

Dear _____
A letter to you who have learned to love faith
and want to know what to do next

By and Based on the Books of Robert J. Cormier (www.thefaithkit.org)
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Dear _____,

You have figured out that you need God to be more a part of your life. You have tried to learn more about faith and you have seen that... it is true!... what faith offers is wonderful.

You now want to know what to do next.

Let's start with what you have already done. It is the presumption of this letter that you have worked through the seven steps of "Faith Is Easy" (see the "Explorer" program on the main page of www.thefaithkit.org).

If so, this means that you understand that faith is *not* about the idea that "if I *really* believe that God will do this for me, He will do it," but rather faith is the way we explain our life. Concretely, faith is about knowing that

God made us for life in heaven;

we are here on earth so that we could be involved in our own creation;
and we do this by loving others as God loves us;

and God works with us, through everything He sends into our lives according to His plan, to make us the people He can love with all His heart forever.

If, indeed, you understand this, it means that you are able to receive the gifts of faith—the effects on our spirit that always follow if we really believe that we were made for heaven, that love is the way, and that God guides us according to His plan. If you read "Faith Is Easy" you already know that there are actually ten gifts of faith:

Love of self. Because we realize that God has made us who we are.

Peace with what we cannot change. Because we realize that whatever cannot be changed happened for God's good reasons.

Freedom from fear and pressure. Because we know that everything that is going to happen will also follow God's plan.

Freedom to love and therefore to live the only life that can bring us happiness. Because we know that love is what life is for—and it doesn't matter whether we are rewarded here.

Control. Because we can always do what we want most.

Freedom from the dread of death—or the need to live a life distracted. Because we know that death is not the end.

Freedom from anguish at the death of those we love. Because we know that they are alive with God and that someday we are going to be reunited.

Freedom to dream joyfully. Because we know that the greatest life we can imagine, and more, is on the way.

Freedom from longing and envy. Because we know we were made for life with God and nothing here can fill us.

The ability to enjoy what we already have. Because we do not expect things to be more than they can be.

Almost certainly you recognize that the most important of these gifts is the love of self; and you are trying to live as though you do love yourself by *not* putting yourself down for things you cannot change, or comparing yourself to anyone as though it matters.

Of course, if you really do understand how faith works, you understand that it *doesn't* work unless you are really sure of what it says. This means that you have looked for the truth of faith, which God wrote into every heart, and you have seen it. It means you've looked for a chance to be alone, gotten quiet within yourself, and experienced the miracle of existence—that everything here must have come from something greater. Then, I presume, you have done what you were asked to do: to look at the

basics, considered the alternative (God made us for death?) and noticed that you can hardly imagine that the alternative is true.

But, surely you realize that the only way that faith can help you is if you show yourself that you believe by your actions—by what you do and don't do, by what you give and give up. Was there something you needed to change? Have you committed yourself to do it? Have you started?

Have you done what Point 6 in “Faith Is Easy” asked you to do: to do something to keep faith in front of you day after day. Maybe you are using the “Daily Prayer” that was suggested. Are you saying it once a day? Maybe you picked something else. What are you doing to keep faith in front of you?

And are you committed to coming to church? Do you understand that coming to church is the most concrete thing you can do to show yourself that you believe—or that you want to believe?

If you are coming to church each week you are going to get a steady flow of help to keep growing. But you probably want to know if there is anything else you can do? Is there anything else you can do on the weekdays?

Of course there is. Here's the first, most basic thing to do: Bring faith to everything that God brings into your life.

Bring faith to all your decisions. We all have many every day. Ask yourself: What would faith do? What is love?

Bring faith to all your experiences:

When you have to do something difficult, ask yourself: What is life for?

When something hard happens, remind yourself that God has His reasons. If you feel down, or put down, remind yourself that, so far, you are the person God has made you to be.

When something good happens, be grateful; then you will want to give back.

When you see something good that you can't have, remind yourself that you have still gotten another glimpse of heaven.

At night: read!

I suggest that you start with the mediations in the mini-book that follows "Faith Is Easy." It is called "Phase II: in pursuit of a living faith." It, too, can be found in the "Explorer" menu on the main page of thefaithkit.org. If you pay special attention to "The Ten Suggestions" at the back of Phase II, you will find more ideas about what to do next.

