

## ***NEW: First Steps For New Christ-Followers***

Thank you for downloading this sample of *NEW: First Steps For New Christ-Followers*. We're excited about the opportunity to help new (or young) Christ-followers learn how to lay the foundation for a meaningful faith-journey.

It's a privilege to partner with you to lead your students closer to Christ. Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have any questions.

**God Bless!**

The ym360 Team  
888.96.ym360

### **About *NEW***

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When students come to faith in Christ, the Bible is clear that they are made *NEW*! But what does it mean to live this new life?

***NEW* is all about helping students answer this question.** Here's some of what you'll find in *NEW*:

- 4 weeks of biblically solid, interactive, and creative daily devotions
- Important articles dealing with key issues of students' new faith
- A collection of charts, verses, lists, and graphics to help them understand the Bible
- Guides to help them go deeper in their faith when they're ready

**PLUS!!! We have FREE downloadable Leader's Guides that allow you to use *NEW* as the "out-of-class" piece for a 4-session small group Bible study!**

### **About youthministry360**

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**ym360** is dedicated to equipping youth workers through Bible Study Resources, Training, Community, and Networking. **Here are more ways you can learn more about us and what we do.**

- [CLICK HERE](#) to sign up for the ***ym360 Newsletter***. Receive a free lesson (with PowerPoint), plus stay up to date on other free stuff, new content, resource releases, and the newest trends & culture updates.
- **PLUS!** [CLICK HERE](#) to check out all the great **Bible Study Resources** ym360 has to offer at the ym360 store.





## FIRST STEPS FOR NEW CHRIST-FOLLOWERS >>>

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## HOW NEW WORKS

*NEW* isn't just another book. It's a highly interactive, super creative, in-depth journey into your *NEW* life.

*Because of this, we thought we needed to take a second and tell you a few things about this book and how it works.*

### NEW IS A JOURNEY

The concepts in *NEW* build on each other. The book is laid out over four weeks, each week having a mix of different activities to help guide you in understanding this new life you've discovered. *Or that discovered you . . .* Start at the beginning and move from day-to-day, letting each day, and each week, speak to you.

### GO AT YOUR OWN SPEED

You might be working through this with other teenagers and an adult leader. If so, you probably want to stay on track. But if you're not, take *NEW* at your own speed. For most of you, this will all be pretty, well, new! Take it slow and soak it in. If you need more than four weeks to work through the book, so be it!

### LET EACH DAY BE WHAT IT IS

We didn't make this book a cookie-cutter template where every day is the same. Your life doesn't work that way. Why should this book? Each day is a little different. Some have instructions for stuff to do, some just have a phrase or a verse for you to think about. Take each day of this journal for what it is. (Not bad advice for life, either!)

### MAKE SURE YOU HOLD ON TO NEW

The things you will be learning will stick with you forever. But you might want to check back in this book to see what your first steps as a *NEW* Christ-follower looked like. Plus, this book is slammed full of awesome resources you'll want to use even when you're not such a *NEW* follower. So, hang on to it!

## HOW NEW WORKS FOR YOUTH WORKERS OR OTHER ADULTS

If you're a youth worker or another adult, and you've picked up this book for your student (or students), you need to know that *NEW* functions two ways:

### STAND-ALONE DEVOTIONAL

This book works perfectly as a stand-alone devotional book. You don't have to do anything in order for your student(s) to engage with this awesome resource. There are four weeks of daily content plus some articles and other stuff, all designed for a teenager to walk through without an adult leader. (Though we absolutely suggest engaging where you can and allowing yourself to be available for questions!)

### 4-LESSON SMALL GROUP OPTION

However, if you want, you can use *NEW* as the "out of class" piece for a four-session Small Group Bible study meeting. How? Easy. All you have to do is go to <http://youthministry360.com/new-believers-small-group-lesson-plans>. There you will find a FREE download that enables you to lead a 4-session Bible study centered around what your students are learning in *NEW*.

