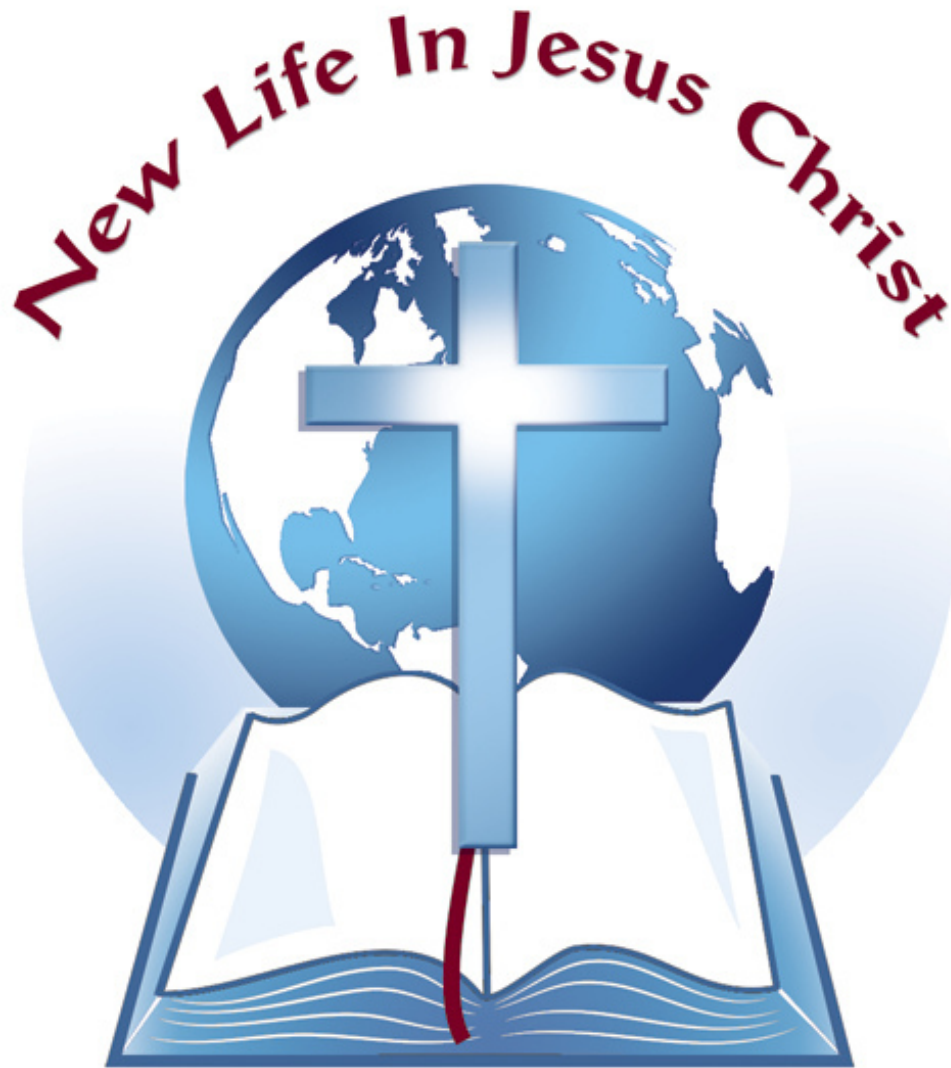


101 Discovering the NEW LIFE



Your name: _____

Date of Conversion: _____

Who brought you here: _____

A Fresh Start



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Congratulations for your decision to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord savior!!! When you commit your life to Jesus Christ you begin a new life or a "fresh start". The Bible explains it this way,

"What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!" - 2 Corinthians 5:17

We want to help you in this new life. That is what the discovering the New LIFE series is for.

Chapter 1

Salvation – The Beginning of a New Life

From the very beginning God created us and desires to have a deep relationship with us. God created us in His image and likeness so that we can be like Him. We have the capacity to be very close to Him. Nevertheless, we fall short of His expectation - we all have sinned. Sin is disobedience to God, choosing our own way instead of God's, and doing something we know it's wrong or immoral. Once we disobey God, there is a wall standing between God and us, - separation.

Sin separates us from God. It is not that God does not love us any more, but because God is righteous and He does not tolerate sin.

