

## Lesson 4: The Way to Eternal Life

### Intro

In the Bible we see that God desires a deep relationship with us from now through eternity. Contrary to some people's opinions, He cares about the decisions we make. He is concerned about our desire to live with or without Him or if we choose eternal death over eternal life. God pursues each person and tries to persuade them to choose eternal life. The main theme of the Bible is God's pursuit of man and desire for all to be saved. What good does it do us to know the Bible, be members of a church, and be involved in religious activities our whole life if in the end we miss out on the ultimate goal: eternal life with God?!



John 6:40

What does Jesus say about His Father's will for our lives?

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### Life with Jesus begins today!

God placed in every person's heart the desire for eternity so that He could fulfill it (Ecclesiastes 3:11). The purpose of our lives is to discover this truth. Don't be fooled into thinking that this means you cannot attain it until you are in heaven for eternity. Life with Jesus begins now. The Bible says multiple times that eternal life is something you can begin to experience today. For example, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life" (John 3:36). Right now, in this life Jesus is offering to us real fulfillment through a real relationship with Him. He said, "I have come so that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10).

The question is: How do we find this life with Jesus that begins today and reaches into eternity? We already read the answer in the text mentioned above. Everyone, who believes in Jesus, will have eternal life. But what is this saving faith that leads us to eternal life?



John and Paul give us the answer we are looking for. According to them, what is the prerequisite for eternal life?

John 17:3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 3:10-11: \_\_\_\_\_  
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The path to eternal life is knowing Jesus Christ. We are not talking about knowing that He existed, when He lived, and what He did. Knowing Jesus means having a deep, personal relationship with Him. How then can we get to know Jesus? The Biblical way is actually quite simple. So simple that every child can understand it. The Bible describes five steps to eternal life. Let's discover what these steps are!

**1st Step**

**I accept that God loves me!**

The first step is to realize that God is a being who loves me. How do the following texts describe God's love for us? What is the outcome of God's love?



1 John 4:8-10 : \_\_\_\_\_

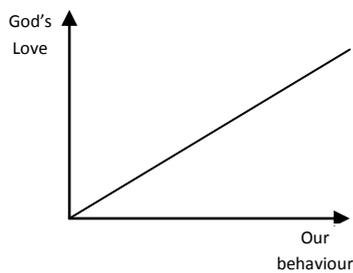
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Romans 5:6-8 : \_\_\_\_\_

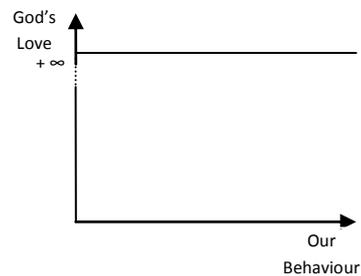
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God's love drove Him to action. He gave His Son so that we might be saved. God's love is unconditional. It was there from the beginning, even before we could attempt to show something in return. Many people believe that God loves us when we are good and His love fades when we are bad. According to these people, God's love is dependent on our behavior.

But that is a lie! God's love is not conditional or based on our behavior. God's love is unending and unchanging. Even when we fall so low, His love is beyond measure and words.



**FALSE!**



**TRUE!**



Have you personally accepted the truth that God unconditionally loves you even though He knows your weaknesses? Write your response to God below!

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**2nd Step**

**I confess that I am a sinner and that my sin separates me from God.**



In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve as relational beings in His image. They were also given free-will. Until they sinned, they enjoyed the benefits of a deep relationship with God. But when they chose to be independent from God and to live outside of His will, they lost that intimate relationship. The choice that they made is known in the Bible as “the first sin” and it had a major effect on their descendants’ relationship with God. Therefore today there is no difference between the deliberate turning away from or a passive indifference to God.

How does the Bible describe the state that we are in?

1 John 1:8-10 : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 3:22-23 : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

No person is excluded from this fact. We are all sinners! Not because of our sinful acts, but because of our sinful hearts. Sin is deeply ingrained in us. It is part of our nature just like the blood in our veins. We can’t wash it off nor can we take a medicine to cure it. The best upbringing and the strongest will are weak in comparison to its all pervasive power. On our own, we cannot change our hearts. We must admit before God that we are guilty! We are guilty toward ourselves, towards others, and above all before God.

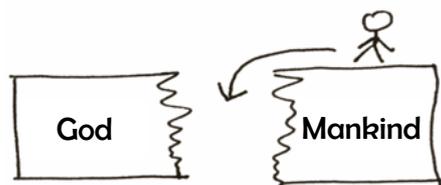


Sin has detrimental results! How does the Bible describe the result of Sin?

Isaiah 59:1-2 : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Romans 6:23 : \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Sin separates us from God! When we stand alone before God, we are guilty and deserving of death. Through our own strength we cannot bridge the gulf that was made through Sin. An honest or pious life is not sufficient either.



Many people believe that they really aren’t that bad and God must accept them the

way that they are. Whoever believes, and holds fast to this idea, cannot receive and experience the help that God wants to give them. Just like an alcoholic who wants to be free must first accept and admit that he/she is an alcoholic, we too must accept that we are sinners. We must understand and admit that without Christ we are lost.



