

What We Believe... | Discover Ordinary Faith | Discussion Guide

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An Ordinary Faith

We believe that Faith is the most powerful and practical component of every Ordinary life. There are a few foundational questions we have in regard to living a life of real and practical faith. When we answer these questions an Ordinary Faith becomes a way of life.

How to Start. We start by Trusting Jesus

Jesus taught that life and faith boil down to two simple tasks: loving God and loving people (**Matthew 22:37-40**). This shows just how important relationships are to God. But how does a relationship with God even start? The Bible teaches that it's not about how good you are or how hard you try to please him. This is good news. But first we must start with the bad news.

Our problem is sin. According to the Bible, people are not "right with God" by nature. And sin has its consequences:

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

Sin can bring great destruction into every person's life: relationally, financially, emotionally, and even physically. But the ultimate penalty of sin is spiritual death. Because of our sin problem, we are subject to eternal separation from God.

Our solution is Jesus. The good news is that God wasn't OK with leaving us in our broken condition. He sent Jesus as the solution to our sin problem.

Galatians 1:4 Jesus gave his life for our sins, just as God our Father planned, in order to rescue us from this evil world in which we live.

Our response is faith. But the work of Christ on the cross does nothing for us until we respond. The faith moment requires two things: the right information about Jesus (and us) and the right attitude toward God (called repentance). When you're ready for your faith moment, you can respond in faith with a simple prayer. So the simple answer to the Question of *How to Start* is this, "We start by trusting Jesus."

Romans 10:9-10 If you openly declare 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 openly declaring your faith that you are saved.

Romans 3:22 We are made right with God by placing our faith in Jesus Christ. And this is true for everyone who believes, no matter who we are.

How to Live. We Live to Honor God

The Bible teaches that once we're saved, we live a new kind of life. The Christian life is not just a free pass to live however we want. We're new people, from the inside. And that means a change on the outside.

2 Corinthians 5:17 This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:9 So whether we are here in this body or away from this body, our goal is to please him.

But how does it happen? How do we practically pull off this new kind of life? Are we left to ourselves to try to do it? Not at all. God gives us three things:

The Spirit leads us. The Bible says that at the moment of faith God himself – by the Holy Spirit – takes up residence in our lives (**Ephesians 1:13**). That means that our new desire to honor God will be fulfilled not just by our own will power, but by God himself.

Ezekiel 36:26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you...

The Bible guides us. But there's more. God also has given us the Bible – which is his very Word, handed down to us through the ages and kept pure by his own power. As Christians, we don't just follow our hearts to know what is right. We trust his Word over our own – or other's – opinions.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.

Other believers help us. The final great resource for the Christian life is other Christians. Faith is not a solo thing; we need each other. It's a team sport. That's why every Christian should connect regularly with a mentor and/or a small group.

Galatians 6:1-2 Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path...

Hebrews 10:24-25 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works...

So in response to the question, "How do we Live?" the simple answer is "We live to honor God".

How to Grow. We Mature by Helping Others

How do we really mature in your faith. The Bible says that it's not about how "spiritual" you look or act, but whether you love people enough to help them. The answer is- *We grow by helping others.*

Mark 9:33-35 ..."Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else."

We grow by serving people. It's the Kingdom upside-down of Jesus' world. Do you want to be great? Serve others. That's what Jesus did, and that's what he expects of his followers.

Galatians 5:13 For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

We grow by giving financially. Looking outward should also affect our pocketbooks. How we spend our money says a lot about who we value. That's why mature Christians are givers.

2 Corinthians 8:7 Since you excel in so many ways—in your faith, your gifted speakers, your knowledge, your enthusiasm, and your love from us—I want you to excel also in this gracious act of giving. (see also **Matthew 6:19-21**)

The greatest way to grow is by mentoring others. Jesus called it "disciple-making". Simply defined, it's helping people pursue God. And every Christian is called to do it, not just the pastors. Jesus called fisherman, after all.

Matthew 28:18-19 Jesus came and told his disciples, "I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations..."

