

# How Can I Get to Heaven?

## From Seeking to Discovering

Getting to heaven and being saved by God are such important issues that you may want to jump right to those chapters first. You can of course, but don't leave out the other chapters whatever you do. These questions are placed in this particular order for a reason—it will likely help fill in answers to some questions you may not even know you've had and make better sense of the others at the same time.

What's your hurry? You have time enough in the present to get right with God for all eternity. We've prayed for Him to be here with you. Give Him some unhurried time to work with.



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The critical step is the one you have already taken, so relax. You are a seeker, or you wouldn't be scouring the web looking for an answer. The insurmountable obstacle would be if you had no interest in seeking God or His salvation.

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### How Can I Get to Heaven?

First, you have to give up the false idea that there is something other than a true heaven out there. Then, you need to realize that you cannot possibly “get” yourself there. Then, the rest is up to Someone else...

### How Can I Get Saved?

This is the best part! And it is a surprisingly easy step to take—if you are willing to take it. The hard part is all that it took to get you ready and make you willing to be open to a moment like this...

### What Is the New Birth?

If you have prayed to be saved, you will definitely want to find out what just happened to you. Maybe you feel like you are floating on air. That's great but be sure to come back down to earth eventually and load up on some deeper understandings.

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First, there is the question "What just happened to me?" That's quite a long list! Then, comes trying to figure out how it happened. With this we're poking our heads into a mystery, but Jesus dropped some "bread crumbs" to inspire our thinking.



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For over a decade Steve Evans and [Healing Streams](#) have been helping people recover inner peace and freedom through the free eCourse for healing, [Matters of the Heart](#). Through Forerunners4Him he has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit-filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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## CHAPTER ONE

# Are You a Seeker?

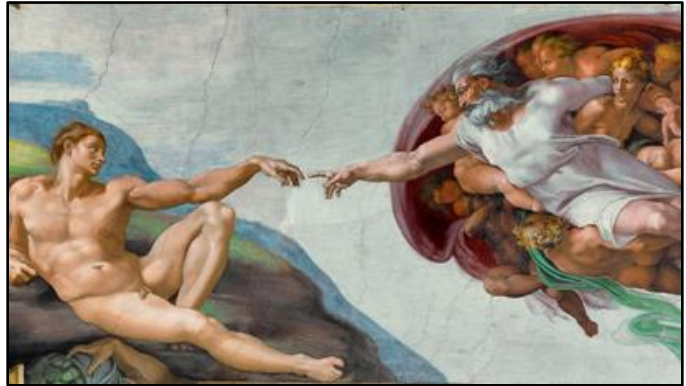
The critical step is the one you have already taken, so relax. You are a seeker, or you wouldn't be scouring the web looking for an answer. The insurmountable obstacle would be if you had no interest in seeking God or His salvation.

[Jesus said,] **"And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. Luke 11:10-11 ESV**

## The "Hidden" Assignment

The most important task imaginable lies right in front of you. We are disconnected from our God and we know it. What will you do about it? Our lives are racing towards death and we know it. What will it be like for you to face a God you have never known? In the moments after death you will know the truth, but by then it will be too late to make any adjustments. The time to act is now!

There is neither wisdom nor honor in setting this all-encompassing assignment aside: If God can be known, we must know Him. If He is there, He certainly expects nothing less from us. What honor or reward can there be for selfish, ungrateful creatures that show no interest in their Creator? If God can be found, we must find Him.



Even if we are not at all concerned about the next life, we would be wise to re-unite with One who can make this life on earth a heaven and not a hell. What wisdom is there in rejecting any possible source of divine assistance?

## An "Impossible" Assignment

In Christian terms all of this is impossible. We are so completely lost, it would take God to "find" us; so totally blind, it would take God to open our eyes; so entirely separated, it would take God to restore us. We cannot lead ourselves completely out of the darkness that enshrouds us, nor free ourselves fully from the sins that enslave us. Don't let that stop you!

**And they were exceedingly astonished, and said to him, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "With man it is impossible, but not with God. For all things are possible with God." Mark 10:26-27 ESV**



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Like miners trapped within the depths of the earth, we can hold fast to hope and send our desperate messages to the surface. We can “grope” our way towards the light. We can seek Him whom we cannot see. We can cry out to Him whom we cannot hear. All is not lost, just because we are lost. Are you a seeker? Then take heart from this: Jesus promised that “All who seek shall find.” We can embrace the quest!

In the beginning of my journey, I didn't know Jesus Christ from Adam's house cat. At first, my spiritual quest only succeeded in getting me further lost! Yet, my heart was crying out for God, for the living God. He heard that silent plea and took pity. That story is told in [Rescued from Hell: An Odyssey of Deception and Discovery](#). Had He not come to my rescue, this website could never have been written. As it is, I have had the pleasure of being a part of His rescue in many lives since then. I have never yet seen Him fail to save those who are crying out to Him and calling upon His Name. May you, too, find Him to be more than you could ever have dreamed possible.

