

# ANSWER WILL YOU RESPOND

The bible is clear that God holds the answer to living a life of purpose. God created you for relationship with himself. Before you were even born God knew you and had a plan for your life. It is this God who has the answer to our deepest longings and desires and this God alone who can show us how to live the life that we were meant to live. God invites us to know him and to share in a relationship with him...

But in order to live in this relationship we need to understand a few key truths about God and our situation, and the bible holds the answers...

**READ** Gen 1: 1, 27-31; Psalm 139:1-18

What do these passages tell us about God?

What do you notice about God's relationship with people in these passages?

God created humanity as a reflection of his greatness, he made you in his image. You are precious because God made you and knows you. He formed people to be in relationship with him, to know his greatness, his glory, his love, his goodness and kindness.

But take one look around, people are far from this ideal picture we understand God had in mind when he created everything.

**READ** Gen 2:15-16, 3:1-8; Romans 5:12

What happened?

What was the result of Adam and Eve's disobedience?

But that was a long time ago. Why is it that today in our world people are still out of relationship with God and unable to know that there is more to life...

**READ** Romans 3:9-12, 23; Isaiah 53:6

What do these passages tell us about our problem before God?

What is sin? What are the results of sin in our world?

God is perfect, and he intended for people to be in a perfect love relationship with him. Because of sin that relationship is no longer possible unless the punishment for sin is carried out.

Romans 6:23 says that the "wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life". All who have disobeyed God are guilty of sin and therefore the punishment of death has to be paid. The death that is spoken of is spiritual death- eternal separation from the creator of life and the lover of life-God. Because of our sin we cannot know God but are separated.



But God's love is greater than our sin and so he did something that is unbelievable...

**READ** John 3:16;

What does this passage express about God and his relationship with humanity?

God made a way for people to once more know him. He paid the price of death for our sin by offering up Jesus. Who was Jesus? How is it that he can bridge the gap between us and God when we could never do it?

The bible tells us...

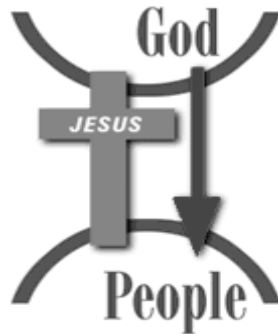
**READ** Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; John 1:1-18

What do these passages tell us about Jesus?

**READ** Mark 10:32-34, 45; Luke 5:20-25; John 6:35-40; John 14:6-7

What does Jesus tell us about himself?

Jesus is so much more than a historical figure. The bible is clear that he is God the Son manifested in the flesh. God stepped into history as the person of Jesus and took upon himself the sin that separates us from God. When John the Baptist saw Jesus walking near where he was teaching he looked and exclaimed "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Jesus paid the price that we never could so that we no longer have to be separated from God.



Here is the greatest news of all. God who has loved us, who continues to love us, despite us turning away from him, ignoring him and disobeying him, has chosen to make the way for us to be forgiven and know him and his plan for our life.

**READ** John 1:12-13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:21-26

What has Jesus achieved for us by his death and resurrection?

How do we receive what Jesus has done for us?

We are invited to receive the free gift of God's love and grace as we believe in Jesus by faith and turn from our old way of living in sin. The bible explains that in order to receive the gift of grace, we must believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that by his death on the cross our sin has been dealt with. We also need to acknowledge him as Lord of our life and begin to live with him in control of our life.

These diagrams show two lives- the first life has self (S) on the throne while Jesus is outside. All the area of this life are solely directed by self resulting in a life that never realises God plan and purpose. The second life has accepted Jesus as Lord



and Saviour and he is on the throne, self is yielding to Jesus. This person sees Jesus' influence and direction in their life and can experience God great plan as he directs their life.

How will you respond?

Jesus offers everyone the opportunity to know him personally in their life, we just need to individually respond. If you want to know Jesus then pray this prayer in faith, turn from sin and submit your life to Jesus.

