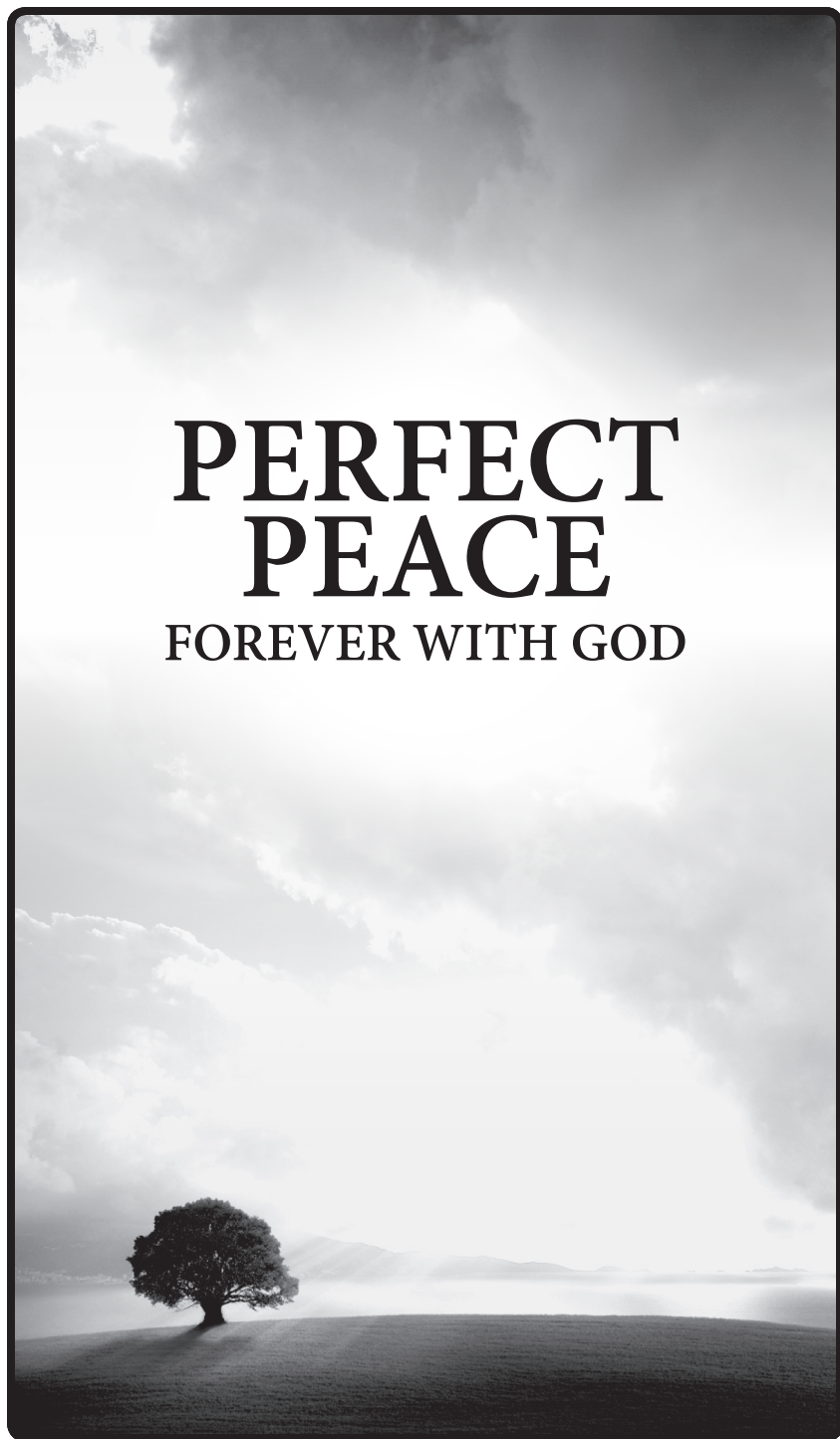


**PERFECT  
PEACE**  
FOREVER WITH GOD



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**Bible Study Leader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bible Study Inquirer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lesson Scheduled for:** \_\_\_\_\_ (date) \_\_\_\_\_ (time)





# INTRODUCTION

## PERFECT PEACE FOREVER WITH GOD

**Perfect Peace** is a Bible study specifically made for a *home setting* where you *discover God for yourself*. You personally come to know God as much as you know one of your closest friends. **Perfect Peace** is not a *religion-based* study – with more religious things to do – but focuses on a real, daily *relationship* with God. In other words, it's not just for church but where you live every day. Here are the main themes:

## PEACE

“Peace” is a wonderful word. It means (1) inner-rest, (2) personal satisfaction and (3) calm. If we put it together: peace is the *inner-rest* that comes from being *truly satisfied*, resulting in a *lasting calm*. How many people could have used more of those three things last week? The world we live in is full of trouble, fear, pain and stress – the opposite of peace. Sarah, an ordinary person from Long Island, New York, recently wrote:

“I live two lives – an inner one where every cell in my body is *infused with the presence of continued love buried inside brutal grief* – and the other that includes a more public persona (image) that still struggles to stay connected to family, friends, work and life. I always want to tell people that they have no clue just how *big and awful this inner-world is*, but it would paralyze them and *doesn't change the truth of my life.*”

As people search for peace and satisfaction, they're usually willing to try just about anything. John Lennon, the famous leader of the **Beatles**, once said, "I've been on pills since I was 19. I've *always* needed a drug to *survive*." It's good that he was willing to be honest about his troubled heart like Sarah. The bad thing is that he was hooked on something that only produces a *false sensation* of peace. The problem with false peace is that it's *never lasting* and always has really *bad side-effects*. It's just not real; it only makes the situation worse in the long run.

## PERFECT PEACE

God promises not only peace, but something He calls "perfect peace." Perfect means this peace is **(1) complete** (has everything, lasting) and **(2) without defect** (bad side-effects). That's what this Bible study is about: God's promise of a *lasting* inner-rest and a personal satisfaction that has *no bad side-effects*. **Perfect** Peace.

Jesus once explained it to a lady this way, "You will never thirst again." Doesn't sound like something this world can offer, does it? That's why Jesus said, "**My** peace I give unto you, *not as the world giveth*."

## PERFECT PEACE FOREVER

Who doesn't want something **lasting** to satisfy them! In fact, deep in the heart of every person, the greatest desire is to find the secret to live happily, *forever*. Remember how all the old bed-time stories used to end: *happily ever after*? What could be better than that? Can you imagine *anything* being wonderful ... *forever*?

Whatever we may think about it, all of us are interested in that word "*forever*." Why? Because God created us "in His image" as eternal beings. I am more than *just* a body. You are more than *just* a body. There's a part of us that will live on and on - **forever** - even after your physical body has stopped working. Someone asked our sixth president, John Quincy Adams (at the age of 94), "How are you feeling this morning?" He answered, "Quite well. Quite well. But *the house I live in* is not so good."

Your body is just a temporary shell for the *real* you. It might help to think of it this way: one day you will turn a trillion years old. (That's one to celebrate!) Hard to picture isn't it? In light of that reality, think about these words spoken by God, "It is *appointed* unto man *once to die*, but **after this...**" Think about those two words: "after this."

It makes us stop for a moment and consider eternity. "There must be a purpose for my being. There must be hope beyond just birth, life and death." The **Perfect Peace** Bible study goes beyond this earthly life into the *forever* part of our existence. God promises perfect peace not just for this life, but for the one that lasts forever. We call that "heaven."

## PERFECT PEACE FOREVER WITH GOD

True, perfect peace, comes from **knowing** as a *fact* that all is well between you and God; and that it will be well with Him *forever in heaven*. It's **knowing** with perfect assurance that God has forgiven all your sins and given you eternal life. No matter what else may be going well for us in this earthly life, if we don't have that confidence, we don't have peace. "Will I spend forever with God?"

On the other hand, imagine how **knowing** would completely remove the horrible fear of death. You'd no longer be living just for a few short years on earth; you'd be looking forward to something fulfilling and wonderful beyond death.

When asked, "will you go to heaven when you die?" most people respond, "I hope so." Religion leaves people *hoping* rather than *knowing*. And hope may be fine when you're talking about a Christmas gift you really want, but not when we're talking about eternity. God's greatest desire for you is in that word **know**. God wants you to **know**!

A verse you may have never seen, and one that's often overlooked by many religions is I John 5:13: "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; *that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life.*" God's Word is clear: we can **know** for a fact that we will live forever with God. And we can know it **now**! Honestly, if we couldn't *know it now*, how could we ever have peace in this life? That is the goal of this four-part Bible study, *Perfect Peace Forever With God*.



## LET'S REVIEW

- ✓ Perfect peace is the inner-rest that comes from being truly satisfied.
- ✓ The peace God offers is lasting and does not include bad side-effects.
- ✓ You are more than just a body; God has made us as eternal beings.
- ✓ Perfect peace comes when we know we will spend all of eternity with God in the blissful place called heaven.



If you have the time, it would be best for you to go through **Study 1: May I Introduce Myself**, filling in the blanks you know, before you meet together with your study leader. Then you can go over the answers together.

If you are not able to do so, you and your study leader will do the lesson together during your scheduled meeting.



# MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

## STUDY 1

In the early 1900's, very few people owned their own car. A certain gentleman was out proudly test-driving his new Model T Ford when it stalled out and rolled to a stop on the side of the road. He was frustrated and embarrassed, but he was determined to get it running again. The strong young man rolled up his sleeves, pulled the car hood up, and went to work.

