

## What is a Christian?

About two-thirds of Americans claim to be Christian. Do you think everyone who claims to be Christian is really a follower of Jesus?

We can look at what the Bible says to understand what it means to be a Christian.

*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

Why do you think people need saving?

Who or what do you think we need to be saved from?

*Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Romans 5:1

What do you think it means to have peace with God? Why is faith in Jesus necessary for this peace?

Do you believe you have peace with God right now?

## Are you good enough to get into heaven?

If you died and God asked you, "Why should I let you into heaven?" what would you say?

What percentage chance do you believe you would have of going to heaven if you died today?

Here is a 5-question test to find out if you are good enough on your own to get into heaven.

1. Have you ever told a lie? Y N
2. Have you ever stolen anything (no matter how small)? Y N
3. Have you ever used "God" or "Jesus" as a curse word? Y N
4. Have you ever looked at someone with lustful thoughts? Y N
5. Have you broken the commandment "You shall have no other gods before Me."? Y N

## What are the consequences of these actions according to the Bible?

1. Have you ever told a lie?  
The Ninth of the Ten Commandments is, "You shall not lie." Revelation 21:8 says, *"...all liars, shall have their part in the lake of fire..."*
2. Have you ever stolen anything (no matter how small)?  
The Eighth of the Ten Commandments is "You shall not steal." 1 Corinthians 6:10 says *"No thieves...shall inherit the kingdom of God."*
3. Have you ever used "God" or "Jesus" as a curse word?  
The Third of the Ten Commandments is "You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain." If you've ever used the name "God," "Jesus," or "Christ" as a curse word, that offense is called "blasphemy." Leviticus 24:16 says *"he that blasphemes the name of the LORD, shall surely be put to death..."*
4. Have you ever looked at someone with lustful thoughts?  
The Seventh of the Ten Commandments is "You shall not commit adultery." If you've ever looked at someone with lustful thoughts, that makes you an "adulterer" in your heart. Jesus said, *"You have heard it said, You shall not commit adultery: But I say to you, that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart"* (Matthew 5:28). 1 Corinthians 6:9–10 says *"no adulterers...shall inherit the kingdom of God."*
5. Have you ever broken the first commandment "You shall have no other gods before Me"?  
This commandment (Exodus 20:3) is clarified later in the Old Testament to mean that we should love God with all of our heart, soul, and might (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). In the New Testament, Jesus clarifies this is the most important commandment (Matthew 22:36-40). Keeping this command means that you love God perfectly every moment of your life. If you have ever done anything wrong, you have broken this commandment.

## What about the good things people do?

Because we have disobeyed God and done evil, we deserve punishment. Good deeds can never make up for the fact that we've broken God's law. Think of it this way: if a person was guilty of murder but gives money to charity before coming before the judge, does that make up for their crime? Of course not. The murderer still deserves to be punished for their crime. This good deed will mean nothing to a good judge when they pass a sentence.

### The Bad News

These questions show how you and I stand when judged by just five of God's Ten Commandments. God is perfectly just. If God judged us by His standard, would we be innocent or guilty?

According to the Bible, the consequences of sin (disobeying God) is physical death, and experiencing the justice of God's wrath against sin after physical death. The Bible calls this state of punishment "hell."

Based on how the Bible speaks about God's righteousness and our evil deeds, do you think we deserve heaven or hell?

## The Good News!

God does not leave us without the hope of being with Him in heaven, even though we all deserve wrath!

God the Father sent His only Son to us so that we could be saved. Jesus is God, but He humbled Himself by being born as a human being like us. He lived a perfect life, fulfilling the requirements of God's law that we all fail to fulfill. Then he took on the sins of the world, paying the debt that justice demands by bearing God's wrath against sin. He was crucified on the cross, buried, and on the third day rose from the grave proving that he is the Son of God and that God's justice was perfectly satisfied! Through Jesus' sacrifice God showed His amazing grace, extending forgiveness and righteousness to us!

2 Corinthians 5:21 says *"God made him who had no sin [Jesus] to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."* That means Jesus takes our sin, and we receive His perfect righteousness by faith.

God promises to save anyone who trusts in Jesus and what He has done for them. Jesus Himself tells us: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."* John 3:16

Romans 6:23 helps us understand this. It says, *"For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."*

**The Bridge Illustration** can give us a good picture of what this verse means:

**The Pie Illustration** shows what it means for Jesus to be the Lord of your life.

## Reflection Questions

Do you have any questions about what we have gone through?

Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?

Do you believe Jesus died on the cross to bear God's wrath that your sin deserves, He was buried, and that He was raised from the dead?

Do you want to turn from your sin (repentance), and put your trust in Jesus alone to save you?

If you turn away from your sin and trust Jesus to save you, you can be confident of your salvation! If that is something you want to do now, we can take a minute to pray about this decision. You can follow A.B.C. as a guide for your prayer:

- Admit you are a sinner
- Believe Jesus died and rose to pay for your sins
- Commit your life to following Him

*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. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. For the Scripture says, "Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame." Romans 10:9-11*

The Bible tells us that the results of faith are the forgiveness of sin, becoming more like Jesus throughout life, and eventually being with God forever!

