

one of us to come home at last. Have you accepted Christ's loving invitation? Receiving God's forgiveness and cleansing is as simple and profound as opening your arms for a child's embrace.

If you have not yet trusted in Christ as your personal Saviour, you can do so right now by praying something like this:

"Father, I am sorry for my old life of sin. Thank you for sending your Son to this world to die in my place. Jesus, please forgive my sins and come into my life and save me. I want a second chance at life—I want to be born again. Even more, I want to establish a day-by-day relationship with You. Thank you for performing this miracle in me. In Jesus name, Amen."

Make this wonderful discovery: when we do the coming, Jesus does the saving.

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DISCOVER

A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE

Letters like this, from one of our students, can really make your day: *You've done the most fantastic job with people I would have written off as faithless losers (including myself). You helped one friend find the way out of drugs; you helped another friend find her way out of her seemingly useless existence (she was a self-made atheist and proud of it). Although I wasn't an atheist, I didn't*

know how to communicate with God, and I would have never guessed that it was through Jesus Christ. But I've found Him, and I've never been so happy in all of my life. Thank you.

These young people have found the only way to a second chance at life—Jesus! They've made the all-important discovery that, while it is a terrible experience to be lost, it is a fantastic experience to find salvation!

What is the only solution for someone trapped in sin?

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”—Romans

1:16. *(Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptural texts in the DISCOVER guides are from the New International Version of the Bible [NIV].)*

The gospel is a saving power to sinful individuals who believe fully in Jesus and accept Him into their lives.

The young people in the above letter accepted Christ by placing their trust in Him and giving Him their allegiance. The power of God, the power of the gospel, transformed their lives, and they now enjoy an ever-growing friendship with Jesus.

1. WHAT IT MEANS TO BE LOST

Just as there are two kinds of life—spiritual life and physical life—so there are two kinds of death—spiritual death and physical death. It's possible for a person to be physically alive—walking around town, doing business, having what some call a good time—and still be dead—that is, spiritually dead.

Living in Christ doesn't mean that we become perfect saints. Sometimes we will stumble and sin. But when we do, we can claim Christ's forgiveness, and keep going. We're headed in a certain direction and we know that Christ remains a living presence in our hearts every step of the way (Hebrews 7:25; Jude 24). Jesus provides two things that are essential for healthy growth: a sense of security through His unconditional love, and the motivation to reach higher through His inspiring Word.

5. THE JOY OF THE SECOND CHANCE

Harold Hughes received many honors during his distinguished career as a U.S. Senator, but the one that meant the most to him came shortly after his commitment to Christ.

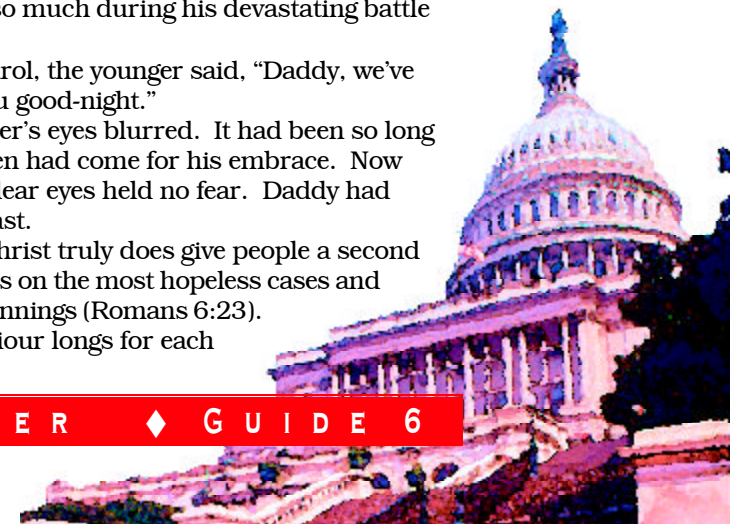
Harold was studying the Bible alone in his living room one evening when he felt a nudge at his elbow. He looked up. It was his two small daughters, standing quietly in their nightgowns. He stared at them for a moment; they had changed so much, and he had missed so much during his devastating battle with the bottle.

Then Carol, the younger said, “Daddy, we've come to kiss you good-night.”

The father's eyes blurred. It had been so long since the children had come for his embrace. Now their beautiful clear eyes held no fear. Daddy had come home at last.

Jesus Christ truly does give people a second chance. He takes on the most hopeless cases and creates new beginnings (Romans 6:23).

The Saviour longs for each



acquires a new life from Jesus?

“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.”—Ezekiel 36:26.