About two hours later, another Model T pulled up behind him, and a frail-looking gentleman approached the annoyed man. "Can I give you some help?" he offered. The muscular mechanic looked up at the scrawny old fellow and shook his head "no." Back to work he went, without a word! The older man just stood watching for about an hour, until he finally offered again, "Look, if you'll just give me *5 minutes*, I think I could help." In anger, the young man snapped back, "I've been trying to figure out what's wrong with this automobile for the last **three hours**; and you think you can do something in five minutes!" After a few moments of awkward silence, the young man finally gave in, "Alright, you've got five minutes, Mister."

*Three minutes* later, the old man motioned for the owner of the car to prepare to start the engine. He cranked the vehicle's engine and it fired right up. The young man jumped out of the car with a look mixed with shock, shame and gratitude, "How did you ... do that? I mean, I've been working on it for hours! What I couldn't do in three *hours*, you did in three **minutes!**" The gray-headed man removed his hat, extended his right hand and said, "*May I introduce myself?* My name is Ford, Henry Ford."

Imagine the surprise of realizing the *very one who **designed** his automobile* was standing right in front of him. He'd heard others talk about Henry Ford and give *their* opinion of this brilliant man, but now *he was meeting him in person!* No one understood his car better than the man who put it together; he knew that car like the back of his own hand! After asking many questions, the proud owner of a Model T Ford drove home with a story to tell. Can you imagine! Well, let's think about something even better:

## GETTING TO KNOW GOD **FOR YOURSELF**

One of the things I think you'll enjoy about this Bible study is you're not simply told facts you need to know, but you are introduced to God personally. It's really the difference between knowing **about** God and *getting to know God for yourself*. Do you see the difference?

Most people would like to know God better: to know Him *personally*. Unfortunately, many of them are content to just "take someone else's word for it." So, much of what they know about God is what someone has told them.

You've probably figured this out by now, but there are some *strange* ideas about God out there. And if you're a little suspicious about *organized religion*, you're not the only one! There are a lot of people who want *real answers* about life and are curious, "I want to know God *as He really is*, not just *as others portray Him*. I want to know God for myself."

## LET GOD **SPEAK FOR HIMSELF**

Have you ever known someone who took the liberty to "speak for you?" Maybe they paint you in a really flattering way or maybe they're unfair and cruel. It really doesn't matter, does it. You want to say, "Look, just let me speak for myself."

Well, if we want to get to know God, we'll have to *let Him speak for Himself*. Most religions have been developed by people trying to "speak for God."



## MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

That's dangerous! Wouldn't you agree no other person knows *you* better than yourself? It's also true that no one knows God better than **God!**

So how do you sort through all of the religious fluff and get right down to the truth? How do you tell the difference between what's real fact and what's religious fiction? Usually, when you first meet someone, you find out more about them *by asking them questions*. No doubt, you have many questions you'd like to ask God. But how do we allow *God* to answer those questions?

## GOD SPEAKS TO US ABOUT HIMSELF THROUGH HIS WORD

God's Word, the Bible, is His way to give us powerful and accurate descriptions of Who He is. It's God speaking for Himself! When you read it, it speaks directly to your heart. *You just know it's true*. As Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

In the following verses from II Peter 1:20-21, notice what God tells us about *how the Bible came to be*.

*Knowing this first, that **no prophecy of the Scripture (Bible) is of any private interpretation ...***

1. According to this verse, is the Bible simply the private (personal) opinions of human writers?

---

*... for the prophecy (Bible) came **not in old time by the will (desire) of man ...***

2. When God tells us His Word was not written *by the will of man* what do you think He means? (Note: "will" means desire.)

3. If it wasn't their *personal opinions* or what they wanted to write, then whose words did these holy men write?

... but holy men of God spake as they were moved **by the Holy Ghost.**

---

Jeremiah 36:1-2 describes this very process of how God told men what to write: "*This Word* came unto Jeremiah *from the Lord*, saying, Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee."

Notice God's promise in Psalm 12:6-7 that His Word would be protected from destruction/corruption.

*The **Words of the LORD are pure words...** Thou shalt keep them, **O LORD, thou shalt preserve (protect) them from this generation for ever.***

4. Who promised to protect the Words of God?

- 
5. How many of God's Words did He promise to protect? (Matthew 24:35 says, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but **my Words** shall not pass away.")

- 
6. For how long did He promise to protect these Words?

---

Satan has attempted many different methods to destroy God's Word, even burning Bibles and the Christians that copied them; but God has kept His Word so that you and I can have it today. Why do you think this is so important to God? Why do you think God chose this method as the primary way to reveal Himself?

## MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

*Through His Word, God tells us what He's like. Just as in our story about Henry Ford, imagine now God literally extending His hand to you and saying, "May I introduce Myself to you?"*

## GOD IS A REAL PERSON WHO IS HOLY AND LOVING

Let's break that down and look at it one piece at a time.

### GOD IS

The first book in the Bible, *Genesis*, begins with the statement "In the beginning *God*." The first fact we need to accept in getting to know God for ourselves is this: *God is*.

It's as if He's saying, "I'm real! I am the eternal God Who created you. I am aware of you and have known you from the very beginning of your life. Will you acknowledge *me*? Will you give me the chance to introduce Myself to you?"

In Hebrews 11:6 we are told that God is pleased when we desire to know Him and even rewards those who seek to know Him.

*But without faith it is impossible to **please Him**: for he that cometh to God **must believe that He is**, and that He is a rewarder of **them that diligently seek Him**. Hebrews 11:6*

7. What one thing must we believe in order to begin seeking Him?

---

We cannot see air, but we know it exists. As a matter of fact, we depend on it to live! We cannot see love or peace, but we all long for them in our heart. We cannot see God, but we know He is real, and that our heart longs to be fully accepted and loved by Him.

## GOD IS A REAL PERSON

Though God is invisible, eternal, all-powerful, and the Creator of everything that exists, *He's also a very real Person*. It's easy to begin thinking of God as a force, a power, a feeling or a belief. He's much more than that. He is **Someone** you can actually come to know in a very personal way.

One of the books in the Bible, *Song of Solomon*, is a beautiful, poetic book that describes just how wonderful God is.

*He is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend.*  
Song of Solomon 5:16

8. What three words are used to describe God in this verse?

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Truly, God is the most *wonderful Person* you will ever meet. He is the most *loyal Friend* you'll ever know. He is the most *comforting and satisfying part of life* that you'll ever enjoy. "So God is a real Person. *But what kind of Person is He? What is He like?*"

## GOD IS A REAL PERSON WHO IS HOLY

Of all the characteristics of God, His being *holy* is mentioned the most in the Bible. "God is holy" is repeated over and over again. Whenever a spouse repeats something over and over again, it's usually because they want their mate to pay attention to it and treat it with importance. Well, *if we are to truly get to know God*, we must stop and consider this aspect of His personality.

In the Bible, we're given two opportunities to "peek" into the very throne room of God Himself. The first one is found in Isaiah 6:1-3.

## MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

*I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train (of His robe) filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims (angels): each one had six wings and one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.** Isaiah 6:1-3*

9. What one thing stood out the most to the angels (called seraphims) about God?
- 

The next chance we get to peek into God's throne room is over 2,500 years after the one we just read. Discover what the angels are doing.

*And the four beasts (angels) had each of them six wings and they rest not day and night, **saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.** Revelation 4:8*

10. After 2,500 years, what do we find the angels still crying out “day and night”?
- 

It's obvious this word *holy* is significant to God. “Holy” is not a word we use much today except as a slang term. But the word is very important since it's *the primary word that describes what God is like*. The word actually means “**set apart from all sin.**” When the Bible calls God “holy” it's saying that (1) He has never sinned and (2) He cannot live in the presence of sin.

11. What are some words you would use to describe “holy”?
- 

Probably, the best word we can relate to is “perfect.” God is totally perfect; **He has never sinned.**

## THINK ABOUT IT



Most ladies share a common fear and even hatred for spiders. Suppose you came to the door of a lady who really despised the little creatures, and you had a pocket full of them. Even if she happened to love *you*, would she let you in? No! She would slam the door and scream through the crack, "If you want in here, you'd better get rid of every last one of those vile things!"

She wants to be as far from them as she can be. Why? *Because she hates spiders!* Now she doesn't hate *you*, but she does hate the spiders you have. You may be the kind of person that isn't bothered by spiders, but that doesn't matter to her. If you want to come fellowship in *her* house, you'll have to part with the crawling creatures. *This explains how God feels about sin.* Sin may not bother *you* that much, but **God hates it!** He doesn't hate you, but He hates your sin. Why? Because God is holy.

12. What words are used to describe God in Hebrews 7:26?

*Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, **separate from sinners**, and made higher than the heavens.* Hebrews 7:26

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

4) \_\_\_\_\_

The last one indicates that He is so perfect **He cannot live in the presence of sin.** There's nothing God hates as much as He hates sin.

13. Because God is holy, and because He wants to have a close friendship with us, what does He require us to be?

*Because it is written, **Be ye holy; for I am holy.*** I Peter 1:16

## MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

14. What word did God use to explain this requirement in Matthew 5:48?

**Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.** Matthew 5:48

---

15. How perfect does God expect us to be?

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This is God's standard He has established for us if we want to live with Him in heaven – be holy.

