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“I prayed the prayer... and I meant it.”

Welcome home! You're now one of God's people! Your personal relationship with God through Christ is the start of an eternal relationship with His family. By saying, “*I will build my church*” (Matthew 16:18), Jesus intends you to be part of a growing fellowship of loyal followers who gather to worship and go out to serve. He calls you to baptism and to remembrance of His death by celebrating Holy Communion regularly. He wants you to find and join a local church of Christians where you will be encouraged: **1) to feed on God's Word, the Bible** (Matthew 4:4), **2) to live a holy life** (Ephesians 4:22-24), and **3) to participate in spreading Christ's “Good News”** (Matthew 28:18-20). Those three areas of emphasis are marks of a healthy local church to join. But avoid groups who claim theirs to be the “only true church” that you *must* join for salvation. That claim isn't the “Good News” of Jesus, but the *bad news* of deception.

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— Rev. David L. Hatton, (Faith Legacy Church, 3532 Whitney Ave, Sacramento, CA 95821 – www.pastordavidrn.com)



- **God created you with potential.** “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)
- **He made the way for you to enjoy a personal relationship with Him.** “But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)
- **He made a community, called the Church, to help you to grow spiritually and to fulfill your purpose in life.** “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.... And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.” (Ephesians 2:19-20, 22)



- **Admit your need as a sinner.** “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:2)
- **Accept Jesus Christ to start your personal relationship with God.** “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)

A Prayer You Can Pray on Your Own: “God, I'm sorry for sinning against You. Thank You for sending Your Son to die in my place. And now, Jesus, I welcome You into my heart to be my Lord and Savior. Teach me how to live the rest of my life in a way that pleases You. Amen.”

- **Adjust your life to reflect your commitment to Him.** “So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.” (Colossians 2:6-7)

- **Allow the Church to help you to grow in Christ.** “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day* approaching.” (Hebrews 10:25) *[This “Day” refers to the time of Christ's return when this world's history will be swallowed up in the everlasting reign of Christ.]

“But I can't believe this!”

Then, at least be willing to do God's will. If you keep your own will above His, then God can never show you the truth. You'll just go on seeing and accepting whatever matches your own desires. But Jesus declared: “*If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.*” (John 7:17). Put Jesus to the test. Read what He taught about Himself in the Gospel of John in the New Testament. See for yourself what you find out. But remember, you must really *be willing to do God's will*.

“I'm not ready yet... I have questions.”

Wonderful! God invites questions! “*Come now, let us reason together,*” says the LORD. “*Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.*” (Isaiah 1:18). You see, God is holy and goes straight to the point. Our real need is to be cleansed from sin. Our intellectual curiosity can often shield our deeper moral problems or emotional hurts from God's healing touch. God wants to transform our lives, not tickle our intellects.



You can respond to God's love...

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