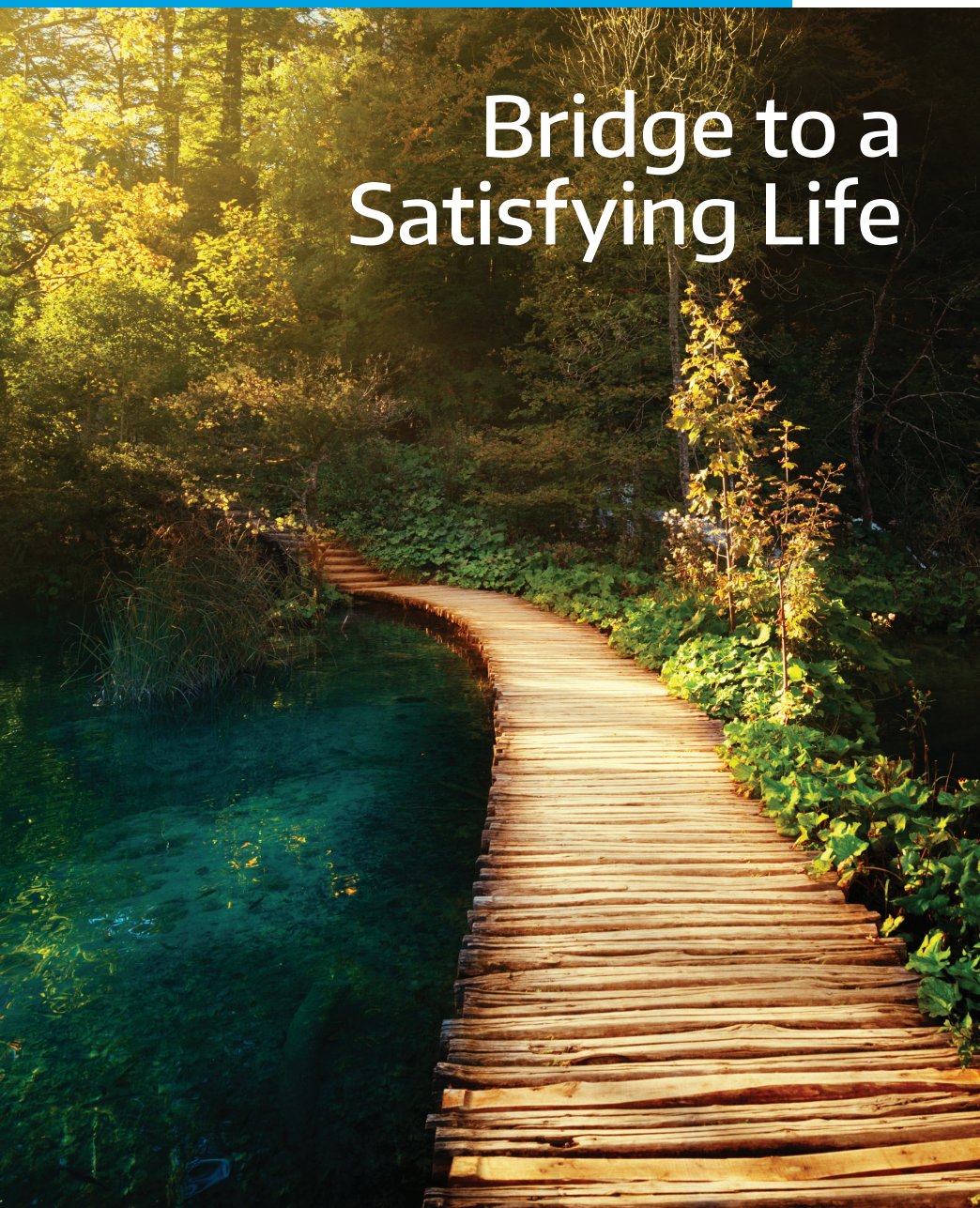


DISCOVER

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

5


Bridge to a Satisfying Life





THEY FOUND HIS SKELETON beside a makeshift shelter on a desolate island in the Mid-Atlantic. The anonymous seaman kept a journal that detailed his four-month ordeal. He'd been set ashore on Ascension Island by the Dutch fleet in 1725 for some unmentioned crime. Soon he was reduced to drinking the blood of turtles just to quench his raging thirst. The man's physical suffering was intense, but an even greater pain stands out in his journal: his overwhelming guilt.

