

SCOTT RUBIN

.....
THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
.....

**MY NEW LIFE
WITH JESUS**



simply for students

SCOTT RUBIN

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO

MY NEW LIFE
WITH JESUS





The Essential Guide to My New Life With Jesus

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ISBN 978-1-4707-3613-2

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 21 20 19 18 17 16

Printed in the United States of America.

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INTRODUCTION

I'm super-excited that this little book is in your hands!

That's because it means you've discovered the greatest gift ever: the fact that Jesus is crazy about you and wants to give you the fullest kind of life imaginable. Whatever your life has been like up to this point, intentionally inviting Jesus into it changes everything! I realize people often use the term "life-changing" for things that really aren't, but in this case it's so true.

This is personal for me because I remember becoming a Christian at age 17. Oh sure, I knew "of" Jesus before then and had heard some general stuff about him. But it honestly didn't seem to have much to do with my life.

So when somebody invited me to a summer camp where they'd be talking about Jesus, I hesitated. But this camp had waterskiing, parasailing, and a sweet beach. Plus, a bunch of my buddies were going, as well as a few cute girls. With all that awesomeness, I figured I could put up with a little "God talk" at camp. How bad could it be?

One night that week, though, someone clearly explained what it meant to be a Christian. Not only did it make sense, it blew my mind. I realized that knowing about Jesus wasn't enough. I recognized that his death on the cross was a game-changer for me personally.

And I figured out that faith demanded a commitment from me. Did I believe in Jesus as God's Son or not? Would I invite him to lead my life or not?

That summer, I understood a bunch of things in a whole new way. When I decided to follow Jesus, it was the start of an amazing relationship.

I also quickly discovered I didn't understand a bunch of stuff about following Jesus. Certain Christian "codes" were a mystery. No one in the church was intentionally keeping secrets from me, but sometimes I felt as if I'd missed the first week of a new school year; everybody else at church seemed to know stuff I didn't.

This book will clue you in on some of that stuff. If you've ever been the "new kid" in any situation, you know how much it helps to have someone show you around. I hope these chapters give you a tour of the awesomeness of following Jesus!

Read the book from start to finish or a little bit at a time. You can also jump around to different sections that look interesting—whatever helps you most.

One last thought: Although this book will answer some of your questions, it might also raise more. Think of a Christian you know, and ask him or her any questions that come up as you read. If someone gave you this book, he or she will probably be honored to serve as a resource.

READY? LET'S DO THIS!

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO
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SECTION 1:

CONGRATS!





CAUSE FOR A PARTY

Imagine what a party would look like if Jesus were hosting it. Now imagine it's not at someone's house or even a fancy restaurant but actually in heaven.

Believing in Jesus and beginning your life with him is the biggest step a person can make. And the Bible says it sets off a huge celebratory bash among the angels—all for one individual.

CHECK OUT THIS BIBLE VERSE:

"In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!"

Luke 15:7

When I first understood what Jesus did for me, I figured it was a big deal but definitely didn't grasp that following him was party-worthy. Why the big deal? Because Jesus loves you more than you can imagine. And he created you with the hope that you'd recognize him and invite him into your heart and life.

Jesus won't force his way into your life, though; that's not his style. So when you ask him to show you the best way to live, he's ready to do just that. Jesus knows what a difference it will make—both for you and for the people you impact.

As I type these words, my heart is beating faster and my knee is bouncing uncontrollably—and it's not because I've had too much caffeine. It's because I'm excited for you, knowing that your adventure with Jesus is underway.

Like the angels, I'm partying, too—
about you and what's ahead for your
relationship with Jesus.



RELATIONSHIP, NOT RELIGION

What does Jesus want most from us? That question often trips people up.

A popular but incorrect answer is that Jesus mainly wants us to behave well. They think he's looking for people who will be good, color inside the lines, and get "good behavior" stamped on their report cards.

People who buy into that good-behavior myth focus on two areas: the Don'ts and the Shoulds. The Don'ts are bad stuff not to do. You know that circle with the line through it? Some people see it all over the place when they think about Jesus and the Bible:



- ◇ **Don't lie. Don't cheat. Don't cuss.**
- ◇ **Don't do mean stuff.**
- ◇ **Don't drink or do drugs or anything illegal.**
- ◇ **Don't have sex.**

**PLEASE DO NOT SET
YOURSELF ON FIRE**



**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR COOPERATION**

**DO NOT TOUCH!
NOT ONLY WILL THIS
KILL YOU**

DANGER

**IT WILL HURT THE
WHOLE TIME YOU
ARE DYING**

The second area, the Shoulds, is good stuff to work harder at. It's like a holy to-do list:

- ◇ **Read your Bible.**
- ◇ **Pray more. (How much is “enough”? Who knows. Probably more than I'm doing.)**
- ◇ **Be polite. (Do good deeds, hold doors, help old ladies across streets.)**

Yes, of course your life looks different after you start following Jesus. But ultimately, he isn't after the Don'ts and the Shoulds. More than anything else, you know what Jesus really wants? He wants to be with you! That's true on your best days and your worst. It's true when you're a candidate for Student of the Month and a candidate for detention.

In the Bible, a guy named Jacob followed God but did some bad stuff. (You can read about it in Genesis 27.) Jacob cheated his brother big-time—enough that he feared for his life and left town. But then God sent a sign to remind Jacob that he was still with him. And Jacob ended up saying,

“Surely the Lord is in this place,
and I wasn't even aware of it!”

Genesis 28:16

That's the cool thing about Jesus: He never leaves you, even when your behavior doesn't look very Christian.

SO REMEMBER:

Jesus wants more than your good behavior; he wants to be with you and have a relationship with you.

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MY NEW LIFE WITH JESUS...

is a practical, encouraging tool that walks you through the “what’s next” of your faith. Whether you’re a brand-new Christian or want to build your relationship with Jesus, this easy-to-read guide answers questions about the most exciting journey you’ll ever go on. With insight from the Bible and plenty of humor, the short but info-packed chapters are designed to help you experience the thrill and everyday rhythms of following Jesus.

This guide covers dozens of topics for new and growing Christians, including Bible reading, prayer, relationships, faith-sharing, and doubts. Plus, you’ll discover how to be sure you’re a Christian and what some “churchy” words really mean. At its core, following Jesus is about a growing relationship with him and other Christians, so this book encourages lots of face-to-face conversations with experienced Jesus-followers.



Scott Rubin is director of Elevate, the junior high ministry at Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago. He’s worked with that church’s middle school students, volunteers, and parents for more than 15 years. Scott, who’s also a speaker and tweets a bit @Scott_Rubin, has written *LIVE™ 5th & 6th Grade, Middle School Ministry*, and *The Red Stuff*. He likes his wife, his three sons (all teenagers), and Michigan State basketball. He just wishes Chicago was next to the ocean.



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ISBN 978-1-4707-3688-0

USD \$9.99



9 781470 736880
Religion/Christian Ministry/Youth