



Meet JESUS
CHRIST

Discover the
PURPOSE
in His
PASSION

CLAUDE V. KING

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Preface to the E-book](#)

[One Solitary Life](#)

[He Is Jesus](#)

[Jesus Is the Christ](#)

[The Shepherds Met Jesus on the First “Christmas”](#)

[Simeon and Anna Met the Baby Jesus](#)

[John the Baptist Met Jesus](#)

[Andrew and Peter Met the Messiah—the Christ](#)

[A Crippled Woman Met Jesus](#)

[A Demon-possessed Man Met Jesus](#)

[A Bleeding Woman Met Jesus](#)

[A Sinful Woman Met Jesus](#)

[A Rich Ruler Met Jesus](#)

[A Despised Tax Collector Met Jesus](#)

[Two Criminals Met Jesus](#)

[A Roman Executioner Met Jesus](#)

[“Doubting” Thomas Met the Resurrected Jesus](#)

[A Government Official Met Jesus](#)

[A Persecutor of Christians Met Jesus](#)

[We All Will Meet Jesus](#)

[Jesus Is God](#)

[The Passion of Jesus Christ](#)

[The Primary Purpose of His Passion](#)

[Bad News](#)

[Good News](#)

[Called to Salvation](#)

[What Must I Do to Be Saved?](#)

[Next Steps](#)

[Appendix: Names, Titles, & Descriptions of Jesus](#)

PREFACE TO THE E-BOOK

In February 2004 the movie “The Passion of the Christ” was released into theaters across the country. The film covers the final day when Jesus Christ was killed on a Roman cross. I knew many people would witness this graphic tragedy with little knowledge of the man featured in the film. Though many have at least heard His name, they do not know about the kindness, humility, and compassion of this gentle, holy man. They haven’t heard the significant teachings He uttered. Without this backstory of the life of Jesus, people couldn’t comprehend the horror of such a kind man being killed by an angry mob.

I wrote *Meet Jesus Christ* as a way to introduce people to the wonderful ways Jesus impacted the lives of those who met Him. I wanted to give them more than a simple tract with a few small pages and a prayer. And I wanted them to know that meeting and experiencing the person Jesus Christ was about far more than going to heaven when they

die. Jesus once said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* or more abundantly (John 10:10).

I've at least tasted that abundant life because of what He has done in my life. At a young age I was lonely for a close friend I could talk to about everything. I heard God's Word preached at church, and I realized I had no ability in myself to live up to God's standards. I understood that my offenses toward God deserved a penalty, and I needed help. That's when I met Jesus Christ. He had a remedy for my problems. He desired a relationship with me that was real and personal. And He had a purpose for my life that would bring meaning and fulfillment way beyond what I could have imagined or planned for myself.

Now, for over 50 years I've had Someone I could talk to about everything, even when no one else was around. The heavy burden of my guilt has been lifted by Christ's forgiveness—I don't have to live in the past filled with regrets. Though I have a long

way to go, I'm experiencing a purity of mind and thought, strength to make right choices and avoid wrong ones, wisdom for critical decisions, and the privilege of serving others in a way that I get to see lives radically changed. Everything good that I'm experiencing is because of Jesus Christ. I'm sure thankful I met Him, and He changed me!

I want you to meet Him, too. In a world filled with crime, evil, challenges, dangers, and messed up relationships, the future may be a dark and stormy time. Those circumstances may not change; but I can testify that Jesus Christ has peace, comfort, strength, wisdom, purpose, guidance, love, restoration, and redemption for every person that chooses to receive His gift of life—abundant and eternal.

Interactive Format

This book is written a bit differently than others you may be familiar with. I call what I've done “interactive writing.” Though I can't be with you as you read, I'll share some thoughts and

Scriptures with you. I'll tell you the stories of people who met Jesus. Then I'll invite you to engage the story, to interact with the content, to do some things, and to talk with God about what you are learning and experiencing. This is a little tougher to do with a digital book rather than with a print version. But I want you to come away from this experience not just knowing more about Jesus Christ but having a personal encounter with Him. Don't be a passive reader. My activities will have instructions in bold text that is indented from the left margin and begins with this symbol: » like the following instruction:

» Let me introduce you to the greatest man who ever lived. Read Dr. James A. Francis' description of this one solitary life.

ONE SOLITARY LIFE

“Here is a man who was born in an obscure village, child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another obscure village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years was an itinerant preacher.

“He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. He never went to college. He never put his foot inside a big city. He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of His divine manhood.

“While still a young man the tide of popular opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. One of them denied Him. Another betrayed Him. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial.

He was nailed upon the cross between two thieves. His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth while He was dying, and that was His coat. When He was dead, He was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend....

“I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that were ever built, and all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon the earth as powerfully as has this *one solitary life*.”

[From “Jesus—a Brief Life” by Dr. James A. Francis.]

Jesus Christ has had a most significant influence on history. Our modern calendar labels the years either B.C. (**B**efore **C**hrist) or A.D. (from *Anno Domini*—Latin for “in the year of the Lord”) for the years after His birth. He was an important figure in history; but more significantly, He wants

to be important for your life.

How can that be? Who was this man Jesus Christ? What did He do? How did people respond to Him? What does His life have to do with you? These are some questions I'll attempt to answer for you in the text that follows. Because Jesus Christ has had such a significant impact on millions of other people, the time you spend reading this book could be the most important time of your life.

What do you already know about Jesus Christ?

Many people only know His name because they have heard it used in a profane way either as “Jesus Christ!” or just “Jesus!” or “Christ!” Many others know Him intimately and would claim Him as the most important relationship in their lives. What about you?

» How would you describe your knowledge and relationship to Jesus Christ? Select one of the following that is closest to your response or come up with your own.

1. I've never heard of the person Jesus Christ.
2. I've only heard His name used profanely by people who really were not talking to Him or about Him.
3. I've heard some stories about His life, but I don't know very much about Him.
4. I've read and studied about Jesus, and I believe He was just an ordinary man who lived 2,000 years ago.
5. I believe He was a Prophet.
6. I know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, but I do not have a personal relationship with Him. I only know about Him.
7. When I came to understand who Jesus Christ was and what He had done for me, I placed my faith in Him as my Savior and Lord. But since then, I've not grown very close to Him.
8. I've turned to Jesus Christ in faith as my Savior and Lord. Since then, I've come to know and experience Him in a spiritual love relationship that is real and deeply personal.
9. Your own: _____

» Did you select a response or think of one of your own? If you didn't respond to the last activity, would you go back and do that now? I want to interact with you through the time you spend reading this book.

No matter whether you selected #8, #1, or somewhere in between, I hope this book will be helpful to you. For some this book may be an affirmation of what you already know and have experienced. For others this will be a first-time introduction to Jesus Christ. I know that some will read this book with great interest. But I realize others may be defensive, skeptical, or even antagonistic toward this message.

» How would you describe your approach to this message about Jesus Christ? Pick one or more. I'm...

- Interested
- Curious
- Angry

- Turned off
- Defensive
- Open-minded
- Skeptical
- Close-minded
- Indifferent
- Already convinced
- Apprehensive
- Desperate for help

Regardless of how you are approaching this message, I welcome you. Stay with me. I pray that God will help you come to a clear understanding of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for you. God is the only One who can help you understand and believe that truth anyway. My human reasoning and writing skills are not going to bring about any significant change in your thinking. However, God's Holy Spirit can convince you. He is the One who reveals truth. He is the One who can convince you that what the Bible says about Jesus Christ is true. He is the One who will spiritually invite you to respond to that message.

Because God is the One who can convince you of the truths you are about to read, I want to ask you to do something that may be new, different, or even a bit uncomfortable. Even if you are skeptical about whom God is, give God an invitation to speak to you, to reveal Himself to you. Prayer is a spiritual conversation with the Creator of the Universe. Since God is all-present, He can hear your prayers right now, right where you are.

» If you are willing, pray the following prayer (or a similar one of your own) either aloud or silently. (Yes, He even knows your thoughts.)

God, I do want to know eternal truth about You and about my relationship to You. Please help me know and understand the truth about Jesus Christ. Please guide me clearly to know how You want me to respond to the message about Jesus. Please reveal Yourself to me in such a way that I clearly know it's You. –Amen.

In the following pages I'll introduce you to some of

what the Bible has to say about Jesus Christ. I'll also tell you stories about people in the Bible who met Jesus. Not all responded positively to Jesus, but those who did were forever changed. Before we're through, I'll help you understand the invitation Jesus extends to you to enter a real, personal, and intimate relationship with Him.

Before we explore who He is and look at the stories of those who met Him, I want to explain the meaning of the word *Passion* that I used in the subtitle. In his suffering and death, Jesus experienced what some have called “**The Passion.**” This title comes from the Bible in the book of Acts where Luke writes:

The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen: to whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs,

being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (Acts 1:1-3, KJV).