Jesus transforms our heart—our feelings and behavior—and dwells “in us” (Colossians 1:27). This new life is not just a nice, spiritual idea; it’s much more than positive thinking; it’s a hard, solid fact. The new birth is a resurrection from spiritual death to an entirely new existence (Ephesians 5:14). Harold Hughes and Tex Watson are just two examples of Christ’s ability to give people a wonderful second chance.

HOW WE RECEIVE A NEW LIFE FROM CHRIST

1. We believe in Him and receive Him as Saviour and Lord.
2. We establish a relationship with Him. (A regular time of prayer and Bible reading is vital.)
3. Christ works through His Spirit to replace our bad habits with His good qualities.

STEP 3. LIVE FOR JESUS EVERY DAY.

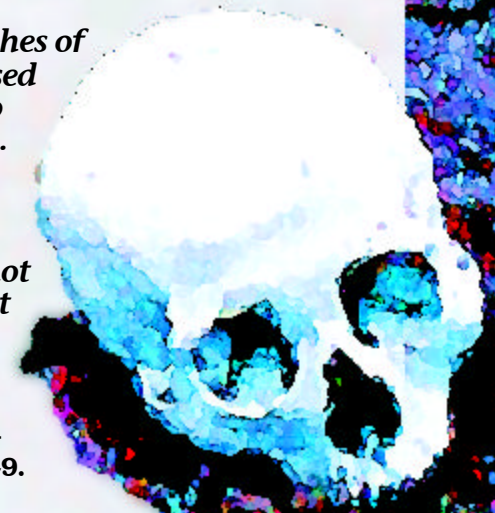
The Christian life involves a daily turning away from selfishness, and bonding with Jesus as our loving Friend. We grow in this new life by strengthening our relationship with Jesus. This means spending quality time with Him, building honest and open communication. God has given us five divine aids for spiritual growth: Bible study, prayer, meditation, fellowship with other Christians, and sharing our experience with others. (DISCOVER guides 14 to 20 give practical suggestions on how to live a satisfying Christian life.)

“As for you, YOU WERE DEAD IN YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS AND SINS, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.”—Ephesians 2:1, 2.

Satan leads a spiritually dead person down a descending spiral of sin and disobedience. But the wonderful truth of the gospel is that God loves such doomed people. He loves them while they are falling away from Him, dead in sins, and offers them a full and free deliverance from their predicament.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, MADE US ALIVE WITH CHRIST EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN TRANSGRESSIONS . .

. [to] show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For 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.”—Ephesians 2:4, 5, 7-9.



God loved us when we had nothing lovable about us. His grace created in us a spiritual resurrection to a new life in Christ. We can't change ourselves, but God can. He gives us a second chance at life.

2. FROM WHAT DO WE NEED TO BE SAVED?

In order to grasp the salvation Christ offers, it's important to clearly understand our need.

1. WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM SIN.

How many have sinned?

***"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*—Romans 3:23.**

To put it bluntly: we don't live up to what we know is right. A parent under stress may blow up and wound a child emotionally. A commuter may become incensed at another driver and almost cause an accident. A student may grow resentful and whisper unkind things about her rival. A businessman may plan to "forget" about a certain source of income at tax time. "All have sinned;" that's the human condition.

How does the Bible define sin?

***"All wrongdoing is sin."*—1 John 5:17.**

We need to be rescued from all kinds of unhealthy habits and compulsions: lying, abusive anger, lust, and bitterness to name a few. The Bible defines wrongdoing as breaking God's moral law that He summarized in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20.

***"Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness."*—1 John 3:4.**

STEP 2. RECEIVE A NEW LIFE FROM JESUS.

Your part in receiving a new life from Jesus is to believe that Jesus has really saved you. Accept without question the fact that He has forgiven and cleansed you, taken away your old life of sin, and given you an entirely new and changed life.

***"All who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right [power, authority, privilege] to become children of God."*—John 1:12.**

As a child of God, you have "the right" to receive a new life from Jesus. As we have said, you can't achieve it on your own—it's a gift from your heavenly Father!

Jesus gives such an absolute promise in order to remove our insecurities and doubts. But if you do struggle with doubt, remember the man who, in the midst of a wrenching crisis, called out to Jesus: "I do believe; help me to overcome my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Focus whatever trust you can muster on God's promises. It's not how much faith you have that counts, it's simply whether you exercise it or not.

What is God's part in giving us a new life?

***"Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.'"*—John 3:3.**

According to Jesus, a repentant, believing sinner is actually born into a new life. The change is as dramatic as the birth of a baby, and it is a miracle that only God can perform.

What inner change takes place in a person who

who died on the cross for our sins can't pardon. A person who trusts in Jesus needs only to ask Him.