**1 John 1:9**

It is also important that we confess the sins in our lives that God has specifically pointed out. According to John, what will God do when we confess our sins?

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How do you view yourself in regard to this 2nd step?

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**3rd Step**



**I personally accept that Jesus died because of my sins.**

What does the Bible say that Jesus accomplished through His death on the cross?

Isaiah 53:4-6,8,10-12: \_\_\_\_\_

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Our sin has not altered God's love. He does not leave us to our own demise, without hope. On the contrary, Jesus (God's Word) became man, lived among us, paid the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross, and by His resurrection became victorious over sin and its consequence: death. Through His death and resurrection a deep and personal relationship with God is possible. Jesus bridged the gap that was caused by sin as symbolized by the tearing of the curtain in the temple.





How many paths of salvation did God make for mankind?

John 14:6 : \_\_\_\_\_

Acts 4:12 : \_\_\_\_\_

There is only one way! Those in the world claim that there are many ways to be saved, but they are wrong. There is no other way except through Jesus Christ! He is the only bridge/path that God has given us.

How does Paul describe salvation?

Ephesians 2:8-9 : \_\_\_\_\_

Paul refers to salvation as a gift that we receive from God. We can either accept or refuse it. But we definitely cannot earn it through good works. Knowing that salvation is a free gift is not enough to save us. We must accept the gift.



Where do you stand in relation to Jesus' sacrifice for you?

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**4th Step:**

**I surrender my life to Jesus.**

This step works hand in hand with steps 2 and 3. If I have confessed every sin to Jesus but have not surrendered my life to Him, then I still live in Sin. How can I ever receive forgiveness? In short, when we ask Jesus to be the Lord of our lives. Simply knowing that Jesus died for our sins does not get us into Heaven. We are born "children of wrath" with a sinful nature (Ephesians 2:3). Only when we give our life completely to Christ can He change our hearts to the point that we feel perfectly at home in a community of sinless beings. Jesus did all that He could, but there is one thing He cannot do for us. He cannot make us chose Him as Lord of our lives. Eternal life hangs on this decision to make Him Lord of our life.



**1 John  
5:11-13**

How does John express this decision and the consequences?

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<b>The Natural Man</b>	Paul describes the natural man first. These people want nothing to do with God. The things of God are foolishness to them. Normally they do not go to church services. They are not really Christians even though their name may be listed as a church member somewhere. Their interests and goals are of a worldly nature. Visually, they are represented by the far left diagram above where everything revolves around them and Christ is outside of their life's sphere.
<b>The Spiritual Man</b>	The next description Paul makes is of the spiritual man who is filled with the Holy Spirit. According to the text he has "the mind of Christ" which means he/she has been born again through the Holy Spirit and received a new heart from Christ. Spiritual people fully trust Jesus. They are not sinless, but are prepared to give Jesus full control of every aspect of their life. They have a relationship with God and are guided in all things by His word. As John wrote, only these people can truly know Jesus and experience both joy and salvation. They are represented by the far right diagram above.
<b>The Carnal Man</b>	The third group that Paul describes is referred to as carnal man. They are represented in the middle diagram above. Jesus is important to these people, but they have not surrendered all of their life to Him. They are interested in spiritual things but they don't have, or have a distorted, relationship with Jesus Christ. They are plagued with fear and doubts. They may confess to be Christians, but they are harboring a known sin in their life that they have not yet confessed to Jesus. Consequently this act short-circuits their spiritual life.
<b>Jesus as a Hitch-hiker</b>	<p>Imagine life is like a road and Jesus is hitch-hiking. Some people would just ignore Him and keep on driving. They do not want Jesus in their car. They are the natural man.</p> <p>Then there are those who would gladly stop and invite Jesus into their car. They offer Jesus the passenger seat, but they prefer to sit behind the wheel and have total control over the car. They are the carnal man.</p> <p>What about the third group of people? They are the ones who not only stop to pick up Jesus, but immediately say to Him, "First of all Jesus, you are a much better driver than me. Second, you know the way better than I do. Third, I totally trust you. Would you please sit in the driver's seat?" They are the spiritual man who fully trust Jesus and give Him complete control over their lives.</p>
<b>Total Surrender</b>	<p>When we fully surrender to Christ it does not mean that we will be like robots or puppets on a string. On the contrary, we still have free will. Jesus will not make us do anything. We still have to choose and our total surrender to Jesus is not a onetime deal. It is a daily decision we have to make if we truly want Jesus to be the Lord of our lives and to live according to His will. He wants to transform us to the point that His will and our will are one and the same. Our only desire and delight will be to obey Him.</p> <p>In her books, Ellen White expresses wonderfully what total surrender to Christ means. Read through the following quotes and mark any of them that are important for you.</p>
<b>Quote #1</b>	"God desires to heal us, to set us free. But since this requires an entire transformation, a renewing of our whole nature, we must yield ourselves wholly to Him." ( <i>Steps to Christ, pg. 43</i> )
<b>Quote #2</b>	"He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains

for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God." (*Steps to Christ, pg. 43*)