## Prayer

*OK, this is it—I'm going for it this time. If you are out there, God, I want to find You. And since Jesus says that all who seek shall find, I'm asking You to help me seek You with all my heart. For my part, I am opening my heart and mind to the possibility that You are Real and that you can be found by a determined seeker. That's me—I'm determined to find You. I'm embracing the quest!*



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## CHAPTER TWO

# What Are the Basics?

This is an overview that will put everything else in a coherent perspective, like what happens right before your eyes when your airplane takes off: Suddenly the earth begins to look far more orderly than you had ever imagined. The chaos and confusion of conflicting, earth-bound perspectives gives way to a higher perspective.

**"I invite the whole world to turn to me and be saved. I alone am God! No others are real." Isaiah 45:22 CEV**

## The Key to Understanding

I plan to walk you through all of the main issues, beginning with why you need to be saved and continuing all the way through to what your first steps as a newborn Christian will be. First, however, I have to introduce you to the "salvation basics." This profound truth appears on every page. It is a divine key that will unlock doors to your understanding and reveal God's working in your life as a comprehensive whole.

"What must I do to get saved" and "How can I get to heaven?" are the essential questions of salvation in terms of eternal life. The answer to both is wrapped up in the extremely "good news" of our salvation basics found in Paul's letter to the Ephesians: We are saved by grace through faith.



**For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 WEB**

## The Basics Rule All of Life

These basics get you started, but the basics also keep you going! Once you get a satisfactory answer to those two elementary questions, you will quickly discover a few more:

- Is there anything I need to do to stay saved?
- How can I always be sure that I am saved?
- Can I lose my salvation?
- How can I stop sinning?
- How do I live now that I am saved?
- How can I stay well-connected to Jesus?



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The answer to these and all other daily life questions is the same: You are saved by grace through faith! That dual purpose may surprise you, but don't let it throw you. God has no need to alter His methods, as if one way might work for getting us to heaven, but not for helping us live a heavenly life on earth. His way is perfect! It is perfectly designed to work for our benefit.

## Self Cannot Save Us!

Anything you try to do to "save" yourself (in this life or for the next), will only end in failure. Such misplaced effort will also burden you with unnecessary stress all along the way, because you put the responsibility of rescuing your life on you rather than on God. That is trying to live by making self into your savior. The truth is self cannot save you from sin and death; neither can self save you from your own failings as a person, or from the many predicaments of life. We need God's salvation to reach us in both of these dimensions:

1. Getting us to heaven means God has to save us from our sins.
2. Getting a heavenly life into us while we are still on earth means God has to save us from ourselves.

God's laws found in the Bible (a.k.a. God's Rule Book for us) will show you what you need to do and what you need to avoid, but the Law cannot give you the power to live within its boundaries. It certainly cannot give you the freedom to soar on wings of the Spirit. For that you will need God's grace which is also found in the Bible (a.k.a. God's Love Letter to us). By His wisdom God foresaw that we could only be saved by His grace through faith. You simply have to learn to trust God that His way of saving you—for heaven and in this life—really works.

## Getting to Know God

Fortunately, you can get saved without knowing much about God, except that you want to know Him and need Him to save you. However, you need to know that you cannot live in the fullness of joy and peace promised to you unless you get to know your God very well—well enough to keep trusting and obeying Him no matter what's going on. Here is an absolutely certain progression: To truly know Jesus is to love Him; to love Him is to trust Him; to trust Him is to follow Him. Making "progress" in the walk, therefore, always comes as we get to know Jesus (and God) better.

Knowing God well is a lifelong quest! At times it requires determined work, the work of growing one's faith. Happily, we actually want to do that part of the work, because God gives us a love for Jesus and Jesus awakens in us a love for the Father and the Holy Spirit. With these "salvation basics" in mind, let us move on to consider why we need to be saved.

## Prayer

*God, I don't know yet if You are really there or who You truly are, but if You are out there, then I ask You to come to me and help me find You. I need You to save me. I also desire to know You, the true and living God. Prepare me to receive Your salvation. Reveal Your truths to me and keep leading me in the way of grace and faith. I want to believe in You. Help me overcome my unbelief!*



## CHAPTER THREE

# Why Do I Need to Be Saved?

No doubt you have your own specific reasons for why you need to be saved: Things you have messed up or messed up things about yourself that you just can't fix. Or maybe you've seen that the bridge is out a little further down the road. Here are reasons why everyone needs to be saved.

**From heaven God looks down to see if anyone is wise enough to search for him. But all of them are crooked and corrupt. Not one of them does right.** Psalm 53:2-3  
CEV

## Reason #1: Conscience and Moral Failure

Every honest person knows deep down that they are not living up to their own moral standards, much less the ones that God requires. We all have the moral law within us in the form of conscience, God's homing beacon, leading us to seek the One who gave it to us. Conscience is also a warning light, alerting us to the ways in which we are failing to live as we should. Try as we might we cannot keep our lives within the moral boundaries at all times. We know that this is wrong and that it is without excuse in general terms however much we may seek to find excuses for specific failings.



Let's call this our moral failure. We really do need someone to help us live as the truly good people which we could be and can't help but believe that we should be. What went wrong? Why can't we fix it? Why is there no one around who can fix us? Sure, you can put a patch on it by trying harder, or you can deny the problem and pretend that you're fine. Still, you know that something is not right.