## THE NEW YOU: AN INTRODUCTION

If you're holding this book, chances are it's because you've recently taken the first steps on a journey.

You will no doubt respond to the last sentence one of two ways . . .

**Some of you reading this right now realize that you are indeed on a journey.** You have a good idea of what's up ahead. You can't wait to really get started. If this describes you . . . well, that's pretty cool.

Buckle up. The ride is a wild one!

**Others of you will read that first sentence up there and be uneasy.** You may be saying to yourself, "I didn't sign up for a journey!" It's OK, though. On many of life's biggest adventures we don't really know we're on one until the trip is already underway.

If you're reading this and you're questioning whether or not you're really on a journey of some sort, an adventure, make no mistake about it: **You are.** You've started something. Something big. Something awesome.

If you're unsure of exactly what you signed up for, it's actually not a bad place to be. After all, you took the first step. A step forward. A step toward something. A step toward Someone.

Whether or not you had a full picture of what your future looked like, you still took a step toward Christ, toward God. What motivated you to do this? Only you know.

**BUT FOR WHATEVER REASON, YOU REACHED OUT FOR CHRIST.**

**MAYBE YOU DOUBTED AND WERE SIMPLY GIVING JESUS A CHANCE TO WIN YOU OVER.**

**MAYBE YOU TRULY SAW HOW BROKEN AND NEEDY YOU REALLY ARE.**

**OR MAYBE YOU SIMPLY HEARD AND BELIEVED.**

Whatever the motivation was, something moved you to consider. To be open. Somewhere along the way, God's very Spirit came alongside you to help you finally choose God over you. However it exactly happened, it started you down this path. And what a path it is . . .

**MAYBE YOU FELT THAT YOUR LIFE WAS MEANT FOR A GREATER PURPOSE.**

**YOU SEE, THIS NEW PATH YOU'VE STARTED DOWN IS A PATH OF DISCOVERY. AND WHAT YOU'LL DISCOVER IS WHAT MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE.**

This path doesn't just lead you to a new label. It doesn't just lead you to a new group of friends. It doesn't just lead you to the "right" and "wrong" way to think, or act, or be.

**This path? It starts with God. And it leads to God. And all along the way, you're encountering God. The path is all about God.**

Whatever you may have thought before this moment, hear me say this: this path you're on will never, ever lead you to a cleaner, better, happier version of "you." (Take it from someone who's been on the path for a while, this fact becomes more comforting the longer you're on this journey.)

You see, the beginning of your **NEW** journey can't lead to a *better* you. "Why," you ask? Because this journey began with another journey's end. An old journey. A hopeless journey where all of your energy and vision was focused on you. **The old you.**

**THIS NEW JOURNEY IS LEADING YOU TO DISCOVER THE NEW YOU.**

The moment you truly believed, the moment you handed the leadership of your life to God, the moment you realized you had a HUMONGOUS problem only Jesus could solve . . . in that moment God created something NEW and beautiful out of the ashes of the old, dead you.

**AND THE NEW YOU IS SO UNBELIEVABLY INCREDIBLE IT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO WRAP YOUR BRAIN AROUND.**

The Bible says this about you . . .

**IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, HE IS A NEW CREATION; THE OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW HAS COME!**



BEFORE YOU GAVE YOUR LIFE TO CHRIST, YOU WERE DEAD BECAUSE OF YOUR SINS. BUT THROUGH CHRIST, GOD GAVE YOU LIFE.

The Bible says:

**YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS ... BUT BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR US, GOD ... MADE US ALIVE WITH CHRIST.**



Your sin would've stood between you and God forever. But Jesus took it away.

Jesus gave you a NEW relationship with God. A NEW purpose. A NEW way of seeing things.

Your mind is NEW. Your heart is NEW. Even your very identity is NEW.

