



Steps to a New Way of Life

Why am I here? Why do I feel as if something is missing in my life? Is there more to life than what I have found? What happens after I die?

At one time or another, all of us have asked these questions. Perhaps you are struggling with one of them now. Maybe at times you've thought you found the answers you needed . . .but that feeling didn't last. Every answer, every relationship, every experience, leaves you with a hole in your heart. Something is missing, but you don't know what it is or where to find it. Something is not right, you but don't know how to fix it. So you keep looking, keep trying this or that, keep searching.

The problem is not "what" is missing. The problem is "Who" you are missing! God created you, and He made a place deep inside of you that only He can fill—a God-sized spot just waiting for Him.

He is not a philosophy. He is not a concept. He is the living Creator of the universe, and He cares about you! He knows the instant of your birth, every part of your personality, each event that has taken place in your lifetime up to this moment. His Book, the Bible, says that He even knows the numbers of hairs on your head, and the thoughts and intents of your heart.

The emptiness in your heart, that feeling of something missing, is there because by nature you are separated from Him. That separation is caused by sin--the "something wrong" that is at the root of all selfishness, loneliness, and sad feelings. Here's why.

In the beginning of time, the first man and woman on earth, Adam and Eve, enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. They lived pure and blissful lives in a beautiful garden that supplied all of their needs. God's only rule was that they were not to eat of a certain tree: the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. However, God had made them with a free will, and they chose to eat of the forbidden tree. As a result, sin entered their hearts and separated them from God.

The descendants of Adam and Eve—every person born into this world—inherited their sinful nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, all are born with an inclination toward evil, which leads to sinful actions. Sin may be dramatic or subtle, but it always separates the sinner from God, and sin's penalty is death.

Thankfully, that is not the end of the story.

Because of God's great love for His creation, He sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to this world to live as a man and die on the Cross in the place of sinful man. Jesus paid the penalty for your sins. Because of His death, if you follow the steps God has laid out, you can gain the connection that was lost in the garden. Through a spiritual rebirth, the sense of separation and emptiness will vanish in a moment of time, and you will feel complete, loved, and at peace.

What should you do to experience this rebirth and find the connection that will fulfill the longing inside you?

Acknowledge your need. Admit that you have sinned and need God's help. The Bible tells us, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Your prayer can be as simple as the one recorded in Luke 18:13, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Confess and repent. Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you. God's Word promises, "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). It also says, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19).

Forsake the sins of your past. 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 in Jesus Christ. 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 Jesus Christ into your heart and life. You can be a child of God from today on if you reach out to Him with all of your heart, taking these steps in complete honesty and surrender to Him. God will let you know when you have been saved. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16).

When you feel that assurance that your sins have been forgiven and you are no longer separated from God, what should you do next?

Tell someone of your salvation. We would love to know, and you may connect with us. You will also want to tell your close associates.

Get a Bible. Begin by reading the Book of John in the New Testament. Contact us to receive a free booklet especially designed for new Christians.

Start talking to God. He wants to hear from you and walk with you through each day.

Seek spiritual friends. The fellowship of other Christian believers will be a great source of spiritual strength and encouragement.