

C+aN

THE ULTIMATE

PLUS



REINHARD BONNKE

THE ULTIMATE

Plus

It is a great honor for me to congratulate you on having made the most important decision of your life - accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord, Savior and best friend. Now you belong to Jesus and Jesus belongs to you. **He is your provider, your protector, your healer and your Lord.**

The Bible calls this being "born again" into God's family (John 3:3-7). God has given you a new heart. The old has gone; the new is here (2 Corinthians 5:17)! You have crossed over from death to life (John 5:24). You have eternal life now. That means you have a life that not only lasts forever, but is also the highest quality of life possible since it is a life of total abundance through Christ.

That is what you have **now** (John 17:3 and 10:10)!

I would like to add three things that are important for your new journey:

FIRST, EVERY SIN IS COMPLETELY FORGIVEN.

Now you are as righteous as you can ever be. More precisely, you are righteous in the same way Jesus Christ is righteous, because He has given you His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21).

SECOND, YOU HAVE BEEN "ADOPTED" by God through your faith in Jesus Christ. You are a member of God's family and His Holy Spirit now lives in your heart.

AND THIRD, JESUS HAS ACCEPTED YOU AS A BELOVED FRIEND. From now on you are in a love relationship and friendship with Jesus Christ. He wants you to get to know Him better and better, loving Him more than your best and closest friend.

WHAT IS MY

next step?

This brochure is written especially for you, because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior. It has two objectives: first, to encourage you to join a Christian church and second, to tell you how you can rest assured that God has truly accepted you.

Your next step as a Christian is to find a church where you feel at home. But why should you join a church?

Figuratively speaking: candles belong on candlesticks, lightbulbs need a socket and trees are rooted in the ground. Without candlesticks, the candle would fall over. Without a socket, a lightbulb gives no light.

And without nutrient-rich soil, trees would die.

For Christians, the church is like a candlestick, like a source of power and like fertile soil to take

A 'TOGETHER'

Faith

Being a Christian means to follow Jesus.

We walk in his footsteps. So what did Jesus do – did he go to church?

There were no churches in Jesus' time, but he did go regularly to a place of worship. And so did the first followers of Jesus. Worshipping God together with other believers is an essential part of being a Christian. The Bible says nothing about being solo believers.

To say, "I want to be a Christian, but I don't want to belong to a church" would be like saying: "I want to be married and stay single!" You simply cannot become a Christian on your own. By new birth you have entered the family of God and belong

to the **household of faith** (Galatians 6:10). This is good news, because it means belonging to a group of people, rather than to an institution.

Just as Jesus surrounded himself with the 12 disciples, we need to be with other followers of Jesus.

The church shows us that the Christian faith is a 'together' faith. When you became a Christian, you were not only brought into a relationship with God, you were brought into a relationship with other people, too.

*You became a part of
God's people, the church,
living on earth.*

By being born again, you have become part of the family of God and belong to the community of believers.

THE CHURCH

and you

Because the church is God's people, it is here that you can encounter God together with others. One Christian leader put it as simply as this:

A church is where the Holy Spirit is.

When we are with God's people, we can be brought face to face with the love, power, and majesty of God. By being born again, you have become part of the family of God and belong to the community of believers.

By being part of the church, you can...

...get to know other Christians and make new friends who will be able to encourage you in your new-found faith.

*Where two or three are
gathered together in My
name, I am there in the
midst of them.*

(Matthew 18:20)

FINDING

"my" church

Take the time to find a church that suits you. If you received the name and address of a good church near you with this brochure, we encourage you to start by going there.

Perhaps you'd like to call the pastor and make an appointment to talk about your new faith. Do not be afraid to tell the minister or pastor that you have recently become a Christian - he or she will be delighted to hear about it!

Try to find a church where you can really belong.

There are many different types of churches. In your area you will probably find a wide variety: churches that are traditional or modern, quiet or noisy, small or large. Go along to a

few services before you finally decide to put your roots down.

A healthy and stable church has these important qualities: good, biblical teaching

worship that enables you to encounter God **friendly people** who encourage you to grow as a Christian

THE CHURCH IS

for others

You need others. Others need you. The church is there not just for the people inside it, but also to serve the world around it.