He penned tormented entries such as: "What pangs do wretched mortals feel who leave the paths of righteousness, pleased to increase the numbers of the damned." This seaman's greatest isolation on that lonely island came from his sense of separation from God. That is what proved unbearable in the end.



Human beings have been struggling with that isolation of the heart ever since Adam and Eve “hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden” after eating the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:8). The strange new emotions of shame, guilt, and fear compelled that first couple to run away when God came calling. Those feelings are unfortunately quite familiar to us now.

What is it that causes a separation between us and God?

“Your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2).

Sin throws up barriers; it separates us from God. But this great gulf that isolates sinful human beings from a holy God is not His doing. God didn’t run away from Adam and Eve—they ran away from Him.

1 | Satisfying Our Hidden Hunger

Before sin spoiled the picture, Adam and Eve enjoyed a personal friendship with their Creator in the beautiful Garden of Eden. Tragically, they bought into Satan’s lie about becoming as wise as God, and broke the bond of trust with their Maker. Their sin resulted in alienation—an alienation that quickly extended to the first family, tearing it apart (Genesis 3:15 to 4:8). Separation from God did indeed result in death, “for the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

After being expelled from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve found life a lot tougher on the outside. Childbearing and tilling the soil now came with blood, sweat, and tears. But much harder to endure was the emptiness of heart that began to plague them.

Their close bond with God broken, they found themselves vulnerable to all kinds of hidden longings, unsatisfied desires, and painful yearnings. They were not unlike that seaman abandoned on an island, surrounded by the greatest tragedy of all: the loneliness of sin.

What condition now exists for all of humanity?

“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

Since Adam and Eve’s rebellion against God, “all” (the entire human race) have fallen into the same sin pattern and are subject to death, sin’s ultimate penalty.



Having lost our connection with God through sin, we all experience a great heart hunger for the kind of security that only God can give. We often try to satisfy this hunger in temporary ways—a shopping binge at the mall or the mad race for a promotion at the office. Some turn to alcohol, drugs, online escapes, or sexual promiscuity. But all these yearnings and unfulfilled drives are merely symptoms of our loneliness for God. And there is no cure except experiencing His love in our life.

What is the only way to satisfy the hunger of the human heart?

“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Psalm 16:11).

There is no cure for our condition except as we experience God's love in our life. Real satisfaction will come only when that separation between us and God is bridged and we're able to live in His presence.

2 | Bridging the Chasm of Sin and Death

God's heart ached on the day Adam and Eve turned their backs on Him. And He is still eager to restore the broken relationship (2 Peter 3:9). He isn't content just to look sympathetically across the chasm of sin and death that separates us from Him. He has decided to build a bridge. How did God Himself become a bridge across the chasm caused by sin?

**"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"
(1 Timothy 1:15).**

Jesus laid Himself down as a sacrifice for sin, paying the death penalty Himself. And He makes His life of perfect righteousness freely available to all who seek forgiveness at the cross. The cross of Christ bridges the gap between our restless yearnings and the peace and joy God can give. It connects the land of sin and wasted living with the country of unending life.

Why was Jesus willing to come to our world?

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

By coming to our world—His life, death, and resurrection—Jesus made it possible to forgive and save sinners without trivializing sin. The bridge of Christ's broken, bleeding body spans the

chasm, enabling all who place their faith in Him as Saviour and Lord to walk over into eternal life.



3 | Seven Essential Facts You Should Know About Jesus

These seven facts about Jesus are not true of any other man who has ever lived.

1. Jesus Came From Heaven to Earth

How is Jesus identified?

