

**BECOMING A
CHRISTIAN
*UNDERSTANDING THE
BASICS***

BECOMING A CHRISTIAN – UNDERSTANDING THE BASICS

God created us and loves us so much He wants to have a personal relationship with us.

But , “HOW?” one might well ask.

How could we ever understand God whom we have never seen?

Well, that’s the miracle of Christmas.

That first Christmas at Bethlehem, God took upon Himself human flesh and revealed Himself to us in the person of Jesus who lived among us the perfect life we failed to live and later died on the cross to take all the punishment for our sin that separates us from God.

If we want to know God, come to Jesus, because he said,
“I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me.”

(see the Gospel of John Chapter 14 verse 6)

Now here’s the problem.

When God made Adam and Eve (see Genesis Chapter 2) they decided they didn’t need God so went their own way.

So **S | N** entered the world. That's the **BIG |** that has separated us from God. The Bible is all about restoring that relationship.

The Fact of Sin .

The New Testament Book of Romans Chapter 3 verse 23 says,

“For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

That means all of us. None of us is as good as God. We all fall short of God's standard.

The Wages of Sin.

Romans Chapter 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is that we die.

“The wages of sin is death...”

That's the **bad news!**

But the same verse goes on to give the **good news!**

“...but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

When Jesus died and rose again he provided forgiveness from sin for those who come to Him, and he triumphed over death so that while Christians die physically, they have the assurance of eternal life right now and later with Jesus in heaven.

What a wonderful gift that is. Our sins are forgiven, we have Jesus with us every day and we have a home in heaven!!

But how is that gift provided by God?

Christ died on the cross to take the punishment for our sin.

“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

See Romans Chapter 5 verse 8

It was at the cross that the BIG **I** of my self dependence,
(**S I N**), was dealt with .

The Cross is like a crossed out **I** (**I**)

Jesus Himself dealt with all my sin that separated me from God in order to reconcile me to Himself.

However, just because Jesus has done this on our behalf, it does not mean that everyone is automatically accepted. Jesus calls us to respond **PERSONALLY** to him and accept Him **personally** for who He is and for what He has done to provide the way for us to be accepted by Him.

So the question is, “How do I personally respond to what Jesus has done for me so that I can be accepted by Him?”

In the New Testament Book of Acts Chapter 16 verse 31 there is a man who asked that very question and he was given the right answer by two of God's servants Paul & Silas.

He asked them,

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Paul and Silas replied,

"BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS AND YOU WILL BE SAVED."

The word "**believe**" means to place our whole trust in.

By way of example, I might "believe" that a plane can take me to Sydney. But that in itself won't get me to Sydney. It is not until I commit myself entirely to that plane, get on board and commit all I am and have to that pilot and those engines under his control that I really "believe" and reach my destination by a power far beyond my human capacity.

The power of Jesus to save us is far beyond any illustration I could use. His power to receive, forgive and accept us is awesome! And we don't even have to pay for the fare! He did that when He died on the cross.

But you might ask, "Don't I have to do something to make myself acceptable to God?"

Salvation is a FREE GIFT

Ephesians Chapter 2 verses 8 & 9 provides the answer.

“For by GRACE that you are saved through FAITH– and this is not from yourselves, it is the GIFT of GOD – NOT BY HUMAN WORKS, so that no one can boast.”

‘**GRACE**’ is a free underserved gift and ‘**FAITH**’ is simply taking God at His word and trusting in Him to do what He says and on that basis we commit ourselves to Him to be our personal Saviour.

Now that brings with it a great relief because we know we could never DO enough to make ourselves acceptable to God.

We simply come as we are and acknowledge that we are a sinner before God in need of His wonderful free gift of forgiveness and acceptance.

The Gospel of John Chapter 1 verse 12 says

“To all who received Him, that is those who believed in His Name, he gave the right to become the children of God-children born not of natural decent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

While we have all been born by a natural human birth, when we become a Christian it is like being born anew by the Spirit.

So there we have it. The way to God is through personal acceptance of Jesus who came to die for our sins and rose

again victorious over death to give eternal life to all who personally place their trust in Jesus. We can become His child for ever, forgiven and accepted.

Jesus said, ***“Those who come to me, I will in no way cast out.” John 6:37***

It is as though Jesus Christ has come to the door of our lives and has been knocking, knocking, longing that we might open the door of our lives to Him with his precious gift of forgiveness and acceptance. But the handle to the door is on the inside – if we agree to open to him he will come into our lives.

In the last book of the Bible, Revelation, Chapter 3: 20, we read these wonderful words from Jesus:-

“Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with me.” (In other words Jesus will come to live in us by His Holy Spirit)

This is what becoming a Christian is all about.

There came a day in my life when I prayed a simple prayer to receive Jesus as my personal Saviour. The Bible does not give us special words we have to pray. It only needs simple prayer expressing something like the prayer below.

Lord Jesus, thank you for coming to die on the cross to bear the penalty that my sins deserve then rising again to give eternal life to all who come to you.

I am sorry that I have gone my own way.

Now I turn away from my self-directed life and come to you as the Saviour and Lord of my life.

I ask you to forgive all my sins and make me your child forever.

Just now, I personally receive your free gift of forgiveness and acceptance. Please take control of my life from this moment on.

Thank you for receiving me and coming to live in my life by your Holy Spirit to be with me forever.

In Jesus Name I pray, AMEN.

If we really mean what we say to Jesus, he takes us at our word and makes us His very own child.

That's what a Christian is - one who truly belongs to Jesus Christ.

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Not only has Jesus forgiven your sin, but He has come to live in you by His Holy Spirit, never to leave you, and He promises to lead you on through the joys and challenges of life.

Jesus has promised, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

Hebrews Chapter 13 Verse 5

You are now under 'new management' with Jesus as the Lord of your life, to the glory of God.

A Couple of Suggestions:

- **Read a little section of the Bible every day. I suggest starting to read the Parable of the Lost Son in the Gospel of Luke 15: verse 11-24. If this is the way the father welcomed home this son, we can be absolutely sure our Heavenly Father welcomes us home when we come to Him. The Gospel of Mark in the New Testament is also quite easy to read. It tells us all about Jesus. The Gospel of John is a good starting point also.**
- **Pray every day. Even a brief prayer thanking God for making us His child and praying for our loved ones and for our daily needs and guidance and for the needs of others.**
- **Worship with others regularly at church where we are taught from the Bible and are strengthened through fellowship with other Christians.**
- **And remember- you can always 'phone a friend' through the Church's Pastoral Care Ministry. There are many willing friends at Bridgeman to encourage you in your walk of faith.**