His “passion” was His suffering and death. Later, I will focus on the purpose of His Passion; but for now I want you to meet Jesus.

HE IS JESUS

Each year hundreds of millions of people around the world celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ on Christmas day.

» Have you celebrated Christmas before? Select one of the following responses that best describes your experience.

- a. I've never celebrated Christmas before. I focus on another holiday or none at all.
- b. I've celebrated Christmas, but my focus was on Santa Claus and giving and receiving gifts.
- c. I've celebrated Christmas, and I knew that it had something to do with Jesus' birth. I just didn't give much attention to Jesus in my celebration.
- d. I've celebrated Christmas, and I make a special effort to focus attention on the true reason for the holiday—to celebrate the gift to the world of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

You may or may not have celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ in the past, but this baby was no ordinary child. The Bible describes His birth this way:

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit....

An angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” —which means, “God

with us” (Matthew 1:18-23).

Mary was an especially chosen woman. She was chosen to be the mother of God’s Son. Joseph was not Jesus’ biological father. Mary was a virgin. But through a miracle of God’s doing, Mary conceived a child by the Holy Spirit of God. Mary and Joseph followed the angel’s instructions and gave their newborn son the name *Jesus*. Jesus’ name was very important because it described the reason for His coming into the world: “He will save his people from their sins.” The name *Jesus* means “Jehovah [God] is salvation.”

Eight hundred years before Jesus’ birth, a prophet of God’s wrote about His coming. The prophet Isaiah said that He would be born to a virgin who would call him Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). Matthew explains to us that this name means “God with us.” Jesus was unique, one of a kind. Though He was a human being born of the virgin Mary, He also was and is the Son of God. He was and still is “God with us”! He is Immanuel.

» Which of the following definitions means *Jesus* and which means *Immanuel*?

“God with us”

“God is salvation”

Immanuel means “God with us.” In Jesus, God came to live with us to reveal to us what He is like. The name “Jesus” describes His purpose in coming to live with us: “God is salvation.” Jesus Christ is God. He came to earth to save us from our sins.

JESUS IS THE CHRIST

Because of the way we use names these days, you may think that *Christ* is Jesus' last name or family name. *Christ*, however, is a title. *Christ* comes from the Greek word meaning "anointed one." The Hebrew word for "the anointed one" is *Messiah*. In Old Testament times before the birth of Jesus, a special ceremony called "anointing" was used to set apart a person for special work. In this ceremony, oil was poured upon the head of the person being set apart for service to God. Anointing was used for priests who served before God in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. It also was used to identify the person chosen to be the king of the nation. Many Scriptures in the Old Testament tell about the coming of an "Anointed One." This is why the Jewish people were expecting a Messiah to come. Jesus is the Anointed One that God the Father sent to save His people from their sins.

» **Match the following words with the correct definition below. Feel free to look back at the text above for the answers.**

1. Christ; 2. Messiah; 3. Anointing

- a. A ceremony where oil is poured on the head of a person being set apart for special service to God.
- b. The Hebrew word or title for “Anointed One.”
- c. The Greek word or title for “Anointed One.”

(Answers: 1-c; 2-b; 3-a)

On one occasion in His hometown of Nazareth, Jesus went to the synagogue (Jewish place of worship) on the Sabbath. He was asked to read the Scripture for the day. It happened to be a text that foretold the work of the coming Messiah. The text came from Isaiah 61:1-2. Jesus read:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for

the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing” (Luke 4:18-21).

Jesus was the Anointed One, the Messiah, the Christ. That is why Jesus has the title “Christ” added to His personal name Jesus. He is Jesus Christ—The One anointed by God to save His people from their sins. Did you notice some of the things He came to do? He came to do such things as provide freedom for prisoners, give sight to the blind, and release the oppressed. He announced and then demonstrated this season of God's favor.

THE SHEPHERDS MET JESUS ON THE FIRST “CHRISTMAS”

Suppose you were a shepherd out in the fields with your sheep late at night. You and your coworkers are sitting around a fire to keep warm when suddenly an angel appears in the sky overhead. How do you think you would respond? Well, this happened to a group of shepherds the night Jesus was born. They were terrified until the angel calmed them down. The angel announced the birth of this special baby: *“Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord”* (Luke 2:11). The angel told them where Jesus could be found. Then...

The shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the

manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.... The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told (Luke 2:15-20).

» Why do you think the shepherds wanted to tell about their experience to other people? Select the response you think best describes their reason.

- a. This was the biggest thing that had ever happened in Bethlehem, and they couldn't wait to tell everybody about it.
- b. They were proud to be the first ones to hear this good news. They wanted to be the first ones to tell everybody else.
- c. The Jewish nation had been waiting and praying for a savior—a deliverer. This news of His birth was far too important to keep

secret. Everybody needed to know.

- d. An angel had spoken to them from heaven about something that was really important. They felt commissioned to spread the good news to others.

We don't really know their reason for sure.

Probably some or all of these reasons were a part of their thinking. What a privilege they had to be the first ones to know about and meet this important baby Jesus—the Savior, Christ the Lord!

SIMEON AND ANNA MET THE BABY JESUS

Simeon was a very devout Jew who was longing to see the coming of the Messiah—the Christ. The Holy Spirit had revealed to Simeon that he would not die until he had seen the Messiah with his own eyes. Following the Jewish requirements, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple when He was eight days old to dedicate Him to God as a first-born son. On that day the Holy Spirit guided Simeon to go to the temple to see the Lord's Christ. He went up to Mary and Joseph, took the baby Jesus in his arms, and prayed:

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).

As you might expect, Mary and Joseph were amazed at what this elderly stranger had to say about their son. How could he have known what they already knew about this special child? While they were still marveling at what Simeon had said, an 84 year old prophetess named Anna approached them. Anna was a widow who lived at the temple and spent all her time worshiping God, praying, and fasting. With Jesus in her arms, *“she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem”* (Luke 2:38).

» If you had been Mary or Joseph, how do you think you would have felt after your encounter with Simeon and Anna on the same day? Select your response or think of your own.

- a. Assured that what the angel had told me was true.
- b. Amazed that two strangers would say such things without knowing all I had experienced

and been told.

- c. Still some unbelief that this could be true of my son.
- d. Other?

What a day that must have been for Mary and Joseph to have two godly people affirm what the angel had already told them about their son. Their minds were probably filled with all kinds of emotions. But they knew this child was a special gift from God to His people. Jesus was the long awaited Messiah. That's why we call Him Jesus *Christ*.

JOHN THE BAPTIST MET JESUS

When Jesus was about thirty years old, He began His earthly ministry which lasted for about three years. During that three-year period, Jesus showed us and taught us what God is like. At the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, He was met by John the Baptist.

John the Baptist was a prophet sent by God to prepare the way among the Jewish people for the coming of the Messiah. John called people to repent of sin and turn to God. To symbolize their repentance, John baptized (dipped or immersed) people in the Jordan River. This is how he got his name, "the Baptist." By lowering a person into the water and raising him or her out of the water, John symbolized their cleansing from sin. He refused to baptize people who did not give evidence that they had turned from their sinful lives. Some people thought that John might be the Christ, but he

explained:

“The one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God” (John 1:33-34).

John said he saw the Spirit of God descend from heaven like a dove and come to rest upon Jesus. He pointed people to Jesus: *“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”* (John 1:29).

» See if you can match the numbered person below with his or her message about Jesus. You can look back to find the answers if necessary.

1. Anna; 2. John the Baptist; 3. Simeon

a. He is the Son of God.

b. He is God’s salvation and a light for revelation to the Gentiles

- c. Gave thanks and spoke about the child to all who were waiting for redemption of Jerusalem.
- d. He is “*the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*”
- e. He is God’s glory to Israel.

(Answers: 1-c; 2-a,d; 3-b,e)

ANDREW AND PETER MET THE MESSIAH—THE CHRIST

As Jesus' public ministry began to grow, John the Baptist humbly said, "*He must become greater; I must become less*" (John 3:30). On one occasion with two of his followers, John saw Jesus passing by and said, "*Look, the Lamb of God!*" (John 1:36). John's disciples then left him and followed after Jesus. One of those men was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter.

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus (John 1:40-42).

Later, Jesus prepared to choose twelve men to train and equip as leaders for the early church. He was prepared to invite Andrew and Simon Peter to become two of His disciples. They were fishermen by trade.

Jesus went to the Sea of Galilee where they were fishermen. A crowd gathered around Jesus, and He began to teach them. He saw Peter's boat by the shore and asked to use it. Getting into the boat, Jesus asked Peter to move out from the shore so He could speak to the growing crowd.

