

*This is an extract from the book
'From God with Love'
which is a series of reflections for
Holy Week written for the church*

THE GIFT



Everything that God shows us through Jesus is summed up in two simple truths.

The first truth is that he loves you intensely and incessantly with no conditions attached.

He told some people that you have to become like a little child in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. That's the first hurdle to get over. Our very nature can result in a tug of war with our feelings. God's message is not to be reasoned or proved. He asks that we take a step of faith. Faith is trusting someone by taking them at their word.

The second truth is that to enjoy a gift you have to do something.

Some while ago the daughter of some friends of ours entered a competition whilst shopping at an ASDA supermarket - 3 months later a letter arrived saying she was the winner of a Volkswagen camper van worth about £20000. The prize was in her name and waiting to be picked up.

Now unless she had made a conscious effort to go and get it she couldn't have benefited from it - it would have just sat there. Even though it was hers, she would not have enjoyed

any of the benefits it has brought her. She had to do something about it.

Some are waiting for a special sign, a supernatural occurrence to show them the time is right to ask God into their lives. There are a number of instances when this has happened, such as Paul's experience on the Damascus Road. But for most of us God works in a very natural way and the time is right when you feel in your heart this is the step you want to take. You may not fully understand everything, there may be questions you still need answers to but the time is now.

He loves you but he will never force you to love him. He is stood now knocking on your door waiting for you to open it. If in your heart you really feel you want God to come into your life say this prayer now, slowly and thoughtfully:

Lord I come to you,
Thank you for sending Jesus to die on
the cross for me
I am sorry for all the things I have done
wrong,
I ask for your forgiveness

I choose to turn away from these sins
and turn to You alone.

Come to me as my Lord and Saviour

I want to serve you and be with you
forever

Amen

If you have prayed this prayer sincerely in your heart something very special has now happened. You may not feel different but you are and over the next few days you should do two things: *Tell and Taste*.

Tell someone who will understand about the step you have taken. Our faith is personal but we are not expected to live in isolation. Someone said *there is no such thing as a secret disciple: either the secrecy kills the discipleship or the discipleship kills the secrecy*. More than anything, you will need support and encouragement.

Taste the importance of a healthy diet. You have now been born again. How exciting! You are at the beginning of your Christian life and just as when we are born physically, we need food and exercise to grow, it's the same when you are born again. So to start your healthy diet feed on these three things:

God's word: there are loads of different types of readings and reflections that are available. Choose one that suits you. There's some good free stuff on the Internet and it's worth speaking with someone who's been a Christian for a while to provide some pointers.

God's people: active involvement with other Christians is essential for mutual support, encouragement and love.

God's Talkline: God promises he will never leave you. So make sure you talk to him as much as you can. Prayer isn't about lengthy formal stuff, in fact most of the time it is conversational. Paul said *Do not fret or have any anxiety about anything, but in every circumstance and in everything, by prayer and petition (definite requests), with thanksgiving, continue to make your wants known to God. Philippians 4:6 (Amplified Bible).*

Your new life has begun and you can go on learning and deepening your relationship so that God becomes closer and closer.

**From God
with Love**