After that I suggest you go to "Panorama," which is also available from the main page of thefaithkit.org. Click on any of the e-book offerings you will find there. Read the descriptions. See if you are intrigued to read one, or two, or more. Or read them in order from left to right as they appear on the screen.

If a relationship is a big part of your life—and there is no reason it should not be—be sure to read the stories that make up the e-book "Kirk." Especially in the second story, you will see how faith helps us to be happy in a serious relationship.

Besides reading, consider writing. Think about starting a spiritual journal where you will record the spiritual thoughts (or experiences) that will come to you day by day as now you are living your faith in a much more conscious way. Express your hopes and dreams—and see them as the glimpse of heaven which they are. Record your spiritual victories (over temptation, etc.) so you will see that you are making progress. I especially urge you to record any questions you might have, or things that cause you doubts. Then follow up! Faith can always respond.

Even if it is not for the purpose of asking questions, almost everyone profits from a regular meeting with a person who is called a "spiritual director." If you make, for example, 12 such meetings in a year, you are almost sure to grow a lot.

One more thing: If, indeed, you are growing in faith, this means you are growing in love. This will mean that you will, in some way, want to serve. Presuming that you are going to church, keep your ears open. Your community may be asking for help. In some cases you can pitch in right

away. In other cases you might have to participate in some kind of course. But that's not a bad thing! Not only do you learn new things, you get to know like-minded people; and this will help you be more sure that you have chosen the right road. In all cases, a ministry makes you part of things in a deeper way than before; and you will find that this is a very rich thing for your life.

Even if you do not chose or have the opportunity to become part of an official "ministry," at least not right now, you can serve during the normal course of your daily life.

You can keep your eyes open for the countless ways you can be kind to others, and it is not wrong to keep track of such things so you will be motivated to keep it up.

You can keep your ears open for opportunities to encourage people around you who need encouragement and who might even be open to hearing about what you have already learned about faith.

You can pick a cause and support it with a regular donation. Keep in mind, if ongoing sacrifice is part of your life, you are showing yourself that, for sure, you *do* believe in something bigger than yourself.

If you do (some of) the things we are talking about, this is what you can expect:

Your peace, sense of purpose, and joy will grow, and grow, and grow. You will get to levels of spiritual depth you could not have imagined until they arrived.

You will NOT be bothered by many things.

You will be getting ready for the super-serious things that happen in every life; and you will know that for every day you continue to work on your faith, you will be that much more ready.

Finally, using your dreams and many deeper ideas, you will get better and better at imagining life with God. This, you will find, is the richest experience a person can have. How not? It is looking from here into heaven, what we were made for, where we are going to be forever.

Dear God, let me be a person of true faith.

Let my faith be based on my experience of You; and may the faith I profess be my explanation of life in the light of this experience.

Let me see everything in life in the light of this explanation; and let me receive the gifts of faith—those effects on our spirit that always follow when we look at life in the light of faith.

Let me have the joy I get for knowing that I am on my way to life with You, the purpose I get for knowing what to do to help You give me more, and the peace I get from knowing that my life is now, always was, and always will be, in Your hands. Let me be a person of true faith who wants nothing less.

Let me understand that by thinking about my faith, and the reasons we know that what we see is true, and by practicing my faith and showing myself that I do, indeed, see it, I can make my faith grow and, as it grows, gain more deeply the gifts that only faith can give.

Dear God, do not let me be a person with false faith.

May the “faith” I claim NOT be nothing more than hoping You are there, and that You hear me, and that You will give me what I want. Let it NOT be that the “faith” I practice is nothing more than what I do to persuade You to give me some worldly thing or things that I care about more than anything else.

May the “faith” I claim NOT be based on nothing more than “wanting,” and tells me nothing about why I am here, and what I am to do, and why things happen as they do.

May mine NOT be a “faith” that rises up every time something good surprises me; and falls flat every time my pleading, obedience, or claim “I trust You” fails to change Your plan for me.

May I NOT be just another person always seeking what will never make me happy, and who ignores the joy, purpose, and peace that are always ours, immediately, just for wanting them.