

Calvary Chapel Santa Cruz

How to Become a Christian ¹

The central theme of the Bible is God's revelation of Himself through His Son Jesus Christ. Central to this theme are the mercy and love of God. God's love is for you and for all people, and was supremely revealed when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came into the world as a human being, lived a sinless life, died on a Roman cross for our sins, was buried, and rose from the dead three days later. Because Christ died, your sins have been paid for. Because your sins have been paid for, they can be forgiven if you will turn to God and away from your life of sin, believe in Jesus' death for you, and receive Him into your life. Because Jesus Christ conquered death you can have eternal life. You can know for sure what will become of you after you die.

You have probably heard the story of God's love referred to as the "Gospel." The word Gospel simply means "Good News." The Gospel is the Good News that, because of what Christ did for us, we can be forgiven and can live forever.

But this gift of forgiveness and eternal life cannot be yours unless you willingly accept it. God requires an individual response from you. The following verses from the Bible show God's part and your part in this process:

God's Love Is Revealed in the Bible

"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." —John 3:16 (NKJV)

God loves you. He wants to reconcile you to Himself, bless your life, and make you all you are supposed to be for His purpose. He wants to give you a life which will last forever, even after you experience physical death.

We Are Sinful

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

You may have heard someone say, "I'm only human—nobody's perfect." This Bible verse says the same thing: We are all sinners. We all do things that we know are wrong. And that's why we feel estranged from God—because God is holy and good, and we are not.

Sin Has a Penalty

"For the wages of sin is death." —Romans 6:23 (NKJV)

Just as criminals must pay the penalty for their crimes, sinners must pay the penalty for their sins. If you continue to sin, you will pay the penalty of spiritual death. You will not only die physically, you will also be separated from our holy God for all eternity. The Bible teaches that those who choose to remain separated from God will spend eternity in a place called hell.

Christ Has Paid Our Penalty!

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

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ, the sinless Son of God, has paid the penalty for all your sins. You may think you have to lead a good life and do good deeds before God will love you. But the Bible says that Christ loved you enough to die for you, even when you were rebelling against Him.

Salvation Is a Free Gift

"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 2:8-9 (NKJV)

The word grace means "undeserved favor." It means God is offering you something you could never provide for yourself: forgiveness of sins and eternal life, God's gift to you is free. You do not have to work for a gift. All you have to do is joyfully receive it. Believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ died for you!

Christ Is at Your Heart's Door

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." —Revelation 3:20 (NKJV)

Jesus Christ wants to have a personal relationship with you. Picture, if you will, Jesus Christ standing at the door of your heart (the door of your emotions, intellect and will). Invite Him in; He is waiting for you to receive Him into your heart and life.

You Must Receive Him

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." —John 1:12 (NKJV)

When you receive Christ into your heart you become a child of God, and have the privilege of talking to Him in prayer at any time about anything. The Christian life is a personal relationship to God through Jesus Christ. And best of all, it is a relationship that will last for all eternity.

If you are making this commitment to Christ today, please let one of the pastors know about it. We would like to give you a Bible and some other materials to help you grow in your faith.

1. Adapted from "Your Christian Life" 1965, 1968, as "Aids to Christian Living," 1986 as "Practical Steps in Christian Living," 1995 as "Beginning Your Christian Life," 1997 as "Your Christian Life," Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.