

STARTING OUT AS A CHRISTIAN · STUDY NOTES

Study 1: Becoming a Christian

For personal study or groups

Your name

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How to use these notes. Watch each part's video on biblehelp.net, or read the text below. Look up each passage in your own Bible and write the answer on the lines. The verses are printed at the back if you need them. At the end there are questions to think about on your own or to discuss in a group.

PART 1

Our problem and God's solution

The most important question

Are you a Christian? This is the most important question you will ever have to answer. But many people are confused by it, because they don't really know what the Christian message is. This study makes that message clear, and shows how you can become a real Christian. Here is an outline of the Christian message.

1. God's plan

God wants us to have the best He has to offer! In the beginning He made a good world to live in.

1 **Look up Genesis 1:31**

What did God see when He looked at all that He had made?

He still wants us to have the best He has for us. See what Jesus said:

2 **Look up John 10:10**

Why did Jesus say He had come?

2. Our problem

To enjoy the full life God wants us to have, we must be in a right relationship with Him and live as He intends. Here lies the problem: our relationship with God is in ruins. Why? God is the

rightful Ruler of the world, but we have all rebelled against His rule. This is what the Bible means by sin. We have lived our way instead of God's way.

3 **Look up Romans 3:23**

How many have sinned?

The consequences are devastating. We are cut off from God.

4 **Look up Isaiah 59:2**

What have our sins done between us and God?

We now live under God's judgement, and the result is death – eternal death.

5 **Look up Romans 6:23**

What are the wages of sin, and what is the gift of God?

People try to find God in many different ways, but they are powerless to put their relationship with Him right. We cannot undo our rebellion, and we cannot live as we should. We simply cannot stop sinning!

3. God's solution

Although we cannot make our own way back to God, He has not given up on us. God's love for us is so great that He has found a way to mend our broken relationship – at great cost to Himself. God's justice is perfect, so He cannot pretend that our rebellion never happened; that would not be true. Instead, God dealt with our rebellion as justice demanded, but without destroying us. He sent His Son into the world to die in the place of all who believe, and to come back to life once the penalty was paid.

6 **Look up 1 Corinthians 15:3–4**

For what did Christ die, and what happened on the third day?

See also: 1 Peter 2:24.

Forgiveness and new life are available through Jesus Christ, and all who become Christ's followers will receive the Holy Spirit.

7 **Look up Acts 2:38**

What gift does Peter say they will receive?

See also: Acts 16:31.

Christ has paid the debt we owed, and now the way to God is open. God will forgive everyone who is willing to return to Him.

PART 2

Your response

4. Our response

We face a choice. If we carry on rebelling against God, He will condemn us. God will not put up with our rebellion for ever.

8 **Look up 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9**

What will happen to those who do not obey the gospel?

But if we want to make a new start – if we repent and live for God from now on – then He and His holy angels will welcome us with joy.

9 **Look up Luke 15:10**

What happens in heaven when one sinner repents?

Christ has paid the believer's penalty on the cross, so those who repent can now be treated as if they had never rebelled.

10 **Look up Romans 8:1**

For whom is there now no condemnation?

5. Steps in repentance

Repentance is not optional: God commands it (Acts 3:19).

Admit that you are a sinner who is justly condemned by God and unable to save yourself.

11 **Look up 1 John 1:8**

What are we doing if we say we have no sin?

Confess your sins to God.

12 **Look up 1 John 1:9**

What does God do for those who confess their sins?

Turn away from all known sin, and return to God (compare the story of the lost son, Luke 15:11–32).

13 **Look up John 8:11**

What did Jesus tell the woman to do?

6. Steps in faith

Faith is also a command (Acts 16:31).

Acknowledge that only Christ can save you.

14 **Look up Acts 4:12**

Is there any other name by which we can be saved?

Trust Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Ask Him, as your Saviour, to rescue you from God's judgement through His death on the cross, and to forgive your sin.

15 **Look up Acts 16:31**

What must a person do to be saved?

7. Finally

You should give up your rebellion, and accept Christ as the rightful Ruler of your life.

16 **Look up Mark 8:34**

What three things must anyone do who wants to come after Jesus?

Do this, and you will be forgiven and brought back into friendship with God.

17 **Look up Romans 5:1**

What do we have with God, now that we have been justified through faith?

