

Jump-Start

Two Follow-up Lessons for New Christians

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“encourage one another”
(Hebrews 3:13)

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Introduction

Jump-Start is a pre-discipleship workbook written to help brand new Christians take their first steps as followers of Jesus Christ. It is best to go over this material with an experienced Christian.

The recent emphasis among evangelicals on spiritual formation has influenced this manual. Hopefully this has enhanced its value as a tool to start new Christians down the path of spiritual growth in Christ and rich fellowship with other believers.

Jump-Start not only helps new believers get off to a good start in their Christian walk, but it also serves as a “trial balloon” for further discipleship. If the response to this material is good and if the relationship that develops is positive, then the next logical step would be to enter into an ongoing discipleship relationship. Ideally, a group of two or three people would make any continuing discipleship effort very rewarding.

About the Author

Jerry Reed (D.Miss) is the Milton B. Engebretson Professor of Evangelism and Discipleship at North Park Theological Seminary in Chicago, IL. His passion for follow-up and discipling builds on his 22 years of experience in evangelism and church planting in Ecuador and Mexico. The author is indebted to his students for some of the themes of Jump-Start. Particular thanks must go to Daniel Demming for his encouragement, ideas, and editing.

Jump-Start

It usually happens in the freezing cold of winter. On this occasion it was my son who called to ask me for a jump-start¹. I had loaned him my car. When he returned to the parking lot where he had left it, he discovered that the lights had been left on and the battery was drained of its power. I borrowed a car with a strong battery and with a jump-start, was able to get his car started.

Jump-Start in the Christian life

Jump-start in the Christian life occurs when a mature Christian instructs and encourages a new Christian to begin walking and following Christ immediately after making a commitment to Him. Synonyms: follow-up, Christian nurture.

The following is suggested material for follow-up with new Christians. There could be two or more sessions depending on the time and need. The sessions will help the new Christian take her or his first steps to becoming a mature, fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. Each session is designed in an outline form for easy adaptation to the situation and application to the needs of the new believer

¹ Jump-start defined:

1 To start (an engine or vehicle) by temporary connection to an external power source (as another vehicle's battery)

2 a. To get off to a speedy start; b. To impart fresh or renewed energy -- To energize

Session One

Meeting Jesus

1. **T**he Bible (See the End Notes²) teaches who we are:
 - 1.1 A unique creation of God, made in His image. (**Psalms 139:13-16**)
 - 1.2 Lost by our own choice (**Isaiah 53:6**)
 - 1.3 Separated from God (**Isaiah 59:2**)
 - 1.4 Individuals with freedom of choice (**Romans 6:23**)
 - 1.5 A new people in a new community in Christ (**1 Peter 2:9, 10**)
2. **G**od's original plan for humankind. (Figure #1)
 - 2.1 What did God have in mind when he created humans? (**Genesis 1:26,27**)
 - 2.2 Did God's plan for people change when sin entered into their lives? (**Romans 8:29**)

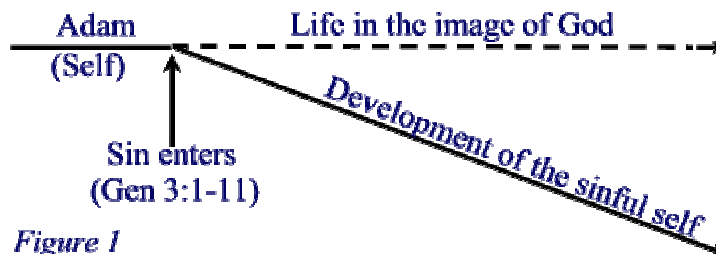


Figure 1

The dotted line represents God's plan but humans are moving away from God (the downward arrow).

3. **H**ow God brings hope to people - His plan still intact. (See Figure #2).

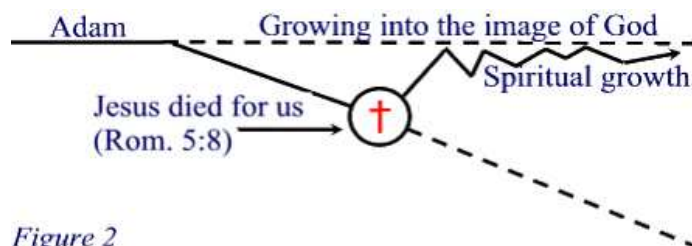


Figure 2

When people meet Christ (the circle), they begin a new life, growing into the image of God. The ups and downs become less as we grow spiritually.

- 3.1 If God has not changed His plan for people, even after the fall, what change needs to take place so that humankind can participate in that plan?

