

Getting right with God

by Keith Glasgow

A silhouette of a person kneeling in prayer in a vast, grassy field. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright glow and long shadows. The sky is filled with dramatic, dark clouds. The overall mood is contemplative and spiritual.

Deep in our hearts, most of us are aware that things are not right between us and God. And because we are all different, we experience the need to get right with God in a variety of ways.

Some have a feeling of deep guilt – a sense of being out of step with their Maker, unable to make amends for past failure.

Others have a profound need to be loved. They may have heard that God loves them personally, but haven't felt it to be true in their case.

Some may have been cruising through life with no real interest in God. Then something caused a change of mind, and they now have a genuine desire to find God personally.

Others could have experienced a growing sense of emptiness – a feeling that 'something' is missing from their lives. This inner lack has driven them to look into the spiritual side of life for an answer.



God is a personal being and His purpose in making us was that we might live in a personal relationship with Him. The experiences of guilt, the need to be loved, the desire to find God, and the sense of emptiness, are all symptoms of a broken relationship with God. They point to the deepest need of all – the need to get right with God. Here is a simple explanation of how this can be your personal experience:

STEP 1 - ADMIT YOUR NEED

A doctor can only help people who admit their need and are willing to take the remedy prescribed. God, the Great Physician, has diagnosed us with a serious condition. We have a broken relationship with God, causing symptoms such as guilt and emptiness.

We can only be healed when we get right with Him.



But He is powerless to help us until we honestly face up to our true condition.

We are guilty of breaking God's law, but we need to admit it! We may try to hide behind a happy façade, and may even fool others; but we cannot fool God.

1. WE NEED FORGIVENESS

God shows in His Word that every person has done wrong, and is guilty before Him.

"There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

SIN IS SERIOUS because it is evidence that we have rebelled against God, and broken His laws.

". . . they have rebelled against Me" (Isaiah 1:2).

"Everyone who sins breaks the law, in fact sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).

SIN ISN'T JUST DOING "REALLY BAD THINGS"

Selfishness is sin: *"each of us has turned to his own way"* -(Isaiah 53:6).

Failing to do what we should is sin: *"Anyone then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins"* (James 4:17).

ONE SIN IS ALL THAT IS NEEDED TO BRING DEATH AND JUDGMENT UPON US.

Only one link needs to snap in order for a chain to be broken. In the same way, only one sin is needed to make us guilty of breaking the whole of God's law. *"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it"* (James 2:10).

SIN IS SERIOUS

because it breaks our relationship with God. *"But your iniquities (sins) have separated you from your God"* (Isaiah 59:2).



God's nature is so holy (perfectly pure) that even though He is loving and kind, our sin creates an automatic rift between us and Him.

IF WE DIE WHILE WE STILL HAVE A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, WE REMAIN IN THAT STATE OF SEPARATION FROM GOD FOR ALL ETERNITY (FOREVER ANDEVER).

"These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

2. WE NEED FREEDOM

When we do things we do not want to do (because we know they are wrong), it proves that we are under the controlling power of those inner desires that



move us to sin. In the words of Jesus we are slaves to our sinful nature. *"Everyone who sins is a slave to sin"* (John 8:34).

The Bible helps us to understand our slavery to sin in these words, *"I am ... sold as a slave to sin, for I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For ... the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing"* (Romans 7:14, 18, 19).

THE PROBLEM IS –
WE DO WHAT WE DO,
BECAUSE WE ARE WHAT WE ARE.

We are sinful by nature, so we cannot help but show what we are by the things we say and do.

Getting right with God involves more than being forgiven for past sins, it also involves being set free from the rule of sin over us.

Jesus Christ is the only One who is able to free us. He gives a new power to rise above temptation and self-centredness. He said, "*If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed*" (John 8:36).

3. WE NEED FULFILMENT

One of the symptoms of being separated from God is emptiness. We were made by God to have a personal relationship with Him and nothing in this world is able to take His place. Only He can fully satisfy our deepest need.

We can easily be deceived into thinking that by living independently of God we will be able to enjoy a more fulfilling life. But though we may pamper our bodies, our spirits are parched.



Without God in our lives we experience an inner emptiness and even restlessness.

Jesus spoke of this lack of fulfilment when He said, *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink" (John 7:37), and "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10: 10).*

SUMMARY

THE FIRST STEP TOWARD GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD IS TO ADMIT OUR NEED OF FORGIVENESS, FREEDOM FROM SIN'S RULE OVER US, AND FULFILMENT.

STEP 2 - BE WILLING TO CHANGE

If a man broke his marriage by leaving his wife for another woman, there would be no hope of mending that relationship until he had a change of heart. He may return to where his wife lives, but unless there is a heart-change where he is willing to return to her completely and sincerely, the relationship will remain broken, even though they live together in the same house!

The rift in our relationship with God cannot be patched up by an outward act of getting closer to God (e.g. going to church, praying, taking communion, etc.). The Bible teaches that we must REPENT; that is, be willing to change direction from the heart and begin following God's way.

