



Global College of Ministry

EXPLAIN

The Christian and Understanding Sin

Man is a Sinner Who Needs a Savior

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us”
(1 John 1:8-10).

From the beginning God had a plan. He had a goal in mind for His creation. But, God did not create machines. His creation was able to choose and make up their own mind. When he created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, he gave them only one restriction. They were not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil located in the Garden of Eden. God had spoken and His word was clear. They doubted God’s word enough to go ahead and do the one thing He asked them not to do. Sin (1 John 3:4; 5:17) caused separation and a breaking of fellowship between God and man (Psalms 66:18; Isaiah 59:2). God would not go against His own word and he had to keep His promise of death. What a terrible price to pay for one small piece of fruit. Because of their disobedience sin entered into the world. Since that time every person born was conceived in sin.

- ☑ “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned” Romans 5:12).
- ☑ “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).
- ☑ “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
- ☑ “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death” (1 John 5:17).
- ☑ “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” Psalms 51:5).
- ☑ “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” (1 John 2:16).
- ☑ “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Galatians 3:22).
- ☑ “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).”
- ☑ “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

God hates sin. However, He loves the sinner.

- ☑ “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

On one hand, God is merciful, and does not want to punish man. On the other hand, God is just, and must punish and deal with sin.

- ☒ “Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty” (Exodus 34:7).

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

Man is born a sinner.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Is this what the Bible teaches?			
Is this what you believe?			
Is this what your church teaches?			

Man needs a Savior. Without one he remains wicked, without hope of eternal life. Man cannot save himself. God’s standard requires perfection. Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Salvation cannot be earned (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Ralph Vincent Reynolds describes man’s miserable condition as:

- ☒ Estranged from the womb (Psalms 58:3).
- ☒ Shaped in iniquity (Psalms 51:5).
- ☒ Heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9).
- ☒ Controlled by Satan (Ephesians 2:2).
- ☒ Law of sin and death continually at work in his life (Romans 7:23).
- ☒ Under a curse (Galatians 3:10).
- ☒ Understanding is darkened (Ephesians 4:18).
- ☒ Has an evil imagination (Genesis 6:5).
- ☒ Filled with all unrighteousness (Romans 1:29).
- ☒ Dead in trespasses and sin (Ephesians 2:1).
- ☒ Corrupt from head to foot (Isaiah 1:6).

HOW DO YOU MEASURE UP?

Man needs a savior to rescue him from his hopeless condition.

	YES	NO	NOT SURE
Is this what the Bible teaches?			
Is this what you believe?			
Is this what your church teaches?			

1. What is sin? _____

2. How did sin enter the world? (Support your answer with Scripture.) _____

3. In the blanks provided, write the Scripture reference that supports each statement given.
 - 1) Everyone is conceived in sin: _____
 - 2) By the disobedience of one man, sin entered the world: _____
 - 3) All have sinned: _____

 - 4) On one hand, God is merciful and does not want to punish man. On the other hand, God is just and must punish and deal with sin: _____

4. Given the following Scripture references, what is the description of man's miserable condition mentioned in each?
 - 1) Ephesians 2:2 _____
 - 2) Galatians 3:10 _____
 - 3) Jeremiah 17:9 _____
 - 4) Genesis 6:5 _____
 - 5) Isaiah 1:6 _____
5. Write out the verse (with Scripture reference) that supports the statement, "God's standard requires perfection." _____

All Have Sinned

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Are we not innocent and good from the beginning of our lives? Do we not have a heart that desires to do good and right? I wish these questions could be answered with a “yes” voice. Unfortunately, they cannot. But why not? What has caused us to be “sinners?”

In the Word of God, we find the answer to every question in life. These questions are addressed in both the Old and New Testaments.

I. The Old Testament Speaks

From the beginning, God had a plan. He did not create the world without a vision or goal in mind. He knew what He wanted His creation to do. He also knew how He wanted to bless and help them along the way. *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”* (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

God does not create machines. His creation is able to make up their minds. He created the first man and woman and gave them only *one* restriction – they *must not eat* of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). There was only one thing man must not do, but God left him to choose whether or not he would obey.