## GOD IS A REAL PERSON WHO IS HOLY AND LOVING

God **does** long for us to live with Him in heaven. God *created* humans so that He could have fellowship with them. In the third chapter of *Genesis*, there's a beautiful description of how God literally “walked” with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. That fellowship with God was the most wonderful, satisfying part of their life. Just think about it: they had a perfect friendship ... **with God!** But that all ended when Adam chose sin over God. He was no longer holy. He could no longer live in fellowship with God.

*Therefore the LORD God sent him (Adam) forth from the garden of Eden. So He **drove out** the man.*

**Your iniquities (sins) have separated between you and your God ...**  
Genesis 3:23-24, Isaiah 59:2

16. What was it that caused God to separate Himself from Adam?

---

17. For the Garden of Eden to remain a perfect, holy place, how many sins could God permit there?
- 

You may have already noticed that there are a lot of interesting similarities between the Garden of Eden and *Heaven*. In Revelation 21, the Lord describes Heaven as a perfect place where our Holy God dwells.

*And there shall in no wise (no way!) enter into it (heaven) **anything** that defileth or maketh **a lie**.* Revelation 21:27

18. Can God permit even a single sin into heaven?
- 

Jesus once told some religious people who were unconcerned about their sins, "**I go my way (to heaven), and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go (to heaven), ye cannot come.**" (John 8:21)

19. What was the reason they couldn't go to heaven when they died?
- 

Even after man sinned, God continued to love him as He always had. In fact, God's love to man was more evident **after** he sinned than before! When we really love someone, we can't simply give up on him when he wrongs us. Because we still want him to be a part of our life, we try to help him make things right. This is the same way God expresses His love. Ever since the day man fell into sin and had to be separated from God, the Lord has been reaching out to him, trying to get his attention, so He can show him the way to be brought back into perfect fellowship with his Creator. Listen to what He says to us:

*Yea, I have loved thee (you) with an **everlasting love**: therefore with loving kindness have I **drawn thee**.* Jeremiah 31:3



## MAY I INTRODUCE MYSELF?

20. What two things does the Bible tell us the Lord is doing for us now?

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_

Even during this Bible Study on perfect peace, you will sense God drawing you to Himself in love. That's why He wrote the Bible. God is loving.

21. Who does John 3:16 say the Lord loves?

*For **God so loved the world** that He gave His only begotten Son ...*

22. Going back to Jeremiah 31:3, who does it say the Lord loves?

God created us in such a way that *nothing* could satisfy our heart but a true friendship with Him. Why do you think He made us that way?

*That in the **ages to come (eternity)** He might show His kindness toward us ... Ephesians 2:7*

Have you ever planned a fun day or even a fun week for someone you love? You know, the more effort it takes, the more your friend feels loved. Can you grasp how much God must love us, knowing that He is planning ways to show us His kindness ... **for all of eternity!?**

## FINAL THOUGHTS

Think about this reality for a moment: there is a real God Who knows you and *thinks about you every day*. He created you and loves you intensely. He's trying to make contact with you. But suppose you're being held hostage by a horrible enemy who hates you and wants to keep you from connecting with God. *God's mission* is to rescue you from this enemy.

This is **really** happening, but because it's *invisible to our eyes*, we generally don't give it much thought. But what if God were literally knocking on your door right now? Would you let Him in? Would you want to know God *personally*? Would you give Him a chance to *introduce Himself*?

Remembering back to our story about Henry Ford, picture God looking down at us as we try to do *damage control* on our life. "I can help you with that if you let me." We can shake our heads "no" and go on trying to fix the problem. Or we can welcome Him. God waits for us to allow Him to come into our lives. He won't force His way in.

Why don't we end our first session by praying this: "Dear God, I truly do want to know what you have to say about yourself. I really don't care so much about what others might think of you. *I want to hear from you. I want to know you for myself.* Thank you for showing me that you are a real Person Who is Holy and Loving. I open my heart, and ask you to show me the things I don't understand. I will let you speak for yourself. Thank you for answering this prayer. Amen."



## LET'S REVIEW

- ✓ God wants you to know Him personally.
- ✓ How does God speak directly to us about Himself?
- ✓ What did we learn about God?
- ✓ Being holy means God has never sinned and cannot live with sin.
- ✓ Because God is loving, he has made a way for us to live with Him, even though we have sinned.

# GOD KNOWS BEST



## STUDY 2

In *Bible Study 1*, we said that no other person knows us better than we know ourselves. Though that's probably true, have you ever struggled to figure **yourself** out? Have you ever said, "What's wrong with me?" or "I can't believe I just said that?" *Sometimes our thoughts, feelings and the things we do are a mystery to ourselves!* Even so, some still conclude, "If I can't figure myself out, I'm sure you can't!"

That's exactly what the young mechanic in our Henry Ford story thought: "If I can't figure out what's wrong with my Model T, I'm sure this *old man* can't!" At first, he was unwilling to trust his car into the hands of a *stranger*. "What does *he* know about **my** car?!" was his attitude. What he didn't realize was that this old fella knew best, because *he himself* had designed the automobile. Think about it: who could possibly have known the car better than the one who put it together to begin with?

As we enjoy this Bible study together, let's not forget that the very One Who created us is with us today. *God knows us better than we know ourselves.* He's the very One Who *designed* us from the beginning. "What does *He* know about **my** life?" *He knows us like the back of His hand!*

In contrast, Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that **our** "heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Have you ever been deceived by your own heart? Jeremiah 17:10 goes on to say that only God really knows our heart.

The point of *Bible Study 2* is simple: since **God knows best**, we need to trust what He says about us even when we don't fully understand it. The

sooner that young mechanic turned his Model T over to Henry Ford, the sooner it was repaired. It's the same with us. Isn't it difficult to trust someone else *more* than you trust yourself? None of us like that feeling of losing control. But when it comes to the God Who knows best, we can trust His plan to bring perfect peace into our lives.

## GOD KNOWS WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT

What would happen if you presented a four-year-old with a choice between a *red helium balloon* and a check for a million dollars? *Uncoached*, the child will choose the balloon every time. The reason is simple: he doesn't understand the value of the check, and he's drawn by the *immediate pleasure* of the shiny balloon. Just the presence of the bright balloon would make it nearly impossible for him to even *think* about the check!

Of course, if the parents were close by, they would explain to their child, "Now Johnny, *listen* to mommy, you can buy a *whole balloon factory* with a million dollars!" Even then, it still might be challenging to get the child to listen and pay attention long enough to convince him. All he can see is *a bright red balloon!* It might be funny to watch all a parent would go through to get the point across ... before they lost *a million dollars!*

## LIVE FOR NOW

There's an *adult version* of that little story: it could be summed up with *Pepsi's* slogan "*Live for Now!*" There are so many entertainments, achievements and thrills to keep people busy for a *lifetime*, that a person could actually *forget* about their *eternal existence*. You know it's true that you can hold a penny close enough to your eye that it appears bigger than Mt. Rushmore! And left to themselves, all people would ever consider is *this short earthly life*. Like the child hypnotized by the big red balloon; it's all he can see.

## GOD KNOWS BEST

The point is that we often fail to understand what's really important in life. Without being coached none of us would ever give our *eternal destiny* a single serious thought. We would just live for now. We would move from one bright red balloon to the next. But God knows best. God knows what is really important *even when we don't*. He wants us to consider *where we will spend all of eternity*.

I know people say, "Life's hard; then you die." But God says otherwise. God says that you are more than a body; you were created as an *eternal being*. Let this sink in: you will live forever.

1. According to Luke 12:23, what is your life more than?

*The life is **more than meat (food)**, and the body is **more than raiment (clothes)**.*

---

2. Ecclesiastes 12:5, 7 describes a funeral. Where does it say man's spirit goes to? (Hint: there are two descriptions.)

*Because **man goeth to his long (eternal) home**, and the mourners go about the streets. Then shall **the dust** return to the earth as it was: and **the spirit shall return unto God** Who gave it.*

---

## THE RESURRECTION OF ALL PEOPLE

3. What did Job say he was sure of?

*And though after my skin worms destroy **this body**, yet **in my flesh (body) shall I see God**. Job 19:25-26*

---

How would Job see God in a real body *after* he died if his body had gone back to the dust? That would be a thing to marvel at! Or would it?

The answer is found in the words of Jesus in John 5:28, *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which **all that are in the graves** shall hear His voice.* Daniel 12:2 explains, *Them that sleep **in the dust of the earth shall awake**, some to **everlasting** life, and some to shame and **everlasting** contempt.* When Job talked about seeing God in his body, he was talking about the resurrection of all people.

Clearly, there's something *everlasting* after death for every person. You might think of this earthly life as a **short quiz** that determines a **long eternity!** (This is not a quiz you want to fail!)

## THINK ABOUT IT



One particular man was deeply afraid of the fact that God was going to resurrect his body for judgment. Close to death, all of his past sins came back to haunt him. Sadly, he chose not to turn to the Lord. Instead, he requested that his “hunting buddies” take the remains of his cremated body, pack it into shotgun shells, and shoot it out across the lake.

What a vain hope! However man is disposed of, the Bible is still true: one day every human being will be resurrected with a real body. Just remember *how* God made man in the first place!

In Matthew 25 Jesus explained to his disciples the two possible experiences of each and every person when they die. In the first case, He describes what God will say to those who end up going to hell.