REMEMBER, I SAID IT WAS A JOURNEY. YOU DON'T HAVE TO KNOW IT ALL TODAY. PART OF BEING NEW IS THAT YOU'RE AN "ALL-AT-ONCE" NEW CREATION IN GOD'S EYES. THE OTHER PART IS THAT YOU'LL SPEND YOUR LIFE ON THIS EARTH BEING MADE NEW. GOD WILL ALWAYS BE WORKING IN YOU TO HELP YOU BECOME MORE LIKE HIM. WHICH IS AWESOME.

Sounds pretty amazing, doesn't it?

YOU PROBABLY HAVE LOTS OF QUESTIONS. BUT DON'T WORRY. THAT ONLY MAKES YOU NORMAL. THIS BOOK WILL HELP. IN FACT, THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT HELPING!

THE COOL THING IS THAT GOD HAS MADE IT SO THE NEW YOU CAN BEGIN TO SLOWLY BUT SURELY GRASP WHAT THIS NEW LIFE IS ALL ABOUT. HE'S YOUR GUIDE ALONG THE WAY. YOU'RE NEVER ALONE. YOU DON'T EVER HAVE TO FIGURE ANYTHING OUT BY YOURSELF. GOD HAS GIVEN YOU HIMSELF TO SERVE AS A CONSTANT COMPANION.

**EVERY JOURNEY STARTS WITH A FEW SMALL STEPS. YOU'VE ALREADY MADE THE MOST IMPORTANT ONES.**

If you're ready to keep moving forward, turn the page.

YOU MAY BE SLIGHTLY OVERWHELMED BY ALL OF THIS.

# Don't Be.

## WEEK 1 PREVIEW

*“Drivers, start your engines!”*

I’m not a NASCAR fan but I’ve had the chance to go to a race before. And it was a pretty awesome experience.

When the drivers are waiting at the starting line, the excitement of the crowd feels almost physical, like you could reach out and touch it. The noise from the engines rumbles in your stomach no matter how far away you are from the cars. And when they begin to make their way around the track, slow at first, then faster than anything you’ve ever seen . . . well, even a non-fan like me understands why people love their races.

*Think of yourself like a racecar at the starting line.* While this book isn’t a race, it is an exciting time of growing closer to God. And you’re about ready to take off!

**START YOUR ENGINE AND GET READY FOR A FUN FEW WEEKS OF LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE NEW LIFE YOU HAVE IN CHRIST.**

## HERE’S A LOOK AT WHAT TO EXPECT THIS WEEK:

**Week 1, Day 1:** A devotion on why you need a new life

**Week 1, Day 2:** An activity to guide you in thinking about your new life

**Week 1, Day 3:** Thinking about your relationship with God

**Week 1, Day 4:** An interactive activity about your new purpose

**Week 1, Day 5:** A devotion on the “know-ability” of God

**Week 1, Day 6:** An encouragement to rest a little . . .

## WEEK 1, DAY 1

This week we're going to talk a little more about the ins and outs of your NEW life and what it really means. So, let's just start at the beginning, shall we?

**Why do you need new life anyway? It's an important question to ask, right?**

You need new life because without it, you're dead. Seriously. See, when God created the world and everything in it (a narrative you can read in Genesis 1-2), He made Adam and Eve to be perfect. After all, God is perfect. And He wanted man and woman to be able to hang out with Him. Which meant they had to be perfect, too. The only problem was that they broke God's trust. *They became not-perfect.*

Adam and Eve rebelled against the Creator. (You can read all about that in Genesis 3.) The Bible calls this sin. And rebellion against God earned Adam and Eve separation from God and eventual death.

Here's the worst part: From that moment on, every person ever born carried Adam and Eve's sinful heart in them. And that means they carried death with them. That means you, me, the best person you know . . . everyone who has ever rebelled against God earns death.

A really awesome guy named Paul (you can read about him on page 96) wrote a letter to the Romans that says this: "For the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). Just like when you have a job and your work earns you a wage ("wage" is another word for money), our sin actually earns the wage of death for us.