“A man is free to make a choice, but not free to choose the consequences.” – T. F. Tenney

There is a basic principle that we need to understand. God had spoken. His Word was clear. He even told man the consequences of a wrong choice. When man doubted God’s Word and did the *one thing* that God had told him he must not do, God’s Word was *still* clear. God could not go against His own Word. He had to keep His promise of death.

The remaining portion of Genesis chapter three tells what God did because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience. He told them exactly what life was going to be like from that point on, and history bears witness that His pronouncement was correct. God said:

“...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:17).

The fact that Adam and Eve did not fall dead as soon as they ate of the fruit (like one would do when poisoned) has caused many people to doubt this scripture. Yes, Adam and Eve were still breathing after they disobeyed God. But their bodies began a process that eventually ended in death for them physically. The Bible tells that God put an angel at the entrance to the Garden of Eden to make sure they did not eat of the Tree of

Life and live forever. This was not the tree God had commanded them not to eat of before. But after their disobedience, they were barred from eating of it (Genesis 3:24).

Adam and Eve did die that day – they died spiritually! No more walking with God in the cool of the evening, no more close communion with Him daily. In fact, the Bible does not record God having another personal conversation with Adam. What a terrible price to pay for one piece of fruit that *“was good for food”* and *“pleasant to the eyes,”* and a *“tree to be desired to make one wise”* (Genesis 3:6).

This is the first reference made to the lust of the flesh (*was good for food*); lust of the eyes (*was pleasant to the eyes*); and the pride of life (*to be desired to make one wise*). We cannot blame God when we sin. It is our own failure to heed God’s Word and obey His voice.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15).

“And the Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life; And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:14-15).

The serpent did not go unpunished. Before he was used by Satan, he had been more subtle (cunning or clever) than any beast of the field. The fact he could talk did not frighten Eve – she must have been used to it. The serpent certainly is not such an animal today. He now slithers along on the ground, without love from man or beast.

“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Genesis 3:16).

When a woman gives birth to a child, she suffers pain and sorrow. She can never produce a child without a man, therefore her desire is towards him.

“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Genesis 3:17-19).

Around the world, men struggle, sweat, and toil to bring the things they need out of the ground. They work hard to put bread on the table for their families, just as God said many hundreds of years ago.

“The most harmful part of sin is that it keeps us from God.”

Adam and Eve began this thing we call “sin” when they chose to perform “an action contrary to the law of God” (according to *Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language – Deluxe Edition*). The shepherd/king – David – wrote that

this tendency toward sin began in us at the time of conception in our mother’s womb. *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me” (Psalm 51:5).*

The greatest disaster to result from Adam and Eve’s decision, was their separation from God. No longer did they commune with Him daily, walking in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. Now they could not reach God directly. He was unable to come to them as He desired, because their disobedience and unbelief in His Word had built a wall of separation. God had to set in motion another part of His plan.

II. The New Testament Speaks

Does God’s Word tell what “sin” is about? Does it show us His plan to bring us back close to Him? Let us first find out what sin *is*, and how it affects our lives.

The Full Life Study Bible tells us that the Greek words used for “sin” in the New Testament describe different parts of it:

- 1) *hamartia* – wrongdoing, transgression, sin against God (John 9:41).
- 2) *adikia* – wrongdoing, wickedness, or injustice (Romans 1:18; 1 John 5:17) A lack of love, since all wrongdoing stems from a failure to love (Matthew 22:37-40). This word also means – a personal power that can enslave and deceive (Romans 5:12; Hebrews 3:13).
- 3) *anomia* – lawlessness, iniquity, and defiance of the law of God (Romans 6:19; 1 John 3:4).
- 4) *apistia* – disbelief, or unfaithfulness (Romans 3:3; Hebrews 3:12).

What do all these big words mean to me? All of these words from the Greek (the language used to write most of the New Testament) simply mean the basic root of sin is *selfishness*. Therefore we find ourselves on the “Road to please self – the Sin Road.”