*Depart from me, ye cursed, into **everlasting fire** (hell), prepared for the devil and his angels. And these shall go away into **everlasting punishment**: but the righteous into **life eternal** (heaven).*

Matthew 25:41, 46

## GOD KNOWS BEST

4. What is the one thing both of these experiences have in common?

---

*It is better for thee to **enter into life** (heaven) maimed, than having two hands to **go to hell**, into the fire that **never shall be quenched**.*  
Mark 9:43

5. Using the logic of Jesus, is it more important to focus on my well-being during this short life, or my well-being in my eternal life?

### THINK ABOUT IT



Imagine stepping up to a roller-coaster ride and finding out the cost for enjoying the three and a half minute thrill is *everything you own*. Suppose a man presents you with a legal contract to sign. However fun the ride might be, no sane person would make the deal. "Why not?" asks the smiling operator. You would answer, "Because, no matter how fun the ride is, *it will be over in less than five minutes*. I'm not going to give you everything it's taken me *years* to acquire for a *few moments* of fun." I agree; it would be a foolish deal. But if you think about it, isn't that what a person is doing when he thinks only of *this life* and fails to plan for *eternity*?

This life on earth is **so short** compared to the eternal one. Can you see how foolish it would be to trade all of eternity for a few moments of earthly pleasure? William Gurnall once called it "desperate madness" to "choose to endure the eternal wrath of God **hereafter** in exchange for the short feast Satan spreads before them. If Satan keeps you royally entertained for a lifetime, what is that to eternity?"

Somewhere along life's road, something happens that makes us *think about eternity*. Sometimes it's the death of a loved one. It may be a near-

death experience or a serious illness or disease. For some, it takes a total collapse of the life they've been trying to build. Whatever the case may be, shouldn't we be thankful that an all-wise, all-loving God cares enough to use the situation to teach us what's really important? How kind He is to take away *the big red balloon* long enough to explain the million dollar check! Let's listen to Him. He knows best.

## GOD KNOWS OUR REAL PROBLEM

First of all, God knows best about what's really important: **eternity is important!** *What happens to us after we die is important!* Have you stopped recently to think about what you'll be doing ... in five hundred years? Maybe not, but God has. God knows that we are eternal beings who will live *somewhere* forever. Now let's look at a second truth: God knows best about *what our real problem is*.

It's doubtful that the next time your car breaks down, the designer of the car will show up to rescue you. But *wouldn't it be nice* to have someone like Henry Ford around to diagnose your car problems? Better than that, wouldn't it be nice to have someone who could diagnose your *personal problems* too? You say, "What's wrong with me? Why can't I be happy?" and suddenly you get a *text* with the answer! Well, if we're willing to listen and to give God our attention, He will explain to us what our real problem is. Remember, God knows best.

6. What does Jesus know about all men?

*But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because **He knew all men**, and needed not that any should testify of man: for **He knew what was in man**.* John 2:24-25

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In John 4, there's a wonderful story of Jesus meeting a woman in Samaria. The Bible describes her as an unhappy, hurting person. She's empty inside and searching for peace, but she just doesn't know what her problem is.



## GOD KNOWS BEST

When Jesus first meets her, she pretends to be a *good religious woman* who has all the answers. Because Jesus had never been to her city, she thinks she has an advantage over this stranger. She puts on a good front and hides the true condition of her heart. But she has no idea she's talking to the God of the Universe, the One Who created her, the One Who knows everything. *Jesus knew her real problem.* He knew what was *in her.* What we hide from others, we cannot hide from Him.

Listen to what He pointed to as her problem: *"Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband."* Jesus spoke to her about the **sin** that was in her life. The God Who knows best knows *our real problem is sin.*

7. According to I John 3:4, what is sin?

*Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth (breaks) also the law: for **sin is the transgression (breaking) of the law.*** I John 3:4

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God gave us the Ten Commandments, primarily to show us how much we have sinned. They help us see our real problem. Most people are at least familiar with the Ten Commandments. They're recorded in Exodus 20.

8. Who does Exodus 20:1 say gave us these Ten Commandments?

*And **God spake all these words** saying, Thou shalt not ...*

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In the *seventh commandment*, the Lord says, **Thou shalt not commit adultery.** Committing adultery is sexual activity between two people that are not married. This is the sin Jesus pointed out with the Samaritan woman. She was living with a man, but they were unmarried.

Jesus also included **lustful thoughts** as part of this sin when He said, *"Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* (Matthew 5:28) Have you ever been guilty of committing the sin of adultery either physically or mentally?

Here is God's *third commandment*: *Thou shalt not **take the name of the LORD thy God in vain**; for the LORD will **not hold him guiltless** that taketh His name in vain.* Exodus 20:7

9. What do you think it means to “take God's name in vain”?

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The *fifth commandment* is **honor your father and mother**. Honoring your parents does not only mean that you never disobey them, it also means that you do exactly what they say with a good attitude. Have you ever broken this command? (Especially during teen years!)

God's *eighth commandment* is **Thou shalt not steal**. Stealing is taking anything that does not belong to you. Have you ever been guilty of stealing?

The *ninth commandment* deals with lying. It's almost silly to ask “Have you ever lied?” It's better to ask, “*How many times* have you lied?” or “*How often* do you lie?”

We have only reviewed half of God's Ten Commandments. Knowing what we know, if you stood before God today and He judged you on the basis of His law, would He find you *innocent* or *guilty*?

10. According to Romans 3:19, *who does God find guilty* of breaking His law?

*Now we know that what things soever **the law** saith, it saith... that every mouth may be stopped, and **all the world may become guilty** before God.* Romans 3:19

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# GOD KNOWS BEST

## SIN IS A UNIVERSAL PROBLEM

11. How many have sinned against God by breaking His commandments?

For **all have sinned** and come short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

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Have you ever met a perfect person? Neither have I! Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, **For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.**

A question might come to mind, "Why are all people sinful?" There are at least two answers to that question. First, all people are sinful because **they choose to sin**. Second, all people sin because they have a sinful heart, a **sinful nature**. Let's look at those two explanations.

## OUR CHOICE

When God created man, He gave him the wonderful *gift of freedom*. God didn't create man to be a *pre-programmed robot* that would always do what God wanted. God wanted something far deeper than that; He wanted a *loving relationship*. He wanted man to **choose** Him.

Would it really be *true freedom* if there was only one path to choose? Freedom means the right to select or determine one's own course of action. God gave man this gift. Man chose sin in the beginning, and he has chosen sin ever *since*. People choose to sin every day of their life.

12. What are two "big" sins that few people rarely choose to commit?

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13. What are two "small" sins that pretty much everyone chooses to commit?

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Of course, there's no such thing as a small sin to God, any more than a lady might not mind "small" spiders in her bed. The point is that she hates spiders, no matter what size they happen to be!

## OUR NATURE

14. What condition did David say he was born in?

*Behold I was shapen (born) in iniquity; and **in sin did my mother conceive me.*** Psalm 51:5

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Why does a dog bark? Because *it's a dog*. Even if you raised it with cats, it would still bark. Dogs bark *because they're dogs*. Why does a sinner sin? The Bible teaches us that sin comes from our very nature. It's part of who we are from birth! *It doesn't require any training*. How many mothers teach their children how to tell a lie or be selfish, or – worst of all – bite?

15. How early does a person begin to speak lies?

*The wicked are estranged **from the womb:** they go astray **as soon as they are born,** speaking lies.* Psalm 58:3

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16. According to Ephesians 2:2-3, all are sinners by what?

*We all... were **by nature** the children of wrath... the children of disobedience.* Ephesians 2:2-3

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## GOD KNOWS BEST

### THINK ABOUT IT



Suppose a person averaged three sins a day. That would amount to 10,950 in a decade, 21,900 in 20 years, and 43,800 in 40 years. *That's a lot of sin.* Even so, God knows our biggest problem is not the specific sins we commit by **our own choice**; but that our heart is **by nature** a sin-making factory! Apart from a miracle, it will never stop making sin.

Now if God is so holy that He can't live with a *single* sin, what are the chances He'd live with nearly 50,000? Worse yet, how could He live with a *sin-making factory*? Just think, after 1,000 years in heaven, we'd have over a million sins ... **each!** That adds up. Heaven wouldn't be too *heavenly* for very long.

Consider this: *because God loves **you**, He hates **sin**.* Do you see why? Sin is like a cancer that destroys our life; it destroys the world; and if allowed into heaven, it would destroy heaven too.

If you had a relative dying of cancer, you couldn't love them *without hating cancer*. Why? Because cancer is destroying the one you love. It's the same with God. He loves us but hates our sin *because of what it does to us*.

### SIN DISQUALIFIES US FROM HEAVEN

The worst thing sin does to us is to disqualify us from heaven. God is more concerned about this consequence of sin than any other.

In our last study we discovered that God is holy: **He cannot live with sin.** This is what creates a great dilemma for us. Sin disqualifies us from living forever with God in heaven. Can you see why sin is *our real problem*?

17. Can God live in the presence of sin?

*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold sin, and **canst not look on iniquity.*** Habakkuk 1:13

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18. How many lies does it take to keep a person out of heaven?

And there shall in no wise (no way) enter into it (heaven) anything that defileth or maketh **a lie.** Revelation 21:27

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Someone might think, "But won't God allow me into heaven if my *good deeds* outweigh my *bad deeds*? Because I've done a lot of good things in my life too."

