

How to Become a Christian

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The Simplicity of Being Right With God

(You Already Know Enough to Be Saved and Go to Heaven)

My Testimony

“And Jesus prayed this prayer, ‘O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding this truth from those who think themselves so wise, and for revealing it to little children.

Yes, Father, for it pleased You to do it this way.”

- Matthew 11:25-26 (*The Living Bible*)

Christmas

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10)

Easter

The Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12)

John 3:16

The Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-15)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15)

Judgment, Heaven, and Hell (Revelation 20-21)

A salesman tried unsuccessfully, over and over, to sell a farmer an “Encyclopedia of Farming”. Finally he said, “This will improve your crop production and save you time, so you do not have one good reason not to buy it.” The farmer said, “I have the best reason there is – I already know more farming than I am doing now.” This is true of all of us spiritually. We may see ourselves as bewildered and confused about the complexities of Christianity; but the truth is, we know what we need to know and it is this that will be held against us when we face God in Judgment after death.

When I was 22 I did not know ten Bible verses; I didn’t know the difference between a Baptist and a Methodist; and I didn’t really care. But from exposure to Christianity, I knew what I needed to know about being right with God; living the right kind of life; and going to heaven. I learned all this from Christmas--God came to earth; John 3:16--God loves me; Easter--we murdered Jesus and God raised Him from the dead; the Parable of the Prodigal Son; the Parable of the Good Samaritan and the Golden Rule; the Lord’s Prayer; and Psalm 23.

I knew about **sin**. From my **own heart** and from **pictures of the murder of Jesus** by people just like me, I knew I was not nearly as good a person as I should be. I used language I was ashamed of; I put my interests above everyone else’s; I was rude and unkind to my mother; and from moments of anger I knew I was capable of doing terrible things. I knew about **God’s forgiveness**. From **John 3:16** I knew God loved me in spite of my faults and failures. From the Parable of the **Prodigal**

Son I knew that if I came to Him for forgiveness and help in living right, He would run to meet me, throw his arms around me and throw a party. From the **Lord's Supper** where Jesus said, "**This is my blood of the new covenant shed for many for the forgiveness of sins,**" (Matthew 26:28) I knew Jesus willingly suffered and died so I could be forgiven. When He asked God from the cross to forgive His murderers (Lk. 23:34) I knew He would forgive.

I knew about **turning from wrongdoing** and about the **life God wanted me to live**. From Jesus' teachings that we should turn **the other cheek**, live by the **Golden Rule**, help people like the **Good Samaritan** and forgive others if we wanted to be forgiven (**the Lord's Prayer**); I knew that becoming a true Christian was making a commitment to turn from wrongdoing and live this kind of life.

I knew about **heaven and hell**. Like 99.9 percent of the human race I knew that the part of me than made me "me" would survive death and if I was a Christian I would go to heaven and if not, I would go to hell.

What I Didn't Know

With all these beliefs plus watching Billy Graham's New York Crusade, I began to take Christianity seriously. But I had a real problem. The only "Christian" (?) in my family, was also the meanest person in my family. He was a closet alcoholic; he beat his wife; he treated my mother and me with contempt when her illness forced us to live with him; and he always made us say a blessing before we ate at his table. I knew that this was not real Christianity, and I wanted to be the real deal. I did not want to be a hypocrite like him.

The problem was I thought I had to change my life and give up all the things I did wrong to become a true Christian. The Sermon on the Mount, with its teachings about turning the other cheek, etc., stood between me and being right with God; because I knew I couldn't do it. I was not going to commit to something I knew I could not do.

I had a wonderful man working for me who was a Church of God lay preacher. I respected him and valued his opinion. And he told me if I wanted to become a Christian I would have to give up things like drinking and profanity and gambling. I tried and tried, but the harder I tried, the more I failed. Trying to reform our lives is like mopping a dirt floor. The harder you work, the dirtier it gets. Thank God, I did not give up, but went to our new Pastor. I told him I wanted to become a Christian, but did not want to be a hypocrite. I didn't tell him about the drinking and things like that. I told him that I grew up on a Mill Hill where bullies beat me up for my lunch money, or for the fun of it. And that produced in me a rage that would not allow me to turn the other cheek, like Jesus commands. That wonderful man of God said, "Bob, I'm not sure I can turn the other cheek. I hope I can, but I don't know it." I said, "Man, you are the preacher, you have to do it." He laughed and said, "Bob, let me ask you this. Would you like to be able to turn the other

cheek, and will you ask Christ to help you be that kind of person?" I answered, yes, and he said, "That is all God wants."

Soon after that I got out of my car one day, thought of the verse where Jesus said, "**Father forgive them**" (Luke 23:34) to His murderers, and said, "Lord, if you forgave them I believe you will forgive me. I cannot live the Christian life, but I believe you will help me. So right now I give you my sins to forgive and my life to change." He did both. About a year later I was called to preach and preached my first sermon. I didn't know fifty Bible verses, but I told people this, "For 20 years I lived 12 inches from heaven-- the distance between my head and my heart. I always believed with my mind, but when I let Jesus forgive and change me, Christianity went from my head to my heart." Is this true of you? If not, act on what you already know and give Jesus your sins to forgive and your life to change and control.

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