When He finished His message, Jesus told Peter to go out into the deep water and let down his nets to catch fish. Though Peter had fished all night with no success, he obeyed. He caught so many fish the nets began to break. Peter had to call on his partners to come and help him.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

...Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him (Luke 5:8-11).

» When Peter experienced this miraculous catch of fish, what did he do and say?

Mentally complete the following:

Peter _____ at Jesus' knees; and he said,
*“Go away from me, Lord;
I am a _____.”*

When many people meet Jesus Christ, they become aware of His holiness, His purity, and His sinlessness. That in turn causes them to see their own sinful condition. Like Peter, they are fearful. They don't want to stay too close to Jesus in their sinful state. Others may be fearful of meeting Jesus for other reasons—because of something they have heard or been taught about Him, because of someone they have known who claimed to be a follower of Christ but didn't live like it, or perhaps just because of a fear of the unknown.

» Would you have to say that you are somewhat fearful of meeting Jesus Christ?

Yes or No?

» **If you answered yes, think about why you are fearful.**

Notice what Jesus said to Peter, “*Don’t be afraid.*” Jesus loved Peter and had a plan for his life. Jesus knew that He had come to set Peter free from his sin. He was going to use Peter in a special way in His kingdom work. Peter didn’t need to be afraid. Neither do you. Jesus loves you and has a plan for your life as well.

When Jesus invited Andrew and Peter to join in His kingdom work of “*catching men*” for God, they “*left everything and followed him.*” Andrew and Peter had met Jesus Christ—the Messiah, the Christ—and now they were ready to leave everything to follow Him.

A CRIPPLED WOMAN MET JESUS

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue ruler said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."

The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to

give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing. (Luke 13:10-17).

In this story of a crippled woman, we see the love and compassion of Jesus toward those who are bound up, bent over, or crippled. He set this woman free from her bondage knowing that the religious leaders would condemn His actions. This was a physical healing; but it was also a spiritual healing, because the problem was caused by “*a spirit*.” Many people today are beaten down, bound up, or crippled emotionally or spiritually. Some may even be in bondage because of an evil spirit. Jesus has just as much compassion for them as He did for this woman. He takes pleasure in setting people free from bondage. He came to set

the captives free.

» If you have been crippled by something someone has done to you or if you are experiencing a spiritual or physical bondage, take a moment to pray. You can talk to Jesus silently or aloud. Tell Him about your bondage or the way you feel crippled. Ask Him to begin to work in your life to set you free from your bondage.

A DEMON-POSSESSED MAN MET JESUS

One day Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee. When they came ashore, a demon-possessed man saw Jesus, *“cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?’”* (Luke 8:28). This troubled man is described as a violent man who had been chained and guarded. But when the demons in him stirred him up, he would break the chains and flee into solitary places. He was so strong he couldn't be restrained. He lived among the tombs. Naked, he would cry out and cut himself with stones. This man's bondage had destroyed his family and ruined his life.

Jesus commanded the demons to come out of him. They entered a herd of about 2,000 pigs who then rushed down a steep bank into the lake and drowned. When the people from town came to see

what had happened, they saw the man *“sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind”* (Luke 8:35). The man wanted to stay with Jesus, but Jesus said, *“Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.’ So the man went away and began to tell... how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed”* (Mark 5:19-20).

On many other occasions, Jesus set people free from life experiences that had held them captive. He cast out demons. He healed blind and lame people. He caused the deaf to hear and the mute to speak. Jesus came to set the captives free (Isaiah 49:9). Do you need to meet Jesus in this way because of something in your life that holds you captive?

» Read through the following list of things that often hold people captive. Think about ways you may need to be set free from something that holds you in bondage. If you

think of something not in this list, make a mental note.

- Addiction to alcohol, drugs, or other substances (legal or illegal) that harm your body or cause problems in your relationships
- Habits or behaviors that get you into trouble, wound relationships, or make you feel guilt or shame
- Addiction to gambling or some other activity that is damaging your family or consuming your time, your resources, and your life
- Memories of past experiences that have so wounded you that you are consumed with fear, hurt, bitterness, anger, resentment or some other emotion that gets in the way of healthy relationships with your family, coworkers, or others
- Financial debt caused by poor spending habits or losses that consumes your energy with worry about how to make ends meet
- Unhealthy relationships with individuals or organizations that pressure you to do things that

you know are wrong or that cause you emotional pain

- Eating addictions or patterns that cause weight problems, produce shame, rob your energy, or hurt your health
- A poor self-image that limits your potential, causes you to act in self-destructive ways, or generates depression and withdrawal from meaningful relationships
- Depression that immobilizes you or keeps you emotionally distant from others
- Others?

» Have you identified ways you feel like a captive? a prisoner? in bondage?

Yes - No - Maybe a little

» If so, consider telling it to Jesus in prayer. Tell Him how you feel and describe your desire to be set free. Ask Him to begin the work in your life that will lead to your freedom from the things that hold you in

bondage. Turn to Him for help. Be prepared to obey Him and take the hard steps that may be required of you. Be prepared to receive His compassion and healing touch.

A BLEEDING WOMAN MET JESUS

Jesus encountered another needy woman in the middle of a crowd. She, too, needed to be healed and set free.

» **As you read her story, identify the words that describe the conditions that caused her suffering.**

A large crowd followed and pressed around him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her

suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

...Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering” (Mark 5:24-34).

Not only had this woman suffered from the physical problem of bleeding, she also had suffered at the hands of the doctors who had completely depleted her finances. Instead of improving, she grew worse. With courage and faith she interrupted Jesus while He was on another important mission. Notice the simplicity of her faith: *“If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed.”* In the case of the crippled woman, Jesus took the initiative to heal her. In this case the

bleeding woman took the initiative to seek Jesus' help.

Many people today are suffering publicly and privately from the abusive practices of modern day "doctors." Suffering may come from a variety of sources of abuse. Parents, relatives, children, employers, teachers, physicians, lawyers, politicians, and even pastors or well-meaning friends can be the source of personal suffering. Suffering is a part of life. Everyone suffers, though some suffer more than others. Suffering can bring a person to a point of hopelessness and desperation. The good news in this story is the truth that Jesus is approachable and able to set people free from suffering.

» Look back at the story. When did the healing take place? Was it before or after the woman made her actions known?

before - after

» Though she came forward with fear and trembling, Jesus comforted and commended her. For what did He commend her?

Jesus commended her for her

Her healing took place when she exercised her faith and touched Jesus. Then the power left Him. Only after the healing did Jesus call for a testimony and commend her faith.

» Perhaps you are suffering today because of the abuse of others. It may be because of physical, emotional, or financial abuse. It may have been caused by injustice or just by circumstances beyond your control. Would you be willing to take your woundedness to Jesus? Take some time to pray. You can talk to Him silently or aloud. Tell Him about your suffering and ask Him to care for your needs in the way you need to experience Him.

A SINFUL WOMAN MET JESUS

One day as Jesus was teaching in the courtyard of the temple, the teachers of the Law and the Pharisees brought a woman to Jesus in an attempt to trap Him and discredit Him in the eyes of the people. They said, “*Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?*” (John 8:4-5).

The Law actually required that both the woman and the man should be stoned. The fact that the man was not presented may have indicated their deceitful purposes. Had the man been enlisted to entice her into the act at just the time the Pharisees needed an example? We don't know for sure, but their act was a cruel scheme.

» Try to place yourself in the position of this woman. What do you think she felt at this time? Select all that you think apply.

- a. She felt guilty because of her sin.
- b. She felt violated by the gaze of the men who caught her in the very act of adultery.
- c. She felt singled out and unfairly condemned.
- d. She felt shame, disgrace, and public humiliation.
- e. She felt anger because of the harsh injustice.
- f. She felt fear of her impending death.

Perhaps the woman felt all of these emotions and more. She may have seen a stoning and knew the capabilities of a mob incited by religious zeal. She probably trembled in fear as she listened for the Teacher's verdict.

Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

At this, those who heard began to go away one

at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?”

“No one, sir,” she said.

“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin” (John 8:6-11).

» Now, what do you think the woman must have felt because of Jesus’ response? Identify all that apply.

- a. forgiveness
- b. disbelief
- c. cleansing from shame
- d. joy
- e. unworthiness
- f. love
- g. freedom
- h. relief

Others?

Surely this woman was overwhelmed by this turn of events. Jesus showed mercy and granted her forgiveness instead of condemnation. She experienced the love and compassion of the Savior Jesus Christ. Her very life had been spared and restored! With a grateful heart, this woman could return home with a determination to leave her life of sin in obedience to the One who set her free.

» Can you see yourself anywhere in this story? If so, select one or more characters with whom you can identify because of past or present actions or attitudes.

