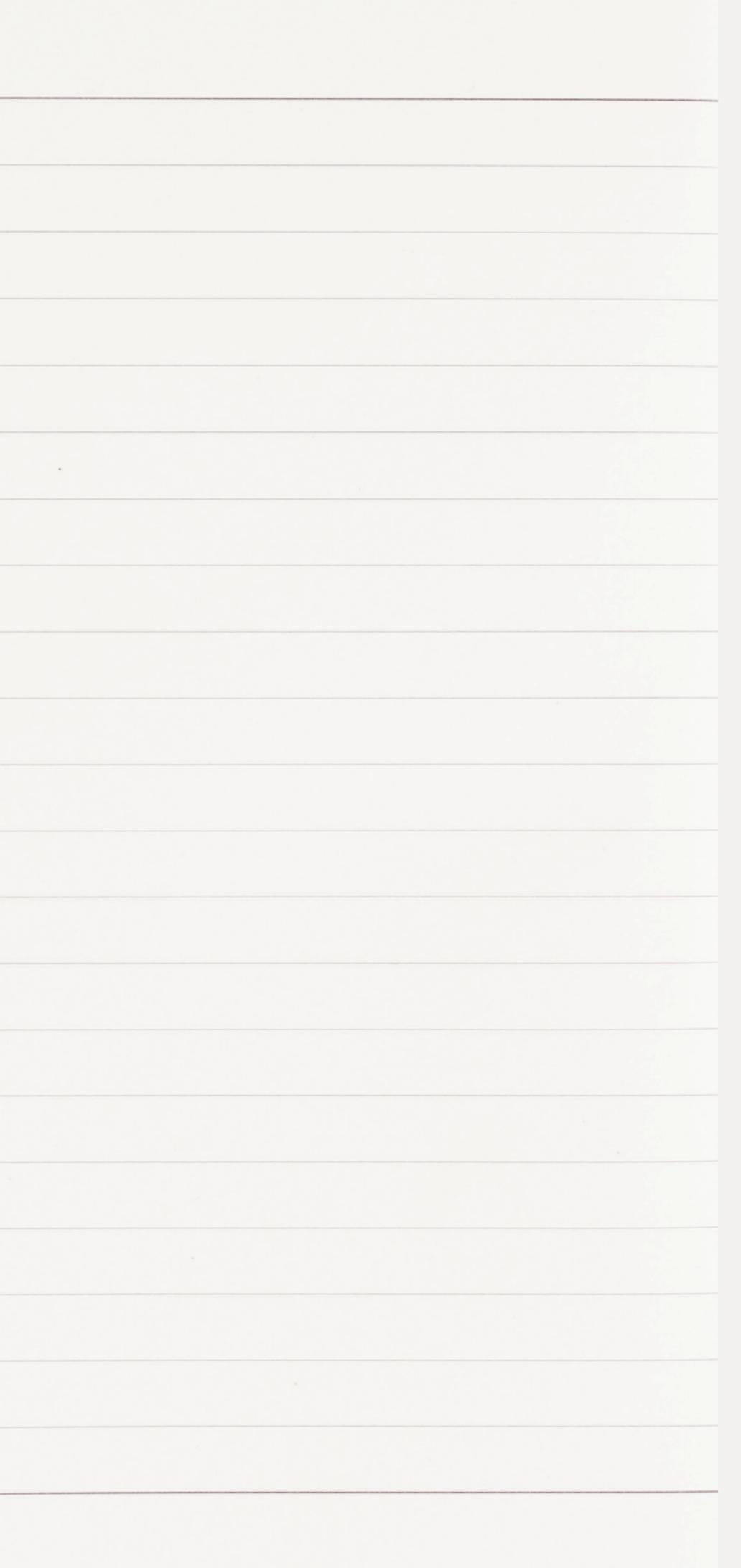




the Journey.

Which way now?

By **Mark** GREENWOOD
with contributions from Tim Alford and friends.