*"Jesus, I want to know you. I want you to come into my life. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sin so that I could be fully accepted by you. Only you can give me the power to change and become the person you created me to be. Thank you for forgiving me and giving me eternal life with God. I give my life to you as my lord, please do with it as you wish. Amen"*

# 2 **EMPOWERED**

God loves you and has an incredible plan for your life. He created you to know him and live in relationship with him, and only in this relationship can we truly know the life he created us for. Because of sin, the world has fallen out of relationship with the Creator, but God in his great love paid the penalty for our sin so that we could be once more who God intended us to be. Through Jesus death on the cross we can personally know God and experience his presence in our life. Jesus' promise to us about our new life in him is incredible...

**READ** John 10:10; John 14:12-14; Romans 8:28-39; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21

What are some of the promises that Jesus makes about our new life in him?

What do you think it means to be a 'new creation' and for the 'old to be gone'?

Although Jesus came to reconcile us to God and allow us to experience life as God's children living in relationship with him and in his power, so many people find it incredibly difficult to live the life God has asked them to live. It seems that we make the commitment to accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour of our life and really desire to change from sin, however, pretty soon we find that we are just slipping back into the life we were already in. This life to the full that Jesus speaks of seems impossible.

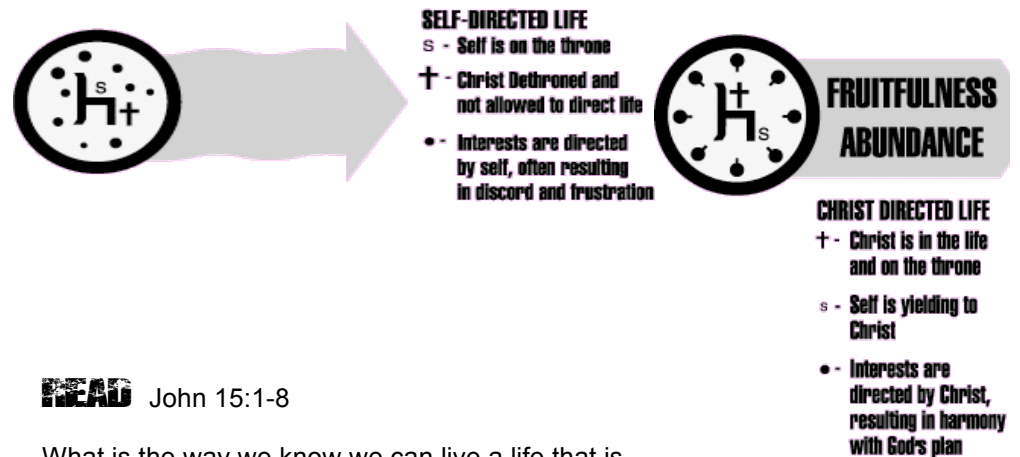
Why do you think we find it difficult to continue living the life that Jesus wants for us?

**READ** Romans 7:14-21; Galatians 5:17;

What do these passages say is the problem?

John 10:10 says that the enemy (the devil/satan) seeks to destroy our life while Jesus offers Life in abundance. On top of that, our nature of sin still remains in our life. Sin has been dealt with but it still battles within us. Although Jesus offers us this incredible life- it is only in his power that it is possible. When we try and do it ourselves we end up failing. In fact the whole idea of doing it ourselves is against Gods desire for us. Jesus should be the centre of our lives, directing leading and

empowering us to live the life he made us for. When we try and do it we put ourselves back on the throne of our life and will end up failing and this leads to a life of struggling continually with sin. But this is not the life Jesus has planned for you.



**READ** John 15:1-8

What is the way we know we can live a life that is fruitful in Jesus?

Is it God's will for us to live the life he desires? If we desire him to empower us to live this life do you think he will?

God's desire is for us to be effective in living the life he has planned for us. The only way we can do that is by Jesus working through us. Jesus promises that we do not have to struggle all our life to try on our own to be the people he wants us to be because he gives us the strength to ,to do it by giving us his Spirit. The Holy Spirit is Gods way of empowering us to be the people he wants us to be.

**READ** John 14:15-17, 26; Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16-18, 22-26; Romans 8:5-8

From these passages who is the Holy Spirit?