- a. Teachers of the Law and Pharisees acting judgmentally and deceitfully
- b. The untrustworthy man who helped set up the woman for this scheme
- c. The woman, guilty and in need of forgiveness
- d. The woman forgiven and set free
- e. Jesus with the opportunity to condemn a

person or forgive her

» Is there a sinful act or perhaps a habit in your life for which you deserve God's judgment and condemnation? Have you done something for which you feel very guilty and covered with shame? Would you like to hear God Himself say, "I don't condemn you..."? or "I forgive you..."? If so, pause to pray. Nothing you have done is beyond His ability to forgive! Tell Jesus what you have done. Ask Him to begin showing you how you can be set free from the guilt, the shame, and the condemnation of your sin.

A RICH RULER MET JESUS

Choosing to follow Jesus is a costly decision. God wants you to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. If you love anyone or anything too much, you will not be able to follow Jesus in an acceptable fashion. In the following story, Jesus met a man who was so in love with his wealth, he didn't have room to love God wholeheartedly. Here is a sad story of one who met Jesus but chose not to follow Him.

A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'"

"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was a man of great wealth. Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.”

Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

Jesus replied, “What is impossible with men is possible with God.”

Peter said to him, “We have left all we had to follow you!”

“I tell you the truth,” Jesus said to them, “no one who has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God will fail to receive many times as much in this age and, in the age to come, eternal life” (Luke 18:18-30).

» When Jesus asked the rich ruler to choose between God and his wealth, which did the ruler choose? God or wealth?

This man's wealth had become his god. He loved it so much it stood in the way of his choosing to allow God to be Lord of his life. According to Jesus, those who have learned to love and trust in their great wealth will have difficulty choosing to love and follow Him. This is the sad story of one who chose not to follow Jesus. Jesus, however, did not ask all wealthy people to give up everything as we will see in this next encounter.

A DESPISED TAX COLLECTOR MET JESUS

Zacchaeus was a despised tax collector for the Roman government. He had become wealthy. The people of Jericho were prejudice toward this “sinner.” They would have nothing to do with him. He was a traitor working for himself and the hated Romans. Jesus, however, saw Zacchaeus’ interest in Him; and He went home with Zacchaeus to find out what God the Father was doing in his life. Jesus never asked him to sell all that he had to give to the poor.

» **Read about Zacchaeus’ response to Jesus and identify what he proposed to give away.**

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (Luke 19:8).

When Jesus heard Zacchaeus' response, He declared: "*Today salvation has come to this house*" (Luke 19:9). When Zacchaeus believed in Jesus and chose to follow Him, his heart changed. He chose to love Jesus more than his wealth. He freely gave away half his goods. Salvation also affected his relationships. He decided to reconcile with anyone he had cheated by making restitution with four times the amount wrongly taken. Jesus saw these changes and realized the radical change in this man.

» Ask God if anything in your life is hindering your coming to Him in salvation because you love it too much. If He reveals something to you, ask Him what you need to do to break its hold on your heart. Then make a wise choice and choose Christ above everything else. If you have offended or mistreated others, what would God have you do to be right with them?

TWO CRIMINALS MET JESUS

Jesus was not the only person crucified on the day of His Passion. Two criminals also were being executed. Criminal #1 *“hurled insults at him: ‘Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!’”* (Luke 23:39). He only wanted to be set free from the consequences of his sin. He didn’t really believe that Jesus was worthy of respect.

Criminal #2, however, agreed that he was being justly punished. He indicated that he feared God, and he believed that Jesus was an innocent man on His way to His heavenly kingdom. He believed Jesus was the One He claimed to be. He begged of Jesus: *“Remember me when you come into your kingdom”* (Luke 23:42). Jesus responded with a wonderful promise: *“Today you will be with me in paradise”* (Luke 23:43).

» **In each of the following pairs of responses below, select the one that received a**

favorable response from Jesus.

- 1a. Wanted to be freed from the consequences of his sin
- 1b. Willingly acknowledged his sin and accepted the consequences

- 2a. Feared God
- 2b. Insulted God

- 3a. Believed Jesus was a King heading for a kingdom
- 3b. Like the crowd, didn't believe Jesus could be the Christ unless He would choose to save Himself

(Answers: 1b; 2a; 3a)

» Based upon the way you are thinking about Jesus Christ right now, are you more like Criminal #1 or Criminal #2?

- a. Criminal #1

b. Criminal #2

c. Neither

Why?

» Consider your current belief in and relationship with Jesus Christ. If today were your dying day, would you go to be with Jesus in paradise?

Yes - No - I'm not sure

A ROMAN EXECUTIONER MET JESUS

In the early morning after Jesus was arrested and tried, He was turned over to Roman soldiers to carry out the crucifixion. They flogged Him, put a purple robe and crown of thorns on Him, and mocked Him. They spit on Him and repeatedly hit Him in the head with a staff. Then they led Him outside the city to crucify Him.

At the cross, the soldiers offered Jesus wine mixed with gall which probably would have had an intoxicating or anesthetic effect. Jesus, however, refused the drink choosing to endure the suffering to its fullest extent. They stripped Jesus and nailed His hands and feet to the cross about 9:00 AM. They divided His clothes among them and gambled over His coat. For the following six hours they stood by and watched Him die.

During His time on the cross, Jesus made seven

statements that are recorded in the Bible. The Roman soldiers standing watch would have seen and heard these words from Jesus.

1. *“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”* (Luke 23:34).
2. *Jesus answered [the thief beside Him], “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise”* (Luke 23:43).
3. *When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother”* (John 19:26-27).
4. *About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice ... “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* (Matthew 27:46).
5. *Later, knowing that all was now completed, and so that the Scripture would be fulfilled,*

Jesus said, "I am thirsty" (John 19:28).

6. *"It is finished" (John 19:30).*

7. *"Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."
When he had said this, he breathed his last
(Luke 23:46).*

In addition to the words of Jesus on the cross, the soldiers would have seen the sky grow dark from *"the sixth hour... until the ninth hour"* (Noon to Three). When Jesus died there was an earthquake and the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. To assure that He was dead the soldiers thrust a spear into His side. After watching Jesus suffer and die, the centurion (leader of 100 soldiers) said *"Surely this man was the Son of God!"* (Mark 15:39). Wow! Here was a hardened soldier accustomed to seeing death. Yet, he saw something in Jesus that was different than all the other criminals he had crucified.

» What part of this drama do you think was

the most convincing evidence to this Roman executioner that Jesus was indeed the Son of God? Select your choice.

- a. Jesus' manner of quietness and humility in the face of mockery, false accusations, and physical brutality
- b. The humility and willingness of Jesus to surrender to the cross and refuse the drink that would have lightened His suffering
- c. Jesus' forgiveness of this soldier and the others who were killing Him
- d. Jesus' compassion for a dying thief and for His own mother while He Himself was dying
- e. The darkness and earthquake that accompanied Jesus' crucifixion and death, no mere coincidences
- f. All of the above.

» If you had been there to watch the trial and crucifixion, which of these reasons would have been most convincing to you? Select one of the items above or describe your own

reason.

“DOUBTING” THOMAS MET THE RESURRECTED JESUS

Jesus died and was buried in a borrowed tomb. Roman guards sealed the tomb and kept watch over the place to see that no one bothered the body. But early on the morning of the third day, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Jesus made many appearances to His followers that day. In the evening Jesus appeared to His disciples; but Thomas was not with them at the time. When he heard that Jesus was alive again, he couldn't believe it was true. He said, *“Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe”* (John 20:25).

» Can you identify with “Doubting” Thomas? Do you have difficulty believing that Jesus came to life again after His death on the cross? Select one.

- a. Yes, this idea that a man can rise from the dead is hard for me to believe, too. I would have been like Thomas; I would want to see the proof.
- b. No, I am typically a very trusting person. If my trusted friends were to tell me this is true, I would tend to believe them.

Most of us have grown up in a scientific age where we want to see the proof of hard-to-believe claims. Probably you can identify with Thomas and his doubts. The following week Jesus appeared to His followers again, and Thomas was there.

» As you read about Thomas' encounter with the resurrected Jesus, watch for what Jesus said about those who believe even when they have not seen Him with their eyes.

Then [Jesus] said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:27-29).

When Thomas saw Jesus, he acknowledged Jesus was indeed Lord and God. Jesus Christ was the One He claimed to be. Tradition holds that Thomas boldly carried this gospel to India and died a martyr's death. This is evidence of a serious faith in this resurrected Christ.

But Jesus knew many would believe in Him by faith without the benefit of human sight. He said they are blessed! Now that Jesus is in heaven, believing in Him comes through faith not physical sight. I cannot introduce you to the physical Jesus you can see with your eyes. Faith, however, does not have to be blind. When Jesus returned to heaven, God sent His Holy Spirit with an assignment. Jesus said:

“When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned” (John 16:8-11).