- 📖 Sin begins with a grasping of things or pleasures for ourselves, regardless of the welfare of others and commandments of God.
- 📖 This leads to cruelty to others and rebellion against God and His law.
- 📖 Finally, sin becomes the refusal to be subject to God and His Word (Romans 1:18-25; 8:7).
- 📖 It is enmity against God (Romans 5:10; 8:7; Colossians 1:21).
- 📖 It is disobedience and unbelief (Romans 11:32; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:2; 5:6).
- 📖 Sin is not just wrong actions, it is a failure to do what we know is right. *“Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin”* (James 4:17).
- 📖 All unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

Adam and Eve did not want to do what God said was right; they wanted to find out for *themselves* about good and evil. Since the day they made that choice, all humanity has been struggling with the same thing.

Sin makes it impossible to follow our best human intentions.

- 📖 It causes us to commit unrighteousness with delight (Genesis 6:5).
- 📖 It makes us take pleasure in the evil actions of others (Romans 1:32).
- 📖 It is powerful enough to enslave us and corrupt as we give ourselves over to it (Romans 3:9; 6:12; 7:14; Galatians 3:22).
- 📖 It is rooted in human desire (James 1:14; 4:1-2; 1 Peter 2:11).

Sin is something we all struggle with.

- 📖 Sin was brought into the human race through Adam (Romans 5:12).
- 📖 Sin affects everyone (Romans 5:12; Romans 3:23).
- 📖 Sin results in divine judgment (Romans 1:18).
- 📖 Sin brings physical and spiritual death (Genesis 2:17; Romans 6:23; James 1:15).

How can we get rid of this sin/curse? The New Testament is a special account of another part of God’s plan for man – Jesus.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Corinthians 5:22).

He *knew* no sin, but he *became* sin for us. He came to lead us to follow Him.

📖 God knew as soon as Adam and Eve chose to know “good and evil” that He would have to do something about it. The next time He came close to mankind, He would have to do it in a different form. He would take on the same “flesh” that He had created for them. He “became flesh” and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

📖 The only way to eliminate the power of sin is by faith in Jesus Christ and His redemptive work for all men (Romans 5:8-11; Galatians 3:13; Ephesians 4:20-24; 1 John 1:9; Revelation 1:5). There is a lovely story in the Gospel of John where Jesus told how this must be: *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God”* (John 3:3).

“He came to save us, not from poverty, or from ignorance, or from the ghetto, but from our sins. Sin must be dealt with first.”
(Vance Havner)

Jesus was trying to help Nicodemus understand that the first time you are born (flesh) you are born with a selfish, sinful nature. When you are born “again” of water and Spirit, you are now a part of His spiritual family – with an eternal home in heaven. What a blessed hope we have in Jesus!

📖 Romans 5:12, 19-21 tells us, *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

📖 In the writings to various New Testament churches, this wonderful plan that God had to bring us back into communication and fellowship with Him is spoken of again: *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:22). *“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation”* (Hebrews 9:27-28).

III. God’s Plan Will Lead Us in the Way We Ought to Go.

God still has a plan! He wants to help every way He can. He willingly paid the ultimate price (His shed blood) to be sure we could get off this path of sin and find a new road. Listen to the Apostle Paul as he writes to the church at Rome with this blessed hope:

📖 *“Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”* (Romans 6:12-13).

- 📖 *“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness” (Romans 6:16-18).*
- 📖 *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:20-23).*

Let us not continue in “self” and sin, but let us seek and obey Christ Jesus our Lord.

Study Questions

1. What was the one restriction God placed on Adam and Eve after He created them and placed them in the Garden of Eden? (Support your answer with Scripture reference.)

2. After they had sinned, why did God put an angel at the entrance to the Garden of Eden? (Support your answer with Scripture reference.) _____

3. What is the basic principle involved in the story of Eve’s deception and fall? (Support your answer with Scripture reference.) _____

4. How does James 1:13-15 relate to the deception and sin of Eve and Adam? _____

5. List the results (curse/punishment) given to each participant of Adam and Eve's decision to disobey God. (Support with Scripture reference.)