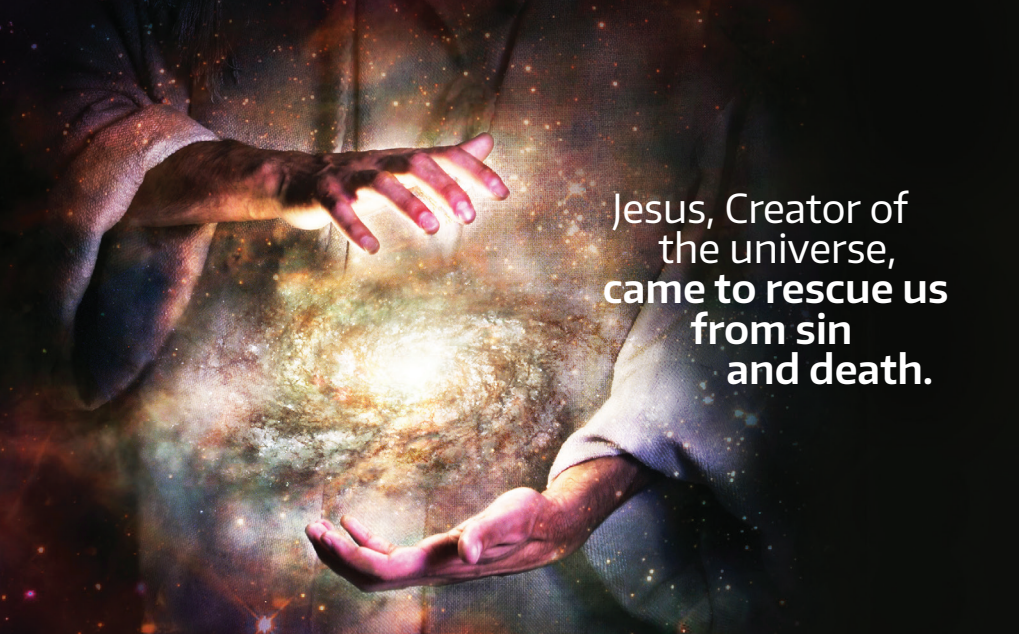
“His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).

Though Jesus was born of a human mother (Matthew 1:22, 23), He is God—God in human flesh. How long did Jesus claim to have existed?

“Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58).

Jesus notified the world: “*I am* the self-existing One; I have always existed and always will.”

Dwight L. Moody, the Billy Graham of the 19th century, once said of the incarnation of Jesus, “It would have been a great sacrifice for Jesus to come and be rocked in a silver cradle, be nursed by an angel, and be fed with a golden spoon. But the



Jesus, Creator of
the universe,
came to rescue us
from sin
and death.

Creator of heaven and earth came and took man's flesh, and was born in a stable of poor parents in the worst possible environment."

What was the purpose of Jesus' birth on this earth? An angel told Joseph at the time of Jesus' birth:

"She [Mary] will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

Jesus, the Creator of the universe (John 1:1-3, 14), was willing to come to our world to rescue us from sin and death. His very name is a promise that enables weak human beings to find true happiness and eternal life.

2. Jesus Lived a Sinless Life

"Jesus the Son of God. . . was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:14, 15).

Jesus lived a real, flesh-and-blood life of moral perfection. God did more than try to talk us out of a life of sin. He laid out His

best argument in the life of Jesus. Satan, Christ's great adversary, plotted throughout Jesus' earthly life to seduce Him into sin. From the temptation in the wilderness at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry to the long night of agony in Gethsemane just before the crucifixion, Satan unleashed his fiercest assaults against Jesus. But Jesus stood firm against every temptation (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 22:44). He experienced the full range of human problems and temptations. So He understands our struggles and needs. He is able to "sympathise with our weaknesses" (Hebrews 4:15).

Why was it necessary for Jesus to live a sinless life?

"For He [God] made Him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Jesus took our sinful life upon Himself and offers us His sinless life in its place. This is why He came to our world. This is how sinners are justified—declared righteous before a holy God—solely on the merits of Christ.

3. Jesus Died to Take Away Sin

How many people have sinned?

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

What is the penalty for sin?

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Why did Jesus die?

"For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to

die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:7, 8).

“Behold! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29).

