

Getting Connected:

Knowing God Personally

What does it take to begin a relationship with God? Wait for lightning to strike? Devote yourself to unselfish religious deeds? Become a better person so that God will accept you? NONE of these. God has made it very clear in the Bible how we can know Him.

Here are four principles to help you discover how you can begin a personal relationship with God:



>> Principle One: God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life. <<

God created you. Not only that, he loves you so much that he wants you to spend eternity with him. Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Jesus came so that each of us could know and understand God in a personal way. Jesus alone can bring meaning and purpose to life.

What keeps us from knowing God? ...

>> Principle Two: All of us are sinful and separated from God. Therefore we cannot know and experience God's love and plan for our life. <<

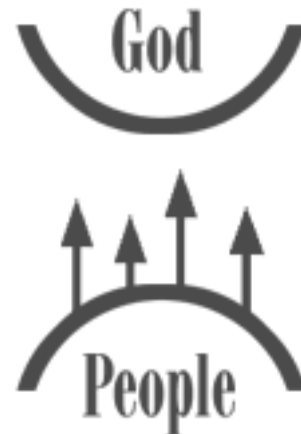
The fact is, we need Jesus. The Bible says, "...all fall short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23). Though God intended for us to have a relationship with him, we naturally want to do things our own way.

Deep down, our attitude may be one of active rebellion toward God or passive indifference, but it's all evidence of what the Bible calls sin. The Bible tells us that "All of us like sheep have gone astray; each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

The result of sin in our lives is death — spiritual separation from God (Romans 6:23). Although we may try to reach God through our own effort, we inevitably fail.

The diagram at right shows the great gap that exists between us and God. The arrows illustrate that we might try to reach God through our own efforts. We may try to do good things, or earn God's acceptance through a good life or a moral philosophy. But our good efforts are insufficient to cover up our sin.

How can we bridge this gulf?...



>> Principle Three: Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin. Through him we can know and experience God's love and plan for our life. <<

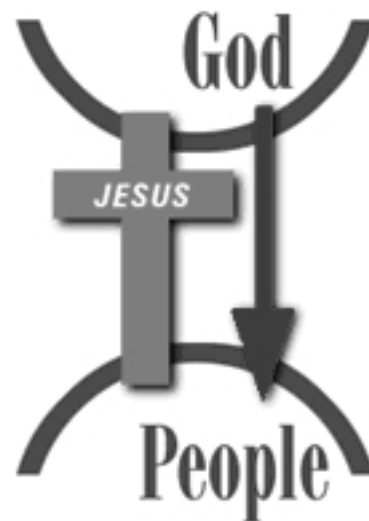
Jesus Christ is God's solution to the problem of human imperfection and evil. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, we don't have to be separated from God any longer. Jesus paid the price for our sin and in so doing, bridged the gap between us and God. "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that he might bring us to God" (1Peter 3:8).

Instead of trying harder to reach God, we simply need to accept Jesus and his sacrifice as the one way to God. "I am the way, the truth and the life," Jesus said. "No one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). He also said, "I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die like everyone else, will live again. They are given eternal life for believing in me and will never perish" (John 11:25-26).

But not only did Jesus die for our sin, he rose from the dead (1 Corinthians 15:3-6). When he did, he proved beyond doubt that he can rightfully promise eternal life — that he is the Son of God and the only means by which we can know God.

Yet just having knowledge about God's plans and purposes isn't enough. We need to consciously accept Jesus Christ as the payment for our sin and welcome him into our life.

It is not enough just to know these three truths...



>> Principle Four: We must individually accept Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our life. <<

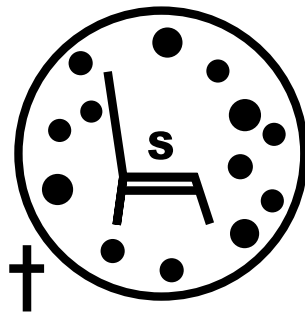
The Bible says, "But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12).

We accept Jesus by faith. The Bible says, "God saved you by his special favour when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

Accepting Jesus means believing that Jesus is the Son of God, who he claimed to be, then inviting him to guide and direct our lives and make us into new people (John 3:1-8). Jesus said, "I'm standing at the door and I'm knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20).

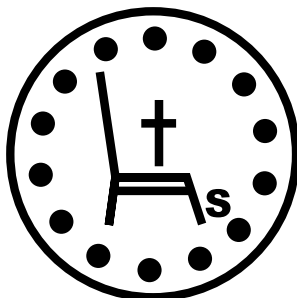
How will you respond to God's invitation? What will you do with the claims of Jesus Christ?

Consider these two circles:



Self-Directed Life

- S** Self is on the throne
- +** Jesus is outside the life
- Interests are directed by self, often resulting in frustration



Christ-Directed Life

- +** Jesus is in the life and on the throne
- S** Self is yielding to Jesus
- Interests are directed by Jesus, resulting in harmony with God

Which circle best represents your life?
Which circle would you like to have represent your life?

Begin a relationship with Jesus...

You can receive Christ right now. Remember that Jesus says, "I'm standing at the door and I'm knocking. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). Would you like to respond to his invitation? Here's how.

The precise words you use to commit yourself to God are not important. He knows the intentions of your heart. If you are unsure of what to pray, this might help you put it into words:

"Jesus, I want to know you. I want you to come into my life. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sin so that I could be fully accepted by you. Only you can give me the power to change and become the person you created me to be. Thank you for forgiving me and giving me eternal life with God. I give my life to you. Please do with it as you wish. Amen."

If you sincerely asked Jesus into your life just now, then he has come into your life as he promised. You have begun a personal relationship with God.

What follows is a lifelong journey of change and growth as you get to know God better through Bible reading, prayer and interaction with other Christians.

I just asked Jesus into my life. Some helpful information follows...

I may want to ask Jesus into my life, but I have a question I would like answered first. Please email us with your questions through EveryStudent.com

>> Growing in your relationship with God <<

Spiritual growth results from trusting Jesus Christ. "The righteous one shall live by faith" (Galatians 3:11). A life of faith will enable you to trust God increasingly with every detail of your life, and to practice the following:

- Go to God in prayer daily (John 15:7).
- Read God's Word, the Bible, daily (Acts 17:11) — begin with "John."
- Obey God moment by moment (John 14:21).
- Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19, John 15:8).
- Trust God for every detail of your life (Proverbs 3:5-6, 1Peter 5:7).
- Holy Spirit — Allow Him to control and empower your daily life and witness (Galatians 5:16-17; Acts 1:8).