1. The Problem of Sin

- *_____ and _____ are the foundation of Your (God) throne; love and faithfulness go before you. - Psalms 89:14*

Separation from God causes us to lose our purpose of life. We feel empty and lost. Sin can even harm our body (e.g., when we keep on being angry, our blood pressure will go up; sexual sin will lead to sexually transmitted diseases). In addition, we have to face the eternal punishment for our sin - to be put in a place called hell.

- *The wages of sin is _____, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 6:23*
 - Other consequences of sin
-

2. God's Plan to Save Us

God loves us so much. He does not want us to be separated from Him eternally and suffer from the eternal punishment. Therefore, long before we are born, God has already prepared a way to save us.

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

God's way of saving us from our sin is by sending His only begotten son (Jesus Christ) to earth and died on the cross. Jesus came to pay our debt of sin with His own life as a sacrifice.

- Jesus is the son of God. He is God (John 1:1-4)
- Jesus became a man
- Jesus died for us on the cross
- Jesus resurrected from the dead on the 3rd day
- Related verses – Romans 5:8, Galatians 2:20

Notes:

3. How can we be saved?

The only way that we can restore that relationship is by accepting God as the Lord and forgiver of our life. We begin by admitting that we have sinned and that we need Jesus. Next, we believe that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the grave on the third day. Remember that believing means to

trust Jesus for everything. Then we need to turn away from our sins. Turning away from our sins means to change direction. To stop living the life we used to live and start a new life aligned with God's will. Lastly we receive Jesus Christ into our hearts and lives. We let Him take total control of our life.

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved.” Romans 10:9-10

❖ Salvation is a _____ from God

❖ We are saved by _____ through _____

Grace has been described as unmerited favor. That means receiving something for nothing. No one can earn his salvation. It is a gift from God. In our culture, something for nothing just doesn't make sense, does it? Most of us have a hard time believing this is possible, especially with God. So, we try to earn His forgiveness. The reality is, forgiveness does have a price – it's just that Jesus has already paid it for us.

Over the history, men have dreamed different way of salvation. (e.g., _____) Unfortunately, there is no other way except accepting Jesus as our Lord Savior.

4. How do you know you are really saved?

If you understand the Gospel and have accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord Savior, you are saved and become a Christian. Your sin is forgiven and your eternal destiny is the heaven. It is important to be sure you are saved so that you don't have to worry about you sin and focus on the new life given by God.

Our Assurance of Salvation

The Bible

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. – 1 John 1:9

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. – John 1:12

The Holy Spirit

We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. – 1 John 4:13

Our Spirit

The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. – Romans 8:16

Chapter 2

Getting Started with God

I have reborn in Christ, what's next?

You are at the beginning of a new life in Christ that is promised to be abundant. There are a lot to explore. You are no longer separated from God. God's blessing can come in an unlimited way. You have the Holy Spirit in your heart. You can be very close to God. Therefore, you should start developing a relationship with Him.

1. The Blessings from God

1. You are _____ and _____ with God

" Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1)

" In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us." (Ephesians 1:7,8)

2. We become _____

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. - John 1:15

3. You are no longer living in darkness --

"for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (Ephesians 5:8)

4. You are given an _____ life

5. We have _____ dwell in our heart.

2. Knowing God and Cultivating Relationship with Him

Now that we are no long separate from God. We shall get to know Him and His love more and cultivate relationship with Him.

When you want to know someone better, you would talk to him, listen to him, and talk with people about him. This is exactly what prayer, quiet time, and going to church are about.

Prayer

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. – Phil 4:6

Just like speaking to someone, prayer is talking to God. Therefore, everyone should know how to pray. God is very interested in listening to you. The Bible said, "He put his ear to listen".

Quiet Time

God created you so that He can have a loving relationship with you. God created you to love you and hope you will love him as well. It is by far the most important purpose of our life. God saves you so that your relationship with Him can be restored. The Bible teaches us on how to do that.