It's a sobering fact that our sins helped drive those nails through Christ's hands and feet. In a real sense we helped crucify the Saviour. But always remember that Jesus endured the cross "for the joy set before Him" (Hebrews 12:2). He willingly paid the ultimate price for our ultimate redemption. And He is more eager than we can imagine for us to accept His gift of pardon and reconciliation.

Word reached a young man who'd run away from home that his mother was dying. The news filled him with remorse over their broken relationship. Hurrying home, he rushed into the room and threw himself on his mother's bed. In a flood of tears he begged her to forgive him.

She drew him close and whispered, "Son, I would have forgiven you long ago if you'd only asked."

If you have drifted away from God—or have not yet come to know Him—please think about how eager your Heavenly Father is to welcome you home. He's made a spectacle of His forgiving love, displaying it dramatically on a hill called Golgotha. He wants more than anything else for you to accept His offer of pardon and grace. He loves you. He died for you. He is always willing to forgive you.

So respond to His gracious invitation to repent. Confess your sins. Simply believe that God forgives you, and he does. Don't just look to your emotions for reassurance. Trust in the clear promises of Scripture.

So we need to be saved from sin—wrongdoing, violating God's commandments.

2. WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

"Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God."—Isaiah 59:1, 2.

Unforgiven sin cuts off our relationship with God, the Lifegiver. There can be no love relationship without faith or trust in God. That is why Jesus spoke of sin as unbelief (see John 16:9). Christ came to restore trust in God, which Satan had undermined.

3. WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM ETERNAL DEATH, THE PENALTY FOR SIN.

"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.

The Bible here has in view eternal death, a death from which a person cannot be resurrected.

4. WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM A SINFUL, UNHAPPY LIFE.

For the sinner, life is a dead-end street because a life of sin leaves an empty, aching void in his or her existence.

5. WE NEED TO BE SAVED FROM A SINFUL WORLD.

We must be rescued from a world full of sin and its results—misery, heartache, loneliness, war, sickness, evil, and death!

3. WHO CAN SAVE US?

1. JESUS CAN DELIVER US FROM SIN.

“You are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”—Matthew 1:21.

A Hindu told a Christian friend, “I find many things in Hinduism not found in Christianity, but there is one thing Christianity has that Hinduism does not have—a Saviour.” Christianity is the only world religion that offers people a Saviour.

2. JESUS CAN SAVE US FROM OUR BROKEN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

One of the metaphors God uses to describe a Christian’s relationship to Him is that of marriage. To those who’d recently become Christians at Corinth, Paul wrote:

“I promised you to one husband, to Christ, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him.”—2 Corinthians 11:2.

To another church he wrote:



it hurts God.

“He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever CONFESSES AND RENOUNCES them finds mercy.”—Proverbs 28:13.

In addition to acknowledging and getting rid of the old life of sin, what else is necessary for the repentant sinner?

“If he [the wicked man] gives back what he took in pledge for a loan, returns what he has stolen, follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die.”—Ezekiel 33:15.

Real repentance means not only turning away from sin, but, as far as possible, making past wrongs right.

What is God’s part in getting rid of our old life of sin?

“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.

“God exalted him [Christ] to his own right hand as Prince and SAVIOR that he might GIVE REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS OF SINS to Israel.”—Acts 5:31.

The ability to repent is really a *gift* to us from God (Acts 5:31). Only He can move us to genuine repentance. And when we do respond, a loving Saviour forgives our sins, blotting them out, throwing them into the depths of the sea, as He says, and cleansing us from sin. There is no sin so terrible that a Saviour

5. JESUS CAN SAVE US FROM A SINFUL WORLD.

The next four DISCOVER guides will provide a full explanation of how Jesus will rescue us from our sinful world.

4. WE ARE SAVED BY TAKING THREE SIMPLE STEPS

STEP 1. ASK CHRIST TO DEAL WITH THE SIN IN YOUR LIFE.

What is our part in getting rid of our sinful life?