What you have found, others also need to have. Churches all around the world work to bring the good news of Jesus to people in need - and every willing worker is welcome. Your church will help you to reach out and help others. Be filled with the Spirit and join in the greatest move of God ever known - to bring the new life of Jesus to everyone on earth.

What has happened TO ME?

Television news reports sometimes show the actual moment when people are told that they have won a large cash prize in a competition.

At first, they refuse to believe it. They think it must be a mistake – or some kind of hoax. But after a few seconds, there comes a moment when they finally accept the news. But even as they leap up and down in excitement, they cannot take in what it all means for them. They still do not fully understand what has happened. The same is often true for someone who has turned to God for the first time and started to follow Jesus. You know that you have taken an important step, but you still have many questions to ask.

What does it all mean? What has happened to me? How will it change my life?

The Bible uses a rich variety of ways to describe what happens to us when we turn our lives over

to God. Here are just a few of them.

You have...

...been declared 'not guilty' by God.

On the cross, Jesus paid the penalty for all the things which we do wrong in our lives, setting us free to be **completely forgiven** by God.

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

(Romans 8:1)

...been saved from darkness.

Whatever kind of darkness you have been in – fear, despair, guilt, addiction, grief, bitterness – Jesus has saved you from it and is already bringing you into the light.

God has called you out of darkness into His marvellous light.

(1 Peter 2:9)

...been born again.

What has happened to you is so important that the Bible describes it as being "born again" (John 3:3). Your life has been changed forever, because God now lives in you by his Holy Spirit.

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

(2 Corinthians 5:17)

...become a child of God.

As a son or daughter of God, you can begin to talk to him personally, as your Father.

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

(Johannes 1,12)

...come home to God.

Like the "prodigal son" from the parable Jesus told, you were separated from God and

have now come home to Him. **And God has welcomed you with open arms.**

This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.

(Luke 15:24)

...found peace with God.

Becoming a Christian marks the beginning of a new relationship with God. You have been reconciled to God, and you will find a new quality of living at peace with him. Jesus said:

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

(John 10:10)

...joined the people of God.

As well as a new relationship with God, you have also become part of the people of God. You need other Christians – and they need you.

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

(1 Peter 2:10)

As we will see later, the Bible is a major resource for every Christian to use in their relationship with God. If you have a Bible, take a few minutes now to read Jesus' story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. Jesus told this story to paint a vivid picture of how God welcomes those who turn to him. Beginning to discover what has happened to you is an important first step to take as a Christian.

Of course, it is only a beginning. God is so great and inexhaustible that we'll still be discovering new things about him to the end of our lives.

In fact, some people have said that the more you know about God, the more you realise there is to know!

HOW AM I

made right with God?

The Bible uses a number of pictures to describe what we were like before God took action to rescue us. It says that we were far from God (Ephesians 2:13). We had fallen short of what he created us to be (Romans 3:23). We were dead to God because of our sins (Ephesians 2:1).

Far away from God... **cut off from God...**
guilty because of our sins – our situation was desperate. So how was it possible for God to save us?

Brought to Justice

The New Testament uses the language of the courtroom to explain what Jesus achieved for us. Paul says:

...being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

(Romans 3:24)

What does this mean? One way to picture it is like this... Imagine a courtroom filled with serious-looking officials, a prosecutor, judge, and two defendants - a man and a woman -

standing in the dock. The jury returns with a verdict of guilty. The defendants stand condemned. They must suffer the penalty and pay the price. If they ask to be set free, the court will burst into disbelieving laughter.

Now picture a different scene. The defendants stand before the highest judge of all. Acting against them is 'the accuser', Satan, who demands a verdict of guilty.

*And if anyone sins, we
have an Advocate with
the Father, Jesus Christ
the righteous.*

(1 John 2:1)

THE MISSING

Evidence

The problem is that the defendants know they are guilty. And the judge of all the earth must act justly. There seems to be nothing left to do but to pass sentence. But then Jesus steps forward and challenges the accuser: "Where is your evidence?"

That causes quite a stir! The accuser is embarrassed. As he goes through his case papers, he cannot produce any evidence: no damning exhibits, no statements by witnesses, no records of any description. Not a single scrap of proof. No sign of this man and woman's wrongdoing can be discovered in all the universe. What has happened to it?