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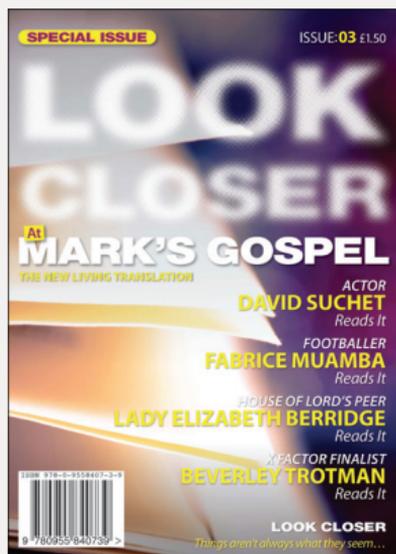
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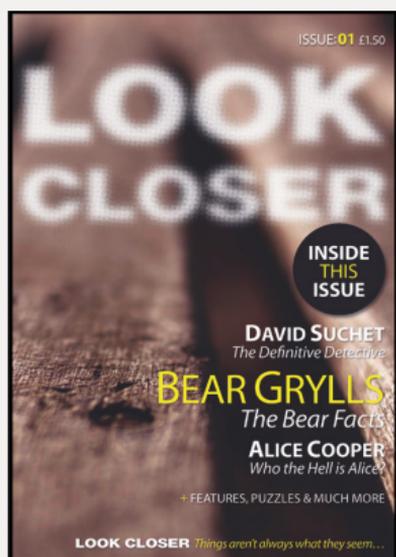
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Things to help you along the journey

by **Mark Greenwood**



In this vibrant presentation of Mark's gospel (from the Bible), Mark has added stories from Christians at the beginning of each chapter, showing you how the Bible has helped real people in their faith journey. There are explanations of tricky words and phrases as well as other features, all designed to help those who are new to, or investigating the Christian faith.



In this issue of LOOK CLOSER you will find an engaging explanation of the Christian message. Rammed full of people's stories of faith, you will read just how God has, and does transform the lives of those who become Christians. Whether you are new to the Christian faith or simply thinking about it, this is definitely a read for you.

To buy these and other resources to help you along the journey visit:

www.revmarkgreenwood.com



Welcome to

the Journey

One of the reasons it needs no special education to be a Christian, is that Christianity is an education in itself.

– C. S. Lewis

Now you've given your life over to God, you will have questions about the Christian faith – that's good! The Christian life is a journey and, as with any journey, there are decisions, obstacles and uncertainties. The Journey is here to guide you in your walk with God. Though you may be tempted to read it all in one sitting, the idea is that you read one section each day. Over the next eight days, you will read words from me, words from the Bible and a few words you can pray. There's also 'Thinking space' where you can journal your thoughts and questions. My friend, Tim Alford, and some of his friends have told us their stories to help you on your journey.

There will never be a time on earth when you'll be perfect; that has to wait until you get to heaven. It is important to keep going and not to feel discouraged. It is my prayer that you will enjoy discovering more and more about God on your journey of faith.

Keep going!

Mark

Mark Greenwood

1 Was it real or was it just me?

If you haven't thought this already, then you probably will very soon.

It was real and it wasn't just you: you are a Christian now.

There is a being called Satan, who doesn't want you to be a Christian. He wants to make you doubt your forgiveness from God and the promise of heaven when you die.

God has given us eternal life, and this life is found in his Son. The person who has the Son has life. The person who doesn't have the Son of God doesn't have this life.

– 1 John 5:11–12

We can know for sure that the journey we are on is real.

You really do have a new life with a real God.

Words to pray

Thank you God that, because I have turned away from a life without you and chosen to follow you, I am now in you.

Thank you that this means I have life.

Help me to realise I have made a real decision to follow a real God.

Amen

Thinking space

Brigette, a mental health nurse from Coventry:

When I became a Christian, I was expecting something dramatic to happen, but for me everything just came in stages. I found myself not gossiping or drinking as much and instead, I began to feel overwhelmed with compassion for people around me who didn't know Jesus. I didn't notice these changes until I reflected back later.



The Lord answered my prayers, giving me what I needed rather than what I wanted. He knew my heart, he knew I needed a relationship with him and worked in me through his Holy Spirit before I even recognised it!

Journal...

2 What if I go wrong?

You will!

Now I know that seems a bit harsh, but that's the reality. It is quite difficult being a Christian, but remember God wants to help you. The great thing is that Jesus died to forgive you when you didn't want to please God. Now that you do want to please God, if you trip up - and you will - God still will forgive you.