The Holy Spirit's job assignment is to:

- **Convict you of guilt regarding your sin.** He can help you understand that you need a Savior like Jesus who removes the guilt of your sin by forgiving you. Sin is “missing the mark” or not measuring up to God's standards for living. Sin can also include acts or behavior patterns that violate God's standards or commands for right living. But the ultimate sin is rejecting God's Son, refusing to believe in Jesus Christ.
- **Reveal to you what righteousness is.** Jesus is no longer physically present to show us what

right living looks like. His Holy Spirit helps us understand it through God's Word and through the lives of those followers who have died to their sinful human nature and allow the Spirit of Christ to live in them.

- **Convince you of judgment.** God tells us that every person will one day stand before Him on Judgment Day and give an account of himself or herself. The judgment rendered on that day will depend on how you have responded to Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's one and only Son*” (John 3:18). If you have not yet placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you will stand before God's judgment as one condemned just like Satan — “the prince of this world.” The Holy Spirit has the assignment to convince you about God's judgment.

» **Has the Holy Spirit been at work with you**

in any of these ways? Select all that apply.

- a. I realize that I am guilty of sin.
- b. I believe that Jesus lived and acted in right and good ways.
- c. I have seen right living (righteousness) in the life of a follower of Jesus Christ that is different than what I see in most people.
- d. I believe that a day of judgment is coming, and I currently would be condemned by my lack of faith.

If this work of the Holy Spirit sounds harsh, you need to know that it is not intended to be. God loves you. He sent Jesus to suffer and die for your sin. But His desire is that you turn to Jesus in saving faith to be forgiven of sin, to experience His righteousness in you, to join His mission in the world, and to be released from condemnation and judgment. God's Holy Spirit is available to help you understand your needs. If He's been convincing you of guilt, righteousness, or judgment, that is a good sign. He is ready to respond to your

faith: *“To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12).

» If you are still in the doubting mode, ask God to bring you to a knowledge of the truth.

A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL MET JESUS

After Jesus had risen from the dead and returned to heaven, the Holy Spirit began His work of pointing people to Jesus Christ. These people were among those Jesus described as “blessed” because they did not see Him and yet they believed. One such man was a government official from Ethiopia.

Philip was one of the early followers of Jesus Christ. God spoke to him and told him to “*Go south to the road... that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza*” (Acts 8:26). On the way Philip met an important official from Ethiopia. He was the treasurer for the queen of Ethiopia. He had been in Jerusalem to worship God. Philip overheard him reading from the prophet Isaiah’s description of the passion of the Christ. He read:

“He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before the shearer is silent, so he did

not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth'” (Acts 8:32-33).

Isaiah had written those words hundreds of years before the time of Jesus Christ. Philip offered to explain the passage of Scripture, and the Ethiopian understood and received the good news about Jesus and the salvation He offered. Though the Bible does not mention him again, this Ethiopian official was probably responsible for carrying this good news of Jesus back to his home country and beginning a Christian movement on the African continent.

The Ethiopian was reading a more extended passage of Scripture from Isaiah. It describes the purpose of the passion of Jesus Christ for you and me.

» Read the following statements from Isaiah 53 and watch for the words *our, us, and we*

that refer to you and me. I've underlined one for you.

- “Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows” (v. 4).
- “He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities” (v. 5).
- “The punishment that brought us peace was upon him” (v. 5).
- “By His wounds we are healed” (v. 5).
- *“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”* (v. 6).

Jesus endured His suffering because of us. Our transgressions and iniquities were the reason He had to suffer and die. He carried our weaknesses and sorrows. His punishment brought us peace. We are healed and set free from the guilt and dominion of sin by his wounds. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin and purchased eternal life for us.

The purpose in His passion was to heal us,

forgive us, save us, and set us free.

A PERSECUTOR OF CHRISTIANS MET JESUS

Saul was a religious leader who had great zeal for trying to stamp out the faith of those who began following Jesus in the years following His death and resurrection. As a young man, Saul was present when Stephen (a servant leader of the early church) was stoned to death for preaching about Jesus Christ. He was responsible for having many early Christians thrown into prison for their faith. He was *“still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples”* when he met Jesus.

Jesus Christ had already returned to heaven. Saul was on his way to the city of Damascus to arrest any Christians he could find there. On the way, he had an unusual encounter with Jesus:

As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. He fell to the ground and heard a voice

say to him, *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?”*

“Who are you, Lord?” Saul asked.

“I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,” he replied. “Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do” (Acts 9:3-6).

For three days Saul was blind from the light. He didn't eat or drink. He just prayed. God sent a man named Ananias to Saul saying, *“Go! This man is my chosen instrument to carry my name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel. I will show him how much he must suffer for my name”* (Acts 9:15-16). Saul believed in Jesus, was filled with God's Holy Spirit, and had his sight restored. He was baptized and immediately began preaching in the Jewish synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. *“Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is*

the Christ” (Acts 9:22).

Does that make any sense to you? Jesus chose Saul —perhaps the greatest opponent of Christianity—to become its greatest advocate. Notice that His invitation to Saul included the promise that he (Saul) would suffer much in carrying out his assignment. Jesus was preparing to do a mighty work through Saul, and He didn’t hide from him the cost he would pay for obedience.

Saul later became known as Paul. He traveled all over the Roman world of his day preaching about Jesus, training Christian leaders, and starting churches. He did suffer much persecution for preaching about Jesus. But toward the end of his life and from a prison, he was able to write,

What has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of the brothers in

the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly (Philippians 1:12-14).

Though he suffered much for the cause of Jesus Christ, the testimony of his transformed life got all the way to Caesar's palace in Rome. Tradition holds that he was executed in Rome. But before he died, Paul wrote twelve letters that became a major portion of the New Testament of the Bible.

» If Jesus were to visit you today, would He ask you the question He asked Saul: *“Why do you persecute me?”* Why not ask Him? Have you ever done anything in opposition to Christians, Christian churches, or publicly ridiculed Jesus Christ or His cause? If so, what have you done?

» Would you be willing to pray the prayer Saul prayed when he asked, *“What shall I do, Lord?”* (Acts 22:10)? If so, pray and ask Him right now. Ask: *“Lord Jesus Christ, what*

shall I do?"

Saul became Paul the Apostle. Sometimes those who are initially the most resistant to the message about Jesus become the most faithful and powerful in telling others about Him. Their transformed lives stand as a powerful testimony for Christ when contrasted with their past opposition to Him. If you are one who has persecuted Jesus in the past, you could become one of those who is powerfully used by God in taking the message about Jesus to others.

WE ALL WILL MEET JESUS

When Jesus went up into heaven, two angels told His disciples that He would be back. Jesus is coming again to receive those who have turned from sin and chosen to accept His great salvation. He also is coming back as a judge. The Bible says: *“Jesus... will judge the living and the dead”* (2 Timothy 4:1) and *“We will all stand before God’s judgment seat... So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God”* (Romans 14:10,12). As Judge, Jesus will separate each person into one of two groups.

» Read the Scripture below. Pay attention to what those on His right and those on His left will receive. Then answer the questions that follow.

“When the Son of Man [Jesus] comes in his glory... he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from

another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world....’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”
(Matthew 25:31-34,41).

» Q1. Which group will Jesus place on His right and which group on His left?

Sheep - Goats

» Q2. What will those blessed people on His right receive?

» Q3. Where will the cursed on His left go?

» Q4. If you were to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus today, would He assign you to the group of blessed sheep on His right or the cursed goats on His left? Select one of the following.

- a. Blessed sheep on His right who will receive an inheritance, a kingdom
- b. Cursed goats on His left who will be sent to eternal fire with the devil and his angels
- c. I don't know.

Knowing that we all will meet Jesus one day, we can choose to be prepared. You don't have to take a chance with your eternal destiny. Keep reading to find out how to make sure you will have nothing to fear on that judgment day.

JESUS IS GOD

Jesus chose twelve disciples (followers) to be with Him during the three-year period of His public ministry. John (the Apostle, different from John the Baptist) was one of these twelve. John was a personal eyewitness who wrote one of the four accounts of Jesus' life and ministry. He begins his Gospel by describing Jesus as "*The Word.*"

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-2,14).

Late in Jesus' ministry another of His twelve disciples (Philip) asked Jesus to show them God the Father.

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip,

even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves” (John 14:9-11).

THE PASSION OF JESUS CHRIST

As I described earlier, “The Passion” of Jesus Christ refers to His suffering and death. Jesus Christ was executed on a Roman cross. He experienced one of the most brutal, violent, and torturous means of execution ever devised by man. His suffering and death on the cross were far more painful and violent than most of us can imagine. Jesus was not, however, just another common criminal deserving death.

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, the prophet Isaiah described the coming of a suffering servant who would give his life to pay the penalty for the sins of the world. These are the words the Ethiopian official was reading. You read some brief quotes from Isaiah 53 earlier.