19. How does God view our attempts to make up for our sin with righteous acts?

But **we are all as an unclean thing,** and all our righteousnesses (*good deeds*) are as **filthy rags.** Isaiah 64:6

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## THINK ABOUT IT



The "filthy rags" spoken of in this verse were used by lepers (the "unclean") in that day. As the disease began to decay their rotting body, they would wrap thin strips of white cloth around and around their body. Obviously, the rags *might* hold in some of the corruption, but would it do anything to *cure the disease*?

This is how God views our own attempts to earn heaven by good works that we do. Our good works might make us *look better* before our fellow man, but they cannot cure the *disease of sin* within our heart.

## GOD KNOWS BEST

20. Based on God's standard of true goodness, how many are good enough to earn heaven?

*As it is written, There is none righteous (holy), no, **not one**. There is none that doeth good, no **not one**. Romans 3:10, 12*

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21. Who does God say is holy like Himself?

*There is **none** holy as the LORD. I Samuel 2:2*

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22. What is God's standard for entrance into heaven?

*Be ye therefore **perfect, even as your Father** which is in heaven is perfect. Matthew 5:48*

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The standard is actually God Himself. God's holiness demands perfection. Can you see how that creates a very real problem for us? In fact, Romans 3:23 says "For all have sinned and **come short** of the glory (standard) of God." We've all come short of God's standard because we have all sinned.

Most people want to believe, "Deep in my heart, I'm really a good person." However, **no one** claims to be *perfect*. We like to think of ourselves being in the gray area of "not too bad." After all, can you think of someone who is worse than you? So can I! As long as we can do that, we feel we're "pretty good." Compared to someone else we may be *pretty good*. But God isn't comparing us to *someone* else; He's comparing us to *Himself*. Remember, **God is the standard**. And compared to God, we're **pretty bad!**

## THINK ABOUT IT



Imagine for a moment that we had a contest to see who could jump across the Grand Canyon. It's eight miles across and one mile *down*! Suppose three people lined up on the rim and took turns jumping. You might be able to jump a little farther than someone else, but all of you would **fall very short** of getting to the other side. Think of how foolish it would be for someone to brag that they jumped five feet farther than someone else, while they missed the goal by nearly eight miles! It's pretty pathetic!

The point is simple: we've "come short" of God's standard to enter heaven by a long shot! We've all sinned horribly against His commandments. Sin disqualifies us from heaven.

God's not impressed with *how far we've jumped*, He's concerned about *how short we've come*. We are not holy; we are **far** from perfect. Yet this is the standard God demands for eternal life in heaven.

If this were the end of the story, if this were all that we knew, how many of us would make it to heaven by our own ability? Even if there was a *magic pill* we could swallow today that would make us perfect from now on, what about all the sin we've *already* committed? Frankly, it's impossible to be perfect! Only God is perfect and holy.

*Why would God hold us to such an impossible standard?* For this reason: He wants to bring us to the conclusion that we cannot make it to heaven by *anything* we do. When we finally reach that conclusion, we're ready to fully accept what He has done for us.

I will admit with you that this is all *bad news*, but there is **good news**. God *did* make a way for our sins to be paid for and forgiven. God *did* make a way for you to live eternally with Him. God *did* make a way for there to be *perfect peace forever with God*. But first, we have to be willing to agree with God about the problem of sin.



## GOD KNOWS BEST

### FINAL THOUGHTS

A Chinese businessman was traveling through London in the early 1900s. At the time, China was far behind in technology. He wanted to bring something interesting back to China, so he went window shopping. Well, it wasn't long before he became fascinated with an unusual instrument he'd never seen before. He walked into the store, asked about it, and then made his purchase. Back home in China, he eagerly opened his new toy, and after reading the instructions, he pieced together *his new microscope*.

He looked at everything he could get hold of: fabric, plants, wood, etc. It was all fascinating and new! One day as he was eating lunch, it occurred to him that he'd never inspected rice. He put some rice under his microscope and focused the lens.

He was startled, to say the least, when he saw *tiny little bugs* crawling all over his food. It was hard to believe. He refocused the lens and tried again; same result! His food was contaminated by germy little bugs. Honestly, it was quite a difficult reality to swallow. *What was he going to do about his discovery?* He ate this rice every day of his life. He loved it! Well, he finally came to a firm decision. He got up, walked over to the trash can, and promptly threw away *the microscope* ... and finished his lunch.

What do you think? Did he make the right choice? Was the microscope the problem? Of course not. The microscope didn't put the bugs on his rice, it only *revealed* the bugs already there. The gentleman chose to ignore it or deny it. He should have thrown away *his rice*, not the tool that revealed the problem. But he knew he couldn't live with both!

*God's Word is like that microscope.* It doesn't *put* sin in our lives; it only reveals the sin already there. Sometimes, it can be painful to come under the microscope of God's Word. Honestly, there are times we'd almost rather not know. But that's not the answer, and it won't deal with our problem. We must conclude that *God knows best*. He knows that I'm eternal and will live somewhere forever. He knows that my sin problem makes it impossible for me to live with Him forever in heaven. And He knows that's the reason I don't have peace in my life.

If we'll be honest with God about that, He'll share His plan with us: His *good news*, of how our sin can be taken care of. It's God's goal to make sure that you end up in Heaven to live with Him forever. He loves you too much to leave you behind. He has made a wonderful way for you that *Study 3* will explain.

Would you like to end our study with this prayer? "God, thank you for not allowing me to be blinded by the **live for now** philosophy. Thank you for helping me to think about eternity and how I will live somewhere forever. I don't want to pretend that you're unaware of my sin problem. You know all about it. I desire to know your plan for taking my sin away so that I can live with you forever in heaven. I open my heart to understand this. Amen."



## LET'S REVIEW

- ✓ We are often blinded by the "live for now" philosophy – the big red balloon of earthly pleasures.
- ✓ God knows best and shows man that He is eternal and must plan for eternity.
- ✓ Man's real problem is sin. Sin is a universal problem.
- ✓ Sin is breaking God's commandments.
- ✓ We are sinners by our choice and by our nature.
- ✓ What is the worst consequence of sin?
- ✓ God has a plan to rescue us from sin.



# HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

## STUDY 3

Since God is *holy* but we are *sinful*, it seems impossible for there to *ever be peace* between me and God. I mean, how can a **holy** God let a **sinful** person into a **perfect** heaven? That's a big problem!

Yes, but remember, God is not only holy, He's also *loving*. As a loving God, He has taken it upon Himself to *make a way* for there to be peace.

Just for a moment though, let's assume **you** had to come up with a way to deal with the problem of sin. *Sin is obviously the problem*. If it was up to you, what would be your *plan* of how to get rid of sin so that you can go to heaven?

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## PEACE BY GOOD WORKS?

1. According to Titus 3:5, what does **not** save us?

**Not by works (deeds) of righteousness** which we have done, but according to His mercy **He saved us**. Titus 3:5

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2. What are some examples of good works people do?

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3. Can we do *anything* ourselves to earn our way to heaven?

*For by grace (free gift) are ye **saved** ... and that **not of yourselves**: it is the gift of God: **not of works** ...* Ephesians 2:8-9

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4. How does God view our good works as a way to pay for our sin?

*All of our righteousnesses are as **filthy rags**.* Isaiah 64:6

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From the very beginning of time, man's first instinct in trying to deal with sin is to *cover it up* with good works. Remember what Adam and Eve did after they committed that first sin? They wanted to be allowed to stay in the Garden of Eden with God, so they tried to cover their guilt with fig leaves. The Bible tells us their plan failed.

According to what we just read in God's Word, will that plan work for you? Will God accept your *good works* as a payment for your sin and make it possible for you to live with God in heaven?

## PEACE BY RELIGION?

5. What are some of the religious things people practice today?

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In Matthew 7:21-23 the Lord Jesus addressed a group of people who thought they were going to heaven because they were very religious.

## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

They were well-known for their religious activities.

6. What three religious things did they claim to do?

*Many will say to me in that day, **Lord, Lord**, have we not **prophesied (preached)** in Thy Name? And in Thy Name **cast out devils**? And in Thy Name done many **wonderful works**?*

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7. Though they had done many religious things and even called Jesus Lord, what was the main problem that wasn't taken care of?

*And then will I profess unto them, **I never knew you**: depart from me, **ye that work iniquity (sin)**.*

---

What is meant by the statement: "Going to church no more makes you a **Christian** than being born in a garage might make you a **truck**?"

Clearly, *being religious* does not deal with the issue of sin any more than *good works*. It cannot bring peace with God. Church attendance, claiming Jesus as Lord, and other religious practices cannot bring us into a relationship with God. He said to them, "I don't even know you."

### THINK ABOUT IT



A farmer put an advertisement in the local paper, trying to sell an old tractor. An interested gentleman came to the farm to "have a look over." Because the farmer was busy, he pointed the man toward the barn and left him to inspect it alone.

When the prospective buyer walked into the barn, he noticed *shooting targets* posted all over the walls. The first target he saw had only one hole: a perfect *bull's eye*! At first he thought it must

have been a lucky shot until he began looking at the other targets. *Whoever* had taken the shots at these targets had made a perfect bull's eye **on every one!**

“Who shot those targets in your barn?” he asked the farmer. “Oh, I shot every one of them,” the farmer said with a proud smile, then added with a wink, “at standard distance too.” The gentleman could barely believe it, but the farmer seemed sincere. “Sir, you ought to be preparing for the Olympics, not farming! How in the world do you do it?”

