

How to Receive



The New Life in Christ

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Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible. Certain words and portions of the verses have been capitalized for emphasis by the author.

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This booklet contains the most important information that you could ever possibly receive. It was written in order to help you understand why it is necessary for you to receive Jesus as your personal Saviour. The Bible declares concerning Jesus, “...for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12) Maybe you are asking, “Saved from what?” Keep reading to find out.

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

First, let's look at what it means to be saved or, as Jesus called it, to be born again. In John chapter 3, a highly educated, religious leader came to Jesus and said, “We know that you have come from God because of all of the miracles and because of all of the good things that you are doing.” Jesus responded simply by saying, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God...that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” (John 3:3,6)

You see, Jesus got right to the point. Jesus revealed what needs to happen for anyone to see the kingdom of God. Suppose that you were to die tonight and stand before God and He were to say, “Why should I let you into My heaven?” What would you say? Let's state this another way, “What do you think a person has to do to go to heaven?”

Most people answer this question by saying something like this: “I have to do the best I can, live a good life, keep the Ten Commandments or God’s commandments, love my neighbor, do more good than bad, etc.”

Isn’t it interesting that Jesus told a religious leader that one must be born again, not just try to live as righteously as possible, in order to see the kingdom of God. This religious leader was doing everything that most people think would qualify a person to be able to enter heaven. He believed in God, he prayed, fasted, gave money to the poor, read the Scriptures and tried to live according to high moral standards. Yet, with all of these good deeds, Jesus told him that he had to be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God.

No One is Righteous

The truth is that none of us are righteous. The Bible says, “*As it is written: There is NONE righteous, no, NOT ONE... there is NONE who does good, no, NOT ONE.*” (Romans 3:10,12) The Bible also says, “*But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags...*” (Isaiah 64:6) Notice the Bible says that all of our righteousnesses (or our good deeds) are like filthy rags. That is profound! We would all agree that our sins (or bad deeds) would be unacceptable in God’s sight, but the Bible says that even our good deeds are like filthy rags in God’s sight.

Man Is Sinful

The reason why even our good deeds are not good enough to make us acceptable before God is that we are all born with corrupt and sinful human natures. The Bible says, *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.”* (Psalm 51:5) The Bible also says, *“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”* (Romans 5:12) These verses are declaring that even at the moment of conception, we have all inherited a sinful nature. This is because the father of the human race, Adam, sinned and disobeyed God and thus brought the curse of sin upon himself and upon the entire human race that would come after him. Briefly, when God created the universe and everything in it, he placed Adam and his wife, Eve, in a beautiful garden. God told Adam, ¹⁶ *“...Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;* ¹⁷ *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”* (Genesis 2:16-17) The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate of the forbidden tree and at that very moment, they died. At that moment they didn’t die physically, they were still alive; they died spiritually.

They were at that moment spiritually separated from God. Likewise, because of this, we have all been born spiritually dead and separated from God. Because of this, even our good deeds spring forth from a corrupt and dead source and God cannot accept them as being good enough to qualify us to enter heaven.

All Have Sinned

The Bible says, “*For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*” (Romans 3:23) You see, God only accepts absolute perfection. His standard is so high that we would never be able to reach it on our own. God’s outlook is not, “Well, just do the best that you can.” Many times we may view that our deeds or our lives are better than the person’s down the street. Maybe that is true, but man is not our standard, God is our standard. Our righteousness (or goodness) must equal God’s righteousness in order for God to accept us into His presence. The problem is that it is impossible for our righteousness to equal God’s.