Ask God to help you turn away from what is wrong and embrace what is right.

God is faithful and reliable, if we confess our sins, he forgives them, and cleanses us from everything we've done wrong.

- 1 John 1:9

The journey starts with forgiveness and continues with forgiveness.

God will always forgive us.

Words to pray

Dear God,

I know I will go wrong, so help me to know when I have gone wrong and to honestly confess my sin. Help me not to forget that you will always forgive me when I do.

Please clean me up inside. Help me to live my life in a way that pleases you.

Amen

Thinking space

Jess, Director of 1*EAT in Bournemouth:

When I was at school I was bullied and developed an eating disorder as a result. I thought God would judge me for my mistakes and the mess I was in, but instead he showed me that all I needed to do was ask Him for help and give my worries to him. He showed me how to forgive myself and others who had hurt me.

Once I understood his love for me and started to live in that security every day, he changed me and healed me of my eating disorder. He is the God of second chances!



Journal...

3 Prayer

Prayer is talking to God and God talking to us.

Prayer may be a new thing to you. Start by thanking God for your new life. Thank him for forgiving you of your sin. Thank Jesus for dying for you on the cross.

Before long, prayer will become more natural to you.

Never worry about anything. But in every situation let God know what you need in prayers and requests while giving thanks.

– Philippians 4:6

Talk to God about everything on your journey, however insignificant you may feel it is.

He is ready to listen.

Words to pray

Thank you God that I can talk to you and that you want to talk to me. Thank you that whether I am fluent in my words, or I stumble over my words, you gladly listen to my prayer.

Help me not to worry about anything, but instead to talk to you about everything.

Amen

Thinking space

Norman, a retired businessman from Exeter:

I once went up a mountain summit of over 3,700 metres, part way by cable car, but walking up to the peak. I found myself short of breath, having to keep stopping. Why? Because at that height the air is thin and my body needs lots of air to function properly!



In my Christian life, prayer is like the air my physical body needs. Without prayer I cannot function effectively as a Christian. There is an old hymn which includes the line: 'Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air.' I have found that to be true.

Journal...

4 Bible

God has given us the Bible as an instruction book. It teaches us how to live our lives in a way that pleases him. Doing what the Bible says not only pleases God, but brings fulfilment in our lives.

Because God made us, he alone knows how we work best and shows us this through the Bible.

Whatever you face in your life, you can be sure that the Bible will have something to say that will help you.

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.

– Psalm 119:105

God shows the way forward through his word, the Bible.

It illuminates our journey.

Words to pray

Lord God,

Thank you for your word, the Bible. Thank you that it is your instruction book for life.

Help me read it, understand it and allow it to guide me through my life as I now seek to follow you.

Amen

Thinking space

Tim, a Christian speaker from Coventry:

I am notoriously useless at DIY. I'm one of those guys for whom putting up shelves is a serious challenge. On the rare occasion, I purchase a new bit of flat-pack from Ikea...one thing I know for sure is this: I need the manual!



My experience of following Jesus has been similar. I so easily get it wrong, and don't understand. That's why I need the manual, God's manual - the Bible. It teaches, helps, encourages and corrects me. These are God's precious words to me, and I can't build anything without them.

Journal...

5 Church

It's really important to worship God and to do it with other Christians. Now you're a Christian, it is essential to start going to church if you aren't already.

Going to church is vital for your growth as a Christian and you will benefit by meeting with other Christians. This is a great place for you to find the answers to any questions you may have on your journey.

It's a great place to be!



We should not stop gathering together with other believers as some of you are doing.

– Hebrews 10:25



Don't journey alone, but do it with other Christians. They are like minded people.

Words to pray

Help me, Lord, to meet together with other believers to worship you. May I be encouraged by them and, in turn, let me encourage them.

Help me get to know my new family.

Amen

Thinking space

Bev, a team leader at a children's home in Coventry:

Church is having people who have decided to make the journey with you, to love and support you, to help you get it right and love you when you get it wrong. Not just because they are related to you or because they get on with you, but because they believe God has asked them to.