**"Why do I need to be saved?"**

This is the first reason: so that we can live on earth as we were meant to live. But this problem—the problem of our moral failure—only gets worse when we consider what it means to come to the end of our life without a solution for it. How do you face death with the nagging awareness of your moral failures troubling your conscience?



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## Reason #2: The Inevitability of Death

The path of life invariably leads towards death. This gloomy fact is universal. We tend to bury our heads on this one, but let's face the facts for a moment. You are going to die one day. This cannot be avoided. What's next? Are you ready for that?

There are four main possibilities that people have imagined which nicely bypass the problem created by our moral failure.

### 1) The Big Sleep

Death is the end of existence. Nothing continues except the memory of you and some of the things you set in motion. Best case scenario? You "live on" in other people's memories for a while, until they too enter the sleep of unconscious termination. But at least you don't have to worry about answering for your misdeeds. There may be no dream of eternal bliss, but neither would there be the nightmare of endless torment. If this fantasy were true...



### 2) The Lobotomy

Life is a cycle and you will be recycled, though all your memories will be removed. You don't really die. You are "reincarnated" in another body—so that's a plus. Also there is no hell-like future torment you need to fear for living the present life with on-going moral failures. You won't even remember this life in your next life! So whatever future version of you is fated to suffer for your failures in this life, well, that's not really your problem, is it? Your problem is working through the suffering of the present life coming to you from failures of the previous one which some other (forgotten) version of you loused up.

### 3) The Sucker's Bet

There is a heaven of endless perfection for you to enjoy. Everyone is going to go there! In fact, all paths lead to God and heaven. So, don't worry, be happy. There is no hell to fear, no sins you have to avoid. God loves everyone too much to allow anyone to suffer for sin. This belief sounds too good to be true and it is. It is a foolish shot in the dark, since you have to bet against your own conscience which tells you that right will be rewarded and wrong won't be. Conscience never lies. Don't play against the odds on this one—they're way too long.

### 4) Mindless Bliss

You merge with the vast ocean of God's consciousness. This may sound pretty good on the surface. You don't get punished for any of your moral failures, misdeeds or bad attitudes. But you do have to give up being a real person. Instead of being the unique symphony of ever shifting thought, emotion and action (which you are in this life when the internal orchestra is in tune), you become a single note going on into the endless



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reaches of time. You as an individual—as an actual person—entirely cease to exist. You have been swallowed up by the Eternal Mind. Good for the Mind, too bad for you.

"That's OK," you may be thinking. "I could handle that." (No, you couldn't. There would be no you left to deal with it one way or the other, but let's don't pause to debate this.) "What I can't handle is the thought of being punished, of having to answer to some maybe not-so-friendly God for having messed up my life." That possibility is exactly why we need to be looking for a savior—now!

What if there really is a fifth possibility at the end of this life? What if there really is a God we will have to face? What if the guilt we wish we didn't feel is a warning from conscience that our moral failure is going to have to be answered for one day? What if there is a God who really does care how we chose to live our lives? What if there really is a place or time of punishment and a place or time of reward hidden on the other side of the veil of death? Shouldn't you be prepared for that—just in case?

## 5) Heaven and Hell

Life on earth is very short compared to whatever life after earth will be. Where do you want to spend the endless years? How do you want to spend them? Will you be gloriously aflame with holy love or will you be wretchedly burning in the infernal fires? You can gamble on one of the first four possibilities being right and hope you luck out, but what if you don't?

A robust majority of all the people ever born on the planet have displayed a belief in the afterlife and carried a hearty suspicion that it is a place of reward, one way or the other. Where did they get that? From religion? No, certainly not! If religion is of human origin (as it is alleged that all are), then the common themes of religion are our ideas, not aberrant notions foisted upon us. We need look no further than ourselves to discover the true origin of beliefs about the afterlife. The "majority view" got it the same place we get it—from the sense of a moral law within our hearts and the fact of an awesome creation surrounding us.

The Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant was hardly an ardent follower of the Christian faith, though he drew heavily on many of its principles. At the conclusion of his *Critique of Practical Reason* he famously wrote:

*Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect upon them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.*

We get our ideas of the afterlife as a place of reward and punishment from the inward sense of a moral law requiring the operations of an overseeing justice. We experience no conflict in wanting it applied to others; conscience, however, insists that it applies to us as well. And it is conscience, no less than the starry heavens, which points us to something or to Someone far bigger than ourselves, to which or to Whom we are ultimately accountable.



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### "Why do I need to be saved?"

This is the second reason: Facing God's judgment and coming out on the side of reward, rather than punishment. We are going to need to have some help standing up to close scrutiny! This brings us to the third reason we need to be saved.

## Reason #3: We Are Separated from God

If there is a way to be saved (and there is) then it could hardly be considered complete if it only satisfied reasons #1 and #2 above. Unquestionably, we need to be saved/helped so that we can live more fully the life we are meant to live in this life and yes, we need to be saved/rescued so that we can live in the place of reward and blessing in the next life.

This still leaves out the ultimate reason why we need to be saved: we are separated from the One who created us! We are cut off from even knowing the greatest Being in the universe.