Now let’s look at our sins. As stated earlier, we have all inherited a sinful nature. There have been many people that have gotten angry at the fact that we have all inherited a sinful nature from our forefather Adam. They will say that it isn’t right that we inherited a sinful nature and that God is unjust to hold us accountable for what

Adam did. But, if we are honest, we know that we ourselves have sinned. We have all happily, joyfully and readily taken advantage of our inherited sinful natures and utilized them to their fullest capacity. Just in case you don't believe that last statement, let's ask a question. Have you ever lied? Ever? Of course you have. We all have. Did you know that the Bible declares, "*...and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone...*" (Revelation 21:8)

The Reality of the Magnitude of Our Sin

So, if we consider sin as missing the mark of God's perfection we can easily see the error of our ways. Jesus said, "*But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*" (Matthew 5:28) That means that even if we are entertaining wrong thoughts, we are guilty of the act even if we don't follow through with it. So, if we think of sin as consisting of wrong thoughts that we embrace: anger, hatred, jealousy, gossip, or lust, we could say that a person who only sinned three times a day would seem to be almost an angel. Have you ever considered that three sins x 365 days = 1,095 sins or transgressions against God? If you are only 17 you would have already committed more than 18,000 sins or transgressions against God. What do you suppose would happen in a court of law if you were found to have 18,000 offenses on your personal record?

Sin Separates Man from God

The Bible says “*THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH...*” (*Romans 6:23*) “Wages” are the due reward for the things we have done. “Wages” are what we have earned. So all of us have “earned” death. “Death” in the Bible means “a separation” (see *James 2:26*). In *Isaiah 59:2*, the Bible says, “*But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you.*” **What does sin do? It separates. It always separates!**

If someone committed the sin of adultery, what would that sin do? It would separate the couple in the marriage relationship.

If someone was dishonest or got into a serious quarrel in a business partnership, what would that sin do? It would separate the business partners.

Without Christ, Without God and Without Hope

When the Bible says, “The wages of our sin is death,” it means that our sins will separate us from God forever in the fiery torments of hell. That’s not good news. Actually, that is very bad news. We are, in ourselves, hopelessly lost for the Bible says, “...*you were without Christ... HAVING NO HOPE and without God in the world.*” (*Ephesians 2:12*)

THE GOOD NEWS!—Jesus Died for Our Sins

The Bible is unanimous on this point concerning sin. There is only one thing that can overcome sin. The Bible says that **without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin.** (*see Hebrews 9:22*) In order for our sins to be forgiven, there needs to be a shedding of blood. And not just any blood will do, for the Bible says, “*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.*” (*Hebrews 10:4*) And since man is sinful, how can a sinful man shed his blood in order to pay for and take away the sins of another sinful man?

Because God loves us and doesn't want us to be separated from Him forever in hell, the only solution was for God to come Himself in the form of a man in order to pay our debt by shedding His blood and dying in our place on the cross, so that our sins could be forgiven. The Bible says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...and the Word BECAME FLESH and dwelt among us...Christ died for OUR sins...according to the will of God...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners... He was manifested to take away OUR sins; and IN HIM IS NO SIN.*” (*John 1:1,14; 1 Corinthians 15:3; Galatians 1:4; 1 Timothy 1:15; 1 John 3:5*) By these Scriptures, we see that God came in the form of a man and His name was Jesus. It was God's will for Jesus to die for OUR sins. Jesus Himself, had NO sin. Because He had no sin, death could not keep Him. The Bible tells us, “*...Jesus of Nazareth, a Man*

attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know— Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; WHOM GOD RAISED UP, having loosed the pains of death, BECAUSE IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE THAT HE SHOULD BE HELD BY IT.” (Acts 2:22-24) So Jesus was put to death in order to pay for OUR sins, but He did not remain dead. Because He was without sin, death could not keep Him; He is alive! As Jesus said, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.”(Revelation 1:18 - King James Version)

So God offered Himself as a perfect, sinless sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. The Bible says, *“¹¹But Christ came... ¹²Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption... ²⁸so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many.” (Hebrews 9:11,12,28)*

So we see that God has not left us without hope, for the Bible tells us, *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him (Jesus) the iniquity of us all.” (Isaiah 53:6)* In the Bible, the word “iniquity” is an all-inclusive word. It means both sin and the punishment for sin. So God laid upon Jesus both our sin and the punishment for our sin. We all deserve to be punished for our sin, but

Jesus was punished for us, in our place, so that we wouldn't have to be punished.

