

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

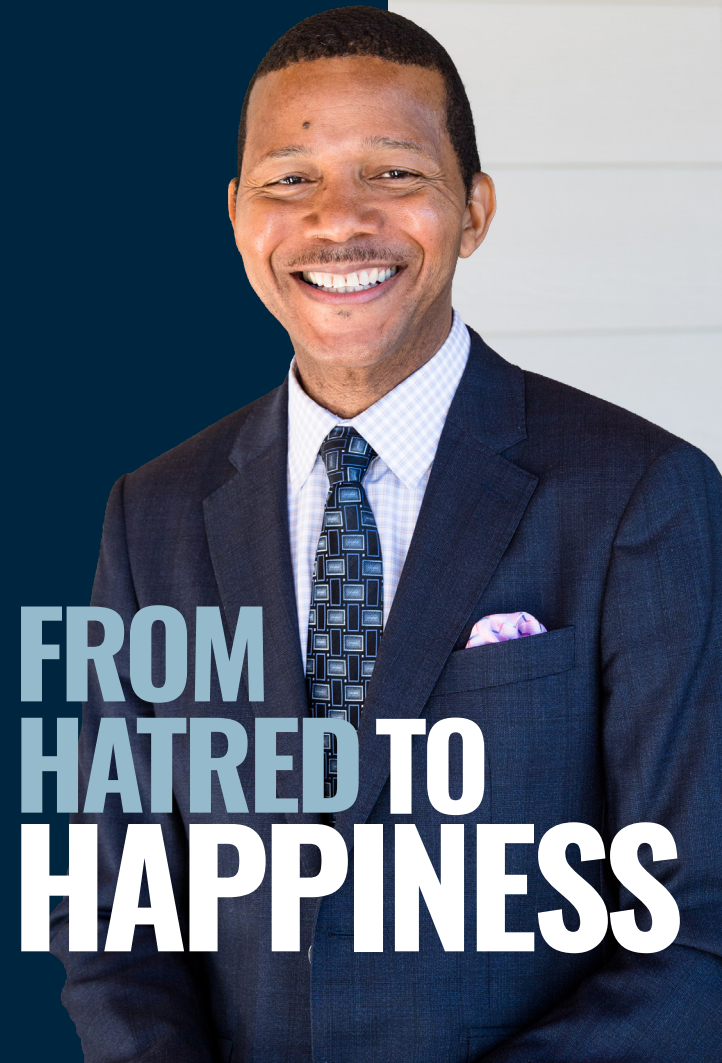
JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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FROM HATRED TO HAPPINESS

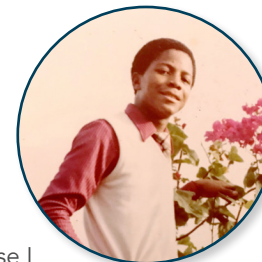


FROM HATRED TO HAPPINESS

Garfield was headed down a dangerous path.
Then he prayed a life-changing prayer.

By Garfield Charles

In my early years, I was known as a problem child. It seemed I was always getting into trouble. While still a boy, my grandmother told me, "If you don't change, you're not going to live long." Had God not intervened, I know she would have been right, because I have seen what happened to the people I ran with back then. Some of them were shot to death and some were stabbed, and others are now incarcerated. When we were younger, these people were better behaved than me, so I know where I was heading. If not dead, I would be in jail for murdering somebody because of the hatred and anger that was in my heart.



When I was two years old, my mother moved to the island of St. Thomas and left me in St. Kitts to live with my grandmother, in a home where some uncles, aunts, and cousins were also living. My aunts and uncles drank alcohol regularly, and I would see the bad effects of it. Once, one of my aunts was fighting with her boyfriend, and she threw an enamel cup that hit my sister in the forehead, knocking her down and causing her to bleed profusely. I don't know exactly what role those events played in shaping the person I was becoming, but it could not have been good.

Sometimes I felt I was mistreated because my parents were not around to take care of me. My aunts and uncles had their own children to look after, so I was left to my grandmother, but to me it seemed she loved the others more than she loved me. If my cousins and I were ever given anything, I would get the worst one. When the dog made a mess in the house, I had to clean it up. Many times I was punished for things I didn't do, and even if the adults later found out the truth, there was never an apology for having punished me wrongly. That treatment bred resentment in me, and I began to withdraw into myself.