1) Adam _____

2) Eve _____

3) The serpent _____

6. Given the following Greek words used for "sin" in the New Testament, describe what each one means. Support your answer with the Scripture reference where this word is found.

1) *apistia* _____

2) *hamartia* _____

3) *anomia* _____

4) *adikia* _____

7. Given the following Scripture references, write what each tells us about the struggle we ALL have with sin.

1) James 1:15 _____

2) Romans 5:12 _____

3) Romans 1:18 _____

4) Genesis 2:17 _____

5) Romans 3:23 _____

8. Given the following Scripture references, write what each tells us about God's plan to remove/take care of the sin we all struggle with.

1) John 1:14 _____

2) 1Corinthians 15:22 _____

3) Galatians 3:13 _____

4) John 3:3 _____

5) Hebrews 9:27-28 _____

9. What New Testament Scripture references give us the hope of overcoming sin as related by the Apostle Paul? _____

Additional Notes

Welcome to the “Path to Righteousness”

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34).

When we speak of a “path” to anything, we usually refer to the road or means used to arrive at that place. The “Path to Righteousness” then, must be talking about the “road leading to righteousness.” But where is righteousness? What is it?

Over 500 times in God’s Word the term “righteous or righteousness” is used. Since it is mentioned frequently, we need to know what it means and has to do with us.

What Does It Mean?

The Revell Bible Dictionary says this word has different meanings, depending on whether or not one is reading a scripture from the Old or New Testament.

In the Old Testament:

- 📖 Righteousness was first used to talk about something like God, Who always acts in harmony with His moral nature (Psalm 4:1; Jeremiah 12:1).
- 📖 This word was also used when speaking about obedience to or the following of the moral and ethical norms revealed in God’s law, as given to Moses (Deuteronomy 6:25; Psalm 119:121).

These Old Testament definitions went beyond the theory of being without sin to mean rather acting in harmony with man’s obligations to God and other people (1 Samuel 24:17). This same sense of righteousness is found in the Gospels, as when Matthew describes Joseph, the espoused husband of Mary (Matthew 1:19), or when Mark speaks of the character of John the Baptist (Mark 6:20).

In the New Testament the word “righteous” or “righteousness” was used to speak about:

- 📖 Imputed (something put on or added) righteousness: the declaration by God that a person is righteous in God’s sight, not by virtue of his acts but by his faith in Jesus (Romans 1:17, 3:21).
- 📖 Actual righteousness: the inner moral conformity of one’s character to the character of God, and the acts that flow from a righteous moral character (Romans 8:4; Ephesians 4:24).

What Does This Have to do With Me?

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (besides Jesus Christ) wrote about this “righteousness” at least seventy-four times in his book of Proverbs. In chapter twelve, verse twenty-eight, one of the greatest benefits of living a righteous life is given: *“In the way of righteousness is life; and in the pathway thereof there is no death.”* Does this mean the righteous will never die? Yes! Those who live a life of righteousness will:

- 📖 Be blessed (Psalm 5:12)
- 📖 Be upheld (Psalm 37:17)
- 📖 Flourish (Psalm 92:12), and
- 📖 Be remembered (Psalm 112:6).

Their lives on earth will be happy, with a hope of living eternally with God, the Righteous One.

David spoke of this “Path to Righteousness” in his special Shepherd’s Psalm. *“The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake”* (Psalm 23:1-3).

From the book *A Shepherd Looks at the Twenty-Third Psalm* we learn a lot about sheep – things David already knew. He understood that sheep are creatures of habit.

- Sheep follow the same paths and eat from the same hills until the paths become ruts and the hills desert wastes.
- David knew his sheep would pollute their ground until it was full of disease and parasites.
- Many people think sheep can “get along anywhere.” David knew this was not true. As a watchful shepherd, David knew to lead his sheep to new feeding places with clear running streams and fresh green grass.
- The greatest safeguard a shepherd has is to keep his flock on the move. David knew there must be a predetermined plan of action, rotating grazing grounds in line with proper principles of sound management. David’s name and reputation depended on how effectively and efficiently he kept his sheep moving on to wholesome, fresh grass.

