**Receiving Christ…**

**A Decision Between Life and Death**

Yes, it’s that serious. Examining what the Bible says about Jesus Christ and making a decision about His claims is a decision between life and death that each person must make. The Bible says that, “*God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life”* (1 John 5:11 – 12 NKJV).

**Consider the Steps to a Relationship with God and Eternal Life**

1. **Recognize God’s Plan** – *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*. John 3:16.
2. **Realize our Problem** – Separation: But your iniquities have separated you from your God – Isaiah 59:2. Eternal life and having a personal relationship with God is not automatic because we are by nature separated from God. We cannot earn our way to God by works or being religious. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast” – Ephesians 2:8-9.
3. **Acknowledge the only remedy**: Jesus Christ said, “I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” – John 14: 6. God’s only remedy to save us from sin and death is giving His Son Jesus Christ, who willingly gave His life on the cross and rose from the grave to pay the penalty from our sins.
4. **Receive Jesus Christ**: “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” – John 1:12. Receiving or rejecting Christ is a choice each of us makes freely. If we receive Christ, God adopts us as His children. Receiving Jesus means you are trusting in His death and resurrection as the only way to pay for your sins. When you trust in Christ alone for your eternal life, He becomes your Savior. As you choose to follow Him, He becomes Lord over your life.
5. **Accept the invitation to repent**: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” – 1 John 1:9. To confess means to agree with God. For example: “I lied.” “I cheated.” “I was unkind.” “I lost my temper.” To repent means to turn from sin and toward God. Sin and God are opposites; therefore, you cannot walk toward God without first walking away from sin.

If this makes sense to you and you want to begin a relationship with God, you can tell Him right now in a simple prayer like this one:

 *Father, I recognize that I have sinned and that I cannot save myself. Please forgive me. I receive Christ as the only way to have a relationship with you. I turn away from my sin to accept your gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Please grant me that life now. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.*

**Now that I have received Christ, what’s next?**

*Four steps in the right direction:*

1. **Read your Bible**. *Like newborn babies, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby.* 1 Peter 2:2. The Bible is nourishment for your spirit just as food is nourishment from your body. You cannot grow strong without either.
2. Becoming a Christian means you are intentionally turning from a life of sin and self-rule to a life where Christ becomes your focus and pleasing Him becomes your desire. You now have a home in heaven and your time here on earth is in preparation from your eternal life with Christ.
3. Jesus is not only your friend but your savior from the penalty of your sins. We know this because God has revealed it to us through His Word, the Bible.
4. Here are several passages that help us to understand this new life in Christ: 2Corinthians 5:17; Romans 8:1 – 3; Ephesians 2: 4 – 8; John 1:12; 2 Peter 3:18; 1 Peter 2:2.
5. The Holy Bible is unlike any other book in the world. It’s unique in its purpose and power; it’s a written revelation of the mind of God! The Bible you hold in your hand is God’s instruction manual for life. In it you’ll discover how He desires you to live in accordance with His will and how His Spirit empowers you to live in a way that blesses you and pleases Him.
6. God’s Word is also a love letter to you. The pages of Scripture will unfold an amazing love story for you to enjoy and you’ll discover that YOU are the object of your Heavenly Father’s love.
7. **Prayer** – Prayer is the biblical word for “talking” to God. Prayer is communication between you (a child of God) and your heavenly Father (God).
8. Prayer is our own personal intimate conversation with our Heavenly Father. It gives us a great sense of freedom when we look to the biblical instructions given regarding prayer and consider how pure and simple God designed prayer to be.
9. To learn about prayer and how it’s powerful part of our growth as Christians, let’s look at the following verses: Matthew 6: 5 – 11; 1 Peter 5:7; Philippians 4: 6 – 7.
10. Make a prayer list. Write out the things you are thankful for, those things you are asking God to help with and your prayers on behalf of others. You may find it helpful to create a prayer journal and keep track of how God answers your prayers.
11. **Tell someone** – Sharing your story. It’s truly amazing isn’t it? He loves you. He saved you. He blesses you. By grace He’s given you everything you need to grow in Him. Even though you may not fully understand all that God is up to in your life, you know enough to declare without hesitation that God is good!
12. In light of His goodness and grace, is there someone you know who needs to hear about His amazing love?
13. Your faith in Jesus Christ is something you will have opportunity to tell others about. When those times come, simply share what Jesus has done for you. It can have a powerful impact on others and lead them to a relationship with God personally.
14. Some verses to read: Mark 16: 15; I Peter 3: 15 – 16; Matthew 5: 16; 2 Timothy 2: 2; Acts 1: 8
15. **Go to Church** – God never intended for us to walk this Christian life alone. His plan and purpose includes you being connected to other Christians. Developing Christ-centered friends is critical to your growth as a believer.
16. Be aware of the danger of isolation. We need to encourage, support and be accountable to one another.
17. First century Christians found it absolutely necessary to meet together regularly for strength and support.
18. Some Verses to read: Acts 2: 42 – 47; Hebrews 10: 23 – 25; 1 Corinthians 12: 26 – 27

God’s story is recorded in His book, the Bible. It is His autobiography, written over a period of 1600 years in three different languages by 40 authors who lived on three separate continents. The Bible records approximately 4000 years of history and contains 1,189 chapters; 31,173 verses, and 807,361 words. In it God has miraculously preserved His story just for you. If you read it from cover to cover you will find that God loves you, that He is madly in love with you and that He wants to spend eternity with you.

It has always been God’s plan for you to belong to Him. He created you to love you, to walk through life with you, and to give you a future and a hope.

The Bible speaks of a book called the Lamb’s Book of Life. Those who have had a life-changing encounter with God are recorded in this book, which will be used to determine who enters heaven and who does not: “*Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, bot only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life*” – Revelation 21:27.

If you are ready to have your God-story written, then all you need to do is acknowledge the living God, who is waiting to write His story on your heart. Talk to Him; pray and let Him know that you realize how much He loves you and how you have been living your life without Him to no good end, then God will make His presence known to you and restore your relationship with Him. He will take you out of darkness and bring you into the light of His goodness and kindness. He will gather up your life with all it’s broken pieces and replace it with His life – a life without end, a life everlasting. Then you, too, will have a God-story to tell, “*Written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart*” – 2 Corinthians 3: 3.