The truly astonishing thing about this immense tragedy is how "normal" it seems to us to be severed from our Creator. We don't know His Name, we can't see His Face, we can't sense His Presence, we can't hear His Voice, we can't feel His Heart, we can't enjoy His Company. Unless God chooses to open those lost pathways of communication and communion for us, there is nothing we can do to reinstate them.



Try as we might, unaided by God, we cannot penetrate the vast "cloud of unknowing" that surrounds the great Mystery of who God is. We need to be re-connected with our God! If the Christian religion is truly God-given (as we believe that it is) then "the God that we don't know" just happens to be the most loving, most joyful, most exciting, most beautiful Person imaginable.

### "Why do I need to be saved?"

This is the third reason: Not to know the Lord is the worst possible form of ignorance and loss you could ever experience in this life. Dear God, save us from not knowing You!

That, my friend, is exactly what He wants to do...

## Prayer

*God, I have to be honest with You. I don't know You, but deep down I really do believe that this world has a Creator and deep down I know that I am not living with a completely clear conscience. All three of these reasons for seeking You apply to me! I don't want to have to face You at the end of my life with my moral failures hanging over me. I don't want to take a chance on those other "possible endings"—my heart is telling me that the Christian view of heaven and hell is the right one. And I don't want to go on living separated from You, if there is a way that we can be reunited. Please, calm my fears and increase my desire to know You that I may seek You with my whole heart. Reveal Yourself to me in ways that I can sense and understand. Help me want what You want and make me willing to surrender everything to You.*



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## CHAPTER FOUR

# Who "Qualifies" for Salvation?

There is always a catch, but in this case what will “hook” you is how entirely pre-qualified you already are. Without a doubt you are exactly the kind of person our God is looking for! This isn’t flattery or even a wild guess, just playing the odds, as you will soon see...

**Jesus heard them and answered, "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do. I didn't come to invite good people to be my followers. I came to invite sinners." Mark 2:17 CEV**

## An Easy Entrance Exam

The great thing about being saved by God through Jesus Christ is the very low bar. You don't have to jump high or jump through a lot of hoops. You don't have to jump through hoops at all! It's not about you and what you have to do. It is about God and what He wants to give you.

Jesus said that He only came for "those who were sick" — not the healthy. The "healthy" have no interest in salvation because they don't believe that they have anything wrong with them. Even Jesus could not save people who had no use for Him or what He offered them. So, if you know you need salvation, then you are one of the "sick" whom Jesus wants to save!



But it gets better than that.

## Nothing About You Can Disqualify You

There are actually four conditions — none of which are desirable—that "qualify" a person for God's love and for His saving help. Paul lists them for us in his letter to the Romans: Who "qualifies for salvation? The answer is certain to be an encouragement to you.

**For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. Romans 5:6-10 ESV**



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## 1. The Weak

Those who ought to be able to do better and wish they could do better but can't.

## 2. The Ungodly

Those who live as if living for God doesn't matter; those who don't care about God, only themselves.

## 3. The Sinful

Those who know what is wrong but do it anyway; those who know how they ought to live but won't.

## 4. Enemies of God

Those who live as if God were their enemy; those who live in direct, intentional opposition to what (they believe) God desires; those who have been living for God's enemy, the devil, rather than God.

Could you see yourself in one or more of those descriptions? Don't be afraid to admit it. This is what "qualifies" you to receive the mercy of being saved by our loving Father! The truth is none of us deserved to be saved. None of us can be good enough long enough to merit salvation. We have all fallen far short of God's uncompromising standards.

## Pre-qualified by a Great Love

It takes a lot of love to want to save people like us, but our Father has it: God is love. It takes a lot of grace and patience to want to help people like us get saved, live saved and stay saved all the way to heaven, but our Father has it: He is the "God of all grace"! It takes a lot of sacrifice to pay the penalty for all of our wrong ways and wrong doing, so that people like us can be saved, but Jesus was willing and able to do it: He is our all-sufficient Savior!

Take heart dear Christian (or soon to be Christian), whatever your condition may be, you have a God who is intent on saving you. He is fully prepared to do everything necessary to save you to "the uttermost." Jesus is even praying for you when you can't find the right way to pray for yourself.

**Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them. Hebrews 7:25**

Since we are all fully qualified to receive God's salvation, the next logical question is how to get to heaven...



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## Prayer

*Father, thank You for making it so clear in Your Word that You want to save someone like me. I've been seeing how far I have fallen short, how little real strength I have to do the right thing, and how little desire I have at times to live the way that I know You would want me to live. I have been so afraid that I could never qualify for Your love or for getting to heaven. Now, I'm beginning to see that no one qualifies, that it's not about our goodness, but Yours! Thank You for loving me so perfectly and for making a way for me to be saved through the sacrifice of Jesus.*



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## CHAPTER FIVE

# How Can I Get to Heaven?

First, you have to give up the false idea that there is something other than a true heaven out there. Then, you need to realize that you cannot possibly "get" yourself there. Then, the rest is up to Someone else...

**And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" Luke 18:18 ESV**

## Let Someone Else Save You

You are going to love this! You getting to heaven is a piece of cake. Jesus has literally done all of the hard work and the Holy Spirit will be doing all the heavy lifting. You don't even have to convince Father God to let you in—He wants you in!