The farmer thought for a moment, and then said modestly, “Well, first I go out to the shooting range, and I put up a completely blank piece of paper. Then I shoot at it. Wherever the bullet hits, I come home and paint the target around that hole. Then I post it up in my barn for everyone to see!”

Pretty tricky! If you think about it though, isn't that exactly what people are doing when they try to pay for their sins and earn their way to heaven by *good works* or *religion*? They know they can't hit God's standard! “Who can be perfect?” So they simply create a standard they **can** hit.

Of course the standard changes from person to person and from religion to religion. Each one decides what good works are important. Each religion makes its own **list** of things that must be done. *Then they paint the target around it.*

Do you see what they're doing? **They're making up their own standard!** “If you do your best to obey the things on our list, you might go to heaven.” But whether it's *good works* or *religious devotion*, it doesn't meet God's requirements of how our sins must be paid for.

## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

### HOW CAN I PAY FOR MY SINS?

Long before you and I were ever born, God already decided on a just payment for sin.

8. What is the only payment for sin that God will accept?

*For the wages (payment) of sin is **death**...* Romans 6:23

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9. Since God is a holy and just Judge, will He actually require this payment to be made?

*Shall not **the Judge** of all the earth **do right**?* Genesis 18:25

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### THINK ABOUT IT



Suppose a man was caught on video abusing and murdering a mother and her children. After the conclusive evidence is reviewed by the jury, they hand a “guilty” verdict to the judge. But imagine, if after reading the verdict, the judge says, “You’re guilty of breaking several of our laws. It’s wrong to kill; it’s wrong to hurt; it’s wrong to steal. But I can see that you’re a *kind-hearted person*, and have probably done many nice things in your life as well. So I’ve decided *not to punish* you for your crimes.” Would that be justice? What would you call a judge who would do that?

Can you see God saying, “I know you’re guilty of breaking my laws thousands of times, but I’m just going to let it go?” If God let our sins go unpunished, He would be no different than the corrupt judge. Though He loves us with His *great heart*, He **must** condemn us with His *great justice*.

Numbers 14:18 tells us that God will “by no means *clear the guilty.*”

10. According to Psalm 9, what does God promise to do someday?

*But the LORD shall endure forever; He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And **He shall judge the world** in righteousness.* Psalm 9:7-8

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## THE SECOND DEATH

Romans 6:23 says the just punishment for our sin is *death*. But even people who go to heaven die *physically*, so it must mean something more than that. Read the following verses about what the Bible calls *the second death*.

*And I saw the dead, **small and great**, stand before God; and the books were opened and **the dead were judged** out those things which were written in the books, **according to their works**.*

*And were cast into **the lake of fire**. This is **the second death**. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was **cast into the lake of fire**.* Revelation 20:12, 14-15

*And **all liars** shall have their part in **the lake which burneth with fire** and brimstone: which is **the second death**.* Revelation 21:8

11. How would you describe what the Bible calls the second death?

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While Jesus lived on earth, He spoke more about hell than He did about heaven. In Luke 16, He even gives us a little glimpse into hell, telling a story about a man who died and found himself there.

*And **in hell** he lift up his eyes, **being in torments...** and **he cried** and said... *have mercy on me... for I am **tormented in this flame**.* Luke 16:23-24*



## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

12. How does the Bible describe the state of this man?

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Jesus made this warning so vivid because He loves us. If your house was on fire, and you were sleeping, what would you want someone to do?

### PEACE BY ASKING FORGIVENESS?

*“Well, I believe God will forgive me if I ask Him to.”* It is true that He is a *loving* and *forgiving* God, but He is also a *just* and *holy* God. There's more to it than a simple apology.

### THINK ABOUT IT



Suppose I lost all common sense one weekend and put **a million dollars** on my *Visa Card*. At the end of the month, the bill shows up. There before me is a list of all the things I purchased. “Wow! That added up fast! How am I going to pay for all this?” Fact is, I can't. Could you? So I call the credit card company and explain to the customer service, “Look, I didn't really mean to make those charges. I'm **very sorry**, and you have my word that I will do better in the future.” What do you think they would say? “That's nice ... but *you still have to pay.*” What if I continued, “Look, I **told** you I'm sorry. Will you just *forgive me* and forget about my debt?” They would probably laugh! What if I decided to send the credit card company some freshly baked cookies or a Wal-Mart gift card with a nice note? Once again, “That's nice ... but *you still have to pay.*” If I continued to plead with them and send gifts and apologies, eventually they would send me a letter saying, “Enough is enough. Now you either pay your debt or find someone to pay it for you!” Do you think the *Visa Card* company is being unfair or unkind to expect me to pay my debt: to pay what I owe?

We all owe God a debt because of our sin. "The wages of sin is **death**." We cannot pay instead with *good works, religion or apologies* any more than I could pay Visa back with *cookies*.

Yes, God is forgiving, but it's not that simple. We have charged a debt greater than we can pay. Yet the **debt has to be paid** for God's justice to be satisfied. That's the "bad news."

13. According to II Peter 3:9, do you think Jesus desires *anyone* to go to Hell?

*The Lord is **not willing (desiring) that any should perish**, but that all should come to repentance.* II Peter 3:9

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*Who will have all men to be saved ...* I Timothy 2:4

Can you remember back to our key verse, I John 5:13? It gives us God's promise that we can **know** that we **have** eternal life. You can be sure you're going to heaven. You can know it **now**.

Dear friend, God *longs* to welcome us into His acceptance, but He cannot do so until our debt is *paid in full*.

If I try to pay for my own debt, it will cost me an *eternity separated from God in hell*. That's the wages for my sin. It's what I owe. However, **God made a plan** for *Someone Else* to pay for my sin debt and yours. That's the "good news!"

## THE GOOD NEWS

I Corinthians 15:3 tells us, "Christ died for our sins." That's the good news; that's the Gospel! That's God's plan to bring sinful men into peace with Him. But what qualifies Jesus Christ to die for our sins?

## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

16. What does the Bible say about the kind of life Jesus lived?

**Christ** also suffered for us... **Who did no sin**, neither was guile (deceit) found in His mouth. 1 Peter 2:21-22

## WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

14. Who does Matthew 1:23 say Jesus Christ is?

*Behold, a virgin shall be with Child, and shall bring forth a **Son**, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, **God with us**.* Matthew 1:23

In John 20:28, a disciple called Jesus, "My Lord and my God" and bowed down at His feet to worship Him. Jesus received the worship.

15. Who are the three Persons of the Trinity of God?

*There are three that bear record **in heaven** and these three are **One**.* 1 John 5:7

*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father**, and of the **Son**, and of the **Holy Ghost**.* Matthew 28:19

1) \_\_\_\_\_ 2) \_\_\_\_\_ 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Jesus, Who is truly the **eternal** God, became a man, so that He could take care of our sin for us. He is "God ... with us!"

Jesus was not crucified because He had done anything wrong. *He was perfect.* It's also true that He was not crucified *against His will.* Jesus told those who crucified Him, "*No man taketh my life from me; I lay it down.*"

Why did He do it? Because God's justice demands **death** for our sin, so Christ willingly and *purposefully* died for our sin. Now the Judge can be satisfied, because **the acceptable payment** has been made on our behalf!

## WHAT CHRIST ACCOMPLISHED WHEN HE DIED ON THE CROSS

*But God commendeth (expresses) His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.*** Romans 5:8

## HE **SUFFERED** FOR US

17. Why did Jesus have to suffer for us on the cross?

*Who His own self **bare our sins** in His own body on the tree ... For Christ also hath once **suffered for sins** ...* 1 Peter 2:24, 3:18

## THINK ABOUT IT



During the early days of industrialization in Switzerland, a man working on a tall building was perched on a scaffolding seven floors up. A shepherd was bringing his sheep through the city because his fluffy lambs were long overdue for sheering. As the sheep passed by this building under construction, onlookers gasped when the worker slipped and began falling seven stories toward the ground.

## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

By a complete miracle, the man landed back-down on one of the woolliest lambs in the flock. The crowd that had gathered watched in amazement as he picked himself up, brushed off the dust, and walked away *without* a scratch. Unfortunately, the same couldn't be said for the lamb; it had been **crushed** beneath the man's weight. It had literally *absorbed his fall*.

This beautifully demonstrates what Jesus did for us. *The weight of our horrible sin fell on Him.* In fact, Isaiah 53:6-7 says, "The LORD hath laid on *Him (Jesus)* the iniquity of us all. He is brought as *a lamb to the slaughter...*" He paid off our debt by His own death. **He was crushed** by the guilt of our sin so that we could walk away forgiven and free. *He suffered for us.*

## HIS PAYMENT WAS IN FULL

18. How many of our sins does I John 1:7 tell us Jesus died to pay for?

*The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from **all sin**.*

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Does that cover your *past, present and future* sins? Think about this, when Jesus died for your sins, all of them were future from His point of view.

19. When Jesus was dying on the cross, what did He cry out?

*He said, **It is finished:** and He bowed His head.* John 19:30

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The actual word Jesus cried when He said "It is finished" was a word (tetelestai) the Romans used when a person made the last payment on their mortgage. They would place hot wax on the mortgage and then stamp it with the official insignia of Rome and that word "It is finished."

It meant *no more payments are necessary; the debt is paid in full*. If the creditor came by to get more money, the person would simply show them the paper, and say, "No, no; it is finished!"

