

Knowing God

In 2 Kings 5 we read of Naaman, captain in the Syrian army. Suffering from leprosy, Naaman desired to be healed. One of his servants told him of a prophet in Israel who could heal him. Upon hearing about Naaman's arrival, the prophet Elisha sends instructions to Naaman to dip himself seven times in the Jordan River and he would be cleansed.

Naaman was angry for two reasons. First, the man of God did not come out to meet him, and, second, in Naaman's own words: "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than any of the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage. (2 Kings 5:11-12)

One of his servants convinced him to give it a try. If Naaman was willing to do something difficult, why not try the "simple" solution offered by Elisha? Naaman agreed and he was healed of his leprosy. We read in 2 Kings 5:13-14, 13Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed!'" 14So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

Naaman was upset because he considered the process to be too simple. He was looking for something difficult so he would feel as if he had "earned" his healing. He almost missed his blessing because he could not see that God had already made a way for his healing. All Naaman had to do was respond with faith and then obey.

Knowing God the Father through His Son and our Lord Jesus Christ is very similar. God has made a way for each of us, and Jesus has paid the price. Too often we resist giving our lives to Christ because we feel that doing so could not be that easy. Certainly, considering all we

have done, the road to salvation should be difficult and arduous. Yet, because of Jesus' love for each of us it is not. Therefore, even if the following seems "too easy", be like Naaman and respond with faith.

God's Plan

God created us in His image to be in relationship with Him and to rule the earth. He loves us and desires to have a personal relationship with us that we might experience abundant life.

God's Purpose

Genesis 1:27-28 (NIV) ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

God's Love

"God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

God's Desire

1 Timothy 2:3-4 (NIV) ³ This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴ who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (**John 17:3, NIV**).

The Problem: Sin Separates Us from God

As stated above, God created us in His own image to have an abundant life. He did not make us puppets who must automatically love

and obey Him. Instead, He gave us a will and a freedom to choose. When man chose to disobey God and go his own willful way, sin entered the world. Because we still choose our way instead of God's, we find ourselves separated from Him.

Original Sin

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— **(Romans 5:12, NIV)**

All Have Sinned

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **(Romans 3:23, KJV)**

For the wages of sin is death.... **(Romans 6:23, KJV)**

Man's Way Will Not Work

There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death. **(Proverbs 14:12, NIV)**

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God,
And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.
(Isaiah 59:2, NASB)

God's Solution: Jesus and the Cross

God's only provision for our restoration is through Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only way we can experience forgiveness of sins, a personal relationship with God, and God's abundant love. Jesus Christ, the only answer, died on a cross, rose from the dead, and bridged the gap between God and us.

God's Love

But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us. **(Romans 5:8, NRSV)**

Jesus' Death, Burial, and Resurrection

¹⁷They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha. ¹⁸There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. (John 19:17-18, NASB) Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there. **(John 19:42, NIV)**

⁵In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ⁷"The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" ⁸Then they remembered his words. **(Luke 24:5-8, NIV)**

³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. ⁶After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. **(1 Corinthians 15:3-6, NIV)**

Jesus, God's Only Provision

⁵For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time **(1 Timothy 2:5-6, NIV)**

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, NIV)**

Our Part: Believe And Receive Jesus

Everyone Is Invited

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, NIV)**

For God did not send His son to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. **(John 3:17, NIV)**

Matter of Faith, Not Works

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

That 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. **(Romans 10:9, NIV)**

So, Believe

[Jesus said,] "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. **(John 5:24, NIV)**

Jesus answered: The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent." **(John 6:29, NIV)**

How Do We Do This?

1) Confess and Admit Your Need

Our Sins

The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." **(1 John 1:9, NIV)**

Jesus' Name

That 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. (**Romans 10:9-10, NIV**)

2) Repent (turning from sin to God)

...Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (**Mark 1:14-15, NIV**)

Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (**Acts 2:38, NASB**)

3) Believe

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. (**Acts 16:31, NIV**)

4) Receive

[Jesus said,] "If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer." (**Matthew 21:22, NIV**)

The Prayer of Faith

We can only receive Christ by a personal invitation. The Bible tells us He stands at the door of our hearts. It is up to us to let Him in. If you would like to make a decision to accept Christ's forgiveness and to give your life to Christ, the answer is a simple one. Pray the following prayer in faith:

"Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner. I confess that I need You. I genuinely repent of my sins and ask for Your forgiveness. Lord Jesus, I believe that You died on the cross for my sins, that You were buried, and that You rose from the dead. I receive You as my Lord and Savior.

I invite You into my heart, and I make a commitment to follow You. I believe that, according to Your Word, I am now a child of God, completely forgiven and loved. I confess with my mouth that You are my Lord and Savior! Amen!

If you sincerely confessed your sin and prayed this prayer to receive Christ, you are now a Christian with the gift of eternal life. You are a new creation, a child of God, and Jesus' friend. Take this by faith, not by feelings. Even if you do not "feel" different, believe God's word and accept it because it is the truth.

To help you in your new walk as a Christian, we suggest you become involved in a local church. Don't wait because we need each other. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.