



**Stepping Out**  
*For the authentic Christian Experience*

# introducing...Stepping Out!

**Stepping Out** is about learning to enjoy the authentic Christian experience. It is designed to help us build a vibrant relationship with God, to *know* his love...and to enable that love to flow through us to others, in powerful and effective ways.

We could equally say that the programme is about *fulfilment*, because it provides a framework in which we can become everything God wants us to be - fulfilling his perfect plans for our lives. Of course, co-operating with the Divine Plan will also produce *personal fulfilment* - a deep sense of satisfaction and joy as we are drawn ever closer to our Heavenly Father, and are increasingly used for his purposes. That's one of the many wonderful things about pursuing a relationship with God - he makes it so attractive, so rewarding. He blesses us *extravagantly*...out of all proportion to any effort we are called to make. Participation in **Stepping Out** can produce that dynamic relationship with God, where we are always eligible for his best plans, his greatest rewards and his most significant service. But there's no secret weapon or "magic formula" that makes Stepping Out a powerful tool for Christian development - it doesn't need one, it's got something better...

## the power base

The strength of **Stepping Out** is that it's firmly rooted in scriptural principles. It is based on the biblical understanding of who Christ is, what he has achieved for us, and what our response should be. **Stepping Out** takes the real essence of the gospel message, and presents it in easily digestible "bite size" pieces. There are no unachievable goals, no impossible challenges - just a gentle, step-by-step progression towards our full potential in Christ. **Stepping Out** deals in essentials - we can always study Greek and Hebrew later! It unpacks the great spiritual truths and makes them accessible, encouraging us to respond to them *practically* and *effectively*. As we shall see, though, the greatest encouragement for those who engage in practical Christianity will come from God himself!

## the format

It's a very simple format, and a typical **Stepping Out** programme begins with choosing our '*course partner*'. Our course partner will be someone we can meet up with - either prior to the group session or the day before - so we can read carefully through the relevant chapter together. We'll discuss the main points, and make a note of any comments or questions we may have. We'll bring these to the group session, where there'll be refreshments waiting for us. Then we'll settle down to discuss the issues raised - probably for about an hour and a half, though if people are in 'full flow', allow for a little 'injury time'!

**Stepping Out** is described as 'the twelve-step discipleship programme' because that tells us a bit about how it works. 'Twelve-step' is a much-used model for courses, and can be helpful in reminding people of the various elements it contains....but here, it has been chosen because we will be exploring the twelve main concepts of dynamic Christian living. The 'steps' are arranged so that - as each is completed - we can comfortably progress to the next. 'Discipleship' features because that is the key to our relationship with God, and 'programme' is preferred to 'course' as it better conveys something of lasting value, rather than something which may be done and forgotten. The concepts found in **Stepping Out** are biblical principles, and we will never outgrow them.

**Stepping Out** brings together the theory and practice of Christianity, and presents it in a way that is easy to respond to and understand. Our 'recipe for success' will be just our willingness and application - plus the transforming power of God. It's a combination that *can and does* change lives. Every Christian who relates to God in this way not only enjoys everything God has from them *personally*, they are able to make a major impact on those around them. Their lives have meaning, importance, significance...*even eternal significance!*

## the programme...

If we want to build that relationship with God which changes *everything*, we don't just build from the ground up - we need to put in firm foundations. *The first step* does just that - it takes us right back to how that relationship starts... how it *really* starts, what the gospel really means and how we should respond to it. *The second step* is where we get 'the plans' out, for an in-depth look at exactly *how* that relationship works. This could seem pretty basic stuff, but - so many times - a *working* knowledge of these things is what separates those who are in a joyous, productive relationship with God, from those who are not.

Having laid our firm foundations, we are ready to build. The programme then takes us through the major areas of Christian life. Each step is designed to draw us closer to our heavenly Father; each response we make to him invites *further* blessing, *deeper* relationship. The complex issues of our faith are simplified and explained...the requirements of God are "demystified", and are met with straightforward practical responses. Together, we will discover our true potential in Christ - a potential that knows no limit, unless we choose to impose one *ourselves*.

In addition to the main programme there is a "Daily Journal", which gives an opportunity to reflect on the day's events, and to consider a bible verse and a few thoughts. We share our journal daily with our course partner (either in person or by 'phone) and encourage each other to expand on the more important issues. The short scriptures (and related thoughts) will refresh us on the most recent session.

The journal will (as ever) prove invaluable -it helps us connect our daily lives with our faith, keeping our relationship with God at the front of our minds. Sharing it will also help each of us pray intelligently for our course partner.

At the end of each step, there is a prayer of commitment. Having fully understood the issues, these prayers give us the opportunity to vocalise our intent to make the appropriate responses to them. Essentially, we're promising God we're going to do things his way. Of course, obedience may often bring blessings out of all proportion to any effort involved, but our primary motivation is always to walk more closely with our creator – enjoying that quality of relationship we were *designed* to have.

## ...and the group!

Our group provides the opportunity to meet and consider the issues raised by the programme. We can put our points of view, throw in any questions we might have - we can move forward together, each benefiting from the contributions of the others. *But that's just part of what the group offers!*

In *addition* to those advantages, the group has great potential for Christian development. It is a small, intimate gathering of God's family - an ideal situation in which to begin putting some aspects of our programme into action. Here, for example, we can practice seeing

others through the eyes of Christ, supporting them in prayer, serving them... *loving* them. As we 'build up' our group in this way we, too, will be built up - both in giving to others and in receiving from *them*. Even after the programme, there may be opportunities for the group to work together: Who knows what may be achieved by a close-knit group of committed Christians, enthused and empowered by God, ready and willing to play their roles in his perfect plans?

That quality of relationship with God we've been considering, is a privilege which is available to us all. If we want it (with all that means for this life and beyond) it is ours for the asking - after all, we *were* designed with just that purpose in mind! For our part, we need only to remain willing, apply ourselves...and the "God who wants us to succeed" will make it happen. Enjoy the programme!

For more details about **Stepping Out** contact:

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## the steps

- 1** Come to a sincere belief in God, and recognising Jesus as our Saviour and Lord, put all our trust in his sacrifice for our sins, turning away from them and committing our lives to him unconditionally.
- 2** Understand that the call of God is the call to discipleship, and determine to follow, learn both from and about him, and value our relationship with him above all things.
- 3** Vigorously pursue a deepening relationship with God, engaging in prayer and worship while remaining open to his response and leading.
- 4** Seek to extend our knowledge of God's character, his promises and his requirements through contemplation and study of the bible.
- 5** Through prayer and reconciliation come to forgive all who have hurt us, seeking God's blessing for them and the ability to love them as Christ loves us.
- 6** Continue to resist temptation, looking to God for his strength, wisdom and discernment.
- 7** Begin to see people, whoever they are and whatever they have done, through the eyes of Christ - as precious to God and worth any sacrifice.
- 8** Take an active part in our local church, using our gifts, talents and resources to serve God and bless others.
- 9** Maintain a God-centred lifestyle, bearing witness to his grace by our behaviour inside and outside the church.
- 10** Prepare to undertake God's specific will for our lives, using his gifts - in his power - to fulfill his perfect plans.
- 11** Allow God to give us his passion for the lost, and be willing and able to share the gospel at all times.
- 12** Having been given so much by God ourselves, use every means to encourage and support those who join us on the path of discipleship, as we abide ever more closely in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit.