



How To Begin A Walk With God

Everywhere we look we find a host of ideas, thoughts and theories about God. A myriad of views about Jesus compete for our attention at every turn. Yet in the midst of this avalanche of contradictory claims, Jesus Christ made a bold assertion: *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me”* (John 14:6). In a world filled with so many different roads of philosophies, religions and ways of thinking, is it possible for anyone to really know they’re on the right path? The answer to this question comes from an incredibly reliable source, the all-time bestselling book, and read by more people than any other book in human history – The Bible. The Bible alone clearly marks the way of truth and getting back on track with God.

1. Houston We Have A Problem! Our first step in getting back on track with God is rather personal. One look in the mirror of Scripture, and our human condition becomes painfully clear: *“There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.”* (Rom 3:10–12) We are all sinners. Now, that doesn’t mean we’ve committed every atrocity known to humankind. We’re not as *bad* as we can be, just as *bad off* as we can be. Sin taints all our thoughts, our motives, our words, and our actions.

Don’t believe it? Look around. Everything in this broken world bears the smudge marks of our sinful nature. Despite our best efforts to create a paradise on earth, crime statistics continue to soar, divorce rates keep climbing, and families keep crumbling. Something has gone terribly wrong in our society and in ourselves, something deadly. Contrary to how the world would repackage it, “me first” living doesn’t equal rugged individuality and freedom; it equals death. The Bible says, *“The wages of sin is death”* (Rom 6:23) —our emotional and physical death through sin’s destructiveness, and our spiritual death from God’s righteous judgment of our sin. This brings us to: God.

2. God Is The Goal When he observed the condition of the world and the people in it, the wise King Solomon concluded, *“Vanity of vanities, all is vanity”* (Eccl 12:8). The fact we know things are not as they should be, points us to a standard of goodness beyond ourselves. Our sense of injustice in life implies a perfect standard of justice. That standard is God Himself. And God’s standard of holiness contrasts starkly with our sinful condition. Scripture says that *“God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all”* (1 John 1:5). He is absolutely holy, which creates a problem for us. If He is so pure, how can we who are so impure relate to Him? We try being better people, trying to tip the scales in favor of our good deeds, or seek out wisdom for self-improvement. Throughout history, people have attempted to live up to God’s standard by keeping the Ten Commandments or by living out their own code of ethics. Worse yet, is when we use each other as the standard for perfection. Unfortunately, no one can come close to satisfying the demands of God’s law. Romans 3:20 says, *“By the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”* What we need is God. To have that same relationship as was seen in the Garden, when God would come in the cool of the day, and walk & talk with Adam and Eve. (Gen 3:8)

3. Our Solution Is Not Within Us So here we are, sinners by nature, sinners by choice, trying to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps and attain a relationship with our holy Creator. But every time we try, we fall flat on our faces. We can’t live a good enough life to make up for our sin, because God’s standard isn’t “good enough”—it’s *perfection*. And we can’t make amends for the offense our sin has created without dying for it. **So who can get us out of this mess?** If someone could live perfectly, honoring God’s law, and would bear sin’s death penalty for us—in our place—then we would be saved from our predicament. But is there such a person? Thankfully, yes! Meet your substitute—*Jesus Christ*. He is the One who took death’s place for you! *“God made him [Jesus Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God.”* (2 Cor 5:21)

4. What A Savior! God rescued us by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins (1 John 4:9–10). Jesus was fully human and fully divine (John 1:1, 14), a truth that ensures His understanding of our weaknesses, His power to forgive, and His ability to bridge the gap between God and us (Romans 5:6–11). In short, *“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.”* (Romans 3:24). Two words in this verse bear further explanation: *justified* and *redemption*.

Justification is God’s act of mercy, in which He declares believing sinners righteous, while they are still in their sinful state. Justification doesn’t mean that God *makes* us righteous so that we never sin again; rather, He *declares* us righteous—much like a judge pardons a guilty criminal. Because Jesus took our sin upon Himself and suffered our judgment on the cross, God forgives our debt and proclaims us *pardoned*.

