

21T16a Now What? (Part 1) **LOVE GOD**

Hello my friends. Thanks for joining me @ the PUNLA coffee table.

Let me ask you a question. Now What? If you are a Christian or at least thinking about becoming a Christian, a question we all eventually ask is, Now What? Don't be surprised, everyone asks this question, you are not alone.

Before we get started today, **Let's Pray. Heavenly Father please bless our time today. Help me to stay out of your way. Please use me Lord. I pray that our time result in a deeper more satisfying relationship with you Jesus. And I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.**

Again, let me ask you. Now what? Once you become a Christian, Now What? What should I do? How should I do it? How do I act? and on and on and on. I know the questions because I have asked these questions myself over and over during my life.

Here is a tougher question. Did you ever get an answer to your questions?

There are a lot of well-meaning people who will quickly quote you Bible verses. But for new Christians, the quoting of Bible verses makes you either feel inadequate or it rings empty because we don't know the Bible yet. What we really need is a real direct answer.

There are lots of books and many sermons from preachers in our churches, on TV and online. But for me, over the years all this stuff just confused me more. I wondered if there were simple straight forward answers.

These questions hounded me for years. What do we do once we become a Christian? Now What?!!

If you go to your church pastor, they might show you a "statement of faith" which is a nice way of saying doctrine. The word doctrine can be intimidating and unfortunately these only tell us what our church believes more than it answers our questions, about Now What?

Did you know that a vast majority of Jesus' teachings recorded in the Bible are about how we should live? How we live with God and how we live with others here on earth. The Bible can actually give us the answer to our "Now What?" questions. We just need to trust God to reveal it to us through His word the Bible.

In this series we will look at a few of the Bible passages that will help us answer some the Now What? Questions that we all ask.

Before we get started, I want to say something. I'm not an expert on any of these Bible verses. I probably can't quote most of them chapter and verse without assistance. I'm

just like you. But I've learned, there is no reason to let the Bible intimidate you. God intended ordinary people like us to be able to open it and understand it. James the half-brother of Jesus says, *"But if any of you needs wisdom, you should ask God for it. God is generous. He enjoys giving to all people, so God will give you wisdom. But when you ask God, you must believe. Do not doubt God. Anyone who doubts is like a wave in the sea. The wind blows the wave up and down. He who doubts is thinking two different things at the same time. He cannot decide about anything he does. A person like that should not think that he will receive anything from the Lord."* (James 1:5-8 ICB)

What this means, is if you honestly want to understand something about God, He has promised to help you understand by giving you the wisdom you lack. Our helper, the Holy Spirit, will guide us and help us to understand the things about God our hearts desire to know. God knows and above all things He wants a relationship with us.

I ask you to let the Bible speak to you. Listen without preconceived ideas, so Jesus can speak to your soul through the Holy Spirit and His Holy word the Bible.

I think we need to define a couple things before we get started.

Number 1. What we are going to be talking about only applies if you are a Christian. If you have not listened to my video titled "What is a Christian", then I encourage you to do so before you listen to Part 2 of this series. We need to be clear what we mean when we say Christian. Unfortunately, the term Christian has been hijacked by many who wish to redefine what it is. But to be clear, in short, a Christian is a follower of Jesus Christ of the Bible. Other terms used instead of follower might be disciple, servant or even slave of Jesus Christ. If you are a Christian, then Jesus is in charge of you. To be a Christian means God is directing your life and you are completely devoted to Him. Whatever He asks you to do, you say "yes". That is what it means to be a Christian.

Number 2. I'd like to clarify this before we start, you cannot earn your way into heaven by good works no matter how noble they are. The Bible is clear on this, but that does not mean we are called to do nothing. In fact, Jesus spent most of His teaching time showing us what to do and how to do it. He is also our perfect example. The interactions between Jesus and people, show us how we should behave. I promise you it is not passive in any way.

So, the short answer to our "Now What?" questions is simply the Bible. Read the Bible. Study the Bible. If we are to be a follower of Christ, then we need to learn about Him. The Bible is our guide. In conjunction with good Bible teaching in our local church and from online resources, reading the Bible and letting the Holy Spirit speak to us through the words is the simplest way to answer the Now What's? Now please understand, no Christian is perfect. I'm sure not perfect. Only Jesus was Perfect when He lived here on earth. But Christians are called to show Jesus to the world through our lives. We are the salt of the earth according to Jesus, *"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt*

loses its salty taste, it cannot be made salty again. It is good for nothing. It must be thrown out for people to walk on.” (Matthew 5:13 ICB)

Salt is a preservative and a taste enhancer. As a Christ follower, we should make wherever we are and whatever we do, better when we are there. The people around us have better lives with us than without us. But if we don't do this, then it's like salt that has lost its salty taste, we are no longer beneficial to the people we are around. We are good for nothing.

Christians are to be the light of the world. Jesus says, *“You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven.* (Matthew 5: 14-16 ICB)

This light is more like a beacon or light house, showing the way to Jesus. We have to be actively engaging our communities in the name of Jesus, or we are like a light under a basket. Totally useless. Things should be better when we are around. We should make the lives of those around us better just because we are there. Our lives should shine a light pointing to Jesus

We cannot be any of these things unless we follow Jesus. Remember follow is an action word. There are definitely things we must do to be “light” and “salt” in this dark world. But I know, you want to know How we can be Salt and Light.

Jesus told us what the greatest commandment is, *“Love the Lord your God. Love him with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’ The second most important command is this: ‘Love your neighbor as you love yourself.’ These two commands are the most important commands.”* (Mark 12:30-31 ICB)

Most of us know this as the golden rule, to treat others as we want to be treated. In fact, Jesus calls us to a much higher standard as His followers, *“This is my command: Love each other as I have loved you. The greatest love a person can show is to die for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you.* (John 15:12-14 ICB)

Jesus tells us, we are His followers **only if** we do what He tells us to do. We must love others as He loved people. This is bigger love than we even have for ourselves. We have to be willing to do things for others even when it is inconvenient or can even hurt us. Loving others the way Jesus does means sacrificially serving others the way Jesus did. We will expand on this in a later session, but we must Love People if we are Christian. This is the Now what? Of all Now What's? But how and where we still need to explore.

We are to love God and love people because God loves us even though none of us are worthy. But despite how unworthy we are, the Apostle Paul has encouragement for us.

Paul says, *"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:38-39 ICB).

God loves us and we can never be separated from His love. God loves us so much He allows us to choose between Him and everything else. Don't miss this, God loves everyone even those destined for hell. Not even hell can separate you from the love of God, but He will honor our choice.

I'm going to stop here for today. I want to leave you with one last thing. According to Jesus, the Greatest Commandment is to Love God with all you have. So, how are you doing on this? I have heard it said this way, you can tell what you love most by looking at your checkbook and calendar. What this means is, how you spend your money and time, show what you love most. Is it God? I will leave you with that question until next time.

Father God. You are the one I love above all else. Thank you for wanting me and loving me, even though nothing I can do will ever deserve your Love. I pray in your name Lord Jesus, Amen.

Thank you for joining me @ the PUNLA Coffee Table today, I hope you'll join us for the rest of the series "Now what" as we dig into the Bible to answer those Now What questions.

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Dallas Willard (Love as a Life) <https://youtu.be/utvZKFTkq2Q>