» Read these words from the prophet and see how clearly they describe what would happen

to Jesus on the cross. I've underlined some key words to give them emphasis.

See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted. Just as there were many who were appalled at him —his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness... For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand...

He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was

pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away. And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his

offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors (Isaiah 52:13–53:12).

Jesus was sent to this world on a mission to do something for humanity that we could not do for ourselves. He came to die—to pay a death penalty for us. Through His sacrifice He purchased forgiveness and eternal life for those who trust in Him and His provision for them.

Is it possible that a man who lived 2,000 years ago really has something to do with your life and destiny? The life and passion of Jesus Christ does

have something to do with your life and destiny. I pray that God Himself will help you come to that understanding.

THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF HIS PASSION

The Bible tells the story of God's dealings with humanity. It begins with the description of God's creation of the universe and His creation of humanity. It describes how God had a real and personal relationship with the first humans—Adam and Eve. Yet, they chose to sin against God and rebel against His rule over them. That sin and rebellion created a broken relationship between humanity and God their Creator. They offended God. They lost the benefit of that real, personal, and intimate relationship with their Creator.

Because God is both holy and just, their sin could not go unpunished. However, the salvation from sin that they needed, humanity could not provide for themselves. That is why God sent Jesus Christ. Jesus came to do something for you and me that we could not do for ourselves. He came to save us—to rescue us—from our sin. This is the primary

purpose of the Passion of Jesus Christ. Jesus explained:

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him” (John 3:16-17).

» **Why did God send Jesus into the world?**

“to _____ the world through him.”

Jesus came into the world to “*save*” the world from sin. That is good news for me and you. In the Bible the first four books of the New Testament tell us about the life and ministry of Jesus Christ while He was on the earth. These four accounts are called “Gospels” or “the good news.” The four Gospels are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Let me introduce you to this good news.

By this point in your reading, you may realize you do not have a right relationship with God. You may have an emptiness or void in your life that you can't seem to fill. You may be captive to sin and know of no way out. You may be overwhelmed with guilt for past actions. You may see that believing Christians have a relationship with God that's different from what you're experiencing. You may see their love, joy, and peace and long for such a life. If you're not a Christian, or if you have doubts about whether you have ever been "saved" or "born again," you need to understand how you can be changed forever by a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. I want to help you:

- understand why you need a Savior.
- understand the good news about Jesus Christ and how He can save you.
- hear God's call or invitation for you to repent of your sins and turn to a love relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ.

If you do have a saving relationship with Jesus

Christ, this may help you be prepared to tell others the way to saving faith in Christ. As you read it, you can review your own experience of God's saving grace. It may even help you better understand what God has done in your life. Allow the Lord to remind you of His mighty work that has changed your life.

» As you begin to read the next section, ask God to open your mind to understand how a person can have an intimate love relationship with Him. Talk to Him before you continue.

God created us for a love relationship with Him. When God first created Adam and Eve, He spent time with them in the garden in the cool of the day. He loved them, and they loved Him. But when they sinned against (disobeyed) God's command, the love relationship was broken. Ever since that time, God has been calling sinful people to return to a right relationship with Him.

» Read the Scriptures below and watch for

the words *love, loved, and loving*. I've underlined one for you.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5. *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”*

Jeremiah 31:3. *“The Lord appeared to us in the past, saying: ‘I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving-kindness.’”*

Hosea 11:4. *“I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love.”*

John 14:21. *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

John 14:23. *“Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will*

love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.’”

God wants a love relationship with everyone. But sin separates people from Him. We don't have to sin much to be a sinner either: *“For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.... you have become a lawbreaker”* (James 2:10-11).

According to God, *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

» Would you agree with God that you are a sinner, that you fall short of the perfect glory of God? Yes or No?

If you don't agree, one or more of the following may be true:

- You don't know the commands and requirements of God that you have violated.
- You don't know or understand God's perfection that sets the standard for measuring your life.

- Your pride won't allow you to admit you don't measure up to God's standard of perfection.
- You have deceived yourself into believing you've never sinned and broken fellowship with God.
- You don't believe there is a God who has the right to set a standard to measure your life.

If you won't agree with God that you're a sinner, you can't and won't take the necessary steps to enter into a saving, love relationship with Him. If you're struggling with this, there's some good news: *"The Lord your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live"* (Deuteronomy 30:6). God can replace your hard heart with a responsive one if you will turn to Him for help.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to

follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws ’’ (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

BAD NEWS

Once you agree with God that you're a sinner, there's some more bad news: "*The wages of sin is death*" (Romans 6:23). Because of your sin, you have been given a death penalty by a holy God. Paul described this spiritual death this way: You are "*dead in your transgressions and sins*" (Ephesians 2:1), "*separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world*" (Ephesians 2:12).

» **Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Titus 3:5 below, and identify the words or phrases in each that describe what cannot save you.**

Ephesians 2:8-9. "*It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.*"

Titus 3:5. *“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”*

The bad news gets worse. According to God, you cannot save yourself. No amount of good works or acts of righteousness can remove your death penalty. We all deserve to die because of our sin.

GOOD NEWS

You cannot save yourself. However, the news isn't all bad. What you can't do for yourself, God did for you through His Son, Jesus Christ. Here's what the Passion of Jesus was all about:

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son....

“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him” (John 3:16-18, 36).

» Based on what you just read in John 3:16-18 and 36, match each numbered person below with the correct descriptions that follow.

1. One who believes in Christ the Son

2. Unbeliever who rejects Christ the Son

- a. shall not perish
- b. is not condemned
- c. is condemned already
- d. has eternal life
- e. will not see life
- f. God's wrath remains on him

God loved the world (including you and me) so much that He gave His only Son to die on a cross for us. The gospel (the good news) is this: "*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ...he was buried ...he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures*" (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). Those who believe and trust in what Christ has done are no longer condemned to death. They

receive eternal life. (Answers: 1-a, b, d; 2-c, e, f).

Paul (formerly named Saul) and his partner Silas had been beaten and thrown into prison in Philippi. They started singing hymns of praise to the Lord, and the jailer couldn't understand such joy. He realized they had something he didn't have in his life. When an earthquake brought a crisis in his life, the jailer asked Paul and Silas, "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" (Acts 16:30). That's a good question that you may be asking by now.

» In the following Scripture, find their answer to his question.

"They replied, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.' Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house... then immediately he and all his family were baptized. The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God

—*he and his whole family*” (Acts 16:31-34).

When the jailer and his family heard the good news about Jesus, they believed in Him and turned to Him to receive His saving grace. God saved the whole family that night, just as Jesus said He would. But you may ask, “How can Jesus’ death pay the death penalty I owe?”

» Read in the Scripture below Paul’s description of what God has done to take care of your sin problem and then answer the questions that follow.

(21) “Now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. (22) This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, (23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (24) and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. (25) God presented him

as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— (26) he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus”
(Romans 3:21-26).

1. Since you aren't saved by your righteousness, where does an acceptable righteousness come from? (v. 21)
2. (Complete v. 22.) *“This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who _____.”*
3. What did God present Jesus to be for us? (v. 25) *“God presented him as a
s _____ of
a _____.”*
4. Why did God do this? (v. 25) *“To*

demonstrate his _____.”

5. Who are the ones God justifies (erases their death penalty just as if they had never sinned)? (v. 26)

For those who have faith in Jesus and believe (or trust) in His sacrifice for their sins, God gives them an acceptable righteousness. When Jesus died on the cross, He paid the death penalty for you. He died in your place as a “*sacrifice of atonement.*” Because God is just, He had to punish sin. But because of His mercy, He paid the penalty Himself through the shed blood of Jesus. Those who place their faith in what Jesus has done are justified by God. They’re restored to a right relationship with God just as if they had never sinned. “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*” (2 Corinthians 5:21). That’s good news! According to the Bible, “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved*” (Acts 4:12).

» Take a moment to thank God for providing His Son as a sacrifice so you could be set free from your death penalty.

CALLED TO SALVATION

In John 6:44, Jesus said, “*No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.*” You cannot initiate salvation on your own. God must begin the process by drawing you to Himself. A number of Scriptures indicate that we are called to salvation.

» **Read the following Scriptures, and notice the benefits for those who are called. Pay attention to the word *called* each time it occurs. I’ve underlined them for you.**

- “*To all . . . who are loved by God and called to be saints*” (Romans 1:7).
- “*God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose*” (Romans 8:28).
- “*Brothers, think of what you were when you*

were called” (1 Corinthians 1:26).

- *“I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you”* (Ephesians 1:18).
- *“There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called”* (Ephesians 4:4).
- *“Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called”* (1 Timothy 6:12).
- *“Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance”* (Hebrews 9:15).
- *“You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful*

light” (1 Peter 2:9).

