

—• **What Next?**

God intends us to grow in relationship with Him and to see our lives totally changed.¹⁴ We get to know Him better in many ways, including through the Bible, prayer and learning to hear His voice when He talks to us. He is always available to us to help and empower us, no matter what our life circumstances.¹⁵

As we walk this journey with God, we need fellow-travelers; we cannot go it alone. Other believers join us on the journey to help and to encourage. Be sure to find a local church where you can learn to live out your new life.

Scripture References

1. John 17:3; John 10:10
2. Psalm 139:13-18
3. 1 John 5:11-12
4. Genesis 6:5-6
5. John 3:16-21; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21
6. Matthew 7:15-23; Mark 7:20-23; Proverbs 4:23
7. John 8:34; Romans 6:16-23
8. Ephesians 2:4-10
9. Luke 13:1-5; Ezekiel 18:29-32
10. Luke 24:46
11. Luke 18:9-14; Proverbs 28:13
12. Galatians 2:20; Romans 14:7-9; 2 Corinthians 5:14-17
13. Luke 15
14. Philippians 1:6, 2:12-13
15. Romans 8:28; Ephesians 1:15-21, 3:14-21

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What Matters

**Simple Truths
to Life's Basic
Questions**

What Matters

God's Dream

God created us for a wonderful reason – to live in a close, personal, loving relationship with Him, one that is to last forever.¹ I believe that at the very moment of *your* conception, God, in His excitement over you, called the angels together to celebrate His dreams and purposes for *you*. Incredibly, since that day, God's heart and purposes toward *you* have never changed, no matter what you have thought or done.²

God never created us to live apart from Him.³ Tragically, *we* reject God; we choose to go our own way. The Bible calls this decision *sin*.

Sin has tragic consequences. We have all experienced its terrible effects. Yet no one has suffered over sin more than God. He has seen and *experienced* all the sin and wickedness of *every* person for as long as there has been sin - every lie, every evil thought, every wicked motive, every rape, every murder, every hurtful act - and it **breaks His heart**.⁴

Despite it all, He hasn't given up on us! God, in Jesus, came to earth, suffered, died, and then was resurrected to life *for us*. He made possible our forgiveness and the fullness of life for which He created us.⁵

The Heart of The Problem

At the center of our life is what the Bible calls the *heart*. It is the *source* of our motives, attitudes, actions and lifestyle.⁶

Imagine there is a throne in your heart. Whoever "sits" on that throne rules over your life. Now, *you* and I actually *choose* who rules there and that decision determines everything else about us. If honest, we will admit we have chosen to be the "god" or ruler of our life. We live supremely for our own happiness and pleasure, caring little how it impacts or hurts those around us. We might never admit it, but we live as though others exist to serve us, meet our needs, make us happy - it's all about ME!

All the while, we live under the illusion that we are in control. Of course, sooner or later we learn that running our own life hasn't exactly turned out like we planned. We have bad habits, perhaps even addictions, which control us.⁷ We say and do things that hurt others. We live with guilt. Inside is a gnawing sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction that no thing or relationship seems to fill. In the end, we discover how hard it is to be our own god!

The Really Good News

Yet, this can all change. God's mercy is great! His love and sacrifice on the cross are greater than all our sin, selfishness and failure.⁸ His love alone has the power to change and transform us. So what should we do?

Jesus made it clear that unless we **repent**, we will perish.⁹ Without repentance, we cannot be forgiven¹⁰ and we are not Christians. There is much confusion about repentance. Repentance is not attending church, giving money, being a nice person or "turning over a new leaf." It is far more than saying a "sinner's prayer," raising your hand in church or going forward at a crusade. It is not saying your sorry or even asking for forgiveness. It is not "making Jesus your Savoir." You can do all these and *not* repent.

Many think they are Christians, but are not yet right with God because they have never truly repented. Consequently, they have yet to experience real life change and freedom.

So then what is *repentance*? You must be brutally honest about the *true* condition of your heart and life.¹¹ Repentance is a heart change and a life decision:

Repentance is a radical change of heart where I surrender the throne of my life to the rightful ruler, Jesus, and give Him total, complete, and absolute control.

Turning my life over to Jesus begins a new life of *faith*. I trust Him completely and with everything; I no longer claim a "right" to my life. I now live in a close personal relationship with Him and experience the joy and peace that comes with knowing Him.¹² I am transformed!

Settle the Matter!

God throws a party in heaven whenever someone truly repents.¹³ Your return to the Father becomes His opportunity to fulfill all the dreams and purposes that have been in His heart for you from the beginning.

True repentance settles *forever* the question of who sits on your heart's throne! Will you settle the matter, now and forever?

"Lord Jesus, I surrender up the throne of my life to you. From now on, I choose Your will and not my own. I am Your servant!"

Name and Date