*"Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him **TURN TO THE LORD**" (Isaiah 53:7).*

Paul, one of God's servants in the early Church, said, *"I preached that they should **REPENT AND TURN TO GOD** and prove their repentance by their deeds" (Acts 26:20).*



We are the ones who have broken the relationship with God, so we are the ones who must turn back.

However, **THIS STEP ALONE DOES NOT MAKE US RIGHT WITH GOD.**

GETTING RIGHT WITH GOD IS NOT EARNED BY THE WAY WE LIVE. *"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith -and this not from yourselves, it is the GIFT OF GOD - NOT OF WORKS, so that no-one can boast"* (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

If a thief pleaded guilty before the court but asked for pardon because he had decided never to steal again, the judge would be likely to say, "Your new resolve is good, but that doesn't change the fact that you have broken the law. Justice demands that punishment be given". All our good works, generous acts and upright living will never wash away those sins which we have committed.

"He saved us, NOT because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy" (Titus 3:5).



THE GAP BETWEEN US AND GOD CAN NEVER
BE BRIDGED BY OUR OWN EFFORTS

STEP 3 - TRUST IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the only Way for us to get right with God. The Bible shows us that *"God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Jesus Christ, Himself Man, is between them to bring them together"* (1 Timothy 2:5).

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

He is God (the Son) Who, before He came into the world, lived with His Father. He created all things and is worshipped (which shows His true nature as God).

"Let all God's angels worship Him" (Hebrews 1:6).

"In the beginning was the Word (the Son of God), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

WHAT DID JESUS CHRIST DO?

The sin which separates us from God and makes us guilty before Him, has been dealt with fully by Jesus Christ. We deserve death, but Jesus took our place in order to offer us the free gift of forgiveness and life.

"For the wages of sin is death, BUT THE GIFT OF GOD is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Sin's punishment **MUST** be paid. If we receive what is due to us for our sin, we would face death and eternal separation from God.

However, **THE PUNISHMENT FOR OUR SINS WAS LAID ON JESUS CHRIST**. He had no sin, so He did not deserve to die. He died in our place and bore the punishment due to us. *"For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, TO BRING YOU TO GOD"* (1 Peter 3:18).

The Lord Jesus Christ is the only One who is able to bring God and us together, because He removed our sin, which was the cause of our broken relationship with Him.



"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were FAR AWAY have been brought near THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST" -(Ephesians 2:13).

HE ROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD

"He was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification (meaning, to make us right with God)" (Romans 4:25).

We could not trust a dead saviour to deliver us. But because Jesus overcame death, He is able to save us also from its power.

HOW DO WE TRUST IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST?

The Bible says, *"Everyone who calls on the Name of the Lord will be saved"* (Acts 2:21). The idea behind "calling on the name of the Lord" is that of a person crying out to Jesus Christ from a position of helplessness. It means to trust the Lord Jesus to do what we cannot do ourselves.



We cannot get right with God ourselves, nor can we raise ourselves from the dead and make our own way to Heaven. Only Jesus Christ can save us, and He promises that if we call on His Name, He will keep His word and make us right with God.

"Everyone who trusts in Him will never be put to shame" (Romans 10:11).

Trusting Christ to do what we cannot do ourselves involves a complete and total commitment to Him as our own personal Saviour and Master.

WHAT TO PRAY

(Read through the prayer one sentence at a time, and check that you agree with what it says before then praying it in faith to the Lord).

DEAR LORD JESUS,

I admit that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness.

I am willing to turn from my sins, and I trust You to be my Saviour. Please forgive me and cleanse me of all my guilt.

I believe that You are God, and that You died for my sins and then rose again.

I now invite You to come into my heart and life. With God's help I will follow and obey You as Master of my life.

Thank You for suffering and dying on the cross for me.

Amen.

Signed _____

Date _____

Place _____

REMEMBER -

"As many as received Him to them He gave power to become the sons of God" (John 1:12).

1. How do I KNOW I am now right with God? Acts 16:31, John 5:24, 1 John 5:12, John 10:28, 29.
2. To grow to become a strong Christian -
 - (a) Read the Bible daily. Psalm 119:9, 11, 105; Acts 17:11; Revelation 1:3.
 - (b) Pray daily. Mark 1:35, Psalm 119:18, Psalm 5:3, John 14:13, 14.
 - (c) Tell others about the Lord Jesus. Romans 10:9, Mark 5:19, 20; Matthew 10:32, 2 Timothy 1:8.
 - (d) Meet regularly with other Christians Hebrews 10:25 Luke 4:16
3. Should you fail God, confess any sin to Him immediately. 1 John 2:1-2, 1 John 1:7-9.
4. Remember every child of God can trust Christ to help them to be victorious over any sin. 2 Corinthians 2:14, 1 John 5:4, 1 John 4:4, Romans 6:1-14.

NOW THAT YOU ARE RIGHT WITH GOD, DOWNLOAD
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NOW, AS A CHRISTIAN, READ WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS
ABOUT YOU ...

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all - how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies (puts us right with Himself). Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

- (Romans 8:28, 31-35, 38-39).