- *“The God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ” (1 Peter 5:10).*
- *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness” (2 Peter 1:3).*

God must draw you, and He must call you to salvation. He has already done all that’s necessary to provide for your salvation. That good news about salvation, however, gets better; because we find that God already wants to draw you to Himself.

» Read the Scriptures below to see who God wants to bring to repentance. See if you can identify the words describing the ones God wants to bring to repentance so they will be saved.

1 Timothy 2:1-4. *“I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”*

2 Peter 3:9. *“The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.”*

» Who are the ones God wants to bring to repentance so they will be saved? Select one.

- a. God wants only the very best people to be saved.
- b. God wants only important people to be saved.
- c. God wants everyone to repent and be saved.
- d. God doesn't want anyone to be saved.

If you didn't select c, you need to read the Scriptures again. God desires that everyone be saved and come to repentance. He wants to draw you to His Son. The very fact that you've gotten this far in this book may well be because the Father is drawing you to Himself right now.

» Are you at a point in your life where you desire to hear and respond to God's call to salvation? Do you want to experience the change He can bring about so you will experience life abundantly? Select your response.

- a. Yes, I want to be saved and know the joy and abundant life God can give me.
- b. I'm interested, but I still have some questions and concerns I must deal with before I'm ready.
- c. No, that isn't my desire at this time.
- d. I don't have that desire, but I'm open to God giving me that desire if He chooses to.

If you desire that love relationship with God, there's a reason. *"It is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose"* (Philippians 2:13). Through His Word as well, God is calling you to come to Him:

John 7:37-38. *"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him."*

Revelation 22:17. *"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' Whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life."*

If you're spiritually thirsty—if you have a spiritual desire to come to Christ—you're invited! Jesus said, *"Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me"* (John 6:45). I believe that during your study of God's Word, God Himself will begin to speak to you and teach you.

He will draw you to Himself because He loves you and wants to have a dynamic relationship with you. If your heart and will are responsive, He will establish that love relationship with you. Like the Philippian jailer, you will be filled with joy because you have believed in Christ.

One day some people asked Jesus, *“What must we do to do the works God requires?”* And Jesus responded, *“The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent”* (John 6:28-29). In the same dialogue, Jesus continued:

“All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. . . . For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (John 6:37, 40).

God Himself is pursuing a love relationship with you. I pray you will respond to His call.

When you sense God is drawing you to Himself, what must you do to be saved? The Bible answers in a variety of ways. You've already read some of them. I've collected them for you below.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

- *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith”* (Ephesians 2:8).
- *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life”* (John 3:36).
- *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household”* (Acts 16:31).

You must believe and exercise faith in Jesus Christ. Below are some other ways the Bible describes what you must do to be saved.

» Read the following Scriptures, and find the word or phrase in each one that describes what a person must do to be saved. I've underlined the first one for you.

- *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12).

- *“Everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name” (Acts 10:43).*
- *“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. As the Scripture says, ‘Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.’ For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, ‘Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved’” (Romans 10:9-13).*

You may have underlined some additional words, but here’s the summary of what I found:

“What must I do to be saved?”

- Receive Him and believe in His name
- Believe in Him

- Confess (agree with God) that Jesus is your Lord (Master, Ruler)
- Believe God raised Christ from the dead
- Trust in Him
- Call on the Lord (ask Him to forgive you and save you)

2 Corinthians 6:1-2. *“As God’s fellow workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. For he says, ‘In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.’ I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation.”*

If you are not ready to ask Jesus to become your Savior, I understand. This is a big decision. It should not be taken lightly. Let me encourage you to continue asking God to make Himself known to you. Find someone in a Christian church who can answer your questions. You may even have a contact with the person who gave you this book. Join a group that studies the Bible so you can hear from God’s Word and learn from Him. Don’t give

up your search. The love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ is worth every effort you may make in seeking Him. I pray that soon you'll find Him. He desires a relationship with you.

» If you sense that now is, indeed, the time of God's favor and the day for your salvation, turn to Him in prayer. Just talk to Him in your own words. He will hear, understand, and respond to your prayer.

- Agree with Him that you are a sinner and that you need Him to be your Savior.
- Tell Him of your belief and trust in Jesus' death and resurrection as the atoning sacrifice for your sins.
- Ask Him to forgive you for all your sins.
- Tell Him you want Jesus Christ to be Lord of your life and guide you in the right way of living. Pledge to Him your loyalty and obedience.
- Ask Him in the name of Jesus Christ to save you and give you His Spirit.

- Thank Him now for saving you, and tell Him how much you love Him.
- Ask Him to help you begin growing from being a baby Christian to full maturity in Christ.

If you have genuinely repented (turned from) your sin, believed in and received Jesus as your Savior just now, God's Spirit testifies with your spirit that you are God's child (Romans 8:16). The Bible says that the angels in heaven rejoice when a lost sinner comes to Christ (Luke 15:10). If they are rejoicing, I rejoice with them.

When you trust Jesus as your Savior, God places the Holy Spirit in you to help you live like Christ. The Spirit will be your Teacher to help you understand the Bible as you read and study it. He will guide you in your prayer life. He will convict you of sin so you can turn away from it and stay in a right relationship with Jesus. Trust the Holy Spirit to help you grow more like Jesus Christ every day.

When you become a child of God, He wants to add you to a local Christian church where you can be a part of the Body of Christ—that's a Bible term describing the church with Jesus Christ as the Head of the church. The other believers in the church will be able to help you follow the Lord. Because of God's Spirit in you, you'll also be able to help them become more like Christ. Look for the first opportunity to tell others of your decision and begin to fellowship with other believers. I pray that your participation in a church will be a wonderful beginning to your new life in Christ.

NEXT STEPS

As you begin your new life in Jesus Christ, you can begin to grow as a new believer in a number of ways. Here are some next steps that you can begin to take. One I just mentioned is...

- **Become active in a Christian church.** There are many groups who may call themselves churches. Because you want to get to know Jesus better, you need to find one where the Bible is their source of authority and not some other person or book. You will find that churches worship in different styles. Find one where people love Jesus and seem to have a real and personal relationship with Him. Find one where you hear the testimonies of people whose lives are being changed by Jesus Christ. Find one where they are willing to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus. Talk to the pastor and he will help you know how to become a part of the church. Pursue this ideal for a church, but keep in mind

that no church is perfect. Find a place to get connected. And keep in mind you can talk to God about this. He will guide you.

- **Follow Jesus' example and command to be baptized.** Baptism is a beautiful symbol of your death to an old sinful nature and your resurrection to a new life in Christ. The church with which you affiliate will guide you in this process.
- **Tell somebody.** Often, when Jesus healed someone, He would say something like: *“Return home and tell how much God has done for you.”* Who do you think would be most interested in hearing of your decision to follow Jesus Christ? Tell him or her. You may even want to get a gift download of *Meet Jesus Christ* to give your friend or relative so he or she can meet Him, too.
- **Start reading the Bible.** The Bible is God's Word to you. It is for a new believer what food is for a baby. God will use it to help you grow spiritually. It helps you to know Him more

clearly. In it, He helps you understand how to live a life that is not only pleasing to Him, but is also the absolutely best life you can experience. The Bible is different than many books. It actually is a collection of 66 different smaller books. Let me suggest that you start reading about the life of Jesus Christ in one of the books: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. You can find them in the table of contents of a Bible or New Testament. Read some of the Bible every day and meditate on what God is saying to you through His words. When you come across a verse that is especially meaningful, memorize it. That way you can carry God's Word with you wherever you may go. As God reveals His desires to you, practice obedience. Obey His commands.

- **Talk to God.** God intends for you to have a relationship with Him. He doesn't leave you all alone. You can talk to Him anytime and anyplace. You can voice the words aloud or you can pray them silently. He's God, and He hears your prayers. As you grow, you'll learn more and

more about the meaning and value of your prayer relationship with Him. For now, talk to Him as you would a Wonderful Counselor. Ask Him to help you come to know Him better. Ask Him to teach you how to experience the best life has to offer. If you are interested, I've written another workbook with T. W. Hunt to help people learn how to pray: *Growing Disciples Series: Pray in Faith*.

» Why don't you start talking to God right now by thanking Him for what He has begun in you?

- **Grow as a follower of Jesus Christ.** Jesus doesn't save you just so you can go to heaven when you die. His calling to salvation includes a calling to be on mission with Him to help other people enter a right relationship with God. God's goal for your life is that you become like Jesus. You increasingly turn away from sin and live for Christ. As you surrender yourself to His working in you, He will begin revealing the fruit of His

Holy Spirit through your life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). He starts cleansing your mind and replacing it with the mind of Christ. Your church can help you grow into Christlikeness. If you would like some more help with an interactive workbook similar to this one, I've written or coauthored several other books that may be helpful as you follow Christ.

Growing Disciples Series: The Call to Follow Christ. This is a seven week study of six disciplines for new and growing believers. It includes a music CD with 7 songs by Damaris Carbaugh.