David compared himself to his sheep, and his Lord to a good, diligent, watchful shepherd.

The Bible makes a comparison to us as “sheep”: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way”* (Isaiah 53:6). We deliberately hurt ourselves. But praise the Lord, we have a Shepherd. Jesus said,

- 📖 *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”* (John 14:6).

📖 *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly"* (John 10:10).

The Good Shepherd came to lead us down the "Path to Righteousness," but most do not follow. We do not want to be led down new paths where grass is green and water flows freely with sparkling freshness. We prefer our own way of probable trouble. *"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* (Proverbs 14:12).

Refusing to follow the "Path to Righteousness" produces pitiful, sickly sheep on ruined land. Many sheep around us have broken homes and hearts. Their lives of greed and selfishness leave nothing behind but ruin and remorse. They have no hope and refuse the help of their Shepherd. *"...Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels"* (Mark 8:34-38).

Most people charged with this failure to follow the Lord will claim they are doing everything He has said. They say, *"We are following Him. We are being 'led of the Lord'."* Too many are going their own way. Few "sheep" are following their Shepherd as He leads them down the "Path to Righteousness."

Remember it is the Good Shepherd leading us. He will not lead us in a bad, harmful path. He will lead us to heaven, the place He is preparing for those who love Him.

In talking about David, where do I fit in, almost two thousand years after his time? In the early days of the 20th century, when the Lord poured out His Spirit once again, He was leading into "new pastures." As our shepherd, He provided "living water" man could drink and never thirst again (John 7:37-39).

God spoke through one of His saints at the Azusa Street Mission in a prophecy that still resounds today. He said that in the end time church there would be three problems that would be seen worldwide:

- People would be more interested in *praises* than *prayer*.
- They would care more for *power* than the *lordship of Jesus* in their lives.
- Everybody would want a *blessing*, but few would seek after *repentance*.

This prophecy is true today. We need to earnestly seek the face of God to be sure we are not a part of these problems. We must seek after the lordship of Jesus in our lives as we pray and humbly follow His leading with repentance in our hearts. He wants to show us the “Path to Righteousness.”

Study Questions

1. Given these Old Testament Scripture references, what is the meaning of the word “righteous/righteousness” in each?

1) Psalm 119:121 _____

2) 1Samuel 24:17 _____

3) Jeremiah 12:1 _____

2. In these New Testament Scripture references, what was the word “righteous/righteousness” used to speak about?

1) Matthew 1:19 _____

2) Romans 1:17 _____

3) Mark 6:20 _____

4) Ephesians 4:24 _____

3. How many times did Solomon write about this “righteousness” in the book of Proverbs?

4. List at least five (5) rewards for those who live a life of righteousness. Give Scripture reference to support each.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

5. Explain how Proverbs 14:12 relates to us as “sheep,” and to Jesus are our “Good Shepherd.” _____

6. According to a prophecy given at the Azusa Street Mission in the early 1900's, what three problems would be seen in the last days around the world?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Additional Notes

What's the Problem?

(Adapted from Raymond Woodward's *Life Course 101*)

"All we like sheep have gone astray, and have turned every one into his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).



The crucial thing is to know what the BIBLE says about salvation, not just what a CHURCH teaches. Contrary to what you might think, they are not always one and the same!

WHY AM I HERE?

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing **"WHY?"** They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God's purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, **"What is the meaning of my life?"** Everyone wants to be happy, and people try to achieve happiness in many ways:

- Some look for happiness by acquiring **possessions**.
- Some look for happiness by experiencing **pleasure**.
- Some look for happiness by gaining **prestige**.
- Some look for happiness by seeking **power**.