What is the work of the Holy Spirit in our life?

Why do we need the Holy Spirit?

Jesus promised that he would never leave his disciples, nor forsake them. In fact he promised he would dwell in them. The Holy Spirit is the God's power in us to live and act the life he desires for us. The Holy Spirit is not an 'IT' but a person-part of the trinity, the Holy Spirit is God dwelling in us. As Jesus said "Remain in me and I will remain in you". The Holy Spirit is the continual presence of Christ with us, living in you. It is only when we live in the Spirit that we can stop living in sin and keep Jesus as Lord. The Holy Spirit also enables us to share Jesus. He came to exalt and glorify Christ so it is in his power that we can share Jesus. Even more than this, the Holy Spirit enables us to know God. It is only by his power that we can understand the bible, that we can learn more of God and we can hear and speak with God. It is only by living in the Spirit that we can please God.

So how do we get filled with the Holy Spirit?

**READ** John 7:37-39; Ephesians 1:13-14; Ephesians 2:8-9; Colossians 2:6; Romans 8:9-10

What do these passages tell us about receiving the Spirit?

When we believe in Jesus and accept him as our lord and saviour he gives us his Holy Spirit. It is his gift that we receive by faith. We do not earn the Holy Spirit or have to beg for him to fill us.

If the Holy Spirit is God's gift to those who believe, why do people not live in the power of the Spirit and instead struggle?

How do you think we can ensure that we continue to live in the power of the Spirit?

The bible tells us that although we receive the Spirit when we become followers of Jesus, we still sometimes try and run our own life and push Jesus off the throne. When we do this we begin to live in our strength rather than in the strength of the Spirit (see the diagrams from earlier). Sin in our life means that we are not following the Spirit. But Jesus commands us to live in the life of the Spirit... and you can. You do not have to continually struggle, you can live in the power of the Spirit by...

1. check for sin in your life and confess
2. pray for God to fill you with his Spirit and know in faith that he will because it is his will.

**READ** 1 John 1:8-9

What does this passage say about dealing with sin in our life?

How often should we do a spiritual 'health check' for unconfessed sin?

We can continually check that we have confessed sin to God. And when we do, we know that he forgives us. When we confess to God and again ask him to be in control we also need to ask that he once more fill us with his Spirit. God will fill you, because it is his will for you to walk in his Spirit. Once we have done this we need to live in faith that the Holy Spirit will guide us and lead us.

**READ** Acts 1:8; Galatians 5:16-26

What is the evidence that we are filled with the Holy Spirit and what would show that we need to confess sin to God and once more submit to him?

God desires for you to live an abundant life in him. A life in which the fruit of the Spirit is seen by everyone in your life and a life that shows God's love and grace in Jesus to others. He placed his spirit within you so that you could be empowered to experience the life he planned for you and so you could know him and share him with others. Make sure that you are continually *filled* by the spirit by (1) *confessing your sin* and (2) *asking for and accepting the filling of the Holy Spirit in faith*.

# 3 GET ON LINE

Jesus while praying for his disciples said "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (John 17:3) The whole basis of the Christian faith is that through Gods grace, shown in Jesus on the cross, we have been made right with God and through our relationship with Jesus we may know God. It is all about a relationship. We have eternal life through a relationship with Jesus! We are transformed in our relationship with Jesus! We are empowered to live the life that God desires through our relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit dwelling in us!

Like all relationships, our relationship with Jesus needs to grow and as it grows it transforms us...

**READ** Ephesians 3:14-21, 4:11-15

From the passages you just read, write down the main points that stand out to you.

What is Paul's (the writer) prayer for the Ephesians? (what does he ask to happen and what is the outcome)

What do you think it means to be "no longer infants tossed back and forth by... every teaching"?

God has an exciting plan for your life. He has given you the greatest gift in his son Jesus, and through his death on the cross you have been made whole, your sin is forgiven and we have been given eternal life. But it doesn't end there. God wants you to grow in him so that you can live the life he desires of you. This is the work of the Holy Spirit in our life- leading us, teaching us and transforming us to be the person that God desires. It all stems from that relationship with Jesus. And we need to grow in that relationship, so that we may know more and more the love of God in Jesus and so that we can become familiar with the way he is leading us and working in us. Like all relationships, we become like those we spend time with- so we need to spend time with Jesus.  
How do we grow our relationship with Jesus?