The Bible tells us, “*God offered Him [Jesus], so that by his sacrificial death He should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven...*” (Romans 3:25 – Today's English Version) Remember that our sins have separated us from God. But the Bible says, “*But now in Christ Jesus you who ONCE WERE FAR OFF HAVE BEEN BROUGHT NEAR by the blood of Christ.*” (Ephesians 2:13) Because of the blood of Jesus that was shed on our behalf, we can be brought near to God. We don't have to be separated from Him any more. That is good news! That is the message of the gospel!

The following parable illustrates what Jesus has done for us. A parable is a simple story that explains a moral or spiritual truth.

One day, I was driving down the highway. Because I was late for work, I was driving much faster than the speed limit. I was driving so fast that by the time I saw the police car it was too late. The officer had already flashed the blue lights and pointed directly at me as I attempted to slow down. He stopped me and gave me a ticket for speeding. I was going so fast that I had to appear before a judge at the courthouse. As the judge came in, I noticed that he was a friend of the family. I thought to myself, “*I KNOW I'M GOING TO GET DISMISSED FROM THIS TRAFFIC TICKET.*” The judge greeted me, asked about

my family, then said, “*I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW YOU MERCY; I WOULD LIKE TO SHOW YOU GRACE, BUT I CANNOT IN ORDER TO BE A JUST JUDGE.*” He heard the evidence from the highway patrolman and found me “GUILTY AS CHARGED.” His sentence was jail-time or \$1000. Not having \$1000, I was prepared to go to jail. At this point the judge did an amazing thing. He took off his robe that distinguished him as a judge, stepped down from his stand, reached into his pocket and handed me \$1000.

Because God is just and holy, He sentenced us (the wages of our sin is death; Romans 6:23), but in His mercy and love He paid our debt. “*For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit.*” (1 Peter 3:18).

Earlier we discussed how some people think it is unfair that we have inherited a sinful nature. But if we are honest, we all know that we have sinned. So it really isn't unfair that we are all guilty before God. We deserve to receive death or eternal separation from God in the burning torments of hell as the just wages for our personal sins. (See Revelation 20:10-15)

What is unfair is that Jesus was perfect and without sin and He was sacrificed; He died and He suffered for OUR sins. But no one has ever heard Jesus complain about that. The Bible says, “*Looking unto Jesus,*

the author and finisher of our faith, who for the JOY that was set before Him endured the cross...”

(*Hebrews 12:2*) Jesus happily, joyfully and readily gave Himself for us so that we could be forgiven and be saved from death. If someone had a father, an uncle, a cousin and a brother who died from cancer and that person finds out that he has cancer, what would we say? We would say that cancer runs in his family or, in other words, he inherited cancer. Does the person need to mope around and be angry and think about how unfair it is? Or does he need to find a remedy? Being angry will do him no good; he needs a remedy or he will die. The good news is that there is a remedy for sin. The remedy is accepting the blood of Jesus that was shed on behalf of our sins.

What Happens If We Reject Jesus?

Let's ask another question. What happens if we reject Jesus and what He has done for us? This is a very important question. The Bible declares that those who believe in Christ, their names are written in the Book of Life and those who do not believe in Christ, their names are not written in the Book of Life. To those whose names are not written in the Book, the Bible declares, *“And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire... And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”* (*Revelation 20:15,10*)

There are people who say that since God loves us so much, then how could He allow someone to suffer for eternity in the fiery torments of hell. The answer is actually simple. WE are all sinners and WE are all guilty before God. God has done nothing wrong, we have. The point has been established that the wages or the due reward for sin is death. And ultimately, death is eternal separation from God in hell. If we reject Christ and what He has done for us on behalf of our sins, we are declaring to God that we don't want Him to pay for our sins but that we want to pay for our own sins. The only problem is, death is the only payment for sins. Being that God is just and good, He will allow us to pay for our own sins if we want to. However, no one, if they truly understand what the consequences would be, should want to do that. So that leads us to our next point.

HOW DO WE RESPOND?

With this being said, how are we to respond to the good news of what Jesus has done on our behalf?