All of us have sinned and are subject to eternal death—the ultimate penalty for sin. But Jesus became sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21), He died in our place, thus paying the death penalty for us. His act in dying is a gift, therefore “the *gift* of God is *eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

One day, in the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz, the commandant announced that 10 prisoners would die because a man had just escaped. Ten names were read to the crowd. When the last one heard his name called, he sobbed in agony: “My wife and my children!”

Suddenly an older prisoner pushed his way toward the front. It was Father Maximilian Kolbe, a saintly man who managed to share the love of God even amidst the horrors of Auschwitz. “Herr Kommandant,” Kolbe said, “please, sir, may I take his place?”

The dumbfounded SS officer ordered Kolbe to join the other nine on their way to Block 13. In its dark, smelly basement, they were to be starved to death. During the next several days, the men could hear prayers and songs of praise coming from Kolbe’s cell. Finally, he was killed with an injection of carbolic acid.

Father Kolbe had lived a life of heroic virtue in the most trying circumstances. But he was willing to lay it down freely for a





stranger in need. Love like that is almost beyond human comprehension. But Jesus laid down His perfect, righteous life as a gift—for the most unworthy. Because of His death, “we have *peace* with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).


4. Jesus Rose From the Dead

Jesus’ death on the cross wasn’t the end of His remarkable story. We have a living Saviour who is still at work in our world!

“If Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished” (1 Corinthians 15:17, 18).

Muhammad and Buddha have presented to the world some great philosophical truths. They have inspired the lives of millions of people, but they have no supernatural power to give life since they still remain in their graves.

Because Jesus rose from the tomb the third day after His death (Luke 23 and 24), what promise is He able to make to us?



A chorus of testimonies claim freedom in the power of the risen Christ

“Because I live, you will live also” (John 14:19).

Only Jesus has demonstrated, by coming out of the tomb, that He can overcome the grim specter of death. Jesus is alive! The One who appeared after death and announced, “I am He who lives,” (Revelation 1:18) can now offer us life that is both abundant and eternal. He will live in our hearts if we invite Him in (Revelation 3:20).

Is the risen Christ present to meet our needs today?

**“I am with you always, even to the end of the age”
(Matthew 28:20).**

Men and women all over the world are sharing stories of how Christ has delivered them from the worst addictions and the deepest emotional traumas. A chorus of testimonies point to the power of the risen Christ.

One of our former students wrote these words of gratitude on one of his answer sheets: “I was an alcoholic. One day after leaving the bar, I saw a card in the gutter advertising your Bible course. I

picked it up, filled it out, and received my first true knowledge of Christ. Shortly after taking the Bible course, I offered my heart to God and lost the taste for whiskey.”

Jesus took possession of this man’s life and gave him the ability to overcome addiction. A new power had entered his life—one that proved stronger than his old desires. Because Christ is the risen Saviour, He can save all who come to Him for help.

5. Jesus Ascended to Heaven

After His resurrection, Jesus returned to the Father:

“When He [Jesus] had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).

Just before His ascension, what promise did Jesus make to His followers?

“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:1-3).

6. Jesus Ministers as Heavenly Priest

Jesus constantly seeks to prepare you for a place in heaven. He came to this planet, lived, died, rose from the dead, and ascended so that people everywhere could accept the gift of salvation (eternal life) and live forever with Him. The following words of Scripture clearly portray His goals for us:

“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same,

that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. . . . Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted" (Hebrews 2:14-18).

According to this passage, Jesus came into our world on a rescue mission to:

- ▶ Deliver people from the misery of sin.
- ▶ Reconcile men and women to God.
- ▶ Permanently remove the cause of sin, suffering, and death by destroying the devil.

Jesus as our Priest, our Mediator, continually appears in the Father's presence on our behalf. The same Jesus who blessed the children, rehabilitated the woman caught in adultery and forgave the dying thief, is working in heaven right now to minister to our needs. "He is able to aid those who are tempted."

7. Jesus Will Return

Before returning to heaven, what promise did Jesus make?

Jesus . . .

CAME as God in human flesh.

LIVED a sinless life in our place.

DIED for our sins.

ROSE from the grave to deliver us from death.

ASCENDED to prepare a home for us in heaven.

MINISTERS each day as our High Priest.

IS COMING SOON to take us to be with Him forever.