When I was facing redundancy, my church group and others walked with me through the whole thing, listening and praying with me; they showed me what it means to be part of God's family.



Journal...

6 Holy Spirit

God the Holy Spirit lives in us and leads us in our lives as Christians. He shows each of us how to live our life and he gives us strength to live it.

You may not understand much about him now, but you will get to know him more.

Ask other Christians to explain more about him to you.



When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into the full truth.

– John 16:13



As well as the Bible, the Holy Spirit will lead us on our journey.

We know we belong to God because of the Holy Spirit in us.

Words to pray

Dear God,

Thank you for your Holy Spirit. Teach me to know when your Holy Spirit is leading me to what is right for me to do. May your Holy Spirit give me the strength I need to live my life for you.

Help me to know and feel you are there.

Amen

Thinking space

Doug, a booking agent and producer/DJ from Hereford:

Throughout my life the Holy Spirit has guided me and comforted me in times of indecision and trouble. Knowing his presence with me has helped me build confidence, brought a reassurance that I won't face loneliness in my life, and helped me when connecting with people who don't know God.



Allow the Holy Spirit to help, support and guide you in your daily life, whether in a time filled with struggles or even when everything is going really well. Meeting God has changed my life and I feel honoured to have his presence with me through the Holy Spirit.

Journal...

7 Telling others

It's good to tell other people that you have become a Christian.

This is called witnessing or being a witness.

A witness tells of their personal experience. That's all you have to do. Talk about your good news of becoming a Christian. You will learn more about this on your journey.

Firstly, tell your Christian friends or someone at the church you are attending; then tell your family and friends.

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes to you. Then you will be my witnesses to testify about me...

– Acts 1:8

Telling people about God encourages you in your journey and helps others on their journey with him.

Words to pray

Dear God,

Thank you for what you have done for me.

Help me to know what to say to people about you and give me the boldness and confidence I need to say it.

Amen

Thinking space

Phil, a former professional footballer and property developer:

As a new Christian, my biggest challenge was telling the players at Nottingham Forest I had signed for Jesus. I thought the lads wouldn't understand: Stuart Pearce found out and asked me in front of all the players, 'What's this about you becoming

all religious?'

I took a deep breath and told them all about it. It was such a relief, I had got myself worked up over nothing. My confidence grew and now it's an integral part of my faith. I now know the importance of sharing my faith to try and help people understand the reality of Jesus.



Journal...

8 Keep going.

Being a Christian isn't always going to be easy.

There may be times when you want to give it all up. Even if you weren't a Christian, life wouldn't always be easy.

The great thing is that when you are a Christian, God is always with you.

Tell God and your Christian friends when you are finding it tough.



God has said, 'I will never abandon or leave you.'

– Hebrews 13:5



God does what he promises. There will be times on your journey when you feel distant, but one thing is definite, God promises to stay with us and that's what he will do.

Words to pray

Thank you God that you have promised to be with me always. Help me to believe it even when I go through tough times.

I also ask that you would help me to never leave you.

Amen

Thinking space

Hazel, Head of R.E. at St. Peter's school, Exeter:

My experience after 35 years as a Christian is that God himself - living by his Spirit inside - is what keeps me going! He's drawn me closer to him and become a trusted friend as I've shared my life with him.



When my old car died, I chatted to my heavenly dad about it. The next day I was with a friend who said, 'I have a car I don't need and was asking God yesterday who might like it. You can have it!' I realised that God is good, he cares about me, loves me and keeps me going!

Journal...

Final words

Belonging, believing and behaving

Being a Christian is all about **belonging** to God and his family, which is amazing.

What an identity: you are one of God's children!

You will appreciate it more as you journey in your new found faith.

Being a Christian is all about **believing** in God and trusting him, however you feel.

Pray each day that God would strengthen your faith in him and your knowledge of him.

Being a Christian is all about **behaving**.