Redemption is God’s act of paying the ransom price to release us from our bondage to sin. Held hostage by Satan, we were shackled by the iron chains of sin and death. Like a loving parent whose child has been kidnapped, God willingly paid the ransom for you. And what a price He paid! He gave His only Son to bear our sins—past, present, and future. Jesus’ death and resurrection broke our chains and set us free to become children of God (Galatians 4:4–7).

5. Where Do We Start? All of this points us to how God has provided a way to Himself through Jesus Christ. Since the price has been paid in full by God, we respond to His free gift of eternal life in total faith and confidence in Him to save us. We step into a relationship with God that He has prepared for us—not by doing good works or being a good person, but by coming to Him just as we are and accepting His justification and redemption by faith. The Bible says, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Eph 2:8–9)* We accept God’s gift of salvation simply by placing our faith in Christ alone for the forgiveness of our sins.

Shortly after Jesus ascended back to the Father, the Disciples had their first assignment – lead people into a relationship with God. The very first gospel sermon is found in Acts chapter 2, and of all people, Simon Peter is the one given the assignment to stand in front of a crowd of thousands of people and tell them about The Savior. Remember Simon Peter, the guy who couldn’t tell a servant girl that he was a follower of the man from Galilee. Well, he may not have done very well on his assignment around a campfire, but he doesn’t hesitate on his second chance. The historical record in Acts says that Peter told the crowd, *“This same Jesus, who you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ.” (Acts 2:36)* Remember, many people in that crowd were there the day they called for Pilate to “crucify him”. And what Peter said must have struck a nerve because the Bible records, *“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37)* And without hesitation, 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. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:38)* Two words in this verse bear further explanation: *repent* and *baptize*.

Repent is to change one’s mind. Peter is calling every person from that day to this, to get off the “me” train and get on the “God” train. To accept what God has done for us and to begin to build a new life built on Him, not us.

Baptize is exactly what Jesus told His disciples to do. (Matt 28:19) And Peter wasn’t about to change the orders he received from his Commander. Baptism is not some kind of religious ritual, it is a time of personal commitment to Jesus Christ. Peter explained that during our baptism, our sins are washed away and we receive *the gift* of the Holy Spirit – God living in us, empowering us to live a new life! Notice, the presence of the Holy Spirit within us is a gift. We don’t do anything to earn it, we receive it by faith in Jesus Christ. And on that day, 2000 years ago, the Bible says, 3000 people stepped forward to receive this gift, this new life, this forgiveness of sin, all through accepting Jesus Christ as their Savior and King!

Have you ever made a commitment to him? Would you like to get back on track with God by trusting in Christ as your Savior? If so, here’s a great place to begin, a simple prayer you can use to express your willingness to accept Christ:

Dear God,

I know that my sin has put a barrier between You and me. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die in my place. I trust in Jesus alone to forgive my sins, and as best I know how, I accept His gift of eternal life. I ask Jesus to be my personal Savior and the Lord of my life. Thank You. In Jesus’s name, amen.

If you’ve prayed this prayer or one like it, you have just started the most satisfying journey you will ever take. You may not know where to begin your walk with God or where to go to be baptized. We have a network of churches across the country and around the world, who would love to be a part of this life changing decision to have Christ in your life. And we have a small gift we’d like to give you to help you in about knowing God and His plan for you. Give us a call at **(760) 728 7649** or write us at:

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Of all the relationships you enjoy in this life, none can compare with a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave Himself for us. The Bible says, *“We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.” (Rom 6:5)* and *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.” (Eph 2:4)* That first step by faith onto the true path begins a personal and eternal relationship with God. We want to pray with you and for you, as you begin this great new adventure, give us a call or email us at info@fcc-fallbrook.org - we’d love to hear from you. God bless you in your walk with Him!