

Plan of Salvation

Knowing God

God's Purpose One can be religious without necessarily being Christian. True, Christianity is a religion, but it's much more than that. Christianity is a relationship between God and people. It involves knowing God personally, experiencing His divine love and forgiveness, and communicating this to every life we touch.

We start by realizing that no matter what we have ever done or have failed to do, God loves us and is vitally interested in our total life - both for this life as well as the next. In fact, Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16 NIV). And again, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10 NIV).

The greatest thing in the world is to fully realize that God is not out to punish us for wrongdoing but that He loves us unconditionally and does indeed have a wonderful purpose and plan for each of our lives.

Man's Problem

Let's face it, we all have sinned and fallen short of God's standard (Romans 3:23). Our wrongdoing, or sin, blocks us from experiencing God's love and receiving the full and abundant life that He has for us.

Punishment for sin comes from the wrongdoing itself. Sin has its own self-destructive consequences - first spiritual death and ultimately eternal death (Romans 6:23); that is, eternal separation from God, the Author of all love and life.

Just as a burned out light bulb can't respond to electricity, a spiritually dead person cannot respond to God's love and power without His help. Though God's love and power are constant, we're dead to it as sinners. But, God is not out to punish us for our wrongdoing; He loves us unconditionally and does indeed have a wonderful purpose and plan for each of our lives. He loves us so much that He sent us His son to die on the cross for our sins.

Christ's Answer

Because our sin has separated us from God, we have been left with a "God-shaped vacuum" or spiritual emptiness. The world's many religions are all evidence of man's endless struggle to fill this vacuum. And his relentless search for inner peace through pleasure seeking, power, fame, fortune, drugs, and mystical experiences all tell of his inner emptiness. But as Augustine put it, "You have made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You."

Since it is impossible for us to find God or peace with Him through our own efforts, God in His love and mercy sent His own sinless Son, Jesus Christ, to save us (Ephesians 2:8-9). Christ did this by dying on the cross in our place, paying the ransom price for our sins - which was death. Thus, Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin and He is the only way back to God and eternal life (John 14:6, Romans 5:8). As the Bible says, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all men" (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NIV).

Your Response

If you were found guilty of a crime and were sentenced to death, would you accept a free pardon from the President? Most of us would.

In the same way, we are all guilty of sin, and the consequence of sin is that we are condemned to eternal death. But because Christ died on the cross in our place and paid our ransom, God now offers us a free pardon. All we need to do is respond to God's love and accept His pardon.

How Can We Do This?

First, confess to God that you are a sinner. Admit your spiritual need. The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9 NIV). We must admit we are a sinner before we can receive forgiveness.

Second, repent - turn from your sin to Christ. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news" (Mark 1:15 NIV). A person can reject God's solution for sin and accept the consequences, or they can turn and receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Third, believe. "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31 NIV). Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross. Trust in His death as the only avenue for forgiveness for your sins.

Fourth, receive. God said, "[To] all who received Him [Christ], to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12 NIV). Through prayer you can receive Jesus Christ into your heart and life. Then you will be a son or daughter of God.

So you see, Christianity is much more than a religion. It is responding to God's offer of a free pardon for your sin, accepting His forgiveness and committing your life to Christ that makes you a real Christian.

To help you do that, pray the following prayer out loud:

"Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner. I believe You died on the cross for my sins. Right now, I repent of my sin, independence and rebellion. And I receive Your forgiveness. I receive You as my Lord and Savior and make a commitment of my life to You. I answer Your call to follow You. With Your help I choose to serve and obey You. Thank You for saving me. Thank You for dying for my sin, for Your free pardon, for Your gift of eternal life, and for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen."

Here's Great Assurance

If you sincerely confessed your sin and prayed to receive Christ, you are now a true Christian and have the gift of eternal life! You are a brand-new person inside with a new spiritual life. You are a child of God and a member of His family (2 Corinthians 5:17, John 1:12). God promises all of this. So believe it. Accept it. Take it by faith and not feelings. Feelings change, but God's Word never does. God's Word, the Bible, says "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life, he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:11-13 NIV).

If you prayed to receive Christ into your life, we want to help you grow as a Christian. Your new spiritual life will need care just as your physical life does. Contact us about your decision and we will provide you with a free study designed for new Christians. We also would be happy to answer your questions or meet with you