

# Getting Connected: Knowing God Personally

## What does it take to be in right relationship with God?

Wait for lightning to strike? Devote yourself to unselfish religious deeds? Become a better person so that God will accept you? NONE of these. God has made it very clear in the Bible how we can know Him. These four points explain how you can personally be in a right relationship with God.

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### **Point One: God loves you and created you to have a personal relationship with him.**

The Bible says that God created us all, you and me and it says that we are made in his image. This doesn't mean that we look physically like him, but that we have a spirit as God is Spirit. The Bible also says that in the beginning, we were created to be perfect and to be in right relationship with God for all eternity (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The Bible also says that God desires to interact with people and that he gave us the free will to make choices.

*Why is it that most people do not have this kind of relationship with God?*

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### **Point Two: All of us are sinful and guilty before God, who is perfect and just. Sin has separated us from God and broken the relationship that we were made for.**

#### **What is sin?**

God gave us the free will to make choices in our lives. Some of these choices are mundane (like what colour socks we will wear) but some choices are more serious. God hasn't really given us any instruction about the colour of our socks, but he has given us standards for many of the other choices we face. For instance, there is the choice to lie or tell the truth. God has made it quite clear that he expects us to tell the truth and deep down, we know that this is the right thing to do. This is because God gave us a conscience when he made us, an internal radar of right and wrong (Romans 2:15).

God has set standards for a whole lot of things but biggest of all, he set the standard that he should be number one in our lives. Because he created us, he deserves to have us reverence him and honour him. We do not put him first in our lives. Mostly

we choose to honour ourselves above him. We make our choices based on what we want and we act accordingly. In essence it means that we choose to make ourselves the god of our lives rather than the God who made us. This choice is what the Bible calls sin. It is rebellion against God. It is both the actions that we commit (lying, stealing, hating) and the attitude of rejecting his rule over our lives.

If we take an honest look at ourselves, we know that we have done just that. The Bible says:

*"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" - Romans 3:23*

### **The consequences of our sin**

The consequences of our choice to rebel against God are twofold.

1. In this life, the relationship between us and God is broken. We do not have the close personal relationship with God that the Bible says we were created to have.
2. The second is that the Bible speaks of a life beyond this and that we will be accountable for all our choices. The Bible says that there will come a day when our thoughts, words and actions will be judged by God (Romans 2:16). It says that we can end up one of two places. Perfect people get to go to a place the Bible calls heaven which is great news... if you are perfect... The imperfect people go to a place called [Hell](#).

### **Good works are not enough to save you.**

Imagine yourself as the victim of a serious crime. Let's say the murder of your closest friend. They catch the man who did it, haul him up before a judge and find him guilty of the crime. The judge asks the man, "Before I pass sentence on you, do you have anything to say for yourself?"

The man responds with an extensive list of his good works and asks that they be taken into consideration. How would you feel if the judge let that man go on account of his good works? Would you be angry? Hurt? Sad? If the judge let him go on account of good works, that would not be just. He would be a corrupt judge. You would be right to be upset.

It is the same with God and his rules. He cannot let us go just because he loves us or because we have made good choices as well as bad ones. If he did he would not be just or good. Many people think that they can get right with God because of the good things they have done or because the good things outweigh the bad things. You might give money to charity, help people in need, go to church or pray but none of these can cancel out the bad things you have done.

*So, how can we be made right with God?...*

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### **Point Three: Jesus Christ is God's only solution for our sin. Through him we can know and experience a personal relationship with God.**

Imagine yourself in the courtroom again, this time you are in the guilty seat, guilty of 10 serious crimes. The judge passes sentence and you are given a \$5 million fine. Assuming that you do not have that sort of money, the only option is for you to be imprisoned for life. You have no hope of release.

Imagine though that after passing sentence, the judge removes his wig, walks across to you and says, "I am a good judge and cannot just dismiss your crimes. However, because I love you very much I will pay your fine for you so that the law can be satisfied." He then writes a cheque for \$5,000,000 and hands it to you even though it will cost him everything he owns to honour the cheque.

