

One of the magazines I regularly read is *Christianity Today*, and there are usually several articles I save out of every issue. For the past two years, the last column in each issue has been a feature that highlights stories of conversion to Christ. The testimonies have been from ex-atheists, ex-Muslims, ex-bank robbers, ex-Mormons, football stars, and one media pundit who met Jesus in a Taiwan hotel room.

The title this month caught my attention. It was **“Humdrum Hallelujah!”** The opening paragraph goes like this: “I have no memory of becoming a Christian. I didn’t pray a prayer or walk an aisle or have a eureka moment. In fact, I don’t remember a time when I didn’t love the Lord Jesus. My Christian testimony—the story of how I came to faith—is downright boring.” Author Megan Hill goes on to observe that “It’s not the outward circumstances that are amazing. It is the grace.”

As we move through these last forty-eight hours until CHRISTmas Day, Megan’s testimony reminds me that if we move through these days without personal and vibrant relationship with Jesus, not in the past, but in the here-and-now, nothing else we do matters very much. In a sense, it doesn’t matter how often we come to church, how active we are in ministry, or how much money we give . . . if we don’t really know Jesus, we’ve missed the Main Event.

Most of you who take the time to read this column every week do know Jesus in the way of which I speak. Some of us may have fairly dramatic stories of how we first came to faith in Jesus, while many of us probably have testimonies much like Megan’s.

While it’s not necessary to have a clear memory of the moment in which you were born again, I find that it’s helpful to identify a moment after which we are certain of that relationship, because fuzziness at this point gives Satan fertile ground in which to sow seeds of doubt.

Our Lord’s brother told us to *“Resist the devil, and he will flee from you”* (James 4:7). We have a strong rebuttal to Satan’s whispers if we can say, “Satan, I no longer belong to you. As of \_\_\_\_\_, I am a child of the King!” What better time to gain clarity on this point than at the manger? As Christina Rossetti’s familiar poem puts it, “

“What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;  
Yet what I can I give Him: *give my heart.*”<sup>1</sup>

What follows is the content of a handout I use to explain one way to “lead a person to faith in Jesus.” I offer it first of all so that you might feel more confident in those moments when God gives you this highest privilege and opportunity; but also so that as you read it, you might confirm beyond any doubt your own relationship with our Lord.

*Lift up your hearts! Our redemption is closer now than when we first believed!*

Dave

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/238450>

# Can You Tell Me How I Can Become A Christian?

There is no one “right way” to lead someone to Christ. Each of us will find a way that fits our own personalities, and even then each presentation will be tailored to fit the person with whom we are speaking. We speak from within our own journey and our own testimony.

## ❖ SIX PRINCIPLES FOR SHARING YOUR FAITH

1. **The Principle of Responsibility**: The work of salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit. We give witness to what we ourselves have experienced, but it is the Holy Spirit who causes persons to open their hearts to Jesus (John 16:8).
2. **The Principle of Respect**: Because every person is created in God's image, whenever we speak of Jesus to others, we speak with respect, with clarity, and with love (Genesis 1:26-27).
3. **The Principle of “Loading the Heart Drive”**: The Bible tells us to “hide God's Word in our hearts” so that we will understand God's purposes (Psalm 119:11; Deuteronomy 6:4-7; Psalm 19:7-14).
4. **The Principle of a Clear Spirit**: By God's grace, we live our lives in ways consistent with the Gospel, so that we are not ashamed of our testimony. We “walk the walk” (Colossians 1:10).
5. **The Principle of Current Experience**: “You must worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if you are asked about your Christian hope, always be ready to explain it” (1 Peter 3:15).
6. **The Principle of Spiritual Breathing** (from Bill Bright):

**“Exhale”**: “But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong” (1 John 1:9)

**“Inhale”**: “let the Holy Spirit fill and control you” (Ephesians 5:18)

**Trust God**: If we are faithful students of the Word, “the Holy Spirit will teach you what needs to be said even as you are standing there” (Luke 12:12).

## One Way to Answer the Question . . .

- ❖ The verses in bold print are often called “The Roman Road to Salvation.”
- ❖ If possible, use a New Testament and let the person read with you.
- ❖ You may find it helpful to underline these verses in your Bible or Testament, writing the page number of the next verse at the bottom of each page. You need only remember the first verse! Apart from Jeremiah 29:11, all verses are in the New Testament.

## 1. GOD'S PURPOSE

Jeremiah 29:11 *"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."*

John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."*

## 2. OUR PROBLEM

Romans 3:23 ***"For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard."***

Romans 6:23 ***"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."***

## 3. GOD'S PROVISION

Romans 5:8 ***"But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."***

John 14:6 *Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."*

## 4. OUR DECISION

Romans 10:9-10 ***"For if you confess with your mouth 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 confessing with your mouth that you are saved."***

Romans 10:13 ***For "Anyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."***

- Don't pressure, but do give a clear opportunity to respond. Conversion is God's work.

### Prayer of Invitation, "The Sinner's Prayer"

(There is really no one version of this prayer—these are not "magic words." Use words that fit what you have talked about together. Even better, prompt them as they use their own words.)

Dear God, thank you that you love me, and that you have paid the debt for my sin. I agree with you that I have sinned and am in need of your forgiveness. I ask you to forgive me of my sin, to cleanse my heart, to make me your child, and to begin to remake my life so that I will become more like Jesus. Guide me through your Holy Spirit as I discover the purpose you have for my life. Thank you for saving me! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

- ❖ After the prayer: Sometimes people feel significant emotion after a prayer of repentance; sometimes they don't. Emphasize that faith is anchored in God's promises, not in our feelings.

1. Point out that when a person asks for God's forgiveness, (1) our sins are forgiven; (2) we become children of God; (3) we receive eternal life; (4) the Holy Spirit takes up

residence in our lives; and (5) we begin the Great Adventure for which God created us (Ephesians 2:8-10)!

2. Emphasize Jesus' promise to the new believer: *"I assure you, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life [PRESENT TENSE]. They will never be condemned for their sins [FUTURE TENSE], but they have already passed from death into life"* [PAST TENSE] (John 5:24).
3. Talk about the importance of baptism (Matthew 28:19-20) & church membership (Acts 2:47; Hebrews 10:23-25) for growing faith.
4. Encourage immediate witness: Who can you tell about your decision who will rejoice with you? Who do you know who needs to find what you have found?



### **The Joshua Code: Fifty-Two Verses Every Believer Should Know**

O.S. Hawkins (Thomas Nelson, 2012)

**Next week's *Laptop* will consist of the final four verses . . . .**