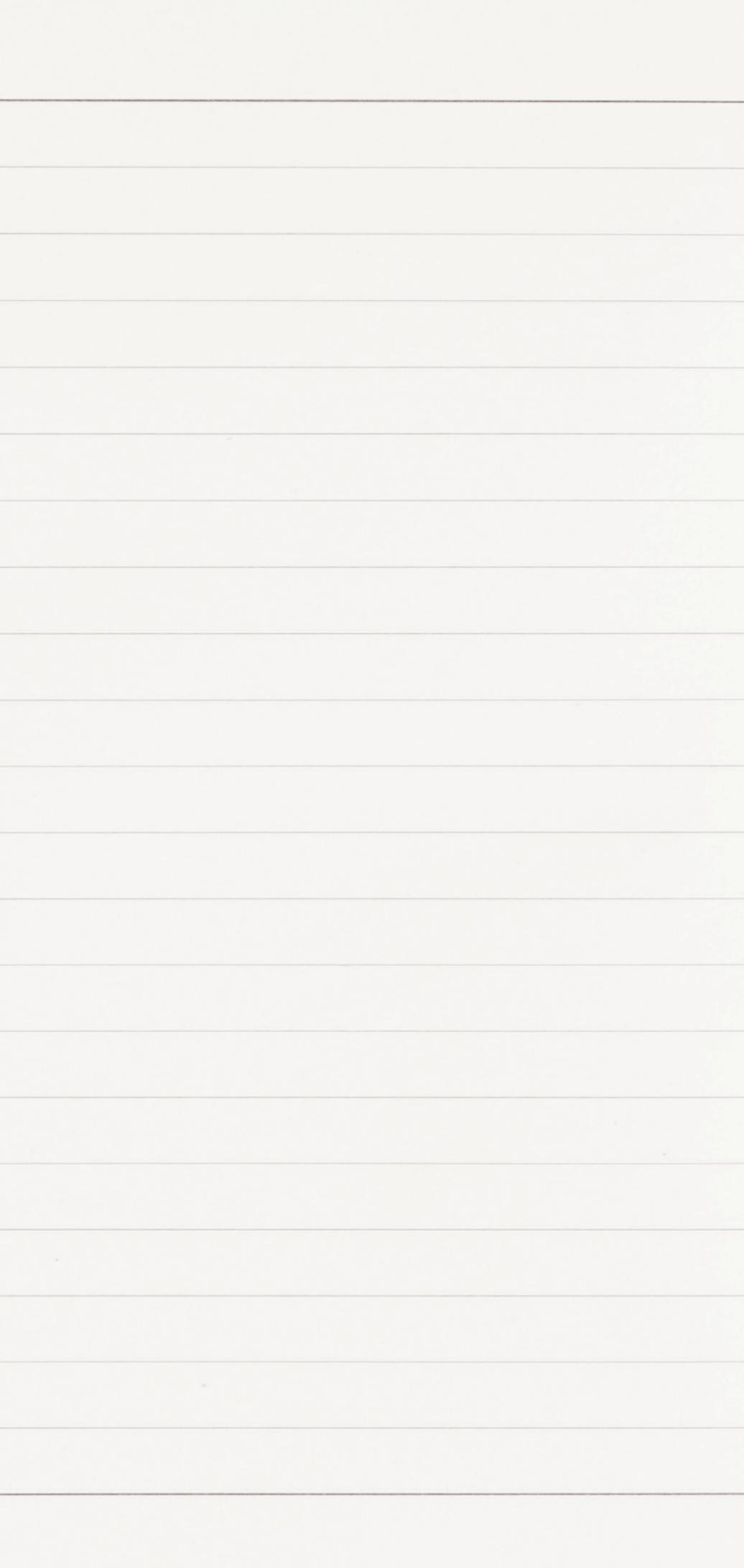
When you become a Christian you need to be willing to change the way you think and act.

The Holy Spirit lives in us to effect that change. Some things change immediately, some things take longer.

Remember the Christian life is a journey so keep going!

Enjoy your
journey!

Mark Greenwood



The Journey

Mark Greenwood travels extensively in the UK helping people come to a fuller understanding of what it means to be a Christian.



The Journey is written for people who have said 'yes' to God and living life his way.

In this booklet you will discover the simple principles of making the most of living your Christian life.

The Christian life is a journey, and as with all journeys, there are things you can do to help you along the way.



MARK GREENWOOD

making connections - changing perceptions

Mark Greenwood is a proud supporter of Christians Against Poverty - lifting people out of debt and poverty

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