A new-born baby

You will also receive the Holy Spirit into your life, just as God promised (Acts 2:38). But that doesn't mean you will become perfect overnight! A new Christian is like a new-born baby: he needs to grow. God will help you, but you will have to make every effort to obey His word. You will only be made perfect when God takes you to heaven. Later studies look at Christian growth in more detail.

THINK IT THROUGH

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. In your own words, what is the "problem" between us and God?

2. What is the difference between knowing about Christ and trusting Him as your Lord and Saviour?

3. Have you taken the steps of repentance and faith described in this study? If not, what is holding you back?

HIDE IT IN YOUR HEART

Memory verse for study 1

Learn this verse by heart this week. Cut out the card and keep it where you will see it.

STARTING OUT AS A CHRISTIAN · STUDY 1 · MEMORY VERSE

“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

Berean Standard Bible · biblehelp.net

“I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You.” (Psalm 119:11, BSB)

AT THE BACK

The Bible passages (BSB)

1 **Genesis 1:31** *And God looked upon all that He had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*

2 **John 10:10** *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I have come that they may have life, and have it in all its fullness.*

3 **Romans 3:23** *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

4 **Isaiah 59:2** *But your iniquities have built barriers between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear.*

5 **Romans 6:23** *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

6 **1 Corinthians 15:3–4** *3For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,*

7 **Acts 2:38** *Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*

8 **2 Thessalonians 1:8–9** *8in blazing fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9They will suffer the penalty of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and the glory of His might,*

9 **Luke 15:10** *In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of God's angels over one sinner who repents."*

10 **Romans 8:1** *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

11 **1 John 1:8** *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*

12 **1 John 1:9** *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

13 **John 8:11** *"No one, Lord," she answered. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Now go and sin no more."*

14 **Acts 4:12** *Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."*

15 **Acts 16:31** *They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household."*

16 **Mark 8:34** *Then Jesus called the crowd to Him along with His disciples, and He told them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.*

17 **Romans 5:1** *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,*

Scripture: Berean Standard Bible (BSB), public domain. Quotations keep its American spelling. Like many English Bibles, it often says ‘man’, ‘he’ or ‘brothers’ where it means people in general, men and women alike.

FOR GROUP LEADERS

Study 1: Becoming a Christian

> **Memory verse:** “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). Say it together at the end, and ask who can say it without looking.

Aims

- Set out the Christian message clearly: God's plan, our problem, God's solution, our response.
- Explain repentance (admit, confess, turn) and faith (only Christ can save; trust Him as Lord and Saviour).
- Encourage each person to respond, and to expect to grow.

Suggested timing (about 60 minutes)

- **5 min** Welcome and short prayer.
- **20 min** Part 1 video (5 min); John 10:10, Romans 3:23, 6:23 and 1 Corinthians 15:3–4.
- **25 min** Part 2 video (6 min); Luke 15:10, 1 John 1:9, Acts 4:12, Mark 8:34 and the discussion questions.
- **10 min** Summary and closing prayer.

Tips

- Some in the group may already be Christians, others may not. Let the outline speak for itself; don't assume.
- Stress that sin is rebellion against God's rule, not just "mistakes".
- Repentance is more than feeling sorry: it means admitting, confessing and turning from sin.
- Make yourself available afterwards for anyone who wants to talk or pray.

Answers to watch for

- **Genesis 1:31:** God looked upon all that He had made, and indeed, it was very good.
- **John 10:10:** Jesus came that we may have life, and have it in all its fullness.
- **Romans 3:23:** all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
- **Isaiah 59:2:** our iniquities have separated us from God.
- **Romans 6:23:** the wages of sin is death; the gift of God is eternal life in Christ.
- **1 Corinthians 15:3–4:** Christ died for our sins, was buried and was raised on the third day.
- **Acts 2:38:** repent and be baptised; forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
- **2 Thessalonians 1:8–9:** everlasting destruction for those who do not obey the gospel.
- **Luke 15:10:** rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents.
- **Romans 8:1:** no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- **1 John 1:8–9:** if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us.
- **John 8:11:** "Now go and sin no more."
- **Acts 4:12:** salvation exists in no one else.
- **Acts 16:31:** "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved."
- **Mark 8:34:** deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Christ.
- **Romans 5:1:** justified through faith, we have peace with God.