Jesus tells us how to respond, “... *Repent and believe in the gospel.*” (Mark 1:15).

Repentance

What is repentance? Repentance is a gift that God gives to people who want to come to Him and be saved. It involves a new attitude, a change of heart, and a change of mind. When a person hears the gospel and desires to be saved, it causes them to have a desire to have a change in the way that they have been living and a desire to walk in a new direction. When God sees that the person genuinely desires to be saved and desires to walk in a new direction, God enables and empowers that person to change and to walk in a new direction. God gives them newness of life. That is repentance. It causes one to turn to God and His kingdom, and turn away from Satan and his kingdom. With this being said, it does not mean, however, that the person is now perfect, but it means that the person has made a change of direction in life by God's enabling power. Repentance involves turning FROM something and turning TO something. It's described in Acts 26:18 as *"to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins..."* A person might not be drinking a lot and taking drugs or committing adultery, but as made clear before, everyone has sinned. Repentance can simply be turning from independence to dependence upon God. It certainly involves turning away from idols and icons and any other god or gods and turning to Jesus and serving Him alone. For the Bible says, *"...and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."*
(1 Thessalonians 1:9)

With God's help, you must have a change of heart, a change of mind and a change of direction in life. When I heard the gospel, I had a desire to be saved. I can't explain it, but I knew that I couldn't continue to live my life the way that I had been living it. My apartment was full of alcohol, pornography and worldly music. Before hearing the gospel, I didn't think that there was anything wrong with those things. I thought that those things would always be a part of my life. After hearing the good news about what Jesus had done for me, I wanted Jesus in my life and I knew that I had to get rid of all of that stuff in my apartment. The only way to explain it was that I was excited to throw all of that stuff away. I knew that God was blessing me and empowering me to get rid of all of that junk. **You see, when God saw that I genuinely wanted Jesus, He then led me and empowered me to make a break with my old life and I didn't resist Him by trying to hang on to my old life.** I started going to church instead of going to the bars, etc. God has totally changed my life. I also know people who say that they want God, but they don't want to get rid of and make a break with their sinful life. Do you know what? Since they aren't truly genuine in their desire for God, God hasn't changed them. They are still miserable, living the same life, etc. Do you know why? It is because God is a perfect gentleman. He only does for us what we desire for Him to do for us. You must turn to God and His ways and turn away from Satan and his ways. You see, **God will enable you to repent, however, you must make an effort to obey God and walk in that new direction, trusting God to empower you.** Many people want the benefits of salvation but they also want to continue in their old way of life. That is not repentance; that is deception.

Believe in the Gospel

Jesus not only said to repent, but also to believe in the gospel (Mark 1:15). Today, “believing” can mean just acknowledging some mental facts. I “believe” in Jesus; He died on a cross and rose again. Many people “believe” that, but their lives are unaffected by their belief. In accordance with this type of believing that doesn’t affect a person’s life or destination, the Bible says, “*You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*” (James 2:19) We know that even though demons believe in God, they are not saved.

In English there is just one word for “believe” and it means: “To hold an opinion; to think or consider to be true or honest.” In the Bible, “belief” or “faith” means, “having confidence in, trusting, reliance upon, placing one’s self in the care of another.” This type of believing affects the way that a person views his whole life. His faith doesn’t just influence a portion of his life, it influences every aspect of his life (how he speaks, how he thinks, what he does, what he desires, etc.). The Amplified Bible expands faith’s meaning by stating, “*Believe in and on the Lord Jesus Christ—that is, give yourself up to Him, take yourself out of your own keeping and entrust yourself into His keeping, and you will be saved...*” (Acts 16:31)

An example of how one must “believe” upon Christ is expressed by the story of a pilot who crashed in the ocean. As he saw a piece of wood from a raft floating by, he really believed that it could save him. However, he finally perished as he saw the wood float away. Even though he believed it could save him, it did not save him. In order for the piece of wood to be able to save him, he needed to throw himself on it, cling to it, rely on it, and trust himself to it. **The kind of “faith” that will save you, is throwing yourself on, clinging to, relying on and trusting yourself to Jesus Christ and His saving work that He did for you upon the cross. It is trusting Jesus ALONE for your salvation.** (See Galatians 2:21; 5:4) But, we must understand that faith (or believing) without corresponding action is not faith at all, but only a deception. The Bible says, “...*so faith without works is dead also.*” (James 2:26) So in other words, **true faith will cause us to believe, follow and obey that which God requires of us.** This brings us to our next point.

