

# 1 Step One

## **Know that God loves you with an ever-lasting love and wants to bless you and fellowship with you.**

The Bible says that our heavenly Father has a plan for each of our individual lives. To fulfill that plan is nothing less than ultimate success in life. But we need to hear Him, so that He can lead us into His plan for our lives. But to do that, we need to be connected to Him through a personal loving relationship. All of us have a great need to hear that “still small voice” of God so that we can receive His guidance and know more about the plan He has for our lives. We need communication with Him all through the day, allowing Him to speak to us by placing His thoughts in our minds. We need to hear Him teach us as we read the Scriptures. We need to seek to hear Him much as a child seeks the guidance of a parent. As a child of God, we need to begin by receiving the love that our heavenly Father offers so unsparingly.

### **Why is it important to receive Gods’ love?**

“But as many as received Him (Jesus) to them, He gave the right to become God’s children, to those who believe in Him “ (John 1:12). See also Rom. 8:15b.

## **2      Step Two**

**The knowledge that God offers His love to you every hour of every day may not be new to you; what may be new is that you have to receive Him who is love or His loving forgiveness will not become yours.**

Generally, humanity gives and receives human love. That is because most people have not received God's love. We cannot give something we do not have. It is vital in all of our lives that we receive God's love so that we can love Him back and love those around us with His love.

The essence of salvation is receiving God's forgiveness, which is part of His love. So all Christians begin by receiving His love. If we are born again, we have already received His loving forgiveness. At any time, we can open the door and ask Him to come in--even right now, you can simply tell Him that you want to know Him personally and live with Him forever--that you want to love and obey Him--that you know that Jesus paid the penalty for your sin on the cross and now offers you His loving forgiveness. Then out of simple faith in what God has said, open the door and receive Him. Receive His love, His forgiveness and the fullness of His Holy Spirit. But to grow up in the Christian life, we must continue to receive His gift of forgiveness because we continue to sin. That is difficult because humility is difficult.

### 3 Step Three

“If you will humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, in His good time, He will lift you up” (1st Peter 5:6). See also Matt. 23:12, Luke 18:14.

**Know that humility is absolutely necessary to receive God’s love--to be lifted up by our heavenly Father.**

We must put aside the love and concern we have for ourselves to make room for the love of another. God’s love is all around us all the time. If we make room, He will surely come in.

You may ask, “How can I control this ego of mine and humble myself so that I can receive God’s love?” Our ego doesn’t want to be dependent on anyone; it wants others to be dependent on us, so that we appear to be someone special. But there is only One who is not dependent on anyone and that is God.

It is said that a humble person does not stoop smaller than he is; he stands at his real height seeing the reality of how small he is compared to God. When he humbles himself, he does not have to put on an act anymore because he has the real thing. *Humility causes us to begin to fit into God's kingdom and into the purpose He has for our lives which is fellowship with Himself.* In trusting humility, we can open the door of our hearts and receive God's love through a real, personal, loving relationship (Revelation 3:20). Then, through the power of His love, we have the strength to overcome our old sinful nature and love Him back. Because He loves us first, we are able to do our part and complete an exchange of love.

## **Where does this exchange of love lead?**

The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him” (Psalm 25:14). See also Proverbs 19:23, 1st Cor. 1:9, John 15:9-11

## **4      Step Four**

**With reverential awe (fear of the Lord), we can be a friend of God. Through a close, personal relationship (an exchange of love); we can have loving companionship and that peace “that passes all understanding” now and throughout eternity.**

The communication that comes out of this loving relationship brings us into the very presence of the Lord, and that produces the reverential awe that the Bible calls the fear of God. It says in Psalm 33:8, “Let all the earth fear the Lord--let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.” In the verse 18 of the same chapter, it says, “Behold the eye of the Lord is on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His steadfast love.” A close relationship with the Lord produces not only His presence, but also reverential awe and hope in His steadfast love.

In a personal loving relationship with someone greater and higher, there has to be recognition of who is greater and higher right up front, and that is exactly what the fear of the Lord does. If we humbly relate to Him with reverential awe, a balance appears--each one relates to the other exactly as they are. God does not become lower and we do not become higher, but there is a mutual recognition of the difference. Then the power of God’s love takes over and friends begin to fellowship.