Getting you saved so that you can get to heaven is your loving Father's idea from beginning to end. If the enemy had his way, you would never even realize that there is a heaven to go to (and a hell to avoid) and you would certainly never realize that you are going to need Jesus to save you in order to get you there. If you are wondering "How can I get to heaven?" then relax--this is a clear sign that the God of heaven is already working with you to get you there.



God has been working to save you all throughout your life. You just may not be very aware of what He has been doing. So, stay calm. You don't need to talk God into saving you or impress Him with how terrified you are of hell or how aghast you are at your own sinfulness. If you even have a glimmer of these realities, it is because He has been helping you to know the truth so that He can use your love of the truth (which He gives you) to save you.

## The Only Thing You Need

All you need to do to get to heaven is to "get saved." This phrase has many true facets of meaning which you will hear from time to time, such as "entering into a life-saving relationship with Jesus Christ"; "giving your life to Christ"; "having your sins forgiven"; "turning from sin to live for God"; "inviting Jesus into your heart and life"; "believing in what Jesus has done for you at the cross"; and of course "being born again."



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Don't let this confuse you! The main idea is that you are making an appeal to God to save you and you are choosing to put your belief and trust in what He says He has done for you through Jesus Christ. This act of faith is our side of it in terms of the part we play.

On the Father's side, there is a lot going on that we can't see and only partially may feel or sense. These will be covered more fully in the article "[What is the new birth?](#)" For now let's just say that what is involved in our salvation is nothing less than making us entirely new creations placed in a new spiritual environment (new for us) called the Kingdom of God. Truly, God does all of the hardest parts!

## Preparing for the Steps

So far, we have been talking about turning towards God to be saved so that we can get to heaven. This is the second half of salvation, so to speak, the longer and better half: Being saved for God, for this life and for heaven. The first part is being saved from our sins and from hell. The two go hand in hand. You absolutely cannot take sins with you into heaven. In fact, they are guaranteed to take you in the opposite direction, if you cling to them down here! They also get in the way of enjoying the earthly life heaven wants to give you.

These two sides of salvation are encompassed by a word which describes the necessary first step of the process: repentance. Repentance indicates a change of mind or a change of direction. It also carries a dual meaning: turning from sin and turning towards God. Repentance may include feeling sorry, but in essence it is a turning around. Imagine a traveler feeling sorry he is going in the wrong direction but continuing on anyway—that's not repentance. That's hard-headedness! Repentance is turning completely around and going the right way.

Desiring to be saved means, therefore, that there is a genuine willingness to give up anything in your life in order to turn to God. No one can become free of sin without God's help, so a part of repentance and the salvation which follows it, is seeking God's love, wisdom and power for complete deliverance from known sins. Fortunately for all of us, the Lord doesn't say, "Get free of your sins, and then I'll see about saving you." Mercifully, He receives all who turn to Him, no matter what their condition. Even so, there has to be a resolute and real decision to turn from sin as part of the turning to God. Otherwise, we are still heading the wrong way on the road but praying that God will miraculously make it end at the right destination anyway. That's not being real.

## The Part You Have to Play

What do you have to part with immediately? You have to give up at least those portions of pride and fear that have been holding you back. These may seem like friends and wise counselors, but they are not. Pride and fear are our enemies! They have pushed and pulled us into countless dangers and wrong directions. All along they have been thwarting God's desire to draw us into His loving embrace.

Don't worry; you don't have to give up all your pride and fear — even if you could. Alas, there is simply too much of it to become free all at once. Genuine liberation from those two formidable foes will take God working with us step by step as we get to know Him better. So, be prepared: You will have pride and fear dogging your steps for some time to come. This isn't a final farewell to those false friends, but it is a good beginning.



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You would also be wise to give up your claim to yourself, your right to do things "my way." I have known many people who have been saved without doing this, but they are a sad sight, really. Trying to go on living for that false god Self with Jesus on the inside is an idea that cannot fly. What works beautifully is learning how to live for Jesus, allowing Him to take the lead. He knows what's truly good for you and always has your best interest at heart.

Why not give yourself fully and freely to Jesus and be done with it? Your life won't be worth a plugged nickel to you if you die without giving it to the Lord for Him to save. And it isn't worth much even now if you try to live without Him. It will never bring you peace and fulfillment unless it is given entirely to God. Don't wait to get to heaven to finally live for Jesus. Don't wait until you die to start living the heavenly life. It is always meant to be lived right here, right now. There really is no other time and place for it but this present moment and all the present moments which will follow this one.

**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

## The Steps to Heaven

The way up first leads us down. These steps to heaven begin by leading "downward" into the humility of total honesty, into facing unpleasant realities and into recognizing our moral failure.

### Step 1

Realize that you will die one day. This first step to awakening is obvious once you have taken it. Nevertheless, countless multitudes live in apparent denial, thinking or hoping that they will never have to face the day of their own death. The truth is it won't kill you to look death square in the face—even your own inevitable death—nor will it rob you of your zest for life. And if things go well, you will arrive at the Right Solution to the death dilemma and a sword that has been hanging over your head will have been removed. That's a good thing! So, let's turn and face the dread reality: Every life ends in death. Or does it?