“If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also” (John 14:3).

When Jesus returns, He will deliver us—once and for all—from the sin, sickness, tragedy, and death that plague this planet. He will welcome us into a new world of eternal happiness and eternal life—in the presence of God. Future *Discover* Guides will explore what will happen when Jesus returns.

4 | Unfailing Love

John and Ann Betar married on November 25, 1932, in Harrison, New York, making them—in 2016 when this story was broadcast—the longest living married couple in the United States! They were married when John was 21 and Ann was 17. Their families objected to the marriage, so they eloped.

“Don’t worry,” an aunt consoled Ann’s father a few days later, “this marriage won’t last.” But in 2016, when John was 104 and Ann only 100, they were still happily married after 83 years of living together.



The secret, John told the media, is to “get along, compromise, and be content.” After more than 83 years of marriage, the affection between them is still obvious. Ann sits, lovingly holding John’s hand—frail and withered—still linked together in a love that has continued through all the ups and downs of decades.

That’s the kind of love relationship that Jesus longs to have with you—only even stronger and more lasting. A relationship that

Continued on page 16

WordSearch

If you want to go deeper into this study topic, complete this section.

1. If you belong to God and are following Him, what three promises does Jesus give to you? (John 10:27-29)
 - (a) Verse 27: "I know _____." (sheep = God's people)
 - (b) Verse 28: "And I give them _____." ("never perish")
 - (c) Verse 28: "Neither shall anyone _____ them out of My hand." (or, the Father's hand—see verse 29).

2. (a) What practical proof will be evident in your life if you truly love God and are abiding in Him? (John 14:15; 1 John 2:3-6)

(b) Does this mean that you will never sin? (1 John 1:5-2:2)

3. What does God promise to do if you sincerely confess your sins? (1 John 1:9)

4. How does the Bible define sin? (1 John 3:4)

5. How complete is the transformation in your life when you accept Jesus' sacrifice for you? (2 Corinthians 5:17, 18)



spans the years and all the ups and downs of daily living. A relationship that nothing and no one can destroy. A relationship based on love, trust, and commitment.

Jesus was willing to sacrifice Himself in order to demonstrate His unfailing love for you. The Bible says that His love is so powerful that “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Christ’s great sacrifice has created a bridge that restores the alienation sin has caused. He wants to draw you across the chasm and into His arms. Will you respond and pray this prayer?

My Decision

- ☐ I am thankful for the sacrifice of Jesus and His love for me.
- ☐ I invite Jesus into my life. I accept Him as Lord and Saviour of my life and ask Him to forgive my sins, which separate me from Him. I want to experience His unfailing love and eternal life.

My Prayer

Dear God, I need You. I am sorry for my sins and ask You to forgive me. I believe that Jesus died for my sins. I give You my life and receive Jesus as my Saviour and Lord. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Thank You for hearing me and helping me to follow Jesus. In His name, Amen.



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DISCOVER

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

6

A Second Chance at Life





COMMENTS LIKE THESE from our students really make our day:

"One of the study guides mentions loneliness. I sure know what that feels like since I have burned my bridges with my family and friends. This is because of all the bad things I was involved in. I was encouraged by what you sent me. It always gives me a spark of hope to know that Jesus Christ is there next to me and walking with me in everything I do. Jesus truly is my Best Friend."

"I've been a follower of Jesus for a while now. He has healed my broken heart, forgiven me of my sins, and is my Best Friend. I can't wait to be with Him in heaven, spending eternity worshipping. Thank you for making the Word of God easier to understand."

These individuals have found the only way to a second chance at life—Jesus! They’ve made the all-important discovery that, while it is a terrible experience to be lost, it is a fantastic experience to find salvation. What is the only solution for someone trapped in sin?

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

The gospel is a saving power for sinful people who believe fully in Jesus and accept Him into their lives.

The individuals who wrote the above comments accepted Christ by placing their trust in Him and giving Him their allegiance. The power of God and the power of the gospel transformed their lives, and they now enjoy an ever-growing friendship with Jesus.