Follow the Lord in Water Baptism

The Bible also says that we need to follow the Lord in water baptism if we are sincere in following Him, for the Bible says, “...*Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...(Acts 2:38)*”

Water baptism is simply you identifying with what Jesus has done for you. The Bible says, “*Therefore we were BURIED WITH HIM THROUGH BAPTISM INTO DEATH, that just as Christ was RAISED FROM THE DEAD by the glory of the Father, even so we also should WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.*” (Romans 6:4) The waters of baptism represent a grave. The person who goes down into the water is demonstrating that the old person and the old independent life has died with Christ and is being buried in the water and that the person who comes out of the water has been raised with Jesus into a new life that is full of God’s love, life and power.

The following story perfectly describes the practical outworking of that awesome promise given in Romans 6:4. The following story is told by Don Krow:

There were some people that came to Christ and after they heard the teaching on water baptism, they said, "We want it! We want it now!" It took some time to fill up a large tank with water, but they were then led outside. I said, "Would you like to openly profess your faith in Jesus Christ?" They turned from us and turned to God as if we weren't even there. Both of these people said, "We thank you for saving us, for bringing the Gospel into our lives, etc., etc." We baptized them in the name of Jesus Christ and they came out of the water. Do you know what? This lady told me a few days after, "I left 35 years of nicotine addiction, smoking 2 packs of cigarettes a day. I left them in the waters of baptism. When I came out of that water that night, I was totally delivered! Totally free from that 35 year nicotine addiction!" She identified herself, she was baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. She said, "Jesus, I'm identifying with you. I'm yours!" She received her deliverance that night as she acted upon the word.

Water baptism is also like a marriage ceremony. Everyone sees and knows that this is for real. People who get married are declaring to the world that they love each other, that they are committed to each other and that they have forsaken all others. It isn't the ceremony that produced that type of love and commitment, but it was the love and commitment that produced the ceremony. The same is true with water baptism. The water baptism ceremony doesn't produce love, commitment, faith and salvation. Rather the ceremony should be a demonstration

that love, commitment and faith already exist. Without such love, commitment and faith, the ceremony is without substance, meaning and power.

You see, water baptism is an act of faith. Water baptism is not for those who believe half-heartedly in the gospel. It is an act of obedience in following the Lord's command. It is your faith expressing itself. It is your faith identifying with the personal work of Jesus Christ. It is saying, "I'm taking my stand. This is it! I've died to the old life and have been raised up out of the water to walk in newness of life. I am totally the property of Jesus Christ." Remember that the Bible says in Acts 2:38, it is for every one of you. People who turn to Jesus as Lord and Saviour are willing to express that faith and openly confess Jesus in this public way. People who say no to Jesus' command are showing to some extent a dead faith. Faith is dead when people are unwilling to express it. Baptism is not what saves, it is Jesus. Water doesn't wash away sins, it is the blood of Jesus. But faith applies His blood to you and faith is always willing to express itself.

Commit To God

God also requires a strong commitment from us in this relationship since He paid such a great price in order to save us. It is only fair, we as people do the same. If we want to marry someone, we would want that person to be committed to us. We wouldn't want to share our mate with another. Well the same is true with God. He loves us so much that He wants us to give ourselves to

Him and follow Him and make Him number one in our lives. Jesus said, “²⁴*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me.* ²⁵*For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.* ²⁶*For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?... (Matthew 16:24-26)*

I remember a man felt that the Lord was drawing him to Himself, but he was concerned that he couldn't repent and change his direction. This man used to drink rum every day and was a womanizer. This man didn't want to start something and not be able to finish it. That is a good attitude. God tells us in His Word to count the cost of following Him (see Luke 14:26-33).