Simple steps to have quality Draw-near-to-God quiet time

1. Start with proper attitudes

- a. Come with faith
 - b. Come to please Him
 - c. Come to know Him
2. Select specific time and choose a quiet place
3. Follow a simple plan
 - a. Sing a Hymn or two
 - b. Pray
 - c. Read Bible (slowly, repeatedly)
 - d. Give thanks and worship
4. Spice with variation from time to time

Going to Church

God does not want you to be alone in your spiritual journey. Therefore, His will is to have a church, God's family. It is important to go to a church to have fellowship with other believers.

In church meetings, we can learn about God and the Bible (His Word) through the sharing of other mature brothers and sisters. We will talk more about this in the lesson 4.

Chapter 3

Growing in your New Life

God wants you to grow in Him. God wants every believer of His to be like his Son Jesus Christ. God's way to help us grow is called discipleship. It is modeled by Jesus when He was on earth. Back then, Jesus spent majority of His time with His 12 disciples. He taught them about the Heavenly Father, helped them to obey Him, mentored them, and ministered with them for 3 years. Although we do not have Jesus physically around us now, He lives within us and still uses the same process to help us grow. We are called to follow Jesus Christ and to be His disciples.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.- Matt 28:18-20

1. Be a Disciple of Jesus Christ

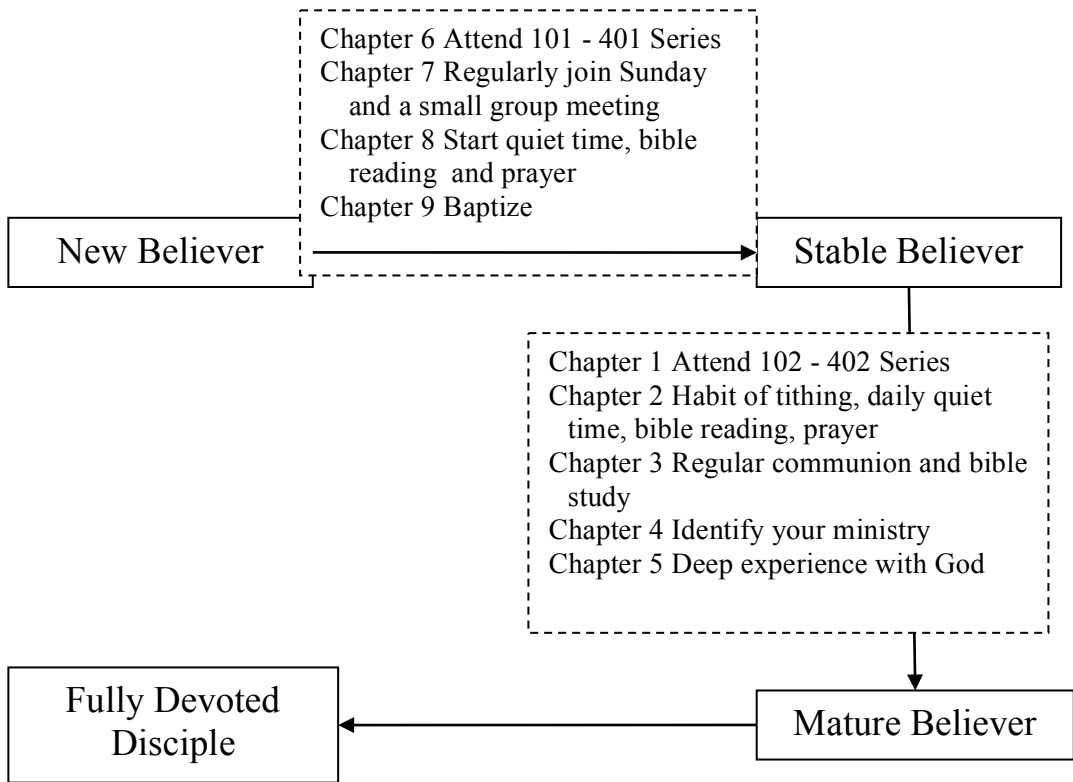
As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." – Matt 4: 18-19

Following God in our life is one of the most beneficial choices we could ever make in our life. When Peter was a fisherman, Jesus called him to follow him and later God shaped him and made him one of the most influential persons in the first century. Similarly, God wants to lead you to be a successful and significant person that can positively impact the life of many people. Here are some of the things we should do to grow in Christ