1 | What It Means to Be Lost

Just as there are two kinds of life—spiritual and physical—so there are two kinds of death—spiritual and physical. It’s possible for a person to be physically alive—walking around town, doing business, having what some call a good time—and still be dead—that is, spiritually dead.

“You . . . were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1, 2).

Satan leads a spiritually dead person down a descending spiral of sin and disobedience. However, the wonderful truth of the gospel is that God loves “doomed” people. He loves them even

while they are falling away from Him, dead in sin, and offers them a full and free deliverance from their predicament.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . that . . . He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 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 2:4-9).

God loved us when there was nothing lovable about us. His grace created in us a spiritual resurrection to a new life in Christ. We can’t change ourselves, but God can. He gives us a second chance at life.

2 | From What Do We Need to Be Saved?

In order to grasp the salvation that Christ offers, it’s important to clearly understand our need.

A. We Need to Be Saved From Sin

How many have sinned?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

Most of us do not live up to what we know is right. Sometimes we hurt each other emotionally. Sometimes we “forget” about a certain source of income at tax time. Sometimes we gossip, lie, or cheat on our spouse. “All have sinned,” and that’s the human condition.

How does the Bible define sin?

“All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17).

We need to be rescued from all kinds of unhealthy habits such as lying, abusive anger, lust, and bitterness, to name a few. The Bible defines wrongdoing (“unrighteousness”) as breaking God’s moral law that He summarised in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20.

The Bible says, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). So we need to be saved from sin—violating God’s commandments.

B. We Need to Be Saved From a Broken Relationship With God

“The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

Unforgiven sin severs our relationship with God, the Life-giver. There can be no love relationship without faith and trust in God. That is why Jesus spoke of sin as unbelief (John 16:9). Christ came to restore trust in God, which Satan had undermined.

C. We Need to Be Saved From Eternal Death, the Penalty for Sin

“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

D. We Need to Be Saved From a Sinful, Unhappy Life in a Sinful World

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

For the sinner, life is a dead-end street because a life of sin leaves an empty, aching void in his or her existence. God’s plan is to rescue us from a world full of sin and its results—heartache, loneliness, war, sickness, evil, and death.

3 | **Who Can Save Us?**

A. Jesus Can Deliver Us From Sin

“You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).


A Hindu told a Christian friend, “I find many things in Hinduism not found in Christianity, but there is one thing Christianity has that Hinduism does not have—a Saviour.” Christianity is the only world religion that offers people a Saviour.

B. Jesus Can Save Us From Our Broken Relationship With God

God uses some of the close personal connections we have with one another—friendship, family, and marriage—as illustrations of the relationship we can have with Him.

To the church in the town of Ephesus, the apostle Paul wrote:

“At that time you were without Christ . . . having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:12, 13).



**We need to be rescued
from sin and its results:
heartache, sickness,
war, and death**

When we commit ourselves to Christ, a relationship begins, followed by a lifetime of serving Him. Jesus is the perfect Friend; He loves to bring out the best in us. “By the blood of Christ,” our past life of sin is erased, and day by day, He gives us His acceptance, His power over sin, and His perfect life. Our love for Him, in turn, produces in us a desire to live in a way that pleases Him. And how can we know what pleases our Saviour? Jesus says:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

The Bible, God’s Word, tells us how to live for Him. And the Holy Spirit will help us understand the Bible and live in harmony with its teachings.

C. Jesus Can Save Us From Eternal Death, the Penalty for Sin

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

We are spiritual lawbreakers, sentenced to die. The penalty for our sins is eternal death, but Jesus can save us from eternal death

and give us eternal life. He loved us so much that He died for us in order to pay the penalty for our sins.

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Because of His unfailing love, Jesus “died for us.” By accepting death in our place, He provided a pardon for each of us. He experienced the horrors of complete separation from God so we wouldn’t have to. Because He died for us and suffered the full results of sin, God can now forgive and accept sinners without trivializing sin.

D. Jesus Can Save Us From a Sinful, Unhappy Life

God not only provides forgiveness for our sins, but He also offers us healing and restoration. God promises to save us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We can’t save ourselves from sin or change our nature on our own any more than a lion can decide to become a lamb (Romans 7:18). Sin is simply stronger than our willpower. However, Christ is able to cause us “to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). He works to replace our destructive habits with His righteous qualities—love, peace, joy, kindness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). Christ lives His life through us. He loves to take on the most hopeless cases.