20. Since Jesus paid for *all* of your sins *how many* sins did He leave for you to pay for?

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He didn't say "It's *almost* finished" or "It's *nearly* finished." Most religions teach that Jesus did not pay for **all** of your sins and that He left some for you to pay for. That is simply not true, and the Bible doesn't teach it. Think of the gray area it would create!

## HE OFFERS US HIS **RIGHTEOUSNESS**

21. The first part of the promise in II Corinthians 5:21 tells us that Jesus became what for us?

*For He (the Father) hath made Him (Jesus) **to be sin for us**, Who knew no sin ...*

- 
22. The second part of this promise in II Corinthians 5:21 tells us that Jesus made us what?

*... that we might be made the **righteousness** of God in Him (Jesus).*

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Do you remember what God's standard for heaven is? \_\_\_\_\_  
Without it, we can't enter. *Jesus is offering us **His** own perfection.*

When He appeared before His Father with *our sins* upon Himself, He appeared guilty (though He wasn't), and He was punished. When we appear before His Father with *His righteousness* upon ourselves, we appear perfect (though we're not), and are accepted!

## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Two Japanese brothers immigrated to Chicago in the early 1900s. Though they were identical twins, they were as different as night and day. One was a fine Christian man who held a solid job and understood the importance of honest living. Every Sunday, he could be seen heading for church in his *completely white suit*. His brother, on the other hand, was a drunk and a notorious bar fighter, skilled with a knife.

One particular night, a bar fight broke out and, in a drunken rage, he knifed a man to death. He raced to his brother's apartment and quickly took his blood-stained clothes off. He knew the police would be after him, and justice was served quickly in those days. He rolled the clothes up and shoved them into his brother's closet. As he looked up, his eye caught his brother's white suit. Immediately, a plan formed in his mind: he would put his brother's suit on and pretend to be him, just long enough to get out of town.

When his brother returned from work, he took his work clothes off and went to place them in his closet. There were the blood-stained clothes of his brother on the floor. He also noticed his white suit was missing. It didn't take long for him to put two and two together: "My brother has killed a man and is pretending to be me."

Just then there was a knock at the door. It was the police demanding entrance. With just a moment to think, he quickly put his brother's blood-stained clothes on himself, then opened the door. Because he appeared to be the guilty one, the police arrested him without asking a question. He was tried by a jury and convicted of manslaughter. The judge asked him how he wished to "plead." He plead "guilty" to the charges and was hung only weeks from the trial date.

When his brother discovered what had happened, he was horrified! He returned to Chicago and found the judge who had condemned his brother. "There's been a horrible mistake, Judge. My brother didn't kill that man; I killed the man! My brother was completely innocent!"

The judge looked at him and said, "That may be so, but I cannot touch you. Your brother must have loved you very much, because *he paid your fine*. He died in your place. The demands of our law have been satisfied, and you are free to go."

Do you see what Jesus did for us? He took our sin-stained clothes and placed them on Himself. He took our guilt and was punished for us. But that's not all He did. He offers us His glorious *clothes of righteousness* that we can put on and stand completely innocent before the Judge.

*My soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath **covered me with the robe of righteousness** ...* Isaiah 61:10

*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man **lay down his life for his friends**.* John 15:13

It's an amazing thing that Jesus would still call us "friends" after all the suffering we've caused Him. Yet He does. He laid down His life for us so we can have peace with God. Ephesians 2 says that we once had "no hope" because we were "without God in the world." But then it says,

*But now **in Christ Jesus** ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh (close) **by the blood of Christ**. **For He is our peace!** Now therefore ye are no more strangers but of the household (family) of God.* Ephesians 2:12-19

Though God is holy and we are sinners who owe an eternal debt, **there can be peace!** The peace is made possible by "the blood of Christ." He paid the debt that we owed: **all of it!**

Thankfully, Jesus didn't stay in the grave. If He had, it would have proved He wasn't God. But when He arose, conquering death, sin and hell, He proved He is God. I Corinthians 15:6 says He was seen by 500 people at one time after He arose from the dead. His disciples were so devoted to their risen Savior, they gave their lives as a sacrifice and were put to death because they refused to deny that Jesus had truly risen from the dead.



## HOW CAN THERE BE PEACE?



### LET'S REVIEW

- ✓ Peace cannot be made with God through good works, religion or apologies.
  - ✓ The only way I can pay for my own sin debt is by the second death – separation from God in hell.
  - ✓ God sent His Son to pay my debt for me by dying in my place on the cross.
  - ✓ Jesus suffered for me, paid my debt in full, and offers me His righteousness as a gift.
1. If you were to die this week or five years from now, how sure are you that all your sins (past, present, future) are forgiven and you would go to heaven? (Put it in a percentage form, like 50% or 90% etc.)
  2. What do you think you have to depend on to go to heaven when you die?





# ONE PERSONAL DECISION

## STUDY 4

God is *holy* but we are *sinful*. So how can there be peace? Because God is also *loving*, He made a way for us to be forgiven so that we can escape *the punishment of hell*. God loves us so much that He gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, to pay our debt by dying on the cross.

Jesus took *our sins upon Himself* and offers to place *His perfect righteousness upon us*. Romans 5 calls this wonderful gift "*the free gift of righteousness*." Free gifts are always best! Let's think about that word **free**.

### WHAT MAKES A GIFT **FREE**?

Suppose I wanted to get you a nice gift for your birthday, so I took you to the mall and pointed to a nice leather jacket I picked out. "When do I get it?" you ask excitedly. I answer, "Well, whenever you decide to come down here and pay for it!" Would that really be a gift? Not at all. The moment I expect you to pay any part of the price, it's no longer a *free* gift. What would I have to do *first* before I could offer it to you as a true gift? *I* would have to pay for it. Then it could be **free to you**.

What makes a gift *free* is that someone *else* pays for it. This is how God is able to offer us the gift of forgiveness and eternal life as a **free** gift. **He** already paid for it. It cost Him very much – His own Son – but is completely *free to us*. God offers eternal life to us as a **free** gift.

## WHAT MAKES A GIFT **MINE**?

Now imagine someone offering you a million dollars. The first thing you would ask would be, "Wait a second, what's this all about?" You might be a little skeptical. You'd want to be sure the person didn't just steal it from the bank down the street! Even if the person was able to convince you that it really was a legitimate offer, for the gift to become yours, *you would have to receive it.*

So also, *knowing* that God offers you the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life in heaven doesn't mean *you automatically have it.* Yes, it's already paid for; Christ paid for it on the cross. It's available and free. But, *you have to personally receive it.* "How do I receive this wonderful gift? How does it become *mine*?" **One Personal Decision** must be made:

## SAVING FAITH

1. What is the free gift God is offering us?

*For the wages of sin is death, but **the gift** of God is **eternal life** ...*

Romans 6:23

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2. According to Ephesians 2:8, how do we receive the gift of God?

*For by grace are ye saved **through faith (believing)**; and that not of yourselves: it is **the gift of God.***

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3. Who are we told to believe in?

**God gave them the like (same) gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.** Acts 11:17

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## ONE PERSONAL DECISION

The Bible is very clear about this: we receive the free gift of eternal life *by faith (believing) in Jesus Christ*. Remember what I John 5:13 promises: “*These things have I written unto **you that believe** on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye **have eternal life.***”

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BELIEVE IN JESUS?

Many people have a foggy idea of what it means to believe. Unfortunately, religions have confused it. Let's allow God's Word to clear it up.

4. Who does Romans 10:13 say can believe in Jesus?

*For **whosoever** shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

---

In this verse, those who *believe in Jesus* are those who *call upon Him* to save them. To *call upon Jesus* is not emphasizing the *act of praying*, but **faith** in our heart. It's when we see that *we need to be saved*, and really come to *believe that Jesus is able to save us* that we call upon Him to do it! The Bible calls that **saving faith**.

5. What must a person first do before they will call upon Christ to save them, according to Romans 10:14?

*How then shall they **call on Him** in Whom they have **not believed?***

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## THINK ABOUT IT



If you were drowning in a swimming pool and looked up to call for help, what would you think if the lifeguard turned out to be a seven-year-old boy? "I can't call him to help me. There's no way he could save me. We'll **both** drown!" You wouldn't call him because you have no confidence in his ability to save you. But what if you saw a well-trained, Red Cross-certified man standing ready to help you? Knowing he was able to save you, and knowing you were helpless, you would call out to him.

*Believing in Jesus* takes place when we realize that we **are** helplessly drowning **in sin** and cannot save ourselves by anything we do. We see *Jesus Christ* standing ready to save us. He is qualified because He is the Son of God and He lived a perfect life. He is able to do it because He died on the cross for our sins. He has promised to save us if we will call upon Him. When we believe that, we call on Him in faith and He saves us.

6. John 3:16 tells us that faith is not merely believing **about** Jesus, but believing \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus.