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God (with Henry and Richard Blackaby) will help you into the kind of relationship with God through which you experience Him working in and through you to accomplish His purposes in the world.

The Mind of Christ (with T. W. Hunt) will introduce you to a lifelong process through which God transforms your life into Christlikeness.

If this book has helped you meet Jesus Christ, why don't you share digital copies with family members, friends, or coworkers who also need to meet Jesus Christ. I pray that Jesus Christ will reveal Himself to you in ever increasing dimensions of His love. And now...

To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen (Jude 24-25).

APPENDIX: NAMES, TITLES, & DESCRIPTIONS OF JESUS

The following list includes some of the names, titles, and descriptions used for Jesus in the Bible. As you read through this list, think about what the name tells you about Him. You could use this list to guide your praise and worship of Him as you pray. It may also give you a better understanding of who this “One Solitary Life” can be in your life. I’ve included at least one Bible reference for each name. These all come from the New International Version of the Bible.

all (Colossians 3:11)

Alpha (Revelation 1:8, Revelation 21:6)

Anointed One (Psalm 2:2, Acts 4:26)

apostle and high priest whom we confess

(Hebrews 3:1)

author and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)

author of life (Acts 3:15)

author of their salvation (Hebrews 2:10)

the Beginning (Revelation 21:6)
a righteous Branch (Jeremiah 23:5)
the Branch (Zechariah 3:8, Zechariah 6:12)
true bread from heaven (John 6:32)
bread of life (John 6:35)
bridegroom (Matthew 9:15)
builder of everything (Hebrews 3:4)
the capstone (Matthew 21:42, Mark 12:10)
Chosen One (Luke 23:35)
Christ Jesus my Lord (Philippians 3:8)
Christ Jesus our hope (1 Timothy 1:1)
Christ of God (Luke 9:20, Luke 23:35)
the Christ (Matthew 16:16)
consolation of Israel (Luke 2:25)
a chosen and precious cornerstone (1 Peter 2:6)
chief cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20)
Wonderful Counselor (Isaiah 9:6)
covenant for the people (Isaiah 42:6)
desire of all nations (Haggai 2:7)
the End (Revelation 21:6)
Faithful and True (Revelation 19:11)
first to rise from the dead (Acts 26:23)
the First (Revelation 22:13)

firstborn among many brothers (Romans 8:29)
firstborn from among the dead (Colossians 1:18)
firstborn over all creation (Colossians 1:15)
firstfruits of those that have fallen asleep (1
Corinthians 15:20)
foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11)
a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God (Ephesians
5:2)
friend of tax collectors and sinners (Matthew
11:19)
the gate for the sheep (John 10:7)
the gate (John 10:9)
indescribable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15)
our God and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:1)
the only God our Savior (Jude 1:25)
head of the body, the church (Colossians 1:18)
head of the church (Ephesians 5:23)
head over every power and authority (Colossians
2:10)
the Head (Ephesians 4:15, Colossians 2:19)
heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2)
head of every man (1 Corinthians 11:3)
high priest (Hebrews 6:20)

a great high priest (Hebrews 4:14)

a merciful and faithful high priest (Hebrews 2:17)

him who died and came to life again (Revelation 2:8)

him who is from the beginning (1 John 2:13)

him who is ready to judge the living and... (1 Peter 4:5)

him who loves us and has freed us... (Revelation 1:5-6)

Holy and Righteous One (Acts 3:14)

holy servant Jesus (Acts 4:27)

hope of Israel (Acts 28:20)

image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15)

Immanuel (God with us) (Matthew 1:23)

Jesus (Matthew 1:21)

Jesus Christ (John 1:17, Acts 2:38)

Jesus Christ of Nazareth (Acts 4:10)

Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 1:4)

Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:6)

Jesus of Nazareth (John 19:19)

judge of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42)

KING OF KINGS (Revelation 19:16)

King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15)

King of the ages (Revelation 15:3)

king of the Jews (Matthew 27:11, John 18:39)

king who comes in the name of the Lord (Luke 19:38)

your King (Matthew 21:5)

Lamb of God (John 1:29)

a lamb without blemish or defect (1 Peter 1:19)

the Lamb, who was slain (Revelation 5:12)

the Last (Revelation 22:13)

eternal life (1 John 5:20)

the life (John 14:6)

your life (Colossians 3:4)

light (1 John 1:5, John 1:8)

light for revelation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:32)

light for the Gentiles (Isaiah 42:6)

light of life (John 8:12)

light of men (John 1:4)

the light of the world (John 8:12)

true light (John 1:9)

Lion of the tribe of Judah (Revelation 5:5)

the Living One (Revelation 1:18)

Lord (Luke 2:11)

Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:20)

our Lord and Savior (2 Peter 3:2)

Lord Jesus (Luke 24:3, Acts 7:59)

Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 1:3)

our glorious Lord Jesus Christ (James 2:1)

Lord of both the dead and the living (Romans 14:9)

Lord of glory (1 Corinthians 2:8)

LORD OF LORDS (Revelation 19:16)

Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15, Revelation 17:14)

Lord of peace (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

Lord of the harvest (Matthew 9:38)

Lord of the Sabbath (Matthew 12:8, Luke 6:5)

my Lord (John 20:28)

love (1 John 4:8)

Majestic Glory (2 Peter 1:17)

the Majesty in heaven (Hebrews 1:3)

man accredited by God (Acts 2:22)

the man Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:5)

man of sorrows (Isaiah 53:3)

righteous man (Luke 23:47)

second man (1 Corinthians 15:47)

that innocent man (Matthew 27:19)

Mary's son (Mark 6:3)

Master (Matthew 23:8, Luke 5:5)

a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1)
mediator (1 Timothy 2:5)
Mediator of a new covenant (Hebrews 9:15)
messenger of the covenant (Malachi 3:1)
Messiah (John 1:41)
morning star (2Peter 1:19)
the bright Morning Star (Revelation 22:16)
a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23)
a sin offering (Romans 8:3)
the One and Only (John 1:14)
one greater than Jonah (Matthew 12:4)
one greater than Solomon (Matthew 12:42)
one greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6)
the one I love (Matthew 12:18)
one who makes men holy (Hebrews 2:11)
one who speaks to the Father in our defense (1
John 2:1)
our Passover lamb (1Corinthians 5:7)
our peace (Ephesians 2:14)
Physician (Matthew 9:12, Luke 4:23)
a great priest over the house of God (Hebrews
10:21)
priest, forever, in the order of Melchizedek

(Hebrews 5:6)

Prince and Savior (Acts 5:31)

Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6)

Prophet who is to come into the world (John 6:14)

the Prophet (John 7:40)

Rabbi (John 3:2)

the radiance of God's glory (Hebrews 1:3)

a ransom for all men (1 Timothy 2:6)

a ransom (Hebrews 9:15)

resurrection and the life (John 11:25)

the Righteous One (Acts 3:14, Acts 7:52)

our righteousness, holiness, and redemption (1

Corinthians 1:30)

the rising of the sun (Dayspring) (Luke 1:78)

spiritual rock (1 Corinthians 10:4)

Root and the Offspring of David (Revelation

22:16)

Root of David (Revelation 5:5)

ruler of God's creation (Revelation 3:14)

ruler of the kings of the earth (Revelation 1:5)

a ruler [governor] (Matthew 2:6)

blessed and only Ruler (1 Timothy 6:15)

only Ruler (1 Timothy 6:15)

the atoning sacrifice for our sins (1John 2:2)

your salvation (Luke 2:30)

Savior Jesus (Acts 13:23)

the Savior of all men (1Timothy 4:10)

Savior of the world (John 4:42)

holy servant (Acts 4:27)

Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1Peter 2:25)

great Shepherd of the sheep (Hebrews 13:20)

Chief Shepherd (1Peter 5:4)

the good shepherd (John 10:11)

Son of God (John 1:49)

Son of Man (Matthew 12:40, Matthew 24:27)

Son of the Blessed One (Mark 14:61-62)

Son of the living God (Matthew 16:16)

Son of the Most High God (Mark 5:7)

God's Son (John 10:36)

his one and only son (1 John 4:12)

our only Sovereign and Lord (Jude 1:4)

Sovereign Lord (Luke 2:29, Acts 4:24)

a stone that causes men to stumble (1 Peter 2:8)

the stone the builders rejected (1 Peter 2:7)

Teacher (Mark 9:17)

a teacher who has come from God (John 3:2)

good teacher (Mark 10:17)

the Teacher (Matthew 26:18)

the testimony given in its proper time (1 Timothy
2:6)

the true vine (John 15:1)

the truth (John 14:6)

the faithful witness (Revelation 1:5)

Word of God (Revelation 19:13)

Word of life (1 John 1:1)

the Word (*logos*) (John 1:1)