Jim Rayburn
Young Life Founder
1909-1970



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