John 1:12,13:

Ephesians 2:5:

Colossians 3:9, 10:

- 3.2 There has to be a change within people themselves. **This is a change from being self-centered and lost to becoming a follower of Christ who now has God's Holy Spirit within to empower us to life in the image of God.**

- 3.3 How people may receive a new life through Christ.

Revelation 3:20

John 1:12

Romans 10:9

4. **W**hen Jesus comes into a person's life a lot of things change -- goals, values, direction, etc. (**2 Corinthian 5:17**) -- and they

receive eternal life. **(1 John 5: 11, 12)**. Notice that this is a present reality. You **now** have (not will have) eternal life.

John 6:47 says that one who believes has:

5. **W**hat to Expect as You Begin Your New Life

- 5.1. A new spiritual awareness - The Holy Spirit takes up residence in each person who opens their life to Jesus (**Ephesians 1:13**). The Holy Spirit will guide us and give us a desire to know more of Jesus and to make Him known to others (**John 14:26, John 16:13, Acts 1:8**).

Ephesians 1:13 -- What is the seal that we are marked with when we believed?

Acts 1:8 -- What do we receive power for when we are filled with the Holy Spirit?

- 5.2 Overcoming the influences of evil - When we come to Christ, we have turned from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God (**Acts 26:18**). God promises in His Word that He will give us strength to overcome temptations to do wrong (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). You will struggle, but God is with you now. You will still sin and will feel sorry for those things, but instead of turning away ashamed, you can come to Him with confidence to receive forgiveness and help. There is nothing you might do that Jesus has not already paid for (**1 John 1:9; Hebrews 4:16**). You will begin to understand God's grace and His mercy (grace = receiving what we do not deserve; mercy = not receiving what we do deserve).

1 Corinthians 10:13 What has God promised to give us when we are tempted?

1 John 1:9 What does God promise to do if we tell him we did something wrong?

Session Two

After Meeting Jesus - What Next?

1. **S**eek the Lord

- 1.1 You have come to know Jesus because He came seeking **you** and you responded to His call. Now we discover that we have a new friend. He already knows all about us. Our every thought and word and action is known to Him. (**Read Psalm 139: 1- 4**). He is so wonderful, but we need to discover how great His love is, and grow in our relationship with Him. We begin this process by reading His Word, the Bible, and by talking to Him (praying). Just as Jesus knew the Bible, so we too, want to know it so we can follow His will and be able to make decisions that are right (**Matthew. 4:4**). Just as Jesus prayed, so we too want to pray and seek God's presence and direction in our lives (**Mark. 1:35**)

Matthew. 4:4 What else besides bread does God want us live by?

- 1.2. Begin reading the Gospel of John, the fourth book (section) in the New Testament. A good goal would be to read a chapter each day. Pay particular attention to the word **believe** in this book. Notice the first and last instances of the word 'believe' in **John 1:12** and **John 20:30, 31**. Throughout the Gospel of John, **believe** has the idea of

going beyond mental assent and includes the idea of **trust in, obedience to, dependence upon, and full confidence in** Jesus. Someone said, "You can believe in Christopher Columbus, but that doesn't make you his follower or disciple." Believing in Jesus means that we depend on Him to give us a new focus in life, a new purpose for living, and a new hope of eternal life. He comes and lives His life in us when we **believe** in Him

John 1:12 What is the result of believing in the name of Jesus?

John 20:30, 31 What was purpose for writing the Gospel of John?

2. **L**isten to the Lord

2.1 The Lord speaks to us through the Bible, His Word. Ask the Lord to speak to you as you read His Word. It is good to establish the habit of reading it every day. If you miss a day He is still with you. But if you ignore the reading of His word you begin losing the freshness of your new relationship. Your spiritual battery runs out of energy and you need a jump-start. As we begin reading the Bible, we may not understand everything, but the things we understand will nourish us like milk nourishes a newborn baby (**1 Pet 1: 23 - 2:2**).

1 Pet 1: 23 - 2:2 Why are we urged to hunger for spiritual milk (the Word of God)?

2.2 The Lord responds to us through the Holy Spirit when we pray. When you pray, you do not have to do all the talking. Be still and listen. This takes time and the experience varies from person to person. Often it will be a hunch, or a sense of something that you will hear. (**Psalm 46:10, John 16:13-15, 1 Corinthians 2:12**). Whatever you hear that is from God, will never contradict the teaching of the Bible. You can check out your hunch or sense of what you understood by comparing it to what the Bible says.

John 16:13-15 Who will guide us into truth?

