

After Care

There are few experiences in the Christian life as joyful and as rewarding as helping people enter new life in Jesus Christ. Yet, I am sobered by the high percentage of new believers who stumble and fall in the first weeks of their Christian walk.

Making a commitment to Christ means more than entering a new experience with God; it actually means embarking on a new way of living. We shouldn't gloss over this radical dimension of the Gospel. There are very real challenges to the Christian way of life and we need to alert people to them. A smoothed-over gospel is no gospel at all.

Let's dare to make clear that a call to Christ is a call to discipleship! We should be preparing people to live under his Lordship. This means we should warn our friends to turn from wrongdoing and welcome the Holy Spirit into their lives to make firm their dedication to Jesus.

After care is difficult work. We need to stay in contact with those we bring to Christ. Don't let them hang or they will get picked off by the devil, the flesh, or just natural circumstances. See that new believers have a Bible and are receiving prayer as needed. There is no need to keep them excited about the Lord after their initial experience. It will be the biblical facts which will sustain them in the long-run.

What new believers need most are instruction, support, and good example. It will be up to you to give this to them. Some accountability is important as well. It's good to say something like: "Hey, how's prayer going?" It's not too early to mention spiritual warfare. This element is involved in the normal Christian life and cannot be ignored. New believers had better learn to fight. So, help them to confront the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. Most importantly, encourage them to examine everything in the light of God's word.

Be sure to emphasize to new Christians how critical it is to be in fellowship with other believers. An independent approach to Christianity never works. A slew of Christian activities alone won't work either. Ongoing strong relationships are crucial to maintaining our life of faith. Community is natural to Christianity. A body of believers provides much needed wisdom, encouragement and Godly example for the new believer.

In conclusion, be open and honest with people from the start. Tell them of your own struggles and mistakes in living righteously. Assure them of the gift of the Holy Spirit who is committed to empower us to live the life of Christ. Yes, God himself is determined to "present us holy and blameless and irreproachable before him." (Colossians 1:22)