**Quote #3** "In giving ourselves to God, we must necessarily give up all that would separate us from Him. Hence the Savior says, 'Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.' Luke 14:33. Whatever shall draw away the heart from God must be given up. Mammon is the idol of many. The love of money, the desire for wealth, is the golden chain that binds them to Satan. Reputation and worldly honor are worshiped by another class. The life of selfish ease and freedom from responsibility is the idols of others. But these slavish bands must be broken. We cannot be half the Lord's and half the world's. We are not God's children unless we are such entirely." (*Steps to Christ, pg. 43-44*)

**Quote #4** "But what do we give up, when we give all? A sin-polluted heart, for Jesus to purify, to cleanse by His own blood, and to save by His matchless love. And yet men think it hard to give up all! I am ashamed to hear it spoken of, ashamed to write it. God does not require us to give up anything that it is for our best interest to retain. In all that He does, He has the well-being of His children in view. Would that all who have not chosen Christ might realize that He has something vastly better to offer them than they are seeking for themselves. Man is doing the greatest injury and injustice to his own soul when he thinks and acts contrary to the will of God. No real joy can be found in the path forbidden by Him who knows what is best and who plans for the good of His creatures. The path of transgression is the path of misery and destruction." (*Steps to Christ, pg. 46*)

**Quote #5** "Many are inquiring, 'How am I to make the surrender of myself to God?' You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are weak in moral power, in slavery to doubt, and controlled by the habits of your life of sin. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, and your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him." (*Steps to Christ, pg. 47.*)

**Quote #6** "Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith." (*Steps to Christ, pg. 48*)

**Quote #7** "Consecrate yourself to God in the morning; make this your very first work. Let your prayer be, 'Take me, O Lord, as wholly Thine. I lay all my plans at Thy feet. Use me today in Thy service. Abide with me, and let all my work be wrought in Thee.' This is a daily matter. Each morning consecrate yourself to God for that day. Surrender all your plans to Him, to be carried out or given up as His providence shall indicate. Thus day by day you may be giving your life into the hands of God, and thus your life will

be molded more and more after the life of Christ." (*Steps to Christ*, pg. 70)

**Quote #8** "If we do not choose to give ourselves fully to God then we are in darkness. When we make any reserve we are leaving open a door through which Satan can enter to lead us astray by his temptations." (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pg. 92)

**Quote #9** "The battle which we have to fight—the greatest battle that was ever fought by man—is the surrender of self to the will of God, the yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love." (*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pg. 141)

**Quote #10** "Do you feel that it is too great a sacrifice to yield all to Christ? Ask yourself the question, 'What has Christ given for me?' The Son of God gave all—life and love and suffering—for our redemption. And can it be that we, the unworthy objects of so great love, will withhold our hearts from Him?" (*Steps to Christ*, pg. 45)



Think for a moment about the above mentioned quotes, the example of the hitchhiker, and the 3 diagrams. Then answer the following questions:

What is your relationship with Jesus Christ like? Which of the three diagrams best describes you?

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What place should Jesus have in your life?

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If you find yourself in the left or middle diagrams, then I would like to invite you to trust Jesus with all of your heart and accept the salvation He made available to you when He died on the cross. Jesus loves you and wants to fill your life with meaning and joy. Perhaps you have made this decision before but you feel that your relationship with Jesus has grown cold. You see habits and sins that you have held onto, that were more important than Jesus. You can come back to Jesus now, as you are, and renew your commitment to Him! What are you waiting for?



**Revelation  
3:20**

How can Jesus take first place in your life?

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**Jesus wants  
to be invited  
in.**

Jesus stands before your heart's door and wants to be invited in. He will not break down the door and force Himself in. How can we invite Jesus in? We can invite Jesus in by praying a simple prayer.

*My Lord Jesus Christ,*

*It has become clear to me that You died for me and rose again because you love me. Thank You that You did this just for me. I know that I cannot save myself and that I cannot earn eternal life. I want to trust You 100%. Please take full control of my life. Please free me from the power of the enemy. Give me the strength, day by day, to live with You. Thank You for giving to me the gift of eternal life and for allowing me to*

*to belong wholly to you. Amen*

Jesus will never turn away the person who sincerely prays this prayer. Jesus said: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." (John 6:37)

Please read this prayer through! Does it express the desire of your heart? If so, take time to pray this prayer right now. Whether you pray the text above or put it into your own words doesn't matter. What matters is that your prayer comes from the heart.

**5th Step:**



**1 John  
5:14-15**

**I thank Jesus that He has given me the gift of eternal life.**

God is faithful and keeps the promises He has made to us. What assurance is given to us when we confess our sins to Jesus, accept His sacrifice on our behalf, and give our lives completely to Him?

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Jesus keeps His word and gives you everything He promised. He...

- Takes control of your life
- Forgives the sins you have confessed
- Makes you a child of God.
- Fills you with the Holy Spirit.
- Transforms and strengthens you to live according to His commandments.
- Gives you the gift of eternal life.

You can fully and implicitly trust that Jesus has made all of these things true in your life!