However, God doesn't expect us to change ourselves. If we could change ourselves, then we wouldn't need Jesus. So the man was told that it wasn't up to him to change himself because he couldn't change himself. What he needed to do was to make a quality decision to follow the Lord no matter what happened and to make a decision to allow the Lord to change him. That is what he did and the Lord has changed him. He no longer lives the way he used to live. This is a perfect example of repentance, believing (or faith) in Jesus and commitment all wrapped up into one example.

This doesn't mean that everything in life will be perfect and without problems. Actually, the Bible teaches that, "...*your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*" The devil, Satan, tries to trip us up and influence us. But for those who give themselves to the Lord, 1 John 4:4 tells us that "*greater is He (Jesus) who is in you than he (Satan) who is in the world.*" The Lord will strengthen us and help us and change us. As stated earlier, making a decision to follow Jesus and to allow Him to change us does not mean that we will never slip up. Actually the Bible says, talking about those who decide to follow the Lord, "*If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" (1 John 2:2; 1:9)

So in summary, the gospel is responded to in faith by whole-heartedly believing that Christ died for our sins, was buried and arose from the dead that we might be declared righteous, for the Bible says, "*...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures... who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.*" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 4:25)

This whole-hearted believing results in confessing Jesus as the Lord of our lives and committing ourselves to Him as our only means of salvation. This causes us to repent and to turn from our ways unto God's ways and it causes us to follow the Lord in water baptism, for the Bible says, *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation... you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins... And He (Jesus) said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."* (Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 1:21; Mark 16:15-16). When you have believed and obeyed in this way, then you have allowed the Lord to do a work in your heart and you are what Jesus called "born again."

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER WE RESPOND?

A Spiritual Rebirth

This “born again” condition is a spiritual rebirth. The Bible says in John 3:6, *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* So, the born again experience is not to be confused with our fleshly or physical birth. In Ephesians we read, *“And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins... but God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).”* (Ephesians 2:1,4-5) Obviously, you weren’t physically dead, but as stated before you were spiritually dead and separated from God because of your sin. But when you believe what Jesus Christ has done for you and receive His payment for your sins, you are reconciled to God and made alive spiritually by the power of the Holy Spirit. You are born again; you are saved! And all of this is done as a free gift to you. The Bible says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.”* (Ephesians 2:8)

Jesus Becomes Our Righteousness

Not only that, but the Bible also says, “*But now the righteousness of God apart from the law (apart from our own personal efforts) is revealed... even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe...*” (Romans 3:21,22) These verses are telling us that to those who believe and trust fully on Jesus Christ, those people receive the very righteousness of God.

Another verse says, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have BECOME new...*” This says that we have become a new creation. This changes the way we view life. The old things you used to enjoy doing, no longer bring joy to your heart. The Bible also says, “*For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might BECOME the righteousness of God in Him.*” (2 Corinthians 5:17,21) That is incredible! Not only did Jesus shed His blood so that our sins could be forgiven, but God offers us His very own righteousness in Christ. So the blood that Jesus shed on the cross takes care of our sin problem and our righteousness problem.

So, in Christ, our righteousness equals God's! Why? How can that be? Because as the Bible says, “*But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who BECAME FOR US wisdom from God—and RIGHTEOUSNESS and*

sanctification and redemption—that, as it is written, ‘He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.’ (1 Corinthians 1:30-31) Christ Himself is our righteousness, to those who believe.

Eternal Life

In ending this booklet we want to quickly look at the meaning of eternal or everlasting life. One of the most familiar passages of scripture is John 3:16. It seems that many people know that scripture which says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

This scripture reveals a two-fold purpose for Jesus coming to this earth. The first purpose was that Jesus came to die for our sins so that we wouldn’t have to perish, in other words, so that we wouldn’t have to spend eternity separated from God. The second purpose was that Jesus came to give the believer everlasting life.