But real happiness only comes from finding my **PURPOSE!**

1. I was created by God to have a personal relationship with Him.

"So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said ... live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge." (Genesis 1:27-28)

"Jesus said, 'I have come in order that you might have life — life in all its fullness!'" (John 10:10)

2. When I love the Lord and live in harmony with His purpose, it produces incredible benefits!

Power and Strength Philippians 4:13	Real Life and Peace Romans 8:6	Help with Weaknesses Romans 8:26
Purpose Romans 8:28	Confidence Romans 8:31	Security Romans 8:39
Clear Conscience Romans 8:1	Fulfillment Philippians 4:19	Freedom John 8:32, 36

If this is the kind of lifestyle that God intends for us to live, why are most people still searching for real happiness?

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

- 1. Man has a natural desire to be his own boss and to ignore God's principles for living. The Bible calls this attitude SIN.**

"All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way." (Isaiah 53:6)

"If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth." (1 John 1:8)

- 2. Sin breaks our close relationship with the Lord and causes us to try to live our lives outside of His will.**

"The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God." (Isaiah 59:2)

"All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal." (Romans 3:23)

- 3. When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before turning to God.**

"There are ways that seem right to man, but they only end in death." (Proverbs 16:25)

- 4. Even when we realize that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him.**

- "I come from a Christian family"
- "I'll give up all my bad habits."
- "I'll work real hard and earn salvation."
- "I'll be religious and go to church."
- "My religion teaches it a different way."
- "It doesn't matter what you believe – just be sincere."
- "I'm as good as the next guy."

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

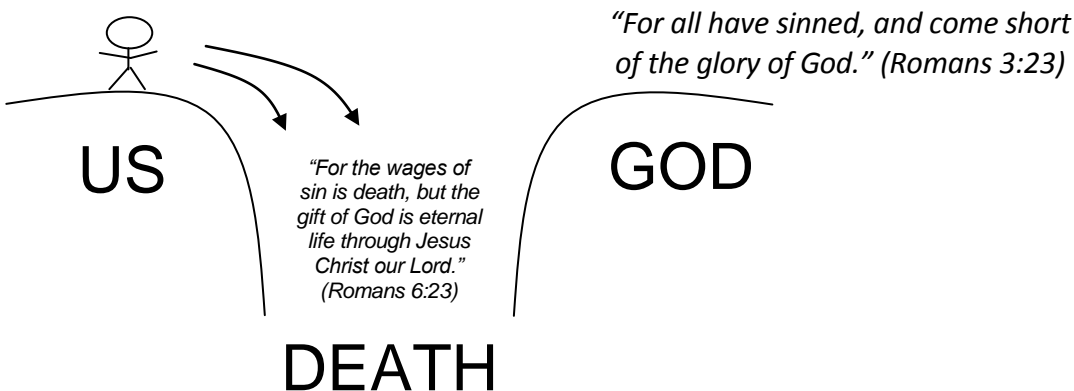
1. God came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. The solution is a SAVIOR!

"(Jesus said) I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through Me!" (John 14:6)

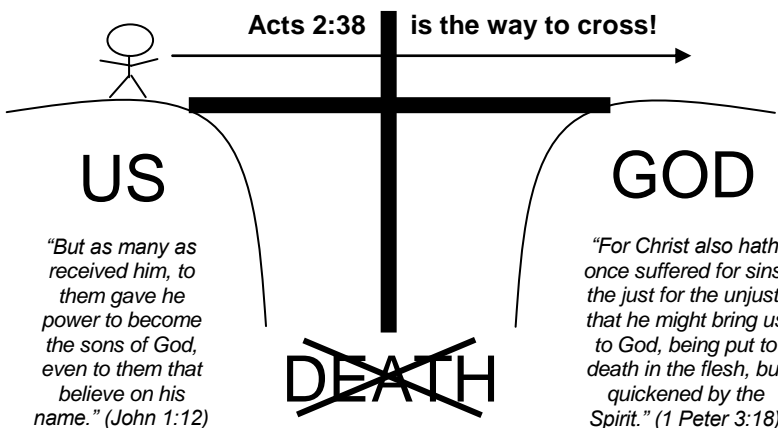


All of the major world religions attempt to POINT THE WAY to truth. But Jesus Christ says, "I AM the truth!"

2. Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem!



"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." (John 3:16)



"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38)

3. **God did this for us because He loves us and He wants us to have a second chance to be His children through being BORN AGAIN.**

"God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

"For there is only one God, and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is the man Christ Jesus." (1 Timothy 2:5)



God has already done His part to restore our relationship with Him. He took the initiative! Now He waits for each of us to individually receive what He has done for us.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

1. **ADMIT** that there is a problem! Tell God that you are willing to set aside your own selfish will, give Him first place in your life and receive His gift of salvation.
2. **BECOME** a Christian by obeying God's salvation plan given to us in the Bible. (God requires more than mere intellectual belief – He wants to really change your life!)
3. **COMMIT** yourself to a church family where you can receive encouragement as you begin your new life.

Faith

1. **The Bible teaches that it is absolutely essential to believe in God, or we will never take another step toward being saved.**

"So, you see, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that there is a God and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him." (Hebrews 11:6)

2. **Faith by itself is incomplete. Believing alone doesn't constitute salvation. Real faith becomes the propelling force that causes you to act on what you believe.**

"Dear brothers and sisters, what's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone." (James 2:14)

"In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead." (James 2:17)



The Bible says that even demons BELIEVE in God – and tremble in terror! (James 2:19) But that doesn't mean they are SAVED!

3. Every step toward God must be accompanied by faith. Otherwise, we would never obey Him!

"For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith." (Hebrews 4:2)

"(God says) 'And a righteous person will live by faith. But I will have no pleasure in anyone who turns away.' But we are not like those who turn their backs on God and seal their fate. We have faith that assures our salvation." (Hebrews 10:38-39)

THE ROMAN ROAD

A Roadmap to the Plan of Salvation from Paul's Letter to the Romans

- **Romans 3:23** – How many people have sinned?
- **Romans 6:23** – What is the eternal penalty for sin?
- **Romans 5:8** – What is the only remedy for sin?
- **Romans 2:4** – What is the right response to God's love?
- **Romans 6:4** – How do I put an end to my old sinful life?
- **Romans 8:11** – Where do I get power to live a new life?

Answers: All, Death, Jesus Christ's Death on the Cross, Repentance, Water Baptism in the Name of Jesus Christ, the Baptism of the Holy Ghost

Study Questions

1. I was _____ by God to have a personal _____ with _____.

2. List nine (9) benefits I get when I love the Lord and live in harmony with His purpose. Give Scripture reference to support each.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____

3. Man has a natural desire to be his own _____ and to _____ God's _____ for living. The _____ calls this attitude _____. (List two Scripture references that support this statement.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

4. Sin _____ our close _____ with the Lord and causes us to try to live our lives _____ of His _____. (List two Scripture references that support this statement.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____

5. When people have _____, they often try many different ways of _____ before turning to _____. (Support this statement with one Scripture reference.)

- 1) _____

6. Even when we realize that our deepest _____ is _____, we often try _____ ways of getting to _____ Him. (List seven of these ways.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____

7. _____ came to earth as a _____ being to bring us back to _____. The _____ is a _____! (Support this statement with a Scripture reference.)

- 1) _____

8. All of the major world _____ attempt to point the way to _____. But _____ says, "I AM the _____!"

9. List and write out each of the Scriptures given on the diagram that follows the statement: "Jesus has already taken care of your sin problem!"

- 1) _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

10. God did this for us because He _____ us and He wants us to have a
_____ chance to be His _____ through being _____ again.
(Support this statement with two Scripture references.)

1) _____

2) _____

11. List and briefly explain the three (3) things God wants me to do to receive what He has
already done for me.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

13. _____ by itself is _____. Believing _____ doesn't constitute _____. Real _____ becomes the propelling force that causes you to _____ on what you _____. (Support this statement with two Scripture references.)

14. Every _____ toward _____ must be accompanied by _____. Otherwise, we would never _____ Him! (Support this statement with two Scripture references.)

2)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.