A New Believer's Survival Guide

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First, the bad news. As a lion's eye always locks onto the new-born calf in the herd, the strategy of Satan is to crush the life of God when it is still young and vulnerable. Satan tried to kill Jesus before He was two years old! The good news is that, just like those little, long-legged calves, your first few steps may be a bit wobbly, but when you get going, you can run like the wind and pretty much out-sprint any predator!

Three Tools for New Believers

Jesus has graciously given us insight into what dangers to watch out for in our journey with Him, as well as some of Satan's most effective strategies for silencing young lambs.

Understanding

In Matthew 13, Jesus explains through a parable that the first calf-killer is **ignorance**. Unfortunately, many 'newbies' come into the kingdom with a 'know-it-all' attitude. Every time they have the opportunity to learn about what salvation is really all about, they end up doing all the talking themselves. This reminds me of a time when someone was 'following' my car to Clifton Beach, because they didn't know the way. Along the way, they grew impatient with me and overtook me. As the N2 highway forked, the person (now ahead of me) saw my right turn

indicator too late and realised they were in the wrong lane! As he swerved to cross into the right lane, his wheel clipped the lane divider and his tire burst. Needless to say, he didn't make the sunset.

Following Christ requires bucket-loads of humility. Be quick to listen, slow to speak.

> If you think of Christ as a fashion accessory that is going to make your life cooler, then you will ditch Him when the going gets tough.

Conviction

Your expectation of what your first few years following Christ are going to look like could very well determine whether you keep all your limbs or not. Jesus said that, as a direct result of your decision to follow Him, you will experience trouble and persecution. Things will get harder before they get easier. You might experience backlash from friends, family, maybe even work. Expect it. Don't be surprised when life gets hard. Take it as a compliment, because Satan is terrified of what will happen when you get going.

Ray Comfort explains this best. We 'put on' Christ; He is our salvation. If you think of Christ as a fashion accessory that is going to make your life cooler, then you will ditch Him when the going gets tough. If you think of Him as a parachute in a plane that's going down, you will be so grateful to have Him and you will be willing to endure whatever discomfort may result from following Him.

> Resolve in your mind that if you leave this earth with nothing but Him, that would be reward enough, because He is worth it all.

Vision

Satan operates like an experienced pick-pocket. He'll grab your attention and get you looking in the wrong place, while with his other hand he is robbing you of the most valuable thing you possess – eternal life with Jesus. Faith is all about trusting and waiting patiently for the inheritance promised to us. Our focus is on our future with Christ, but Satan will try to preoccupy you with the here and now.

Jesus warns of 'the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth'. When I sit with new believers, I tell them I have good news and bad news. The good news is that you will soon have

the opportunity to have the guy or girl of your dreams, or the job for which you have been waiting for so long. The bad news is that it will almost certainly be a distraction. We demonstrate what we love the most by our choices. If your time, resources and thoughts are invested in earthly treasures, then your inheritance will be temporary pleasure here on earth rather than eternal treasures with Jesus.

I don't know the exact numbers, but of the people I have personally baptised, I would say that less than half of them are still following in the footsteps of Christ. It breaks my heart. God wants to use you as a mighty warrior in His kingdom. He has not made you to be a victim, so don't be one. Put Christ's words into practice – seek first the King, pursue Him and desire the things of Him with all your heart. Make a lifelong commitment to live in His ways and to live a life that pleases Him. He is the greatest treasure, so make Him your inheritance. Go all in; no half measures. This is not an experiment. Resolve in your mind that if you leave this earth with nothing but Him, that would be reward enough, because He is worth it all.