



**I
HAVE
DECIDED**



JESUS
SAVES

A FRESH START

I am so excited that you have made the most important decision of your life in accepting Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. A relationship with Jesus is the doorway that leads to a life of transformation, blessing and victory.

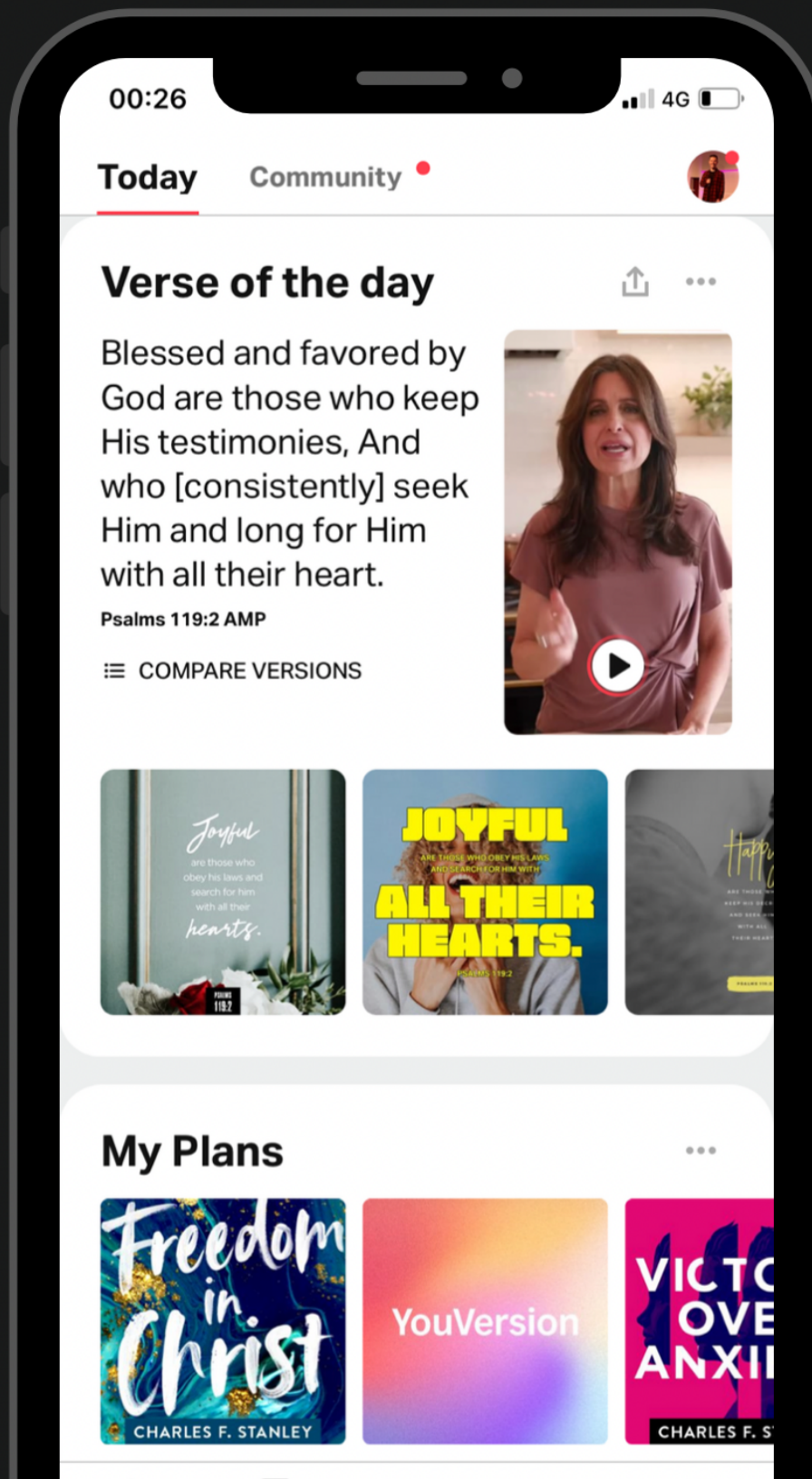
As a church, we are committed to helping you on your journey to discover this new life; and the most important place to start is the Bible. The Bible is the inspired Word of God and can become your greatest asset in your quest to know more. It will point you towards your Heavenly Father, reveal the Lord Jesus Christ and introduce you to the Holy Spirit.

It's my prayer that you would receive this booklet as a gift to mark this decision and that you would sense God's message of hope, peace and love to you. I encourage you to open your heart as you read and allow His Spirit to bring these words of truth to life within you.

LUKE MORGAN

Pastor, Gateway Church Cymru

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WHAT'S NEXT?

You have decided to dedicate your life to following Jesus. You may be wondering what does it all mean and what's next on your journey? We want to help you!

First, you need to know that you are heading in the right direction—you are going to heaven. Before committing your life to Jesus, you were separated from God by sin and on your way to a very real place called hell! But Jesus has saved you by dying on the cross in your place and rising again 3 days later. The Bible says,

"And since we have been made right in God's sight by the blood of Christ, he will certainly save us from God's condemnation. For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of his Son while we were still his enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son."
(Romans 5:9–10)

Second, you need to know that you have been given a new life! The Bible says,

"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)

As a new Christian, you can expect to have new attitudes and desires. You may need to replace some old habits and patterns with new activities that will help you to grow your new life in Jesus. Growth takes time, but it begins, right now, where you are. There are four steps that we believe will help you greatly as you step into this new life of faith.

1 START TO READ THE BIBLE —

***Your word is a lamp to guide my feet
and a light for my path.***

Psalms 119:105 (NLT)

We believe that the Bible is God's Word and that it is accurate, authoritative and applicable to our everyday lives.

Whether we read it in book form, scroll through it on our mobiles, or even listen to it while sitting on a bus, the Bible is far more than an interesting historical document with a few wise thoughts thrown in.

It is the way in which God, the Creator of the world, has chosen to communicate with us and to tell us, not only who He is, but also who we are and what our purpose is.

The Bible may be an ancient book, but its message is timeless and is as relevant to us today as it was to its first hearers thousands of years ago. As we apply the truths found within its pages, it has the power to transform our lives.

2

DISCOVER THE POWER OF PRAYER —

When we think about prayer it often seems to be a mysterious activity, but it can be simply described as a conversation with God.

This conversation can take place anywhere and at any time. We speak to God and then we listen for what He has to say to us.

We are unlikely to hear God's response as an audible voice but, as we take the time to be still and listen, we may be reminded of a verse we have read in the Bible, or a sentence from the sermon we heard on Sunday that is relevant to our situation. It may be as simple as a thought crossing our mind telling us we need to do something or speak to someone.

God speaks through the Holy Spirit into our hearts and the more we spend time in conversation with God, the more we will come to know Him and to recognise His voice. When we speak to God we don't need to use any special words. We simply speak to Him as we would to someone who we know loves us dearly and who wants the best for us.

The thing about being with someone who loves us is that every detail of our lives matters to them. While He was on earth, Jesus cared not only about people's souls, but also about our everyday needs. So we can be confident that He cares about every detail of our lives as we share them with Him.

**Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done.
Philippians 4:6 (NLT)**

***YOU
ARE
LOVED***

3 SHARE YOUR STORY WITH OTHERS —

After such a life changing decision, it is only natural that we want to talk about it with those who are close to us. That may seem a little overwhelming at first because we can feel as though we don't know enough about God, or have all the answers.

However, what we do have is the story of our encounter with the love and grace of God, and there is great power in sharing that.

Sadly, not everyone will be receptive to what we have to say and so it is important to be sensitive about when and how we share our faith.

Everyone's journey is different and all we can do is be ready to take opportunities when they arise and trust that they will bear fruit.

Ultimately, what communicates the reality of our faith most powerfully is not our words but the way we now live out what we believe.

***Let each generation tell its children of your mighty acts; let them proclaim your power.
Psalm 145:4 (NLT)***

4 JOIN OUR CHURCH FAMILY —

We are designed for life in community, to encourage and build one another up. In the Bible the church is described as God's family, so it makes sense to find a church where we can feel at home. In the same way that we would spend time regularly with our natural family and friends in order to strengthen our relationships, so we need to spend time regularly with our church family.

One of the best ways to find community is to attend either the in-person service at Gateway or online every weekend. In addition, as we make it a regular habit to be in church, we will have the opportunity to learn more about our faith and to join with others in worshipping and serving God.