**Not cool, right?**

## BUT HERE'S THE COOL THING . . .

The rest of that verse from Romans brings a ton of hope to the scene, hope that you already know about: "For the wages of sin is death, **but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord**" (emphasis added).

Because Jesus was God's Son, He was perfect. He was the only person in the position to substitute His life for yours. Because God loves you so much, He wanted to make a way to give you life. So God allowed Jesus' death to count in your place:

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Cor. 5:21).

By dying on the cross and coming back to life on the third day, Jesus paid the wage of death that your sin rightfully earned you. In other words, Jesus bought you life! You're alive only because of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus once said, "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life" (John 5:24).

**You could never have been good enough or tried hard enough to save yourself.** Your sin would've always kept you separated from God. But Jesus took care of that. And by accepting His sacrifice on your behalf, you have gained life.

You were once dead. But now, and forevermore, **YOU ARE ALIVE!**

**Consider taking a moment to talk to God in prayer about this. Seriously. Don't skip over this. Do it.**

- Thank God that He loves you so, so much!
- Thank God that He had a plan to allow you to escape the death your sin earned you.
- Ask God to remind you how your NEW life can be used to help other people learn how they can cross over from death to life.

## WEEK 1, DAY 2



In John 14:6, Jesus said these words: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Jesus said, I am **THE** life! This is what we talked about yesterday. **Jesus is truth.** And by following Him, you have life. A rich, full life today. And a life forever with God.

Today's activity is a simple one: *As much as you can, think about what it means to have this NEW life.*

Ask yourself these questions and really contemplate the answers:

- How does having this new life with God make you feel?
- What is different *right now* about this new life?
- Can you describe the way you look at Jesus now? Is it different than before?
- Has this new life changed the way you see others? How?
- Have you really thought about what led you to turn to God? If not, think about that today.

**If you want, use this page to write down your thoughts.** If you have a journal or a blog, maybe you could write them down there. Or, if you're not the "writing type," simply think about them as you go throughout your day.

## WEEK 1, DAY 3



**Relationships.** They're full of drama, right? Without Jesus, our relationship with God would have more drama than you can imagine.

Go to Romans 5 in your Bible. Take a second and read verses 6-10. (Read them twice if you need to.) Let's take verses 6-8 first. Here Paul was saying that maybe, just maybe, someone might occasionally sacrifice his or her life for a great person. But verse 8 says something entirely different: Jesus died for us while we were stuck in our sin. (In other words, we weren't very great at all.) Now let's look at 9-10. Verse 9 uses a big word. **It says we've been justified.** *Justified* is a legal term meaning that we were guilty, but we've been declared innocent. Through the blood Jesus shed on the cross for you, your guilt was wiped away.

But look—look what verse 10 says about what we were: enemies! Apart from Christ, we were God's enemies! Ouch! But verse 10 uses another big but important word: reconciled. *Reconciled* means to restore. To bring back together. **We were God's enemies.** Paul spoke to this again in Colossians 1:21: Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

**But Jesus' payment for our sins brought us back together with God.** Without Jesus, you wouldn't be able to know God. You wouldn't be able to be close to Him. You'd be His enemy. Jesus restored your relationship with God. *This new relationship?* It's a *huge* part of your NEW life.

Think about how you would answer these questions:

- What part of this new relationship with God are you enjoying the most?
- What has been the biggest surprise for you in enjoying a new closeness with God?
- How is this relationship changing who you are?

## WEEK 1, DAY 4

### WHEN GOD GIVES US NEW LIFE, HE GIVES US A NEW PURPOSE.

*What do I mean by purpose?* Basically, your purpose is the reason why you're alive. It's the goal of all your energy, thoughts, and actions. And when God gave you a new life, your purpose, like everything else in your life, became God-centered.

