

How to Become a Christian

Establishing a Relationship with God

By [*Dr. David A. DeWitt*](#)

- *What do I need to understand to begin a relationship with God?*
- *What one thing can I do to begin a relationship with God?*

How would you describe your relationship with God?

- “Non-existent”?
- “Distant”?
- “We hold each other at arm’s length”?
- “We relate through my religion”?
- “We touch base every once in awhile”?
- “Close but not connected”?
- “Connected but not close”?
- “Connected and close”?
- “Growing”?
- “Super”?
- Something else?

Has your relationship with God come to the place where you know you’d go to heaven if you died right now?

“Yes”?

“No”?

“I’m not sure”?

Let me ask it this way:

If you faced God and He said, “Why should I let you into My heaven?”, what would you say?

“Why not?”

“I’ve been pretty good—I mean, compared to most people”?

I’d like to ask you this:

Have you ever seen yourself as lost?

I mean, have you ever pictured yourself as without God or unable to be good enough to get to God, as sinful, or separated from God, or doomed to an eternity without God, or unacceptable to God?

Here is where the message of Jesus, and the whole Bible, for that matter, differs radically from what you’ll hear from the world around you—sometimes even your religious world. The Bible says the starting place for a relationship with God is to say, “Yes, I am lost and unable to be good enough to get to God.” The reason most people will never have a relationship with God is because they don’t see themselves as lost or understand they are separated from God.

But we are. The Bible says:

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).

There is none righteous, not even one (Romans 3:9).

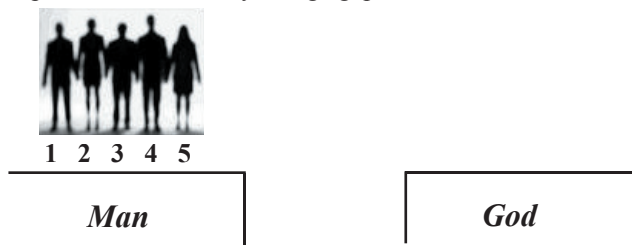
For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

Why are we separated from God?

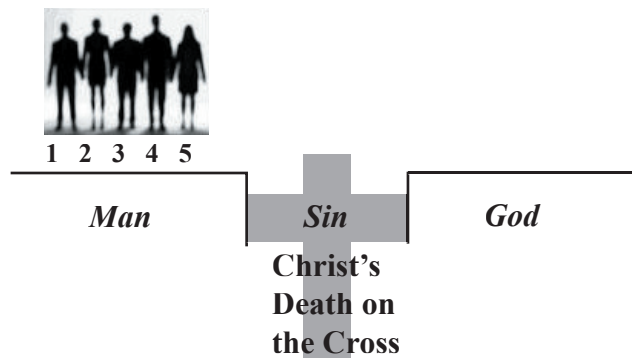
Most of us will admit that we sin. What's harder to buy in today's tolerant society is that our sin separates us from God. Why? Because God is righteous and holy. Sin is anything contrary to God, and God can never accept any of it or He wouldn't be a holy God. If God accepted some sin, He'd be less than holy, and there would be no hope at all for a solution to the sin of the world.

God doesn't grade on a curve

Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:48). God's standard is nothing less than perfection. It doesn't matter how good we are, we can't get to perfection. It's as if we all stood on the coast of California and tried to swim to Hawaii. Some would make it further than others, but the only real question is **where** we would drown. Here's an old illustration I like. Picture man as separated from God by a huge gap called sin.



Some of us are "distant," like 1 or 2. Others are closer, like at 4 or 5. But sin still separates us from God.



Sin is never overlooked. Someone must die for it. *For the wages of sin is death* (Romans 6:23). God essentially says, "I'll tell you what. I'll pay the price of your sin by judging and punishing my perfect Son. He'll pay your price for you." What He actually said is,

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, {it is} the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

For 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).

So God has not abandoned His holy righteous character. He has not overlooked, ignored, or excused our sin. He paid for it!

Can we just keep trying to get better?

Here's the problem with that. Suppose every sin I've committed is represented by a rock laid on the floor of my living room. Pretty soon my living room would be full of rocks. If I decided to turn over a new leaf and commit half or a tenth of my sin, I'm still adding rocks to my living room, only at half or a tenth the rate. What I really need is to get the rocks out. I need to get rid of my sin. The only way to do that is by accepting Christ's death on the cross as the one and only punishment for it, not by committing less sin.

Is there a "catch" to this?

Well, yes, there is: You have to personally receive Christ's payment for your sin. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12). You're not married unless you say, "I do." If you want to cross that sin gulf to begin a relationship with God, you can pray the following prayer:

Dear God, I realize that I am a sinner, and my sin has separated me from You. I understand that I can never get rid of my sin by myself but that Jesus paid for all of it on the cross. I right now receive the Lord Jesus Christ as my personal God and Savior. I am right now trusting Him alone as having paid for my sin. Thank You for making me one of Your children. Amen.

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life (John 5:24).

Maybe you're thinking ...

"I'd like to, but I have too many doubts."

Don't let doubts prohibit faith. You can get on an airplane without getting rid of all your doubts about flying.

"For me, it will be a long process of study."

Good! I hope we can help with that. But that study begins when you receive Christ.

"I went forward and joined the church."

But what did you tell God? Did you realize your sin separated you from Him and receive Christ as your God and Savior?

"I pray and ask God for things all the time."

But have you prayed this:

- (a) for a total wiping away of your sin by receiving Christ,
- (b) acknowledging Jesus Christ as your God and Savior, and
- (c) receiving Him personally as your Savior?

Questions and Answers

Q: *What do I need to understand to begin a relationship with God?*

A: You need to understand that you don't have a relationship with God. You can't be "saved" if you've never seen yourself as "lost."

Q: *What one thing can I do to begin a relationship with God?*

A: Personally receive His Son Jesus Christ as your God and Savior.