### Step 2

Realize that you want to go to heaven, not hell. Life doesn't "just end" with death: It goes on long after we die. Most of us have a nagging suspicion that there are only two possible outcomes to life on earth: eternal life or eternal death; eternal reward or eternal punishment; heaven or hell. No one wants to burn. Sure, some crazy, hell-bent rock stars think it's going to be a party down under, but no sane person believes that.

### Step 3

Realize you can't get to heaven by yourself. You are doing great so far! You have passed two fundamental measures of sanity: a) you know you are not god and that your life on earth will end one day and b) you have the good sense to realize that you need to strap on a golden parachute before your plane crashes and burns. But that thought of burning forces to the surface the most troubling questions of all: "Do I qualify for heaven? Will God let me in? Why would God let me in?"



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You may try to answer these questions with bluff and bluster: "I'm really not so bad. I'm certainly not as bad as others are, or as I could have been." Ah, yes, you have been trying to be good, but have you been good enough? Your conscience will never let you say that you have fully measured up to even your own (low) standards, much less God's far higher ones.

#### Step 4

Realize that you need someone to save you. It may hurt to admit it, but none of us have the power to rise to heaven on our own, nor do any of us have the moral character to qualify us for being raised up there by God. But don't think that all is lost! There is Someone who wants to save us; Someone who has the power to get us there; Someone who can "bend the rules" so that we can be allowed to enter in. Who is the heaven-sent Someone? His Name is Jesus Christ and He is fully empowered and qualified by Father God to get anyone to heaven who wants to be saved by Him. So, what are you waiting for? Take the next step!

#### Step 5

Go to that "Someone" and [get saved](#)

### Prayer

*Father, my eyes are open! I can see that I am going to die one day and I sure don't want to end up in the wrong place. But I have to admit that I don't have the moral purity and perfection to be assured of making it to heaven on my own. Thank You for seeing my need of Your saving help long before I did! Thank You for making me aware of an even greater need and desire—to know You. Please don't let me "sleep walk" through the rest of my life, missing out on the greatest gift life has to offer, a living, loving relationship with my God! Lead me now into the steps I need to take and the prayers I need to make. I am ready to give myself to You!*



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## CHAPTER SIX

# How Can I Get Saved?

This is the best part! And it is a surprisingly easy step to take—if you are willing to take it. The hard part is all that it took to get you ready and make you willing to be open to a moment like this...

**There is only one Lord [Jesus], and he is generous to everyone who asks for his help. All who call out to the Lord will be saved.** Romans 10:12-13 ESV

## Put Doubts and Fears Aside

God has not made this hard for us! The only really difficult part is coming to the realization that we need God to save us. That usually means getting ourselves into terrible trouble or discovering what an undeniable moral failure we actually are. We may prolong the agony of self-discovery by thinking that we can fix our troubles (but we can't fix them all) and that we can fix our moral failures (but how can self fix self?).

We may hold out to our very last spiritual breath thinking "all is lost," or "I just can't give in," but if we are ready to reach out to God, the rest is easy. Jesus did the really hard part on the cross when He took the punishment our sins deserved. His "work" of dying for our sins is actually what gets us saved. God wants this more than you do! So, put your doubts and fears aside as well as you can and let's go forward. The Lord knows how to meet you along the way. Just allow yourself to follow these simple steps, study the scriptures and say the prayers:



## Steps to Salvation

How can I get saved? Follow these steps!

### Step 1

Admit you need God. Have you realized that your life is not working out—that it is going in the wrong direction? Have you realized that you cannot "fix" you and that no one else and nothing else can either? Good! Then what you have been going through has been teaching you a life-saving lesson! Now, you are ready to begin your true life.



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## Step 2

Turn to God. This means turning all the way around: Away from your wrong ways and towards God and His ways. You have been showing Him your back; it's time to show Him your face and to start seeking to look in His face.

## Step 3

Confess to God. This is telling the truth to God, hiding nothing. The problem isn't other people, or the world God made, or God and His ways. It's you and your ways! Let Him know how you have lived for yourself and not for Him. Be honest with Him about how that has hurt others and yourself. Then "confess" your need of His mercy and help.

## Step 4

Believe in God. By an act of your will choose to believe that God really does love you, forgives you, and wants to save you through what Jesus has done for you at the cross. Now ask Jesus to come into your heart, into your life and to live His life in you. He is certain to do it! Be sure to say the prayers at the end of this article.

## There Is So Much More

Now that you have prayed to be saved, you are! You may be feeling Christ's peace, fresh confidence or a sense of hope restored. You may have received a vision, felt His love or were touched by His presence. Or He may be asking you to simply take it on faith and just rest in that. The experience is different for everyone. The common element that dawns inside all of us is a faith-knowing, summed up in the phrase, "I know that I know that Jesus is alive!" and the willingness to declare that He is Lord.

**If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.** Romans 10:9

You will certainly want to "nail this down" by going to "[How can I be sure I'm saved?](#)" There is actually so much that has just taken place that it really needs a whole chapter to describe the birth that you have undergone ("[What is the new birth?](#)") and another to describe the life that you have now entered ("[What are my first steps?](#)"). Please keep reading!