**What is your new purpose?** It's interesting. It can actually look a few different ways. It could look like Jesus' words to His disciples in Matthew 28:19: *"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."*

Or, from Paul's words to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 5:18: *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.* Or from the prophet Micah's words in Micah 6:8: *And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.* Or from John's words in 1 John 4:11: *Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.*

**The answer is that each of these verses and many more speak to your NEW purpose.** You have a new purpose, a new reason for living, a new object of your dreams and plans. You have a new lens through which to view your present and future.

On the following page, you'll see three categories. "High School" represents your present. "College" represents your near future. And "Career" represents a distant future. Take a moment to reflect on how your NEW purpose changes the way you look at these three categories of your life.

*How does your new life with Christ change the way you see your present, your immediate future, and your life as an adult?*

### High School

### College

### Career



## WEEK 1, DAY 5

Can you imagine what it would be like to have a best friend you didn't know? *That sentence doesn't even make sense, does it?* The very idea of having a best friend means sharing life with him or her. You know your best friend. If you didn't, he or she wouldn't be your best friend. Imagine someone saying to you, "My best friend and I have never met. I'm not even sure what she likes and what she doesn't. But, we're BFF for sure!" You'd look at that person like she were nuts, wouldn't you!

And yet people all over this world have a similar kind of relationship with the "god" they serve. These people devote their lives to gods they don't know. To put it better, they serve gods they can't know because they don't exist. *Should we look at them like they're nuts, too?* I don't think so. If you ask me, I think we should have two responses . . .

**1. We should be thankful we serve the one, true God, and that we can know Him!** We serve the God who revealed Himself over and over again to real people. These accounts are recorded in the Bible. We should be thankful God chose to go a step further and send His Son to live on this earth. He intersected with real people, too, both friends and enemies who testified in writing that He actually lived and walked on this earth. And we should be thankful God has sent His Spirit to live within each one of us, assuring us of His presence, and reminding us that He is real.

**2. Our hearts should break.** The men, women, and teenagers all over the world who give their lives worshiping statues, myths, or philosophies are basically good people. Like you and me. They believe in what they are doing. But in the end, the thing they serve isn't "knowable" like God is. And that's a pretty tragic thing.

One of the greatest gifts God ever gave us was the Bible, a historically validated account of His interactions with real people. **What an amazing thing it is to be able to know the one we serve.** Our Lord. Our friend!

### TAKE A SECOND AND THINK ABOUT THESE QUESTIONS IN LIGHT OF WHAT YOU JUST READ.

1. Thousands of years ago, God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah, predicting the relationship He currently has with us. God said we'd be able to truly know Him in our hearts and minds (Jer. 31:33-34). **The Bible is the main way we get to know God.** Describe your attitude toward reading the Bible. Do you enjoy it? Does it overwhelm you? Do you feel closer to God when you read it?
2. The Apostle Paul wrote that people can clearly see evidence of God and His characteristics in the natural world around them (Rom. 1:19-20). **Where do you see this at work in your life?** Describe how seeing God in creation helps you know God.
3. Because God is real, David could say this about Him: "The Lord is near to all who call on him" (Ps. 145:18). **When have you felt God close to you?** Describe how this nearness helps you know God.

## WEEK 1, DAY 6



## WEEK 1 ROUND UP

We started this week with the goal of trying to understand a little more about the ins and outs of this NEW life you have in Christ. Hopefully you were able to take the chance to really think about what this life means for your life today and down the road.

*Of course, there is so much more to it than what we were able to cover in these few short pages.* Hopefully, though, you were at least able to lay a good foundation to start building on.

And that's really what this first week of this journal was: a foundation. The first week sets the stage for the remaining three weeks. **So, get ready. You're about to get into some even cooler stuff.** Get ready to begin learning about God and what makes Him so awesome, what it means to follow Jesus, and what living the NEW life looks like in the real world.

*What are you waiting on?* Keep those pages turning. The start of Week 2 is just a few pages away. (But in the meantime, take a moment when you're free and read a pretty cool little article on pages 30 and 31 about *why* and *how* to study your Bible.)