## THE WORD

In relationship communication is the key. The primary way that God speaks to us is through his word- The Bible. God has revealed himself to people throughout

history. Firstly to the Israelites (Old Testament) and then to all people through Jesus (New Testament). The bible records Gods story of his relationship with his people. We can only know God because he chooses to reveal himself to us. And in the bible we see God as he has revealed himself. It is God's primary way of revealing himself and speaking to us today.

**READ** Hebrews 1:1-3

How has God spoken to people in the past? How do we know what he has shown people?

**READ** Romans 15:4; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 2:1; Psalm 119:9-16

Why do we need to read the word? What is it's purpose?

If we do not read the word, what could be the result?

Try This:

- S Scripture** choose a passage and read it. It is good to slowly work your way through a book. Start with the New Testament.
- O Observation** what's happening? Who's involved? Who is it speaking to? What stands out to you? What don't you get? Write it down.
- A Application** how does it apply to us today? Is God asking me to do something in response? How should I change?
- P Prayer** Pray about what you have read. Ask God to make it stick in your heart and for you to grow as he reveals his truth to you.

It is important to remember that as we read God's word we can only understand it and God will only speak through it as we allow the Holy Spirit to do so if we earnestly desire to hear from God and for him to make what we are reading clear, then he will.

# PRAYER

Imagine being able to speak to the creator of the universe, the one who created you and gave himself on the cross for you. God invites us to speak with him and it is called prayer. If we want to grow in our relationship with Jesus, prayer is essential. Jesus continually prayed to his heavenly Father and he taught his disciples to also make it a priority.

**READ** Matthew 6:5-13; Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:5-7

What do you notice about how Jesus teaches his followers to pray? How should we pray?

What should we pray for? When should we pray?

Prayer is where we meet with God. In prayer we come to God, humbled but confident because he who is God of all loves you and invites you into his presence. What a privilege prayer is. God speaks to us through prayer and also helps us to pray by the Holy Spirit in our life- he teaches us how to pray.

Try This:

**A Adoration** Start by praising God for who he is! In our prayer time we can worship him and praise God because he is God.

**C Confession** remember sin cuts us off from God. Ask the Spirit to reveal anything you need forgiveness for, confess it, ask God to fill you.

**T Thanksgiving** thank God for what he has done. Thank him for anything that comes to your mind. Thank Jesus for being in your life.

**S SUPPLICATION** This means asking God. God loves helping those who are his friends. We should never be afraid to ask him for anything.

# CHURCH

The Bible and through Prayer is how we can personally develop our relationship with Jesus. But it is a reality that in this world it is hard to do it by ourselves. We need help. And that is where church comes in. It is vital that you are involved in a church where people will encourage you and challenge you and care for you as you journey in your relationship with Jesus. Make sure you are there regularly and get involved.

**READ** Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; 1 Peter 2:9-12

What do these passages tell us about church?

What is the church?

Why do we need to be a part of the church?

The church is not a building, or a place- it is a people. Those who have a relationship with Jesus and who have accepted him as their lord and saviour are the church. We are Jesus' representatives on earth, to show the whole world who he is and to demonstrate his love to the world. Jesus told his disciples that by the way they loved each other the world would know who he was. We need to be involved in a church, to grow, to be encouraged, to be challenged but also to help build up other people.

Think over the three ways we can grow in maturity in our relationship with Jesus...

In what way can you put these into action this week?

How could you make sure you continue to grow in Jesus and not stay as a "baby"?

# 4 PASS IT ON

God loves you and has an exciting plan for your life in him. That is the truth of the bible, and furthermore God was willing to pay the ultimate price in order that you might know him personally and experience life as he intended. God's heart burns for people to know him and experience him through Jesus Christ. And it is so simple. Our relationship with God, and his promise of life to abundance rests on one truth- that we can accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour through faith and have guarantee of being forgiven and accepted by God.