All evidence of our sin has been destroyed! Jesus Christ gathered it all up and carried it into the fires of God's judgment, which swept across the place where he was crucified. During the terrible hours of Jesus' death, the record was consumed, leaving no trace. Paul describes it in

this way:

And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

(Colossians 2:13-14)No

Condemnation

Jesus the advocate now makes his sensational claim to the whole court: "There is no evidence against this man and woman". The accuser withdraws in rage, and the judge pronounces the defendants "not guilty". They are set free, justified by God's grace.

This is a simple, graphic way of beginning to understand what Jesus has done for us. He puts us right with God. He declares that we are not guilty. As Paul says:

There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

(Romans 8:1)

Our sins have been forgiven and God chooses not to remember them, because of what Jesus achieved on the cross.

Because of this, Christians never need to fear the final judgment of God. Jesus promised this:

For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned.

(John 3:17-18)

Jesus came to set us free from fear - the fear of judgment, sin, and death.

The New Testament word for 'judgment' is the Greek word 'krisis' - from which the word 'crisis'

is derived. So we can say that anyone who has been born again will never know a 'crisis' hour, standing in the judgment, waiting to find out whether he or she is saved or lost. The matter is already settled.

HOW CAN I

be sure?

If you have just read through the last two sections of this booklet, you might now be thinking: how do I know that all this is true? How can I be sure that this has actually happened to me?

It all seems too good to be true!

If you are feeling like this, then you are not alone. Some of the biggest questions that people have when they first become Christians are questions such as:

How can I know that God loves me?

How can I be certain that I am forgiven?

How can I know that I have eternal life?

This section looks at these important questions.

BECOMING

certain

The good news is that God wants you to be certain of your new faith. You do not have to wonder whether God really loves you or not – you can know it for yourself. In one of the Bible’s great stories, Paul brings the good news of Jesus to the town of Philippi in Greece. He and his friends are beaten and thrown into the prison for the night. But during the night, there is an earthquake, and the prison’s jailer, frightened for his life, cries out:

“What must I do to be saved?”

Paul’s reply is full of certainty:

Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.

(Acts 16:30-31)

The first Christians were sure about their faith. Here are just three examples – but there are many more.

John, one of Jesus' twelve disciples, put this in one of his letters:

These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

(1 John 5:13)

Paul wrote to some of the first Christians:

*Now we have received ...
the Spirit who is from
God, that we might know
the things that have been
freely given to us by God.*

(1 Corinthians 2:12)

Paul prayed this great prayer:

...that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

(Ephesians 1:18-19)

How can we have this confidence in God for ourselves? How can we have "the full assurance of understanding", as Paul puts it in Colossians 2:2?

God has given us **two "witnesses"** to reassure us of his love and acceptance. These witnesses are the **word of God** (the Bible) and **the Spirit of God.**

WITNESS NO. 1

The Bible

Many people think that they can base their faith on their feelings. The problem is that when their feelings plummet, their faith goes down with them!

The Christian faith is based on something far more solid than our feelings. It is based on what Jesus accomplished for us through **His life, his death on the cross and his resurrection.** The Bible witnesses to these historical events, and it is through the Bible that you can become certain of your newfound faith.

But what is the Bible?

The Bible does not give us what people have thought about God - but what God thinks of us! It is God's inspired message to mankind, and this is why Christians call it 'the word of God.' The Bible is a book you can completely rely on to tell you the truth about God - and about

yourself.

As Jesus said:

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

(Matthew 24:35)

Our feelings may come and go, but we can know that we are saved and accepted by God because the Bible says we are.

Promises you can rely on

Here are some of the promises that God makes in the Bible to those who turn to him. If you have asked God to forgive your sins and give you new life, then you can be sure that these promises are made directly to you.

How can I know that God hears me?

You will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and

find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

(Jeremiah 29:12-13)

How can I be sure that God loves me?

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:38-39)

How can I know that God is with me?

Jesus said:

The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

(John 6:37)

God has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

(Hebrews 13:5)

How can I be certain that I am forgiven?

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:8-9)

How can I know that I have eternal life?

Jesus said:

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me

has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life”.

(John 5:24)

A professor of theology was once asked by an interviewer how he would sum up the Christian faith. The interviewer expected a long, complex reply. The professor thought for a moment and then simply replied by quoting a children’s song: “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so”.

This truly is the heart of the Christian faith.