Jesus Christ is God's only solution to the problem of our sin and rebellion. He was God in the flesh come down from heaven (See "[Is Jesus God?](#)"). He suffered a cruel death on a Roman cross to pay the punishment for the sin in our lives. No other sacrifice was big enough to pay the fine that you and I owed for the things we do, say and think that offend God. He was our substitute.

*"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God" - 1Peter 3:18.*

*"But God demonstrates his love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" - Romans 5:8.*

As the ultimate act of love, Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice. He payed the fine that we can not pay and the Bible says that only through Jesus can we be made right with God.

*"I am the way, the truth and the life," Jesus said. "No one can come to the Father except through me" - John 14:6.*

*He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish" - John 11:25-26.*

So not only did Jesus die for our sin, he rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-6). When he did, he proved beyond doubt that he can rightfully promise eternal life - that he is the Son of God and the only means by which we can know God.

*He said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" - John 3:16.*

God offers us forgiveness for our rebellion and sin. He offers it as a free gift to all people but it is not automatic.

*What must we do to receive the forgiveness that Jesus offers us?...*

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### **Point Four: We must each respond to Jesus Christ by placing our trust in him as our Saviour and Lord.**

When does a gift become yours? When it is purchased at the shop? How about when it is wrapped up? No, it becomes your when you receive it from someone else. When you reach out and take a hold of it. It is much the same with the gift of forgiveness that God offers us. It didn't become ours when it was purchased for us by Jesus on the cross. So what do we have to do?

Perhaps you have to go to church? Perhaps it would help to give money away? How about praying once a day? None of these will help you. That's like trying to get out of jail with your good works. receiving God's gift of forgiveness has two parts:

1. Agreeing with God that we have sinned (offended him) and deciding to turn from our sin and do things his way. This is called **Repentance** (Acts 2:36-38).
2. Trusting Jesus Christ to forgive us completely because he died for our sins. This is called **Faith** (Romans 10:9,10).

The Bible says:

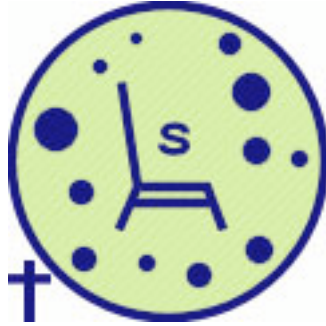
*"God saved you by his special favour when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it" - Ephesians 2:8,9*

And the relationship is personal. The Bible says:

*"But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God" - John 1:12.*

Consider these two circles.

### Self-Directed Life



- Self is on the Throne
- Jesus is outside our life

This circle illustrates a life where the relationship with God is broken. Such a life is under the judgement of God (John 3:17,18)

### Christ-Directed Life



- Self is off the throne and submitted to Jesus
- Jesus is in charge of our life

This circle represents a person who has received God's forgiveness and willingly chooses to obey Jesus Christ as Lord.

**Which circle best represents your life? Which circle would you like to have represent your life?**

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How do you express repentance and faith?

It is a life long process to place your trust in Jesus for forgiveness and to choose to repent (follow his ways) however it is important to start that journey! The simplest way to do that is to spend a little time in prayer and express to God your repentance and faith. (Prayer is simply talking to God)

God knows your heart and is not so concerned with your words as he is with the attitude of your heart. If you are unsure of what to pray, this might help you put it into words:

*Lord Jesus, I realise that I have been rebelling against you and choosing to do it my way rather than yours. I recognise that I need your forgiveness and that only you can save me. Thank you for dying for my sins and paying the penalty that I cannot pay. Thank you for your free gift of forgiveness and I choose to place my trust in you. Please help me to live as you want me to live and to honour you as number one in my life.*

Could you say this to God now and mean it? If so, spend some time expressing your heart to God in prayer. If you repent and put your faith in Jesus to save you, you will become a child of God.

What follows is a lifelong journey of change and growth as you get to know God better through Bible reading, prayer and interaction with other Christians.

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