Harold Hughes had given up hope of ever changing. He had tried desperately to stop drinking many times. He knew only too well that his battle with the bottle had put his wife and two daughters through 10 years of hell. And so he stepped into his bathtub one cold morning and pointed a shotgun muzzle into his mouth. Before

pulling the trigger, he decided he'd better explain things to God. That prayer turned into a long, sobbing appeal for help.

God came through. Harold Hughes made a commitment to Christ and found the spiritual strength to persevere. He quit drinking for good, became a loving, dependable husband and father, and went on to earn a seat in the U.S. Senate. Senator Hughes, who passed away in 1996, is remembered as one of the pioneering leaders in creating legislation for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse. Today, the Senator Harold Hughes Memorial Award is given annually to someone in the field of alcohol and drug rehabilitation.

E. Jesus Can Save Us From a Sinful World

The next four *Discover* Guides will provide a full explanation of how Jesus can rescue us from our sinful world.

4 | Finding Salvation and Growing as a Christian— Three Simple Steps

STEP 1: Ask Christ to Deal With the Sin in Your Life

What is *our* part in getting rid of our sinful life?

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

What leads a person to repent?

“Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).

My son,
I would have
forgiven you
long ago
if you had
only asked



"I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance" (2 Corinthians 7:9).

Repentance is simply being sorry for our sins and then turning away from them—making a break from old habits, practices, and attitudes. It's not sorrow for fear of impending punishment; it's a response to "the goodness of God" that led Jesus to die in our place for our sinfulness. We reject sin because it hurts God—and ultimately us.

What else is part of repentance?

"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

In addition to acknowledging and getting rid of the old life of sin, what else is necessary for the repentant sinner?

"If the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without

committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die" (Ezekiel 33:15).

Real repentance means not only turning away from sin, but, as far as possible, making past wrongs right.

What is God's part in getting rid of our old life of sin?

"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).

"Him [Jesus Christ] God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

The ability to repent is really a *gift* to us from God (Acts 5:31). Only He can move us to genuine repentance. And when we do respond, a loving Saviour forgives our sins. The Bible describes it as taking our sins and throwing them "into the depths of the sea," (Micah 7:19) cleansing us from all unrighteousness. There is no sin so terrible that our Saviour who died on the cross can't forgive. A person who trusts in Jesus needs only to ask Him.

It's a sobering fact that our sins helped drive those nails through Christ's hands and feet. In a real sense, we helped crucify the Saviour, but always remember that Jesus endured the cross "for the joy that was set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2). He willingly paid the ultimate price for our ultimate redemption. And He is more eager than we can imagine for us to accept His gift of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Word reached a young runaway that his mother was dying. The news filled him with remorse over their broken relationship. Hurrying home, he rushed into the room and threw himself on his mother's bed. In a flood of tears, he begged her to forgive him.

She drew him close and whispered, "Son, I would have forgiven you long ago if you'd only asked."

If you have drifted away from God, or have not yet come to know Him, please think about how eager your Heavenly Father is to welcome you home. He demonstrated His forgiving love on a cross on the hill called Golgotha. More than anything, He wants for you to accept His offer of pardon and grace. He loves you. He died for you. He is always willing to forgive you.

So respond to His gracious invitation to repent. Confess your sins. Believe that God forgives you, and He will. Don't look to your emotions for reassurance. Trust in the clear promises of Scripture.

STEP 2: Receive a New Life From Jesus

Your part in receiving a new life from Jesus is to believe that Jesus has really saved you. Accept without question the fact that He has forgiven and cleansed you, taken away your old life of sin, and given you an entirely new and changed life.

"As many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right [the power, authority, privilege] to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

As a child of God, you have "the right" to receive a new life from Jesus. As we have said, you can't achieve it on your own—it's a gift from your Heavenly Father.