*We know that we are
loved and accepted by
God because of what the
Bible, God’s word, tells
us.*

Your Birth Certificate

Jesus said that when someone enters the kingdom of God, or becomes a Christian, they are born again. He said:

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

(John 3:3)

When you were born, your parents were given a birth certificate, which you still use to prove who you are. You are who you are, no matter how you feel about it. Even if you suffered from a loss of memory, your identity would still remain the same. Your birth certificate states who you are – and that settles it.

This is how it is with us and the Bible. If you have received Jesus Christ into your life, then you have been born into the family of God. The Bible is your birth certificate. It tells you who you are, even if sometimes you may not feel that you are a Christian – or if you forget it! We can trust the Bible to tell us about our new birth in the same way that we trust our original birth certificate.

The disciple John put it boldly:

Beloved, now we are children of God.

(1 John 3:2)

And we have already seen that Jesus said:

*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears
My word and believes in Him who sent Me
has everlasting life, and shall not come into
judgment, but has passed from death into life.*

(John 5:24)

These are powerful words! They say that if you have repented and received Jesus for yourself, then you have eternal life and have crossed over from death to life. This is something you can stake your life on.

*We are already God's
children...*

(John 3:2)

THE LIFELINE

God has given us his word, the Bible, so that we can understand him better and grow strong in our faith. If you start reading it regularly, you will quickly discover that the Bible is a lifeline for you.

You might still be feeling worried about your new faith - is it all really true? Has God really rescued me from sin? The Bible warns us that Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44) - he is a master at the game. You might feel certain of your faith one day, but uncertain the next. Your faith can come under attack.

What should you do?

The answer is: go to the word of God. Find a scripture like John 5:24, and read it over and over again! Take it to God in prayer and ask him to write it on your heart. Remember that the Bible is your birth certificate. God says that you are his child and that you have eternal life - and his word is true. These are promises you can stake your whole life on.

As you read the Bible, you will discover more and more of God's promises for yourself. They will help you to become established in your faith.

*Whoever hears my word
and believes him who
sent me has eternal life
and will not be judged
but has crossed over from
death to life.*

(John 5:24)

WITNESS NO. 2

The Spirit of God

The second way you can be certain about what God has done for you is through the work of the Holy Spirit in your life.

When someone becomes a Christian, God becomes present in their life, through his Holy Spirit.

But who is this Holy Spirit? Christians believe that God is so much greater than us that he is on a different level of being. This is why Christians talk about there being three persons

within the one God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

This belief in God as a Trinity is much more than just a dusty old theory. It tells us that the God of the Bible is much greater and more glorious than we can ever think or imagine.

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to

God who alone is wise, be honour and glory forever and ever. Amen.

(1 Timothy 1:17)

CHILDREN OF GOD

The Holy Spirit is the person who puts us in touch with God. He brings God's presence, God's love, and God's power into our lives. He gives us the strength to live as Christ lived, and He gives us the inner certainty we need about our faith. The Bible tells us:

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

(Romans 8:16)

Notice that the Bible uses the word "spirit" twice - once with a capital letter for God's Spirit, and then with a small letter for our human spirit. God's Spirit assures us, deep inside our hearts, that we truly are the children of God.

As children of God, we start to relate to God as our Father. Many people today have had bad experiences of their human fathers. But God is

a Father made to the original specifications – loving and patient, ready to listen and speak to us, and also firm with us when we need it.

Again, it is the Spirit who enables us to relate to God as our Father:

For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'.

(Romans 8:15)

As God's Spirit works within you, your whole life – the way you behave, think, and feel – will be changed.

In the coming weeks and months, as you begin to grow as a Christian and learn to relate to God in prayer, your own experience of him will start to ring true to the promises of the Bible.

THE SECRETARY *of the Trinity*

Someone once pictured the Holy Spirit as the 'Secretary of the Trinity.' One job of any secretary is to communicate the decisions of the board to the people concerned. This is similar to what the Holy Spirit does. After you have received Jesus into your life, the Holy Spirit immediately swings into action. A registered letter arrives, as it were, at the door of your heart with the following message:

Dear

(If you have received Jesus Christ into your life, then write your name on the dotted line. This letter is addressed to you!)

The Father and the Son have asked me to tell you that your sins have been forgiven and completely blotted out and that you are now a true child of God.