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth **in** Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

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## THINK ABOUT IT

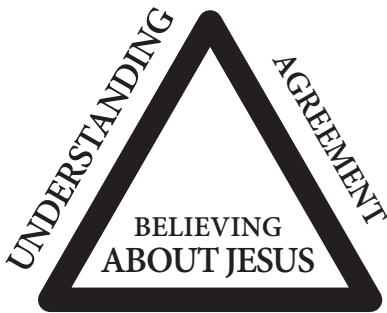


In 1859, the famous acrobat *Charles Blondine* had a tightrope stretched 1,000 feet across the Niagara Falls. The tightrope was 190 feet above the bottom of the raging waterfall. To the watching crowd's delight, he walked across in a large burlap sack

## ONE PERSONAL DECISION

and even carried his manager across on his back. Then he walked across pushing a *wheelbarrow*. When he crossed, the crowd cheered wildly. Once, he even dared to carry a gas stove on the wheelbarrow, stop in the middle of the rope and **cook an omelet!**

He then approached the crowd, got their attention, and asked, "How many of you believe that I could put a man in this wheelbarrow and take him across?" The crowd cheered, "I believe! I believe! I believe!" He pointed to a man cheering "**I believe**" and said, "You, sir, please get in!" The man instantly *took off in the other direction!*



Why do you think the man claiming "I believe" didn't want to get into the wheelbarrow? He believed that the tightrope walker could put *another man* in the wheelbarrow and take him across. But he was not willing to place *his dependence* totally on the tightrope walker to take **him** across.

He was content to believe **about** the man, but he was not willing to believe **in** the man. Do you see the difference? The key issue is **depending**. Am I willing to *fully depend* on Christ right now to save me from all my sins and bring me to peace with God? *This is saving faith.*

**Saving faith** involves three things: **understanding**, **agreement** and **dependence**. First, I must *understand* the truth in my **mind**. Then I must personally *agree* with it. This involves my **emotions**. It's when I realize, "Wow, this is important. I'm a sinner. I need help. I need Jesus!"



**DECISION OF FAITH**

If I stop at *understanding* and *agreeing*, we would call that “believing **about** Jesus.” This will not save anyone. *It's not saving faith.* Last of all, I must make the personal choice (my **will**) to **depend** on Jesus as my Savior from sin and hell. This is truly believing **in** Jesus.

## BELIEVING IN JESUS IS NOT...

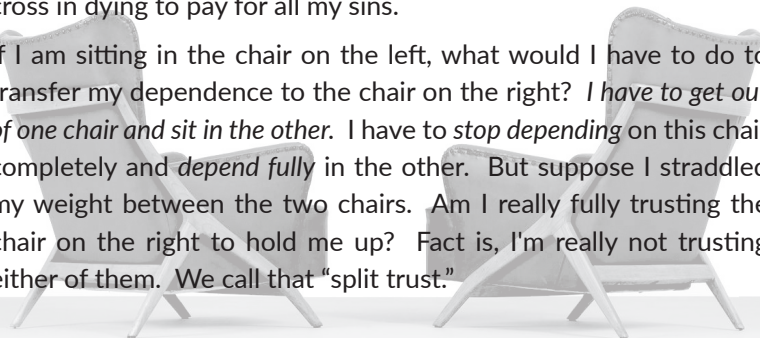
1. Merely trusting God to help you *in a crisis*, although that may have actually happened to you. **It's trusting Jesus to save you from sin and hell.**
2. Just *asking* Jesus to save you (some people do that every night); **it's trusting Him to do it!** (People do this when they don't believe He saved them.)
3. Trusting Jesus **and** something else; **it's trusting Jesus alone to do all the saving.**

## THINK ABOUT IT



Picture two chairs placed side by side in front of us. If I pointed to one of them and told you, “I believe this chair can hold me up,” what would I have to do to prove that I really believed? Suppose the chair on the left represents my good works and my religious efforts to get to heaven. The chair on the right represents what Christ did on the cross in dying to pay for all my sins.

If I am sitting in the chair on the left, what would I have to do to transfer my dependence to the chair on the right? *I have to get out of one chair and sit in the other.* I have to *stop depending* on this chair completely and *depend fully* in the other. But suppose I straddled my weight between the two chairs. Am I really fully trusting the chair on the right to hold me up? Fact is, I'm really not trusting either of them. We call that “split trust.”





## ONE PERSONAL DECISION

If someone said, "I believe you have to depend on Jesus **and** do good works to get to heaven," wouldn't that be a lot like straddling the two chairs? To truly make the personal decision to trust Christ alone, what must you do? If you trust in both, will you make it to heaven?

7. Is it **God's plan** or **man's plan** to trust *Jesus and good works* "just to be sure?"

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (saved) **by faith without the deeds of the law**. Romans 3:28

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## REPENTANCE

When we choose to stop trusting in our own good works and choose to trust Christ alone, it's called *repentance*. The word "repent" simply means "to change your mind." Maybe you have been thinking "my sins aren't so bad as to deserve hell." *You will have to change your mind about that.* If you think your sins aren't deserving of hell, why would you need to trust Christ at all?

Or maybe you've been thinking, "I've done a lot of good things in my life; I know God will see that. I'm sure they will outweigh my sins." Again, *you will have to change your mind about that.* Christ asks you to see your sin for what it is, stop depending on yourself or good works to get to heaven, and place all of your faith in Christ alone.

The one personal decision you must make to receive eternal life is to *transfer all your dependence* to Christ alone. He has promised to save you if you will. This is the decision of faith.

## THE DECISION OF FAITH

Sometimes people say, "I've always believed" or "I've always been a Christian." The Bible teaches that none of us were born Christians, but each of us have to make a personal decision at some point in our life to place our dependence in Christ alone if we are to go to heaven.

8. What did Jesus say was necessary for anyone to go to heaven?

*Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God (heaven). John 3:3*

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The Bible compares our salvation to the day we were born physically in the world. You were born once into this world. It was clocked on the calendar; it was a special event! The same is true about the moment you get saved. It's once, and it's at a definite point in time.

What would you think if you asked someone "when were you born?" and they answered, "I've *always* been born?" That's impossible! There has to be a specific time and date that their physical life began. So also, God says we become Christians at a specific moment in time: the moment we place our faith in Christ. That is the day we're born into God's family; once for all!

9. Does II Corinthians 6:2 seem to refer to a specific day when a person comes to know Christ?

*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is **the day** of salvation.*

---

**When you believe in Jesus alone, He gives you three things:**

- ✓ **Forgiveness of sins:** *Whosoever **believeth in Him** (Jesus) shall receive remission (**forgiveness**) of sins.* Acts 10:43

## ONE PERSONAL DECISION

- ✓ **His righteousness credited to you:** *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him (Jesus) that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.* Romans 4:5
- ✓ **Eternal Life:** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life.* John 6:47

10. What kind of life does God promise to give those who decide to believe in Him?

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Can you have eternal life for just a little while? No, it's forever. Jesus Christ is called "Eternal Life" in the Bible many times. You are literally receiving Him as your life! He is yours for all of eternity.

Believing in Christ is the most important decision you will ever make.

*He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* John 3:18

## ONE PERSONAL DECISION

Do you believe that Jesus can and would save you from sin and hell if you asked Him to? If you have already made the decision in your heart to believe, all that is left is taking the free gift: telling Him yourself that you take Him as your Savior.

If you ask Jesus to save you, how would you know He did? Since the Lord Jesus Christ is willing to save you from sin and hell, are you willing to depend on Him to do so right now?

Here's how: Simply tell God you are putting your trust in Him. Remember, faith is the key, not the prayer. If in your heart, you believe that you are a helpless sinner but also believe that Jesus is able to save you, it wouldn't matter if you only said, "Lord Jesus, save me!"

## AN EXAMPLE PRAYER

*"Dear Lord Jesus, I know I'm a sinner. I know I deserve the penalty of hell. But I also believe that you paid my penalty when you died for me and rose again. The best I know how, I'm trusting You right now to save me from sin and hell. I place my dependence completely in You to forgive my sins, give me your righteousness and eternal life. Thank You for saving me. Amen."*

Did you, just now – the best you know how – transfer your dependence to Christ alone to save you from sin and hell? If so, God's Word affirms you now have eternal life!

11. According to God's promise in John 5:24, will you ever come into His judgment?

*He that **heareth** my Word, **and believeth** on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and **shall not come into condemnation** (judgment); but is passed from death unto life.*

- 
- If you were to die today, where would you go?
  - If you die five years from now, where would you go?
  - If you had died yesterday (before you made this decision) where would you have gone?

Romans 5:1 tells us, *Therefore being justified (declared righteous) by faith, **we have peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Because of your decision to place your faith in Christ, you have been declared "not guilty" by God. You have even been declared "righteous."

Then it says, "we have peace with God." You have God's Word that all is well between you and Him now, and will be well for all of eternity. God has a wonderful plan for your life on earth and for all of eternity.

## ONE PERSONAL DECISION

### FINAL THOUGHTS

Dr. Talmadge once told a touching story about a little girl who was dying but was at perfect peace knowing she was going to spend forever with God in heaven.

*“Mother,” pointing with her thin, white hand through the window, “Mother, what is that beautiful land out yonder beyond the mountains, the high mountains?”*

*“Oh,” said the Mother, “My darling, there are no mountains within sight of our home.”*

*“Oh yes,” she said “Don't you see them—that beautiful land beyond the mountains out there just beyond the high mountains?”*

*The Mother looked down into the face of her dying child and said, “My dear, I think that must be Heaven that you see.”*

*“Well then,” said the little girl, “Father, you come and with your strong arms carry me over those mountains into that beautiful land beyond the high mountains.”*

*“No,” said the weeping father, “my darling, I cannot go with you.”*

*“Well,” she said, clapping her little white hands together, “Never mind; never mind; I see yonder a shining one coming. He is coming now. In His strong arms He will carry me over the mountains to the beautiful land over the mountains, over the high mountains.”*

**Perfect peace** even in the face of death.

