

God Is Reaching Out to You

Did you know there is someone who cares about you and wants to give you the very best? He does not enjoy seeing you sad or confused; He wants to fill you with joy and peace. Who could this person be?

It is God, who longs to be your loving heavenly Father!

He wants you to be His child. In the Bible He gives this promise to those who meet the conditions: "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:17–18). What could be better than to know God as your loving Father? It is wonderful to have such a relationship with Him!

Why is God not automatically your Father and you not automatically His child?

Sin has separated you from God. The first couple, Adam and Eve, were created innocent. But they disobeyed God, and disobedience is sin. You were born as an innocent baby. When innocent babies die, they automatically go home to be with their heavenly Father. But as you grew up, you could no longer be God's innocent child because you chose to sin. The Bible says, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you" (Isaiah 59:2). You became accountable to God for your actions, and you sinned—we all did. The Bible says, "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10, 23).

Your sin condemned you; your life lacked purpose and peace, and you were unhappy. The Bible says, "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). You wanted life, but you faced death!

Does this description fit you even now?

God has the answer to your problem.

Your heavenly Father loves you so much He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer and die on the cross for you. His shed blood is the only sacrifice that can possibly take care of your sins. You don't need to be doomed to eternal death for them! Jesus opened the way for you to once again be God's child.

The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). And now "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7).

Jesus is the only way to eternal life, peace and joy. He said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

You can have peace and forgiveness in your heavenly Father's mercy. It is His free gift to you. The Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8–9). There is nothing you can do to deserve God's gift, but He urges you to believe and receive it.

How can you receive this gift?

Acknowledge your sin and repent.

Repentance means to be sorry for your sins. “Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10). “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). If you are truly sorry for your sins you will confess them. This means that in your prayer to God you will actually name your sins. You may not remember every sin you have ever committed, but when you think of them you will confess them. “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). God will freely forgive your sins.

Open your heart’s door to Jesus.

If you long to be right with God, that is a sign that Jesus is knocking at the door of your heart. He will not force open the door; He patiently knocks. He says, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me” (Revelation 3:20). Jesus is the most important visitor you will ever receive. When you allow Him to come in, you will allow Him to take control of your heart—in fact, He will control your entire life. This might seem like a scary thing to do. However, those who have done this testify to the great blessing it is to have yielded control to Him. That is what it means to allow Jesus to be *Lord*. Those who receive Jesus as Lord are given the right to be God’s children. “As many as received him, to them gave he power [the right] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” (John 1:12).

When you receive Jesus into your heart, the Holy Spirit will abide with you. He will cleanse your heart and give you peace (1 Peter 1:2–3). Receiving Christ Jesus in sincere repentance will move you to change your direction of travel and your way of life. God will empower you to do what is right (John 16:13).

“If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24). Reject your fleshly desires and determine to use the power God gives you to follow Jesus. He will free you from the bondage of sin. Your heavenly Father will give you peace when He makes you His child. His Spirit will produce fruit in your life: “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance” (Galatians 5:22–23).

Your new relationship with God will make you want to take these important steps:

- 1. Read God’s Word daily.** The Bible is your heavenly Father’s way of speaking to you. It will teach you what He wants you to do. Begin with the Gospel of John; the Epistle of 1 John; Romans 12; and Colossians 3.
- 2. Pray every day.** Prayer is simply talking to God. Speak to your heavenly Father in the name of Jesus. This privilege is only for God’s children. What a blessing it is to talk to God often!
- 3. Make your wrongs right.** If you have stolen, lied, or offended someone, make restitution. Repay the theft, correct the lie, and apologize for the offense you have caused.
- 4. Be baptized.** After Peter preached a powerful sermon on the day of Pentecost, his listeners asked, “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter responded, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Baptism is a very important step in your Christian life, because it seals your covenant with God and gives your testimony to those around you.

5. Obey the New Testament. Live as Jesus taught. Chapters 5–7 of Matthew contain Jesus’ teachings on many subjects: the Beatitudes, personal relationships, purity, the permanence of marriage, nonresistance, loving others, giving, prayer, forgiving others, fasting, trusting God, and building on the good foundation. Jesus’ apostles wrote many more teachings. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice. . . . Be not conformed to this world: but be transformed” (Romans 12:1–2). A local Bible-believing and Bible-practicing brotherhood is very important for your spiritual growth and safety. You need the fellowship and support of other faithful Christians to help you be victorious over the temptations that Satan will bring you through your carnal nature. Taking up the cross of Jesus includes subjecting yourself to the body of Christ to live a life of faithfulness and fruitfulness. The Christian woman is to cover her head in submission to God’s order (1 Corinthians 11:1–16).

6. Be sure your life and speech are Christlike. “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children” (Ephesians 5:1). This will give you opportunities to share the good news of salvation and many other truths you discover in your Bible. Help others become God’s dear children. Pray for others. Jesus said to His disciples in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses . . .” (Acts 1:8). A witness is someone who tells about what he has experienced. “Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3–4).

7. Claim God’s promises. Here are a few: “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Matthew 7:7). “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33). “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13). “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” (John 14:1–3). “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels” (Revelation 3:5).

Yielding to God is the best decision you will ever make. Remember, He is your loving heavenly Father. He wants to be your intimate friend and supply all your needs. Reach out to Him; He is reaching out to help you be victorious over sin. Through Him you can “walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4) and be made more and more like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18). Life as His child is very fulfilling; it brings great joy and lasting peace. It is not only an emotional experience; it is a complete change of life. May the joy of the Lord be your strength! (Nehemiah 8:10).

When your life as God’s child on earth comes to a close, you will pass through the valley of death, and He will be with you. Or if you live until Jesus returns, you will be changed “in the twinkling of an eye” (1 Corinthians 15:52) and go to be with your heavenly Father for all eternity!

God is so good! Reach out and take His hand! He will lead you to His eternal home to live with Him forever!

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