

## How to Begin a Relationship with God

The Bible leads us to God with four vital truths.

#1. OUR CONDITION: The first truth is rather personal. One look in the mirror of Scripture, and our human condition becomes painfully clear:

***"There is no one righteous, not even one; 11 there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. 12 All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."*** Romans 3:10–12

We are all born sinners. Now, that doesn't mean we've committed every atrocity known to humankind. We're not as bad as we can be, just as bad off as we can be. Sin colors all our thoughts, motives, words, and actions.

If you don't believe me, look around, or watch the evening news. Everything around us bears the marks of our sinful nature. Despite our best efforts to create a perfect world, crime abounds, and heart ache comes in every shape and form. Something has gone terribly wrong in our society and in ourselves, something deadly.

Contrary to how the world would repackage it, "*me-first*" living, doesn't equal individuality and freedom; it equals death. As Paul said in his letter to the Romans, "***The wages of sin is death***" (Romans 6:23)—spiritually, emotionally, and physically.

#2. GOD'S CHARACTER: HOLY LOVE Solomon observed the condition of the world and the people in it and concluded, "***Meaningless! Meaningless!***" says the Teacher. "***Everything is meaningless!***" (Ecclesiastes 1:2; 12:8).

The fact that we know things are not as they should be points us to a standard of goodness beyond ourselves. Our sense of injustice in life "***under the sun***" implies a perfect standard of justice "***above the sun.***"

That standard and source is God Himself! And God's standard of holiness contrasts starkly to our sinful condition. Scripture says, "***God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all***" (1 John 1:5).

God is absolutely holy—which creates a problem for us. If **He** is so pure, how can **we** who are so impure relate to Him?

Maybe we could try being better people, try to tilt the balance in favor of our good deeds, or, like Solomon, seek out wisdom and knowledge for self-improvement.

Throughout history, people have attempted to live up to God's standard by keeping the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, no one can come close to satisfying the demands of God's law. Romans 3:20 says, "***Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.***"

#3. OUR NEED: A SUBSTITUTE So here we are, sinners by nature, sinners by choice, trying to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps and attain a relationship with

our holy Creator. But every time we try, we fall flat on our faces. We can't live a life good enough to make up for our sin, because God's standard isn't "*good enough*"—it's perfection.

And we can't make amends for the offense our sin has created without dying for it. -Who can get us out of this mess?

If someone could live perfectly, honor God's law, and bear sin's death penalty for us—in our place—then we would be saved from our predicament.

Praise God there is such a person? Let me introduce you to Jesus Christ! He is the One who took death's place for you!

#4. GOD'S PROVISION: A SAVIOR God rescued us by sending His Son, Jesus, to die for our sins on the cross. Jesus was fully human and fully divine (John 1:1, 18), a truth that ensures His understanding of our weaknesses, His power to forgive, and His ability to bridge the gap between God and us. In short, we "***are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.***" (Romans 3:24).

Two words in this verse bear further explanation: justified and redemption.

**Justification** is God's act of mercy, in which He declares believing sinners righteous. Because Jesus took our sin upon Himself and suffered our judgment on the cross, God forgives our debt and proclaims us pardoned.

**Redemption** is God's act of paying the ransom price to release us from our bondage to sin. And what a price He paid! He gave His only Son to bear our sins—past, present, and future. Jesus's death and resurrection broke our chains and set us free to become children of God (Romans 6:16–18, 22; Galatians 4:4–7).

These four truths describe how God has provided a way to Himself through Jesus Christ. Since the price has been paid **in full** by God, we must respond to His free gift of eternal life by trusting in Him and Him alone to save us. He invites us to come into the relationship with God that He has prepared for us—not by doing good works or being a good person, but by coming to Him **just as we are** and accepting His redemption by faith. ***For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.*** (Ephesians 2:8–9)

We accept God's gift of salvation simply by placing our faith in Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins. Here's a simple prayer you can use to express your faith: *Dear God, I confess that I have sinned and sorry for all I've done wrong. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die in my place. I trust in Jesus alone to forgive my sins, and I accept His gift of eternal life. I ask Jesus to be my personal Savior and the Lord of my life. In Jesus's name. Amen.*

If you've prayed this prayer or one like it, please let Pastor Dana know. Catch him at church or call him at home. 319-795-8188 [djurgens67@msn.com](mailto:djurgens67@msn.com)

He will want to rejoice with you in this indescribable moment!