**READ** 1 John 5:11-13; Romans 10:8-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12

What do these passages tell us about the guarantee we have in Jesus?

How is someone saved? Can they be sure of it? How?

Jesus proclaimed to his disciples "I am the way the truth and the life, no one comes to the FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME". He absolutely claimed to be the only way to know God and know life. And this is offered to us freely because Jesus already paid the great price upon the cross so that our sin no longer separates us from our awesome God. Jesus was on a mission to reconcile you to God- but not just you, all people.

**READ** Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Peter 3:8-9; John 3:16-17

What do these passages tell us about God's heart for all people?

Who did Jesus come to reconcile to God? Who does he want to hear about the good news?

What is his instruction to his disciples?

Jesus came for all people, in all places through all generations. It is the greatest news the world has ever heard, and we have the privilege of knowing it and receiving Gods grace and eternal life and knowing Jesus in this life.

Sadly, many people have never heard about the simple truth that God loves them

and has an exciting plan for their life and that through faith in Jesus they can know and experience this.

**READ** Romans 10:9-15

What is stopping many people from knowing Jesus and accepting him as Lord and Saviour?

Do you think that people want to know this good news? Why or why not?

Sometimes we have this strange idea that people don't want to know. But that is not true. People don't want to be preached at, people don't want to be bible bashed and people don't want to be judged. But people definitely want to hear about God's love for them! People definitely want to hear that a great price was paid so they could know intimately the God of the universe and people definitely want to know that there is a way they can be fulfilled.

And we have been given that truth... surely we would want people to know it...

**READ** 2 Corinthians 5:14-21

What is the writers attitude to sharing Jesus with people?

According to this passage what is our responsibility?

"We are therefore Christs ambassadors, as if God were making his appeal through us." What does this mean to you?

Gods love and grace is offered to all people, and his desire is for those who already know him to share that truth with others. Jesus, while on earth trained 12 men to carry on his work once he went back to the Father. He told them "you will be my witnesses when the Holy Spirit comes on you then go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey everything I have shown you..." (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:18-20).

we are commanded by Jesus to share the good news- WHY?

*Because only by sharing can people know...*

*because Gods love and grace is for all people...*

*because we have received the gift freely...*

*because God is glorified when people believe...*

*because only by believing in Jesus can people be saved and transformed...*

So how do we share about Jesus with other people?

First, begin each day with prayer asking for God to lead you and remain in Jesus.

**READ** John 15:5-8

Why do you think prayer is important in this?

Second, trust in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**READ** Acts 1:8; John 14:25-26, 16:12-14

What is the power for us to share the truth of Jesus?

The holy spirit brings Glory to Jesus by making him known. If we are allowing the Spirit to fill us everyday then we won't be able to help it-we will just want to share the good news.

Third, relate to people in a loving, natural and personal way.

Why is this so important when we want to share with someone?

So often we get nervous, or scared. But the truth is that the most loving thing we can do for someone is share Jesus with them. People don't want to be judged and that is not what Jesus asks of us. He asks us to love people and share GODS LOVE.

Fourth, make it clear, simple and easy to understand.

Make a list of the main things someone would need to know to make a decision about Jesus and accept him in their life?

Why do we need to keep it simple and clear?

Have a look back at the first study for an easy way to share what Jesus has done and how someone can accept him. We need to make it easy to understand and clear because it is the most important message in the world. Generally it gets confusing because we get scared and start to nervously try and justify what we are saying. God doesn't need justifying, he just needs people who will boldly share the truth of Jesus with others so that they too can experience the incredible adventure of Gods love.

When you share think of four main points-

1. God loves you and has an exciting plan for your life.
2. Sin has separated us from God and leads to death, there is a penalty that has to be paid because all have sinned.
3. God chose to deal with the issue of sin by sending Jesus to die on the cross, through his resurrection he showed that he has power over sin and death and is God in Flesh.
4. you need to personally make a decision to accept Jesus- it is Gods free gift of grace and is received through faith.

Who do you need to share this incredible news with this week? What will you do?