

**FINDING A
DEEPER
PERSONAL
RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD**



Imagine a Change Like This!

A farmer cleaned up his prize pig, gave it a huge bath, put a bow on it, and then perfumed it up! He said to himself, "This pig will be different! It will stay clean and not want the wallow in the mud." But as soon as the pig was let out of the care of the farmer, it went straight back to the mud hole and jumped in! Isn't that like we are so many times?

We want to do right, but then inside of us something takes over and we run back to the mud! Imagine doing something that would CHANGE the pig's nature to not like the mud but want to stay clean and follow the farmer instead of running away to the mud. It would be amazing.

Now imagine, if your inner nature could be CHANGED! Imagine how amazing it would be to live without even liking the "muddy things" of your life. The inner change in you would be so deep and effective that you would want to do what's right and even have the power to do those things.

RELIGION is like the farmer's attempt to fix the pig with a wash, perfume, and a bow. It doesn't work. It tries to fix people's problems by working on behavior and cleaning up outward conditions.

However, a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with God through Jesus Christ has the power to change your inner nature so deeply that you will never be the same and not want the old wrong ways of thinking,

believing, and behaving. God literally and supernaturally changes you from the inside-out. That is the message of the Bible – not religion!

The message of Jesus has the power to transform individuals and families lives radically. Unlike self-help and many other methods of trying to manage life's difficulties, the Gospel of Jesus has the power to change a person's heart which affects every other area of their life.

Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation (rescued & radical deliverance) for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

God loves you and did not send Jesus to condemn you!

So many people are going through this life believing God is out to get them and He wants to strike them down when they do something wrong. That kind of thinking is the exact opposite of what the Bible teaches.

John 3:16–17 (NKJV) 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. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

Look closely at this passage:

God loves you.... Unconditionally loves you. Loves you so much that He would sacrifice His one and only Son, Jesus, for you. Jesus did this willingly and because He loves you.

Why would He do this?

Sometimes extreme measures must be taken to fix extreme problems. The extreme problem of humanity's rebellion (sin) against God broke us in our persons, our relationships, and our relationship with God. The problem was so big that only God could fix it, so He stepped out of Heaven, King Jesus, to reveal the Father, to teach us of His ways, and to be the sacrifice for our sins. Yes, Jesus was the sacrifice for your sins and rebellions against God, and the entire world's sins.

Yes, our sin was so bad, that this was the only way we could be forgiven.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,"
Romans 3:23

Jesus went to the cross as your substitute. He took the punishment that we all deserve. He paid the price we all should have paid. This is what Jesus did for us:

"But he was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. ⁶ All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all." Isaiah 53:5-6 (NLT)

Many people believe they are better than other people. The truth of the matter is that no one is better than anyone else. Plenty of people deceive themselves and think they are.

Our Earnings...

Romans 6:23 (NKJV) "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

What do we earn because of our sin? Everywhere the Bible talks about death, it is eternal separation from God in a place called Hell, where there are no opportunities to ever leave. Imagine being forever separated from all that is good and God. Jesus taught more on Hell than on Heaven.

"But the gift of God is eternal life." God offers eternal life through Jesus. Eternal life has a here-and-now aspect and a future aspect. Eternal Life, here-and-now, you can be forgiven, have God's love in your life, joy, peace, new life, and assurance you are in God's family as one of His beloved children. There is also a hereafter or future aspect called Heaven. God has prepared a special place for His kids!

This is not just good news, it's great news! Jesus is our Savior who rescues (saves) us from our sins. He provides this amazing salvation for us.

God redeems our lives or restores them to what He wants us to be, by changing us from the inside out.

How good do you have to be to receive Eternal Life on your own?

Ephesians 2:8–9 “God saves you by his grace when you believe. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Notice the two things that do not work. First, no one is personally good enough or will ever become personally good for God to “have to let them in Heaven” because they are exceptionally moral people.

Second, no one can do enough good things (good works) for God to let you in because you have done so many good things.

If you want to try to earn Eternal Life on your own, then you must be perfect. *Jesus said, “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Matthew 5:48* This is the real problem, no one is perfect like Jesus, so we all need God’s grace.

What if you are not perfect? There has only been one perfect person, Jesus. So, God offers us grace.

Grace (def.) is God’s love toward us that we cannot earn or merit. Grace is God’s loving power moving in our lives that changes us and enables us to be transformed and live the life of a Christ-follower.

So how can you receive Eternal Life?

(Forgiveness, joy, peace, love, new life in Christ, and Heaven when you die.)

Jesus said, *"The time promised by God has come at last!"* he announced. *"The Kingdom of God is near! Repent of your sins and believe the Good News!"* Mark 1:15 (NLT)

Repentance and Faith are "two sides of the coin" of salvation. You can't have salvation without both.