In John 17:2-3, the night before His crucifixion, Jesus was praying and He said this, *“As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And THIS IS ETERNAL LIFE, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.”*

This is saying that everlasting life is - KNOWING THE FATHER, the only true God, and KNOWING JESUS CHRIST whom He has sent. That is what everlasting life is.

In John 3:36, it says, *“He who believes in the Son HAS everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”* That verse says that everlasting life can be a present tense position and possession. It is not something that is going to take place only in the future, but something that can be a reality right now. Also, 1 John 5:13 says, *“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you HAVE eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”* Notice that it says you HAVE eternal life, a present tense possession, if you believe in Jesus.

Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ. It is more than an intellectual knowledge. This word “know” is used throughout scripture to describe the most intimate, personal relationship that you can have. For instance, in Genesis 4:1, it says that Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore a son. It is talking about the sexual relationship between a man and a woman – it is talking about intimacy. So when the Bible says that eternal life is “knowing” the only true God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent, it means that eternal life is having intimacy and a personal relationship with God.

With that in mind, John 3:16 says, *“God loved you and me so much, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever will believe in what Jesus has done for us, would not perish but have intimacy, closeness, and a personal relationship with Almighty God.”* Isn’t that incredible! To think that God, the creator of the universe wants to be close and intimate with us. To think that God, the One who

possesses all power is truly interested in getting involved in our lives personally. To think that God isn't so busy that He doesn't have time for us, but always has time for us. Now that has not always been the message that we have heard. The real purpose of salvation is to have intimacy, a personal relationship with God.

Jesus did not come to only forgive you of your sins, as wonderful as that may be. Sin was a barrier that stood between you and intimacy with God. Jesus came to bring you back into a close personal relationship with Him. Jesus loves you. Jesus wants to know you personally. Jesus wants to give you a quality of life that is greater than anything that you could obtain through any other source. Jesus said it this way in John 10:10, "*The thief, speaking of Satan, does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.*" God wants to give you eternal life and God wants to give you abundant life, which is a life that is full of meaning and purpose.

I believe that you need that today, that you want that. Jesus died not only to forgive you of your sins, but also to bring you into a close, personal relationship with Him. You need to go beyond just getting your sins forgiven and enter into everlasting life with the Father.

The Bible says in Jeremiah 29:11-13, "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I*

will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all of your heart.”

God wants to hear from you personally. Cry out to Him from your heart. Cry out to Him for forgiveness and mercy with a heart of repentance and commitment if you haven't done so already. God loves you and wants you to be born again and enter into eternal life and relationship with Him. Maybe you've never talked to God before, but He's lovingly waiting to hear from you.

If you want some help, then just repeat the following words, “Dear God, I know that my sin has separated me from You. I acknowledge, as Your Word declares, that I am without Christ, without God and without hope. But I thank You that You love me so much that You didn't want to leave me without hope. Thank You for sending Jesus Christ to die for my sins and to die in my place. I ask You to forgive me of my sin and come into my life standing on the grounds that Jesus paid it all in order to bring me near to You. Please begin to direct my life and help me to change. Thank You for giving me eternal life. In Jesus' name, Amen.”

If you said this, or something like it, and meant it from your heart, Jesus promised that He is in charge of your life now, for the Bible says, “...*do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20) Jesus also promised that your sins are forgiven—wiped clean. You are a new person inside—God lives in you!

In order for you to grow in your relationship with the Lord and to see the Lord change you, you must:

1. Attend church regularly. Just as your body can't survive without food, you need the Word of God, which the Bible also describes as spiritual food. At church you will learn much more about the Christian life and what God has in store for you.
2. Fellowship with other Christians. Christians need each other to encourage each other. We are in this together, having been brought together by the blood of Jesus. Remember that no one is perfect, including you, so don't expect Christians to be perfect. It will keep you from getting offended and doing what the devil desires most, "separating yourself and judging others".
3. Pray to God. Seek Him daily, trusting that what Jesus has done for you makes you acceptable in His sight. Rely on the Lord to help you.
4. Read your Bible. This will help to feed you spiritually.