## **Maintaining Friendship With God**

**All of our personalities are different, so there is no set way to relate to our Lord. However, there are helps in the Scriptures. Some of them are listed below, along with some of the scripture references. (All scripture references would be too many to list.)**

1. Ask the Lord for understanding and wisdom as you read the Bible.
2. Forgive everyone who has offended you, whether or not they ask for it. All of us, to one degree or another, fail to forgive those who, knowingly or unknowingly have hurt us. It is here that we must choose to go on in the new life God has given us. We must choose to continue to receive His forgiveness by becoming a forgiver ourselves (See Matthew 6:14, 15).
3. Get rid of all known sin. Pray for the conviction of the Holy Spirit of unknown sin, and receive God's loving forgiveness.
4. Monitor any wrong thinking and continue to receive His loving forgiveness on a daily basis as the bedrock of your relationship.
5. Guard your mind, knowing that sin begins in the mind. Get prompt forgiveness for sinful thoughts especially those produced by anger or a critical attitude. Ask the Lord for His thoughts.
6. Turn away from the world. Be "in the world, but not of the world".

7. Keep your mind “stayed on Him” by thanking Him in every circumstance of the day. Listen to hymns and spiritual songs when you can, and hum, whistle or sing chorus songs when you can.

8. Refuse to be moody or depressed by asking Jesus to raise His standard (the blood of the cross) against Satan and his demons and ask for His peace and His joy.

9. Pray that God will help you to receive His love and the filling of the Holy Spirit every day. Knowing that leads to union with our Lord; pray the prayer of Jesus--that you would be in union with Him as He is in union with the Father (John 17:19-26).

10. Commit the day into God’s hands every morning. Be aware of any thoughts or scripture that He may put in your mind. Spend time in meditation with the Lord asking Him about the affairs of the day and the things that are on your heart. Then clear your mind and listen for His “still small voice”. That may take time because of the resistance of the flesh. Our old sinful nature is very persistent, but we must be more persistent. Be aware that there are three persons that have access to our minds: God, the devil, and the flesh (ourselves)--we must sort them out using the Bible as our guide.

11. Whenever you need answers to life’s many questions, ask the Lord to give you a word about your need.

12. Know that you never have to be lonely; Jesus is right there at the door knocking, waiting to fellowship with you and to lead you into fellowship with our heavenly Father. (See Revelation 3:20)

## Conclusion

The Bible says that God has given everyone a measure of faith. Does it not make sense to exercise the measure of faith that we already have and let it grow? As faith increases, we receive more and more of God's love and give Him more and more of our love. It becomes a wonderful cycle of love and faith. All of this is expressed in one sentence in Galatians 5:6. It says; "Faith works through love". If we want more faith, we must allow it to "work" through a loving relationship with our heavenly Father.

What we have been discussing is the most important thing in anyone's life. It is the very reason God has placed us on this planet. He is a loving person who has a need. He needs the love of His children. His love is not complete until we love Him back. And His love is not fulfilling until we enter a continuing relationship that allows Him to bless us to the extent that we are able to fellowship with Him which is the reason for our very existence.

It is true that there is difficulty in overcoming our old sinful nature called “the flesh”, but I suggest to you that there is no other alternative if our lives are to have meaning in this life and the life to come. It may be that you are on this pathway of loving God; if not, you can depend on Him to lead you as you develop your relationship.

We have seen that “*The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him*”. We can all be a friend of God if we fear Him. Most Christians love and respect David because he was a “friend of God”--just read the psalms he wrote and you will see why. It is because in humility, he had the fear of God.

As we look upon our Lord with reverential awe, you and I, with a full measure of His forgiveness, can have the fantastic privilege of being a friend of the God of the universe--the very One who created us.

## You can be part of the Alliance

This message about receiving God's love is meant to help form an alliance of born-again Christians who see the need for revival in ourselves and in others around the world. Genuine revival will surely come as we encourage each other to receive God's love and love Him in return. We can help each other as we seek God for the life-changing and world-changing effects of revival. It is becoming very clear that revival in the Church has already begun because more and more believers recognize their need to be closer to God.

We hope that you will want to help us promote an emphasis of the way to revival which is achieving a personal, loving relationship with our heavenly Father through Jesus our Lord.

In an effort to encourage and assist you as you minister this message, the Alliance for Christian Fellowship International is offering copies of the booklet **The Four Steps to Friendship with God** in quantity, free of charge. **The Four Steps to Friendship with God** booklet is designed as a tool to be distributed as a free gift from your ministry. It is a great tool for Bible Study, Sunday School, and Home group studies.

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