

DEAR FRIEND:

IF YOU ARE SEEKING TO EXPERIENCE A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, BUT DON'T KNOW HOW TO BEGIN, WE HOPE THIS PAMPHLET WILL HELP. IT CONTAINS THE ESSENCE OF JESUS CHRIST'S TEACHING IN A SIMPLE AND LOGICAL FORM. WE'VE COMPILED THESE BIBLE VERSES OUT OF A DESIRE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS THE MESSAGE THAT HAS TRANSFORMED THE LIVES OF SO MANY OF US AT SUNRIDGE. IF WE CAN HELP YOU ALONG IN YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY, PLEASE GIVE US A CALL! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE WHY WE'RE HERE.



GREG SIDDEERS, PASTOR

*“All things were created
by Him and for Him.”*

—Colossians 1:16, NIV

God created us to enjoy an eternal relationship with Him. That is why, as Augustine said, “our hearts are restless until they find their rest in [Him].” Although most people feel a need to know God, many have never heard how to have a personal relationship with Him. The following four principles, taken from the Bible, explain how we can find our rest in Him.

1

God loves you and wants you to have a personal relationship with Him.

Jesus said: **“God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him should not be lost, but should have eternal life”** (John 3:16, NTME). God loves all people and cares about their needs, including their deepest need—to know Him personally.

Knowing God is the secret of lasting fulfillment. Jesus prayed: **“This is the way to have eternal life—by knowing you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth!”** (John 17:3, TLB)

Why is it that most people do not have a personal relationship with God?

2

Our sin keeps us from having a personal relationship with God.

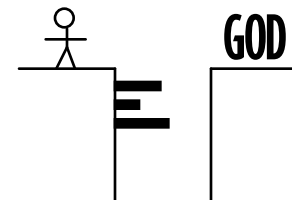
What is sin? **“Knowing what is right to do and then not doing it is sin”** (James 4:17, TLB). Doing what you know is wrong—by breaking one of the 10 commandments, for example—is also sin. Even an attitude of ignoring or rejecting God is sin.

According to the Bible, every person has sinned. **“All have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard”** (Romans 3:23, NLT). **“No one in all the world is innocent. No one has ever really followed God’s paths, or even truly wanted to. Everyone has turned away”** (Romans 3:10-12, TLB).

Even the most moral people are guilty of sin. **“The person who keeps every law of God, but makes one little slip, is just as guilty as the person who has broken every law there is”** (James 2:10, TLB).

Because God is perfectly pure and just, He demands a payment for our sins. And **“the wages of sin is death”** (Romans 6:23, NIV). In the Bible, “death” is not only physical, but also spiritual; it refers to separation from God, both now and forever. The Bible says that **“your sins have cut you off from God”** (Isaiah 59:2, TLB).

Sin has caused a gap between God and us that we cannot bridge through our own efforts. Good works, church involvement, and religious rituals are some of the ways people try to earn God’s forgiveness and favor. But sin creates a distance between God and us that we can never overcome on our own.



What, then, is the solution to our separation from God?

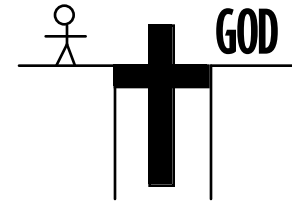
3

Only through Jesus Christ can you have a personal relationship with God.

Jesus said: **"I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me"** (John 14:6, NIV).

Why is Jesus the only way? Because He is God's only Son; He is the One God sent to earth to live a perfect life and then die for our sins, as our substitute. **"He died once for the sins of all us guilty sinners, although He Himself was innocent of any sin at any time, that He might bring us safely home to God"** (1 Peter 3:18, TLB).

When Jesus was crucified, God poured out all His punishment for all our sins on Jesus, so that we would not have to be punished. **"The proof of God's amazing love is this: that it was while we were sinners that Christ died for us"** (Romans 5:8, NTME).



To prove that He could give us eternal life, Jesus rose from the dead three days after His execution. **"He was buried and rose again on the third day ... and subsequently He was seen simultaneously by over 500 Christians"** (1 Corinthians 15:4-6, NTME).

But it is not enough just to know these truths.

4

We must personally respond by receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

The Bible says, **"To all who received Him, He gave the right to become children of God"** (John 1:12, NIV). God offers each of us the free gift of eternal life, in the Person of Jesus. But we must be willing to receive that gift.

How do we receive Jesus? We must **"turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus"** (Acts 20:21, NIV).

Repentance is a change of heart in which you truly desire to become the person God wants you to be.

Faith in Jesus is a decision to place total trust in Him to make you right with God. To receive Him, you must believe that He died for your sins and that He rose from the dead. And you must refuse to trust in your own goodness. **“Salvation is not a reward for the good we have done, so none of us can take any credit for it”** (Ephesians 2:9, TLB). **“The free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”** (Romans 6:23, NIV).

What happens when we receive Christ?

- First, we are forgiven for all our sins—past, present and future—and we are assured of being in God’s presence forever.
- Second, we experience a spiritual “rebirth”, in which the Spirit of Jesus comes to live within us, to empower us to live as God wants us to.

Have you ever made the decision to receive Jesus Christ—to put all of your trust in Him as your Savior, and to follow Him as your Lord?

If not, you can receive Christ right now, through faith. One way of expressing faith is through prayer. Prayer is simply talking with God.

Here is a suggested prayer:

God, I know that my sins have separated me from You. But I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins and rose from the dead. I now receive Him by faith. I accept His forgiveness and I invite His Spirit into my life. Thank You for giving me the gift of eternal life. Please help me to live as You want me to live from now on. Amen.

Can you say this to God and mean it sincerely? If so, pray this prayer right now, and you will find genuine rest in a personal and eternal relationship with God.

Receiving Christ is the first step of an ever-growing relationship with Him.

If you have made the decision to put your trust in Jesus Christ, you have just begun a whole new way of life! Jesus compared believing in Him to being “born again” (John 3:3), and, just as healthy babies grow physically, God’s plan is for you to grow spiritually.

Here are some practical ways you can grow in your Christian faith:

- **Tell others about your decision.** The best way to do this is to be baptized. Baptism is the Christian's first step of obedience (Acts 2:38). If you have questions about baptism, you may request a copy of a taped message on this topic from Sunridge Church.
- **Find a Bible**—preferably a modern translation, such as the New International Version—and begin reading it regularly. You may want to start with the Gospel of John.
- **Attend church weekly.** One test of a good church is that the members bring their Bibles and study directly from them every Sunday.
- **Begin praying every day.** You do not need to be in a particular place or use particular words to pray. God is your Father and loves to listen as you talk to Him from your heart.

Remember that your salvation does not depend on how close you feel to God or how successful you are in avoiding sin; it is secure because of Christ's death for you and your faith in Him. **"[Jesus] has brought you into the very presence of God, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before Him without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand in it firmly. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News."** (Colossians 1:22-23, NLT).

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