## Prayers

*Father, please forgive me for all the ways in which I have lived for myself, hurt others, and turned my back on You. I confess and repent of all these sins. Thank You for loving me and making a way for my sins to be forgiven through Jesus.*

*Jesus, please come into my heart, into my life and live Your life in me. I surrender myself to You, body, soul and spirit. Grant me an assurance of my eventual entry into heaven won for me by Your death and resurrection. Help me by Your Word and Holy Spirit to trust and follow You step by step into the new life here on earth that You have also promised can be mine.*

*Holy Spirit, please come and heal my broken heart of all the hurt that my own sins and those of others have caused. Show me and tell me Your truth in ways that I can receive and understand. Help me fight to remain loyal to the One who laid down His life for me by laying down my “old life” and my wrong ways for Him!*

Did you just pray to be saved? Congratulations! Email us with the good news:

[steve@healingstreamsusa.org](mailto:steve@healingstreamsusa.org)



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## CHAPTER SEVEN

# What Is the New Birth?

If you have prayed to be saved, you will definitely want to find out what just happened to you. Maybe you feel like you are floating on air. That's great but be sure to come back down to earth eventually and load up on some deeper understandings.

**Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3:3 ESV**

## Let Godly Curiosity Awaken!

If you just prayed the prayers for [how to get saved?](#), you may be wondering, "What just happened to me?" That's a great question and it would take [a lot more words](#) on my part and will take a lot of living on your part to do justice to it. No need to wonder, "How can I be born again?" That's already happened! Like a young child you will be experiencing a true awaking of curiosity, especially in terms of the divine things which extend endlessly into the vast Mystery of God.

You are now a learner for life! Your best teachers for this are the Word (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. All a primer like this can do is give you pointers. For instance, you have probably heard that being saved means being born again. But what does that mean?



## Major Elements of the New Birth

The Lord has packed a lot into His answer to our prayer for salvation. You have been spiritually reborn—raised to new life by faith in Jesus Christ and by the gift of the Holy Spirit. It would be very easy to miss most of it and only go with the few things you may have felt or been shown. Here are some of the main items that may have escaped your notice:

### 1) You Were Spiritually Dead

Did you even know that? I sure didn't! In the moment of conversion God brought your spirit to life by putting His Spirit within you and reconnecting you with Himself.



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## 2) You Have Been Sealed to God

Your spirit was joined to the Holy Spirit who came to live within you as a "guarantee" of good things to come.

## 3) You Received a Heart Transplant

The heart you had was self-centered, deceitful and corrupt in God's eyes, so He also placed a new heart within you. This heart is entirely good, just like that of Jesus.

## 4) You Were Dead in Your Sins

That's how deep the separation from God had become. Through your faith in Christ, God was fully able to cover your sins and cleanse you with the Blood that Jesus shed on your behalf.

## 5) You Have Been "Justified"

God not only forgave you your sins, He also separated you from them. This is called justification. Because of your faith in Jesus, you have been given a standing or status with God that you don't deserve and could never earn. He has chosen to treat you with high favor, just as if you were a sinless child in His eyes. You may indeed have sin in you, but you are not your sins!

## 6) You Have Been Liberated

You were under the oppression of an invisible kingdom. You may have thought you were simply living on earth, but you were also held in bondage spiritually under the power and control of an invisible enemy operating in another realm contiguous with earth. In the moment of conversion, you were translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God's beloved Son.

## 7) You Were Blind

There was a veil over your heart that obstructed your mind and kept you from "seeing" the resurrected Lord of all creation, Jesus Christ. That veil has been removed, allowing you to see Christ with eyes of faith. The eye of your heart has been enlightened and your lost spiritual sight has been restored.

## 8) The Image of God Has Been Restored to You

You had been created to both carry and reflect God's Image, but you had lost the vision. Now that His True Image has been restored to you as you behold God in the face of Jesus Christ, you are able to carry His Image in your heart and more truly reflect His Image by your life. This is what transforms you.



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## 9) You Have Been “Reborn” As a New Creation

All things have passed away; many new things have come. You will still have plenty of your old ways, thoughts and feelings left to deal with—these haven’t been eliminated—but you have been given a new power to overcome them.

## 10) You Are Now a Child of God in the Family of God

You were isolated from the family of faith, but now you have been adopted, "brought near" and made a member of Christ's Body on earth and in heaven.

## 11) Get Your Space Suit on for This One

You have been raised and are now seated with Christ in heavenly places. Clearly this is spiritual, not physical, however that doesn't mean it is any less real. A part of you is seated with Christ, sharing in His authority.

## 12) You Are “in Christ” and He Is in You

Your new life will only work properly as you trust yourself entirely to His love and leadership. As you trust and obey, He leads you into the life you both desire.

Believe it or not, there’s more: The gifts of God are too numerous to enumerate, which makes searching things out in His Word an adventure. Walking with God is like a treasure hunt with the clues scattered all over scripture.

Our "new birth" is really quite a marvel! There are two fascinating perspectives you will want to "see" before heading on to the next big question. Take a quick look at "[How was I born again?](#)" Then go on to explore just [how God saves us](#).