Repentance is realizing that your sins have separated you from God and it brings a Godly sorrow that causes you to want to seek God's forgiveness because you sinned against Him. It is change of mind that brings about a total change of direction.

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10 CEV

Romans 10:9 *"If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Surrender!

Step #1 is Surrender control of your life to Jesus as the Leader. The Bible word is Lord means king, leader, boss, and master where King Jesus is in charge of your life and not you anymore. Will you allow Jesus to be Lord of your life?

The sin that led to humanity's problem was rejecting God's authority over their lives and it is the same sin that keeps us from Eternal Life and the amazing quality of life God wants us to have in a personal relationship with Him.

He is our Maker. He is the Creator. How can we say to our Maker that we know what is best for our individual lives? How can we say to Him that we can determine the best course for each of our own lives? Do you have any regrets? Of course, we all do when we seek to live a life apart from the Lord Jesus leading us. Our actions prove we can't do this.

He is the only One who can bring healing to the brokenness in our lives. Brokenness from others inflicting pain upon us. Brokenness from our own regretful decisions. Brokenness from living in a broken world that is crying out for a Savior, but most rejecting the Savior who has already come because He requires us to acknowledge Him as Leader, Lord, Master, Boss, Ruler, King of our lives. Will you surrender to His Lordship, Kingship over your life and allow Him to lead you?

Faith!

Step #2 is Believe (Faith) in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead. This means that you believe His sacrifice, His work on the cross is all you need for forgiveness and Eternal Life. God raising Jesus from the dead proves His sacrifice on the cross is all you need.

Faith has something you are trusting in. The object of faith that brings Eternal Life is faith alone in Jesus' actual death on the cross where He shed His blood as a sacrifice for your sins. Jesus took your place and each of our places and received the penalty for sin that each of us deserve – death and separation from God.

No human could pay this price for his/her sins and live to re-enter into a personal relationship with God. So God stepped out of Heaven, King Jesus and did for us what we could not do for ourselves and because He is God, the grave could not hold Him! He is the Only Mediator of Eternal Life and it is by trusting in His death as our only hope for forgiveness and reconciliation that we are made right with God. He did this for us because of His great love and not because of anything we have done.

"For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved." Romans 10:10

"For everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved." Romans 10:13

What About Now?

Would you surrender your heart today and place your faith in Jesus' sacrifice for you? He is calling you today to Eternal Life, this amazing relationship with God that will fill you with joy, peace, love, and life like you have experienced before.

All you have to do is to call out to God in prayer saying something like this.

Father,

I surrender to Jesus as Lord of my life.
I repent of my sins and I don't want my
ways anymore; I want to follow Jesus.
I want you to be the leader of my life.

Please forgive me of my sins.
I trust in Jesus' death on the cross as
payment for all my sins.
I believe Jesus died and arose from the
grave alive.

Please give me eternal life.
Thank you for forgiving me and giving me
eternal life.
In Jesus name.
Amen.

Welcome!

Welcome to the Family of God! Now get started with the First Steps for New Believers! The Bible teaches that if you genuinely turned from your sin, trusted in Jesus to be Savior and Lord of your life, then you are now in God's family!

Challenge! Tell 10 people what you have done as soon as possible! Maybe the next 24 hours! Some of your friends and family may be ready to hear the message of Christ!

Certainty of Eternal Life!

Did you know that God wants you to KNOW for certain that you have eternal life? Look at this verse – it says you can know for certain that you have eternal life (heaven, forgiveness, becoming a child of God, having God's quality of life, and knowing God personally).

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." 1 John 5:13 (NKJV)

Notice it didn't say "hope so" or "maybe know" but that "you may know." There is a certainty in knowing. The word for "know" here has a deeper meaning. There are two words for "know" in the Bible. One means to know about something from study or observation and the other means to know something from personal experience.

It is very much like snow skiing. Everyone knows what snow skiing is, but not everyone has experienced it. They have not strapped on the skis, got in the chair lift, rode to the top, and came down the mountain! These are two different kinds of knowledge. One knows ABOUT skiing and the other has PERSONAL EXPERIENCE of skiing!

God wants you to know Eternal Life by experience! He wants you to personally know His forgiveness, love, acceptance, and most importantly Himself!

Hey friends,

Message us at The Well if you are interested in learning more about following Christ, growing in your faith, or getting involved in a small group Bible study!

Blessings!

Bill Stevens

The Well Ministries

PO Box 145, Loveland, CO 80539

Info@TheWellLoveland.com

970-541-9673

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happening at The Well!**

Text: Loop to 970-999-1751