2.3 The Lord speaks to us through the wise counsel of friends, especially in the fellowship with other Christians (**Acts 13:2, 3**). **Proverbs 15:22** encourages us to seek counsel and **Psalm 1:1** reminds us that the counsel must be from those who are godly, thus from those who know the Lord and know His Word. This is one reason why it is so good to come together with other Christians for worship and fellowship.

Acts 13:2, 3 What did the Christians do before accepting a prophesy instructing them to send Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries?

3. **T**alk to the Lord

3.1 Our goal is that talking to the Lord will become as natural as breathing. He is with us always. Wouldn't it be strange to spend a day with someone and not talk to him? When you get up in the morning, when you walk along, as you drive, while you are at work -- in every moment --you can talk and share your life, thoughts and circumstances with Him. This is what the Bible means when it says to "pray continually" (**1 Thessalonians. 5:17**).

1 Thessalonians. 5:17 What does this verse teach us?

3.2 Prayer can be spontaneous, but it is also good to have a regular time to talk to God. Many people find that a time set aside each morning for Bible reading and prayer works well. Jesus left us an example when He arose early in the morning and went out to pray (**Mark 1:35**). Then there are those non-morning people who are not alert in the morning. Some have found an afternoon time slot and others an evening time to be good for them. Since we are creatures of habit, it will help you greatly to develop a habit of praying.

Mark 1:35 How does this example challenge you?

3.3 We can pray about everything. Often our Bible reading will prompt us in the things to pray for. Of course our family, friends, and work situations are powerful motives for prayer as well. Pray for your friends and relatives who are not yet believers. One very significant prayer item, and one that is often overlooked, is what Jesus tells us to pray for in **Matthew 9:38** where He says we are to **ask Him to send** out workers into His harvest field. When you pray this, you should be willing to become one of those He selects to send. Notice what happened after Jesus urges His disciples to pray this prayer: He sends them out with authority to preach about His kingdom (**Matthew 10:7**).

4. **T**alk About the Lord

The most natural thing to do after we have met Jesus is to tell other people. Jesus said to the man who had been healed, “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.”

1 John 1:3 What are we suppose to tell people?

5. Fellowship With Other Christians

5.1 When Jesus comes into our life we are suddenly part of a new community. This community is a fellowship, it is the Church, and it is the Body of Christ. In **Romans 12:4-6** we are reminded that each of us is a member of the Body of Christ and that we have different gifts for serving our Lord. We do this by serving one another and those who are not believers.

5.2 The New Testament examples of believers meeting together are abundant. But if the examples are not enough, we have the direct statement in **Hebrews 10:25** to encourage us to become part of a Christian Fellowship, the Church. This is God's design and it is necessary.

Hebrews 10:25 What are not to stop doing?

Congratulations.

You have just experienced a discipleship relationship with those who have walked with you through Jump-Start. I want to encourage you to keep on growing. You may have already noticed that Jesus disciplined his followers. He did this by spending time with them and using the small group context to help them grow. The Apostle Paul did the same thing with a number of people. Notable among those he disciplined was Timothy.

Maturing in Christ

When Paul wrote to Timothy, he reminded him what he was to do as a Christian. He said, "And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will

also be qualified to teach others.” (2 Timothy 2:2). The challenge is to move beyond passive church attendance into active growth and participation in the church and God’s Kingdom. Jump-Start has been a beginning. Why not continue growing and learning in such a way that you can help others to grow and they in turn help others? There are a number of options to continue the discipling process. One of these, that has been used for many years in many countries, is the Discipleship Encounters with its ten steps in outline form for prompting conversation about the Christian life and applied Bible study for daily living.

The Discipleship Encounters are free by downloading them from the following URL: www.discipleship.info To order a hard copy call 1-800-IDEA. They were first written in Spanish, but now are available in many languages. They are flexible and allow believers to grow as disciples and to multiply disciples by each one training one. They focus on the basic teachings of the Bible on the Christian life. Their outline format allows for ample conversation about the Bible and how it applies to each person's own situation. We have tracked the multiplication of disciples to 10 generations in places where the Discipleship Encounters have been used.

²End Notes:

The Bible consists of two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament starts with the story of creation and tells how God selected a group of people (Israel) to tell all other peoples of the earth about Him. The New Testament tells about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and also about His followers after the resurrection. The Old Testament is divided up into 39 parts and the New Testament into 27 parts. These parts are called books. For the purpose of finding the various paragraphs and sentences, each book is broken down into chapters with little subdivisions called verses. The table of contents in the front of the Bible will help you find the books.