During that time, I never knew my father, and although my mom loved her children, I was convinced she did not like me and did not want me around. I felt rejected on all sides, constantly hearing that I was no good. When your grandma says you are not worth anything, and even your mom seems to agree, who is left?

At a very young age I became filled with a spirit of anger, and started running with some of the older kids in the neighborhood who were a bad influence on me. On a number of occasions I nearly died. One time, I was hit by a speeding car and people actually thought I had died.

Somehow I always managed to scrape by. I got into fights a lot. I would fight anyone—even if the person was three times my size. My mother would later say that if I couldn’t fight someone hand-to-hand, I would get a weapon. Yet, I never thought I was the problem. To me, it was the other people who were the problem.

My grandma and aunts and uncles struggled to control me, but they didn’t know how. Before I was a teenager, I got in trouble for destroying a neighbor’s property, and my grandmother was told that a police report would be filed against me. At that point, she became exasperated and put me on a plane to go live with my mother in St. Thomas. But soon after I arrived, my mother had enough of me too, and she wanted to send me back to my grandmother. As a child, it was tough to know that no one wanted me. It only fed the anger and hatred I had inside.

At my mom’s home in St. Thomas, we had neighbors who attended church. My sister started going with them to Sunday school, and the church workers would try to get my brother and me to go along too. My mother was agreeable to it because she was raising us by herself and that was a way for her to have a break from us for a while, so at the age of twelve I started going to Sunday school.

A CHALLENGE FOR GOD

We had a good teacher who would explain the Bible stories and their meanings, and at the end of each class he would always ask if any of us wanted to pray to accept Jesus as our personal Savior. Less than a year after we started Sunday school, the Lord convicted me through one of the lessons. When we were invited to pray there was a spiritual battle going on in my heart. I had doubts about whether

the Gospel was true and if it could really work for me, but I wanted my life to change and decided to give my life to God. I did not know what would happen, and to me it almost felt like a challenge for God: “Let’s see what You can do with me!” I invited God into my life and He saved me that day.

Sometimes when I think about all God has done in my life, it brings tears to my eyes.

I had so much anger in my heart, but when the Lord forgave my sins and showed me His love, it allowed me to love. In time, God began sorting out what was wrong in my life and showing me the right way to live. One of the biggest changes I saw after receiving salvation was that I immediately loved being in church. I was still withdrawn and antisocial at that point, so as soon as church ended, I was gone! But the Lord dealt with me about that and helped me become functional in social situations, and soon I became friends with the people at church. Today, some even describe me as a gregarious person, but I know that is only because of what God has done. In so many ways, God made me into a completely different person than who I was before.

As I continued going to church, I became passionate about the Gospel, and at that time in St. Thomas there was a whole group of young people who felt the same way. Perhaps the fact that some of us hadn’t grown up in Christian homes helped us to cherish what we had found in the Lord—we did not take it for granted. We immersed ourselves in the Scriptures and found that the more we opened up to God, the more He drew us to Himself. As we began to understand

the Bible and what the Gospel is all about, we thought, *Wow! This is amazing!* We would memorize whole chapters and even books of the Bible because we loved it so much. The things of the world that had been appealing in the past were not appealing anymore.

In time, my mom also became a Christian and then moved to New York two years before I graduated, so I lived with my brothers and sisters for those years. There was no parental supervision, but once the Lord was in our lives, my mom didn’t have to worry about us anymore. I did very well in school and didn’t get into any trouble, which had been inescapable before. After graduating, I also moved to New York, and have lived there ever since.

Sometimes when I think about all God has done in my life, it brings tears to my eyes. But I remember a time when I couldn’t cry. At a very young age I had shut off my emotions, and that is so frightening. I definitely was capable of killing someone, but for the change God made. In fact, many of my old friends and loved ones have not turned their lives over to God, and I have seen the suffering it has caused. In the last decade, several young men in my family have died violently. I seemed destined for disaster too, but God redirected my path and has put joy in my heart.

If God could save me, I know that He can save anyone. I have not done anything special to deserve what God has done for me—I am no better than anyone else. Yet, God called me to be saved, and I responded to His call. I am thankful for the opportunity He has given me, and I want to serve Him the rest of my life.

■ **Garfield Charles is an Apostolic Faith minister in the United States.**

STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God’s help.
For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.
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)
Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God’s help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.
Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

BELIEVE

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.
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)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.
The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)