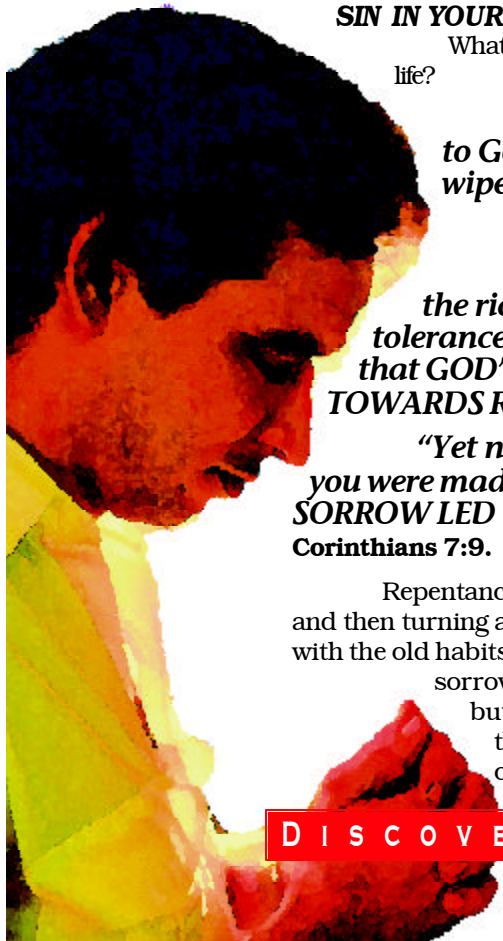
“REPENT, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out.”—Acts 3:19.

What leads a person to repent?

“Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that GOD’S KINDNESS LEADS YOU TOWARDS REPENTANCE?”—Romans 2:4.

“Yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because YOUR SORROW LED YOU TO REPENTANCE.”—2 Corinthians 7:9.

Repentance is simply being sorry for our sins and then turning away from them, making a break with the old habits, practices, and attitudes. It’s not sorrow just because we fear punishment, but a response to “God’s kindness” that led Jesus to die in our place for our sinfulness. We reject sin because



“You were separate from Christ . . . without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”—Ephesians 2:12, 13.

A person who comes to Christ experiences the same joy that a couple experiences during courtship and marriage. When he or she commits his or her life to Christ, a relationship begins, followed by a lifetime of bonding with Jesus.

Jesus is the perfect partner in marriage; He loves to bring out the best in us. “Through the blood of Christ” our past life of sin is forgiven, and day-by-day He gives us His acceptance, His power over sin, His perfect life. Our love for Him in turn produces a desire to live in a way that pleases Him. We know that He’ll be there to pick us up every time we fall.

3. JESUS CAN SAVE US FROM ETERNAL DEATH, THE PENALTY FOR SIN.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Romans 6:23.

We are spiritual lawbreakers sentenced to die. The penalty for our sins is eternal death. But Jesus



can save us from eternal death and give us eternal life. How and why?

“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”—Romans 5:8.

Because of His unfailing love, Jesus “died for us.” By accepting death in our place, He provided a pardon for each of us. He experienced the horrors of complete separation from God, so we wouldn’t have to. Because He died for us and suffered the full results of sin, God can now forgive and accept sinners without trivializing sin.

4. JESUS CAN SAVE US FROM A SINFUL, UNHAPPY LIFE.

God not only provides forgiveness for our sins, but also healing and restoration. God promises to save us *from* sin, not *in* our sins.

“For if a man is in Christ he becomes a new person altogether—the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new.”—2 Corinthians 5:17 (*The New Testament In Modern English, J. B. Phillips translation, Copyright © 1958 by J. B. Phillips, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1958*).

We can’t save ourselves from sin or change our nature on our own any more than a lion can decide to become a lamb (Romans 7:18). Sin is simply stronger than our willpower. But Christ is able to “strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being” (Ephesians 3:16). He works to replace our destructive habits with His healthy qualities: love, peace, joy, kindness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). Christ lives His life through us. He loves to take on the most hopeless cases.

Harold Hughes had given up hope of ever changing. He’d tried desperately to stop drinking many times. He knew only too well that his battle with the bottle had put his wife and two daughters through ten years of hell. And so he stepped into his bathtub one cold morning and pointed a shotgun muzzle into his mouth. Before pulling the trigger, he decided he’d better explain things to God. That prayer turned into a long, sobbing appeal for help.

And God came through. Harold Hughes made a commitment to Christ and found the spiritual strength to persevere. He quit drinking for good, became a loving, dependable husband and father, and went on to earn a seat in the U.S. Senate.

Tex Watson was so numbed by drugs and decadent living that he didn’t know he needed to change. After joining Charles Manson’s “family,” he participated in the brutal Tate-La Bianca killings that shocked the nation. In prison, his behavior seemed as violent and erratic as it had been on the outside—until he began to read the New Testament.

An encounter with Jesus Christ gave Tex a revelation: “My own horrors were part of a larger horror. I began to see, too, that even for a guilt as gross as mine, a penalty had already been paid. . . . I began to see the power of God’s love to overcome death and destruction, His power to heal, not just abstractly but immediately and specifically—for me.”

Today reporters are astounded when they visit Tex in prison. The wild-eyed, cold-blooded killer has disappeared. In his place is a warm, sensitive man leading other inmates in Bible study and helping them find peace in Christ. Tex Watson has discovered the greatest transforming power in our world.