## HOW TO READ THE BIBLE

This is the first of three short articles you can read whenever you have time.

Each of the articles unpacks one aspect of your NEW life. This one is all about how to study the Bible.

The Bible is the living and active Word of God. Engaging with your Bible with the purpose of encountering God and growing closer to Christ is the key to powerful life change. But knowing how to approach the Bible can be tricky. So, I want to pass along two helpful strategies for interacting with the Bible. Try them out and see what you think. (And if you want more strategies, turn to page 100.)

### STRATEGY 1: MEDITATING ON SCRIPTURE

No, not *meditating* like a yoga instructor or a ninja or something. Meditating on God's Word is simply when you read it and think about it. Let's practice a bit . . .

**STEP 1** Clear your thoughts. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help you see God's truth in this passage. *Turn in your Bible to Psalm 100.*

**STEP 2** Read the psalm slowly. Read it again, focusing on each word.

**STEP 3** Clear your head of any distractions. Now read the verses one last time, looking for words or ideas that jump out at you. You may choose to circle these words or phrases, or write them in a journal.

Now finish up:

- Think about how these verses make you feel. What do you want to say to God after reading this?
- Think about how these verses might change your outlook on your day or your life.
- Pray to God thanking Him for what He has shown you through His Word.

**Simple enough, right?** You can use this as a guide to meditate on any passage of Scripture.

### STRATEGY 1: MINING SCRIPTURE

Meditating on God's Word is important. But *mining* is, too. Mining is searching the depths of God's Word for a greater understanding of specific passages. Let's give it a shot.

**STEP 1:** Read the passage.

- *Let's read Galatians 6:1-5.*
  - Read it again, paying attention to what stands out as important.
  - Write down any words you think are important, or any questions you have after reading the passage.
- 
- 

(NOTE: If you have questions, now is the time to answer them. Search for key words in the concordance in the back of your Bible. Or ask your parents, youth worker, or another adult you trust.)

**STEP 2:** Know the context.

- Go back a few verses before the passage you're studying. Read until you come to your passage.
- Now read a few verses past your passage. You should have a better idea of what's going on now.

**STEP 3:** Find the main idea.

- Write what you think is the main idea for Galatians 6:1-5.
- 
- 

**STEP 4:** Live the truth.

- The Bible must influence your life. Come up with a few ways you could apply the main truth of the passage to your life.

**Two cool strategies.** Put both of them to use and watch yourself grow closer to the Lord.

"What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now!"  
1 Peter 1:3-4 (MSG)

A NEW Perspective . . .

If you've given your life to Christ, the Bible is pretty clear: 

# YOU ARE NEW!

**BUT WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE NEW? HOW DOES YOUR NEW LIFE LOOK? HOW DOES THE NEW YOU TALK? ACT? THINK? WHAT STUFF SHOULD THE NEW YOU CARE ABOUT? HOW IS YOUR NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD DIFFERENT THAN THE RELATIONSHIP THE OLD "YOU" HAD?**

You've taken the first and maybe hardest step. You've reached out to God, accepting the salvation only Christ can give. **BUT KNOWING THAT YOU NEED GOD IS JUST THE BEGINNING.** "What's next?" is an entirely different question.

**But don't worry! That's what NEW is all about. NEW: First Steps For New Christ-Followers is an interactive experience that helps you take the next steps in your new journey with Christ.**

## **THIS SMALL BOOK PACKS A BIG PUNCH. HERE'S SOME OF WHAT'S INSIDE:**

- 4-weeks of biblically solid, interactive, and creative daily devotions
- Important articles dealing with key issues of your NEW faith
- A collection of charts, verses, lists, and graphics to help you understand the Bible
- Guides to help you go deeper in your faith when you're ready

**BONUS: FREE LEADER'S GUIDE MAKES NEW A 4-SESSION BIBLE STUDY! FIND DOWNLOAD INFO INSIDE ON PG. 9**



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