They have also asked me to let you know that your name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life in heaven.

I have been told to encourage you to be faithful to Jesus to the end, because an incorruptible crown and inheritance is waiting for you in heaven.

Finally, I urge you to be strong in the Lord and in his great power!

On behalf of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit

What is the DIFFERENCE?

Becoming a Christian is the work of a moment. It happened when you gave your life to God and he rescued you from sin and death. Being a Christian is the work of a lifetime. It takes time for God to transform us into the people he wants us to be!

You are at the beginning of an incredible journey - the journey of following Jesus.

We have already seen how you can be sure of your newfound faith, through the witness of the Bible and by the witness of the Holy Spirit in your life.

So what difference does it make to us to live as a Christian?

Under new Management

When you become a Christian, the ownership of your life changes hands. In the past, you were the boss, doing things in the way you saw best. For many people, this meant looking after 'number one' above everything else.

But now you have a new boss. You have given your life to Jesus Christ. This is what it means to be a Christian - Jesus is now in charge, as the Lord of your life. The apostle Paul said:

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

(Romans 10:9)

What does this mean in practice? It means a new way of life. As we submit our lives to God

and become his servants, we find an amazing new freedom. We are no longer the slaves of sin - instead, we are free to do good. As Jesus said:

I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

(John 10:10)

We start to live out the life of what Jesus called "the kingdom of God". In simple terms, this means accepting that God rules us as our King. Jesus spoke about this way of life in his famous 'Sermon on the Mount,' which you can find in Matthew chapters 5 to 7.

It also means keeping to the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:1-17. The Ten Commandments are not very popular today - our society has turned them into the Ten Suggestions!

But these God-given rules were never intended to restrict or spoil our lives, as many people today think. Instead, they act like a government health warning on a pack of cigarettes - "doing these things can damage your life".

Plugging into God's Power

You might find the thought of living your life under God's rule rather daunting. The Bible is realistic about this. It knows how easily we can be tempted to fall into sin. It also tells us that the world is a hostile place for Christians, and that we have an enemy:

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

(1 Peter 5:8)

However, we do not struggle against sin on our own. The Holy Spirit lives within us, giving us the power to resist the devil and to overcome evil. We only have to ask him to help us.

Tapping into God

Think of it like this. You have electricity in your home. The house is wired and connected to the power station. If you arrive home on a dark night, there may be no light or heat in your house, but you know what to do: you press the switch, and power comes through. You have

light and warmth.

Living in the power of the Spirit is like turning the switch on. Everything else is ready. The gospel message is like the wires and cables that are connected to the power station, the cross of Christ. Lines of truth have already been laid. The power is there waiting. When you trust your life to Jesus and ask for God's strength, His saving power flows to you, giving you light.

The vital thing is to ask. Knowing all about a power station can still leave you in the cold and dark. You can touch the very walls of a nuclear power plant but still be freezing. When we ask God for his help to overcome temptation and to live our lives, then we are tapping into the resources of God, which are inexhaustible.

HOW TO BE A *healthy Christian*

Finally, there are a number of simple ways to grow strong in your faith. Take time to think through this

list. Try to decide now how you are going to put each item into action.

Eat good food

by reading the Bible, which is God's message to us.

Drink plenty

by praying to God and allowing his Holy Spirit to change you.

Take exercise

by living for God as a Christian in today's world.

Breathe fresh air

by enjoying the atmosphere of worship in church.

Relax with others

in the company of God's family.

All of this brings us back to the beginning of this booklet - finding a church that will welcome and encourage you as a Christian. The church is the only place where you can start to receive all that God longs to give you.

If you would like more information or help,
please contact:

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THE ULTIMATE **PLUS**

Congratulations!

You have made the most important decision of your life, to follow Jesus.

In this brochure, you will find vital information on what to do now that you have been saved.

It contains the next steps in your walk with Jesus.

This brochure will:

- help you to be completely sure of your salvation
- show you why it's so important to find a church

Welcome to the family of God! We pray that this brochure will be of great help to you at the start of your faith journey.

Reinhard Bonnke founded the international ministry of Christ for all Nations, and conducted evangelistic campaigns for over 50 years in

Africa, Asia and worldwide. In total, more than 79 million accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior through his ministry.

