

HOW CAN I KNOW JESUS

The Bible tells us how we can enjoy a rich, fulfilling life by knowing Jesus personally as our Lord and Savior. The Awesome Creator designed us with a capacity for love and a desire to be successful. This abundant life was formulated around mankind living in close fellowship with the Lord. Listen to the words of Jesus Christ:

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.

*Revelation 3:20 NIV**

God's design includes provisions for us even when we're physically and emotionally drained:

Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

Yes, our loving Father God has our best in mind:

...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10b

I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

John 15:11

Why is it that most people are not experiencing this abundance? People have stepped out of God's plan and have tried to do their own thing. The Bible calls this sin. This rebellion blocks God's blessings from us. None of us is excluded from this problem of sin:

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23

Some people feel that sin is an old-fashioned concept, but the Bible tells us that our sin separates us from God's blessings.

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Isaiah 59:1,2

Our good works and noble intentions are not sufficient to reinstate us to a standing where the holy God can bless us:

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Isaiah 64:6

God's plan of salvation is the provision of His love for a race of fallen, stubborn beings. Because the Almighty is holy, His standards are essential and can't be ignored. But, because "God is love," He designed a way to reinstate those

individuals who, out of sincere love for Him, would obey His instructions.

GOD'S SOLUTION

God's Spirit overshadowed a virgin named Mary, and the child that was conceived was therefore both God and man. God entered our world in human form as the son of Mary and the Son of God – Jesus, the Christ (or “Anointed One”).

Jesus led a sinless life by complete obedience to Father God. Then, as our substitute, He took our place and our punishment.

Whereas the punishment for sin was death, and because He was just, God couldn't ignore sin, but He revealed in the Old Testament that He would receive a substitute payment for man's sins.

Animal sacrifices pointed to the day when God, in human form, would come to earth and be our substitute sacrifice – the Lamb of God. What God's holiness demanded, God's love provided.

*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*

Because Jesus was a perfect man, He could pay for our sins; because He was Eternal God, His blood paid for all who would come to Him.

Jesus willingly went to the cross and died as our sin

substitute. He arose from the dead to demonstrate that God's holiness was satisfied. By rising from the dead, Jesus broke sin's power over us.

...He entered the Most Holy Place once for all by His own blood, having obtained eternal redemption... How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, Who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God.

Hebrews 9:12b,14

This salvation is all of God. Going to church, doing good works, etc., will not save us. It is very hard for independent individuals to accept that they can do nothing to merit salvation.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.

Ephesians 2:8,9

OUR RESPONSE

A free gift cannot be earned, but it must be accepted. An essential aspect of God's plan of salvation is that it separates between those who couldn't care less about God's will and those who, when they see the error of their ways, will repent, or turn from doing their own thing.

*...unless you repent, you too will all perish.
Luke 13:3*

*I have declared to both Jews and Greeks
that they must turn to God in repentance and
have faith in our Lord Jesus.
Acts 20:21*

We receive Jesus' payment for our sin by submitting to His Lordship over our life. Submission and obedience puts us back on the original path God designed for us.

*That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus
is Lord," and believe in your heart God
raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
Romans 10:9*

YOU CAN RECEIVE GOD'S GIFT OF SALVATION RIGHT NOW:

Do you believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins? That He arose from the grave on the third day?

Will you turn from being the boss of your life and surrender to Jesus, and ask Him to be your Lord and Savior?

Here is a sample prayer. Ponder it, then put it in your own words and say it to God, if you truly mean it.

Dear Heavenly Father, I come to You
admitting that I have sinned and have not

done Your will. I believe that, out of love, you sent Jesus, Your Only Begotten Son, to die for my sin. I believe that His precious blood was shed to wash away my sin. I believe that He rose from the dead and has destroyed sin's power over my life. I turn from my sin and receive Jesus as my Savior and my Lord. Jesus, please come into my heart and life, wash away my sin and be my Savior and Lord. Amen.

The exact wording is not as important as the heart response. Did you turn from being the lord of your own life and, in receiving Jesus, are you making Him your Lord?

This may seem like a simple prayer, yet it is a legal transaction, a covenant. If you were sincere, God will honor His Word and will save you and send His Holy Spirit to live inside you.

GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

1. Read the Bible every day. Get an easy to understand translation, such as The New International Version, The New Living Bible, or The New American Standard Bible.

Start reading at least a chapter a day. Begin with Matthew's gospel and read through the New Testament first; then begin reading in the Old Testament. Make notes as you read, and write down any questions you may have to ask a Bible teacher later. Begin each Bible study with prayer for God's guidance.

Look up these verses on the importance of Bible study:

1 Peter 2:2

2 Timothy 3:16, 17

Psalm 119:11

Psalm 1:1-3.

[Check the index of your Bible for the location of the books of the Bible.]

2. Talk to God your Father in prayer, every day. Begin your prayer time like Jesus' example, with praise (Matthew 6:9). Confess any sin. 1 John 1:9 tells us the Lord will forgive us. Look up these verses to see what happens when we don't confess our sin: Psalm 66:18; Psalm 32:1-7.

Pray for others (Ephesians 6:18, 19; Colossians 4:2-4). Instead of worrying, pray (Philippians 4:6-7). Give thanks in your prayers (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Bring your requests to the Father in Jesus' name (John 16:23,24).

3. Beware of a new pull. Our enemy, Satan, wants to pull you down, discourage you and make you give up. Jesus said the first thing that would happen to us after we receive the Word would be that Satan would come to try to steal the Word of God from us (like having this thought: "I didn't feel anything; nothing happened!"). Also, persecution, worry, cares of this world, and the love of sin will attempt to choke the Word and steal God's promises from us (Mark 4:3-20).

Resist the devil in the name of Jesus the very instant you recognize his temptation traps of sin and doubt: 1 Peter 5:6-9; James 4:6-8; Ephesians 6:10-18; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. For more help, read "Winning the Inner War," available free online or contact Spear Ministries for a free hard copy.+

When temptations or pressures increase, get together with another believer and pray for and encourage each other. The Lord wants us to strengthen each other (Galatians 6:1,2). We're to help others. Learn all you can; share all you learn.

4. Meet regularly with other Christians (Hebrews 10:24,25). Find a good church home where the Bible is taught, God is praised, Jesus is served, and the Holy Spirit is honored.

5. Look into being baptized in water (Matthew 28:19,20; Acts 10:47,48).

6. Begin seeking the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is when Jesus pours out the power of the Holy Spirit on us. Study these verses: Luke 11:9-13; John 7:37-39; Acts 1:4-8; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:44-46. Spear Ministries has a pamphlet called, "Holy Spirit Power," that deals more with this subject. It's yours free for the asking.+

7. Begin sharing the story of God's love and salvation with others. You may be the only "preacher" some people will listen to (Romans 10:9-15).

For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13

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