***And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of His return is drawing near.
Hebrews 10:25 (NLT)***

LOVE

JOY

PEACE

THE S.O.A.P. METHOD OF READING THE BIBLE

There are many different ways to study the Bible and we recognise that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to getting the most out of your devotional time with God. The method we've chosen to highlight is designed to open your eyes to the Bible in a simple but deeper way.

PRAY——

Ask God to speak to you through His Word.

BIBLE——

Choose a version that resonates with you. If you're not sure, find a verse or passage in one version and read the same passage in a few different versions. See which version you connect with the most and find easiest to read and understand.

A NOTEBOOK AND PEN——

With the convenience of mobile phones and computers, many of us rarely pick up a pen to write with these days. Yet you will find that what you write becomes so much more personal and memorable.

A QUIET PLACE——

Find a place that you can go to as regularly as you can that will become your 'place of meeting' with God. It may be your bedroom or your living room. Wherever it is, make it a time and place where you won't be disturbed.



BIBLE READING PLAN

When choosing a reading plan, be encouraged that you don't have to read six chapters every day with a commentary and concordance by your side! Go at your own pace and read as much as you can. Some days you may stay on one or two verses and not be able to move on until you've pondered all that God is saying to you. Other days you may read a few chapters until one verse leaps out.

If you have never read the Bible before, we suggest that you start with the gospel of Luke which tells the story of Jesus' life and ministry. Then move on to Luke's companion book, Acts, which tells of the early years of the church. If you have been reading the Bible for a while but find that you always end up reading the same passages, here is an example reading plan that takes you into different parts of the Bible each day of the week. You simply read as much as you want from the section for that day and then pick it up again the following week.

Below is one example of a Reading Plan you may like to follow. This reading plan highlights passages from both the Old Testament and New Testament.

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MONDAY

Genesis – 2 Samuel

TUESDAY

Matthew, Mark, Luke

WEDNESDAY

1 Kings – Song of Songs
(excl. Psalms)

THURSDAY

John, Acts, Revelation

FRIDAY

Isaiah – Malachi

SATURDAY

Romans – Jude

SUNDAY

Psalms



S

SCRIPTURE

Write out a key verse that speaks to you from the passage you have just read.

O

OBSERVATION

What stands out to you in what you have read? What do you see? Are there word patterns, repetitions? Are there lots of verbs or several characters or just one?

A

APPLICATION

Ask yourself how you will respond to what God is saying to you today. To think that our Creator God wants to speak to us each day is astounding and humbling. How can you apply what you are hearing? Is there something you need to do?

P

PRAYER

Praying at the conclusion of your time of study, seals what God has revealed to you through His Word. Thank God for His presence with you and His Word to you today, and ask the Holy Spirit to enable you to outwork it as you go about your day.

EXAMPLE OF THE S.O.A.P. METHOD —

To get you started, here's an example of how S.O.A.P. can work. Write your thoughts in a way that comes naturally to you. It could be sentences or bullet points or anything in between!

S. "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16 (NLT)

O. God risked everything for us, He gave His only Son even though people could and would reject His sacrifice for them. He loved, so He gave. He died so we may live.

A. Today, what has leapt off the pages is the fact that 'He loved, so He gave.' He loved and as a response to that love He gave everything He had. What is my response to His love? Is it to give my all to Him, live my life in such a way that honours Him? What does it mean for me to respond out of love for Him? I think it means to love others regardless of whether they are of different race, religion, background or opinion. His love for me isn't conditional upon my response. He loves me in spite of it. Therefore today, in all my encounters with others, I choose to love first regardless of how I am received.

P. Father, thank you for speaking with me and showing your Son Jesus in your Word. Thank you for your sacrifice. Help me Holy Spirit to remember your love today and help me to see others the way you see them. In Jesus' Name I pray, Amen.

ONLY
JESUS

A FINAL WORD

Now that you have read this booklet you should have a good understanding of the basic steps to spiritual growth. In some ways, you may feel like you've grown by leaps and bounds. In other ways, you may realise that you have only begun to scratch the surface. In every way, you can be certain that God will be faithful to complete the good work He has begun in you (*Philippians 1:6*).

As you continue praying and reading the Bible and applying it to your daily life, God will continue to change your life and direct your steps.

May God bless you as you keep moving forward and growing in Him.

**"For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope."
Jeremiah 29:11 (NLT)**



WWW.GATEWAYCHURCHCYMRU.CO.UK
281 CARDIFF ROAD, ABERAMAN, ABERDARE CF44 6YA