## Prayer

*Father, thank You! I had no idea that You would be doing so much for me! Help me to grow in knowing how great Your salvation truly is. Help me stay grateful for all that You are doing to save me for heaven and to bring heaven’s way of life into my life now.*



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## CHAPTER EIGHT

# How Was I Born Again?

First, there is the question [What Just Happened to Me?](#) That's quite a long list! Then, comes trying to figure out how it happened. Here we are poking our heads into a mystery, but at least Jesus dropped us some "bread crumbs" to inspire our thinking.

**Having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the living Word of God, and abiding forever. 1 Peter 1:23 MKJV**

## First, Let's Consider the First Birth

Jesus compared salvation directly to the birth process, telling Nicodemus that he “must be born again.” We have just surveyed [a dozen different features](#) of the new birth explained to us in the Bible. Now let's take up the birth metaphor itself and see what it can show us. When you were born the first time, who did most of the work—you, your parents, or God?

### 1. God Gave You Life Through the Seed of Your Father

Your father didn't know you, only God did. Had it not been for God wanting to create you and choosing to bring you forth, you would have remained a gleam in your father's eye.

### 2. God Shaped You in Your Mother's Womb

Your mother's body nourished and grew you. However, your mother didn't know you, only God did. Had it not been for God "forming" you in the hidden places and choosing to protect the growth of the life He placed within your mother, you would never have seen the light of day.



### 3. You Did Precisely Nothing!

At most we could say you willingly submitted to the process of being born, but even that is a stretch. What choice did you have? Your mother and father, on the other hand, made a real contribution. They were willing to do their part, but no one has the power to create life except God. The God of Life had to do all the hard, impossible things. Remember our “salvation basics”? Even our natural life was a gift of grace that we received (entered into, made use of, and enjoyed) “by faith”, by entrusting ourselves to it. Spiritual birth is very similar.



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## Now, Compare that to the New Birth

How was I born again? By a process of sowing and reaping...

### 1. Like a Father, God Has Been Sowing His Seeds of Truth

Into "the womb" of your interior world (seed is the root word that semen comes from). He has used many people, some in positions of authority, to speak truth into your life. Don't just think Bible truths: All truth comes from God and can lead back to Him.

### 2. Others Have Been Praying for Your Salvation

Like a mother the church has been welcoming and nurturing your life in Christ. God has used many believers' prayers to cultivate the words others have planted.

Once again, God does the impossible parts. All words, no matter how true, and all prayers, no matter how earnest, would accomplish nothing in terms of your salvation, unless it were God's good pleasure and free choice to bring you forth from your darkness into the light of His unending Day. In the hidden places deep within you the Holy Spirit has been wrestling with you through your conscience, working with the prayers He has gathered to bring those words to fruition. You have been "born again" by the most essential seed of them all—by the implanted Word!

**Love one another earnestly from a pure heart, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. 1 Peter 1:22-23**

### 3. What Did You Contribute?

Compared to what God has done in saving us, compared to the ways He worked through others and all that they contributed, what have we done to accomplish our new birth? Precisely nothing! At most we could say we willingly submitted to the process of being born again, but even that is a stretch. What choice did we have? Like the "godfather" of movie fame, the One True Father "made us an offer we couldn't refuse!" He offered us life and we said "yes" to Jesus. Yet, even there, He had to work inside of us to make us willing to say yes. This is why God rightly gets all the glory and all the praise: We have been saved by God and His grace through faith, not of our own works.

## Being Born Verses Being in the Womb

We compared being born again with natural birth the first time around. Now, let's look at the new birth as the successful completion of a birthing process by comparing life in the womb to life outside the womb. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about the necessity of being "born again", He wasn't denying the greatness of natural life, but indicating that natural life has very real limitations. What is needed for our spiritual growth to take place is the kind of radical change that birth brings. This analogy invites us to compare the new birth to the experience of a child emerging from the womb.



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The child is alive in the womb, but birth brings life-enhancing transformations in almost every way. Think for a moment about what that child might have been experiencing. Life in the womb wasn't so bad. Sure, it was dark, a bit cramped and there was little real freedom to move about as you pleased, but it was safe, warm and very cozy. The world outside only penetrated with bumps, muffled sounds and vague impressions of light. It was easy to do nothing but sleep, stretch and drool. Then comes the big day: Contractions! Water break! Pressure and pushing! "What's happening to me?" Being born is a scary, painful process! It is also an irreversible "step" into a great unknown.

After going through many changes, the new born child emerges into a wonder-filled environment at a level of life it could never have reached on its own. It has been a journey from darkness into light, from isolation into family, from restraint into freedom, and from helpless dependence into ever increasing abilities and independence. In the womb the child was entirely self-centered; after the womb the child grows into a vital relationship with the ones who gave it life. In the womb the infant knew practically nothing; after the womb the real learning begins. In the womb the fetus was loved; after the womb the baby can begin to love in return.

It only takes a little imagination to compare our natural birth to the superior realities and enhanced relationships that are associated with our spiritual rebirth!

## Prayer

*Father, You are so incredibly masterful at what You do! Thank You for saving me through faith in Your Son and His death on my behalf. Thank You for the resurrection into new life You are giving me through Your Holy Spirit. What a wonder being "born again" truly is!*



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