- Study His Word daily and spend time alone with Him in prayer
- Attend Bible Studies
- Obey and practice His teachings
- Seek out the companionship of other Christians who are growing with Christ.
- Share what you're learning about Christ with others

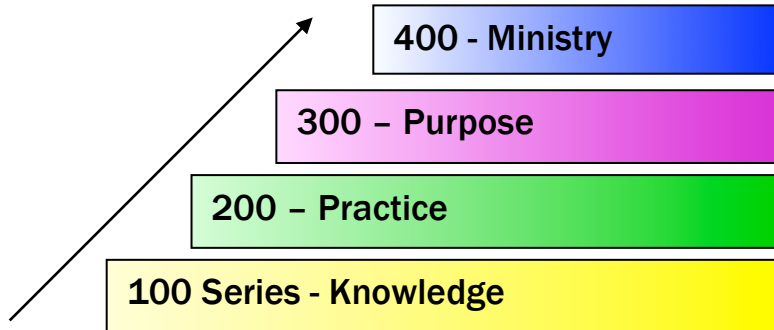
2. Our Spiritual Growth Path

Spiritual growth occurs when we follow God's teaching every day. It is a natural but intentional process. It is natural in the sense that we are endowed by God to have the capacity to grow spiritually, just as we have the capacity to grow physically. Yet we still need to make up our mind to grow and commit to do whatever it needs to help our growth. In order to help you grow spiritually, we have outlined a growth path for you so that you'd know what to do.



One of our missions is to help you become a fully devoted disciple of Jesus Christ.

Outline of 101-401 series



3. Other Basic Practices

Baptism

After we believed in Jesus, He wants us to be baptized in the name of Father, Son, and Spirit. Baptism is a public declaration of our faith in Christ. Baptism does not make you a Christian. It does not make you belong to the family of God. Instead, it shows that you are a child of God, that you belong to God's family, and that you are a follower of Jesus Christ.

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. – Matt 28:20

Communion

Communion, also called breadbreaking meeting, is the meeting Jesus set up for us to remember him. We meditate, sing praise, and pray during the meeting.

Public Prayer and Head covering

God wants us to worship him in church meetings. During the worship time, each of us has the opportunity to pray and praise God. When you hear other

people pray, you should say Amen, meaning you agree with it and we all offer the prayer to God as a whole. Therefore, you should make it a goal to pray in church meetings. For sisters, the Bible teaches that they should cover their head when they pray or preach in church meetings, as a sign of obedience. Therefore, sisters in our church will cover their heads in church meetings.

Chapter 4

Life with a New Family

When you put your faith in Christ, not only you have a new life, you also belong to a new family, the family of God – the Church.

The word "Church" in its original language means "an assembly of people". When Jesus told His disciples that He would build His "church", He did not mean a building or organization but simply a group of people redeemed from sin by His sacrificial death.

In the Bible, there are various symbolizations of the church.

- The Church is _____ (God's family) 1 Timothy

God is love and He treasures relationship. His very nature is relational. He even identifies Himself in family terms: Father, Son, and Spirit.

- The church is the _____ of Christ

- The church is the _____

1. Why you need a (local) church family?

Your new family consists of all believers of Jesus Christ, from the start of the human history to the end. It is important to join the church family,

meaning regularly attend a local church and to have fellowship with a group of believers. There are many reasons God wants us to do this. First, being in a church family identifies us as a genuine believer. In addition, being in a church family allows us to really practice what God wants – Love.

Over fifty times in the New Testament the phrases “one another” or “each other” are used. We are commanded to love each other, pray for each other, encourage each other, admonish each other, greet each other, serve each other, teach each other, accept each other, honor each other, bear each other’s burdens, forgive each other, submit to each other, be devoted to each other

2. Introduction to the Oakland Church

The church of God in Oakland is a local church established in 1997 with the help of a group of brothers and sisters from the Church of God in Hong Kong. At first, we met in a small apartment. At that time, most brothers and sisters are students, either attending high school or college. Over time we have grown and moved to the current meeting place. Our members consist of people from young kids to people over 60.