Jesus gives this absolute promise so that all of our insecurities and doubts will be removed. However, if you do struggle with doubt, remember the man who, in the middle of an overwhelming crisis, called out to Jesus: "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). Focus whatever trust you can muster on God's promises. It's not how much faith you have that counts; it's simply whether or not you exercise it.

What is *God's part* in giving us a new life?

"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).

According to Jesus, a repentant, believing sinner is actually born into a new life. The change is as dramatic as the birth of a baby, and it is a miracle that only God can perform.

What inner change takes place in a person who acquires a new life from Jesus?

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Jesus transforms our heart—our feelings and behavior—and dwells “in you” (Colossians 1:27). This new life is not just a nice, spiritual idea. It’s much more than positive thinking; it’s a hard, solid fact. The new birth is a resurrection from spiritual death to an entirely new existence (Ephesians 5:14). Harold Hughes is just one example of Christ’s ability to give people a wonderful second chance.

How We Receive a New Life From Christ

1. Believe in Him and receive Him as Saviour and Lord.
2. Establish a relationship with Him (it is vital to set aside time for Bible reading and prayer).
3. Allow Christ through the Holy Spirit to replace our bad habits with His good qualities.

STEP 3: Live for Jesus Every Day

The Christian life involves a daily turning away from selfishness as we spend time with Jesus, our Friend. We grow in this new life by strengthening our relationship with Jesus. This means spending quality time with Him—building honest and open communication. God has given us five divine aids for spiritual growth: (1) Bible study, (2) prayer, (3) meditation on Scripture, (4) fellowship with

other Christians, and (5) sharing our experience with others. (*Discover Guides 14 to 20* give practical suggestions on how to live a satisfying Christian life.)

Living in Christ means we have God's power in our life. Sometimes we may stumble, but if we do, we can claim Christ's forgiveness and keep going. We're headed in a direction toward Jesus, and we know that He remains a living presence in our hearts every step of the way (Hebrews 7:25; Jude 24). Jesus provides two things that are essential for healthy growth: a sense of security through His unconditional love, and the motivation to reach higher through His inspiring Word—the Bible.

5 | The Joy of the Second Chance

Harold Hughes received many honours during his distinguished career as a U.S. Senator, but the one that meant the most to him came shortly after his commitment to Christ. He was studying the Bible alone in his living room one evening when he felt a nudge at his elbow. He looked up and saw his two small daughters, standing quietly in their nightgowns. He stared at them for a moment; they

had changed so much, and he had missed so much during his devastating battle with alcohol.

Then Carol, the younger one, said, "Daddy, we've come to kiss you good night."

The father's eyes blurred. It had been so long since the children had sought his embrace. Now their beautiful clear eyes held no fear. Daddy had come home at last.

Continued on page 16



WordSearch

If you want to go deeper into this study topic, complete this section.

1. What did Jesus say was the reason He left heaven and came to live with us on earth as a man? (Luke 19:10)

2. How did Jesus describe the radical change that occurs in your life when you accept the salvation He offers? How necessary is this change if you are to be saved? (John 3:3-7)

3. Must you persuade a reluctant God to bless you and forgive your sins, or is He eager and willing to do so? (Matthew 7:7-11; Ezekiel 33:11)

4. What is God's ultimate goal for you in your relationship with Him? (Jeremiah 31:33, 34)

5. Will God ever give up on you? What assurance does He give concerning how long He will be with you and guide you? (Deuteronomy 31:6)



Jesus Christ truly does give people a second chance. He takes on the most hopeless cases and creates new beginnings—“the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

The Saviour longs for each one of us to come home at last. Have you accepted Christ’s loving invitation? Receiving God’s forgiveness and cleansing is as simple and profound as opening your arms for a child’s embrace.

If you have not yet trusted in Christ as your personal Saviour, you can do so now by praying this prayer:

“Father, I am sorry for my life of sin. Thank You for sending Your Son to this world to die in my place. Please forgive my sins and come into my life. Help me to follow You and Your plan for my life as revealed in the Bible. I ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

My Decision

- ☐ I choose to accept Jesus as my Saviour. I ask Him to forgive my sins and to come into my life. I choose to follow the Bible and live for Jesus by His strength and power.
- ☐ I thank God for offering me a second chance at life.



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