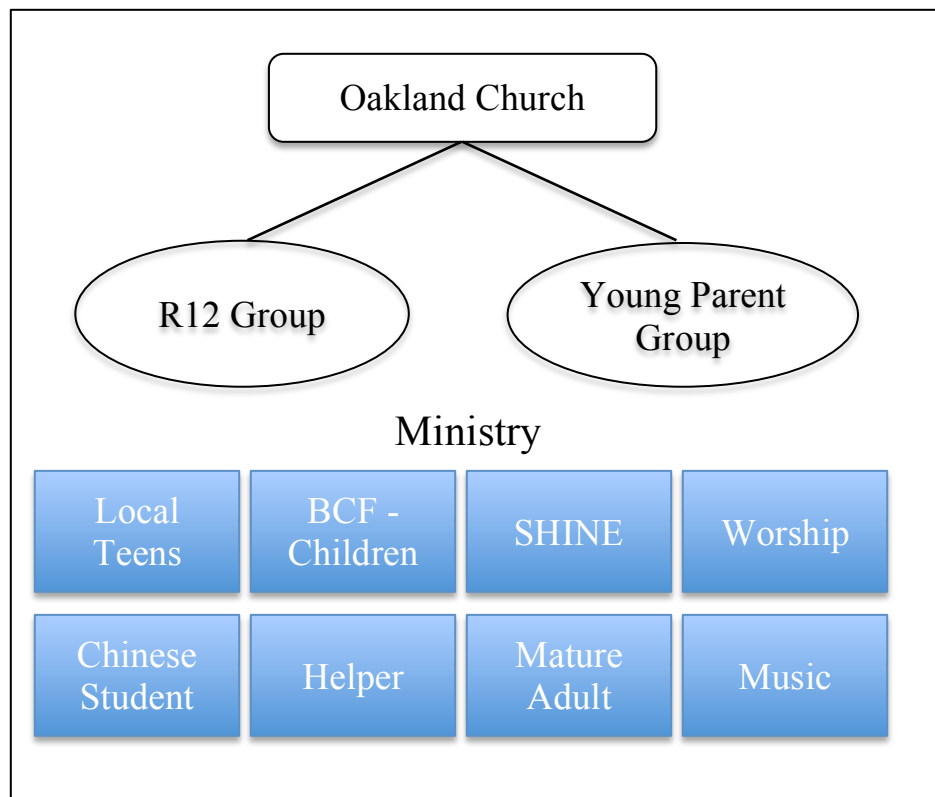
Our mission

- To reach out to the world with the love of God by preaching the Gospel and participating in charity work
- To teach and practice the teachings of the Bible
- To love, worship, and serve God
- To build an loving family of Christians

Our Structure and Leadership (as of Aug 2012)

The church is led by a team of coworkers, which are responsible for making major decisions and ensuring the smooth operation of the church. All staffs in the church are volunteers. We do not have any paid staff.

The church of God in Oakland is divided into two big groups: R12 Group (Singles / Couple) and Young Parent Group. Members of the church will be assigned to each group mainly based on his / her status (e.g., parent, singles, etc.). In addition, we have organized many ministries to serve people. As you get to know more about Christ. We encourage you to join our ministries to serve.



3. Get Involved in our Church

Life in our Church

Church is your local spiritual family that enables you to grow and experience the love of Christ. We have regular meetings on Sunday as well as various small group fellowships on weekdays (usually Friday), that allow you to grow in Christ with other brothers and sisters. Our Sunday meeting schedule and the group fellowship time are as follow:

9:30 – 10:45 a.m. – Communion Service (Chinese & English)

10:45 – 11:10 – Announcement + Break

11:15 – 12:15 – Church message (or prayer meeting – 1st Sunday)

BCF Fellowship

Toddler Activity

Group	Meeting time
R12 Fellowship	Every Friday 7:30 – 9:15 p.m.
Young Parent Fellowship	Every other Friday 7:30 – 9:15 p.m

In addition to these regular meetings, we organize other activities such as basketball competition, badminton competition, hiking, picnicking, BBQ, etc to help our members to live a well balanced and abundant life.

We also organize charitable activity to help the needy as well as to raise fund for poor people. For example, a group of us ran the 2009 and 2010 San Francisco Marathon and raised over \$10,000 for orphans in South America and Africa.

Your participation and opinion

We earnestly wish you will partake in the church. The Bible says the church is one body and we are different body parts. We believe that every believer has his/her unique contribution to the church.