Being involved in a local church is one of the ways Christians grow in faith, and how anyone can learn more about God. Do you have a church you attend?

Another way God helps Christians grow is through spending time with other believers to look at what the Bible says. This is also helpful for those exploring what they believe! Do you want to get together again to talk about how to grow spiritually?

**Discipleship Challenge:** Read back over this lesson and write down any questions you have. Start reading the Gospel of John, one chapter a day and write down your thoughts and questions.

## Leader's Guide

This lesson is a simple tool you can use to share the gospel with a potential disciple! This clear presentation of the gospel is a major tool God is using around the world to help people start a relationship with Jesus.

### Purpose

The goal of this lesson can be summed up into 4 points (shown below). We want to dismantle the false gospel that people can be "good enough" to earn God's favor and clearly communicate the payment Jesus made for them on the cross.

1. All of us are sinners and no one is "good enough" to get to God by good works.
2. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins through His death on the cross and resurrection!
3. The way we receive God's forgiveness is by placing our trust in Jesus as our Lord (leader) and Savior.

### Plan

1. **Start by talking casually and building a relationship** with the person, but try and transition to deeper subjects, such as family and upbringing. Then walk through the three-story outline below.
  - *Their Story*: Ask them to share their story about their experience with spiritual things. Say something like, "So what's your background when it comes to spiritual things?" Most people have something to share.
  - *Your Story*: Share your testimony briefly. Try and do a one-minute version.
  - *God's Story*: Introduce the Gospel Appointment lesson. Here's an example of what to say: "Something that the ministry I am a part of does is these Bible lessons that teach the foundations of having a relationship with God. Do you mind if I show you one?" or, "I have this illustration that explains the big story of God..."
2. **Pull out the gospel lesson and read it with them.** It's that simple! Make sure to sit close enough that both of you can comfortably see it. You don't need to add to it, simply take them through the lesson and the illustrations.
3. **Make the message of Scripture clear.**
4. **If they have questions or reject parts of what you've gone over, respectfully ask them if they want to talk about those things some other time.** Don't be pushy or try to force a decision! You aren't sharing in order to challenge them, but to gain a better understanding of where they're at so that you can continue to cultivate a relationship with them around the gospel. You can ask if they want to meet again to talk about any specific questions or objections they have.
5. **If they say they want to turn away from sin and trust Jesus, show your excitement!**
6. **Celebrate and set up a follow-up meeting!** Tell them that this is the most important decision they could make! Then ask if they want to meet up again so that you can encourage each other to grow in faith. Try to schedule a time to meet again before you leave!
7. **Thank and praise God for what He is doing!**

### Pro-Tips

- Read the lesson out loud with meaning and confidence.
- Move quickly through the lesson, and avoid tangents and lengthy anecdotes or explanations for every Gospel truth. This is not meant to be an in-depth study on each verse, we want them to meet Jesus and whet their appetite for more, so keep it simple! Be brief when explaining illustrations and points.
- Don't stop and ask "Have you heard this before?" out of insecurity. Asking those types of questions will make them feel awkward. Those types of questions may tempt them to lie even if they don't really understand. If they have heard it before it is likely that they will tell you.
- Share the lesson with confidence even if you know that they are a Christian. It will strengthen their understanding of the gospel and serve as an example for what they can do with future disciples.
- Make sure your tone sounds like you are sharing "Good News!" Which is what the word, "Gospel" is. Don't present it with an overly serious "turn or burn" vibe. Have the attitude of "one beggar telling

another beggar where they found bread." Say something like, "I would love to go over something that explains the most important thing about our group. Is that ok?"

- Focus on the fact that Jesus paid for our sins as our substitute on the cross and was raised from the dead. If they don't get anything else, make sure they understand that.
- Relax and trust God to use His Word. Don't be preachy, just share the material with confidence, knowing God has placed you in this meeting

### **Key Illustrations:**

**Bridge Illustration:** This is a great tool for quickly and clearly sharing the Gospel in a visual way.

1. Draw two sides of a chasm. On the left side, draw two stick figures (they represent you and the person you are presenting to) and on the right side, write "God".
2. Explain that we are separated from God due to our sin and that nothing we can produce on our own (good works, religion, philosophy) can bridge that gap.
3. Draw a cross in between the two sides, bridging the gap between us and God.
4. Explain that Jesus, God's son, died on the cross in order for us to be able to cross over to God. We cross over through belief in God and Christ's sacrifice (John 5:24).

### **Pie Illustration**

The point of the pie illustration is to explain "Lordship." Lordship means that Jesus is the leader and king of your life. He calls the shots in every area of life. Lordship means leaving your self-ruled life for a Jesus-ruled life.

1. Draw one pie chart. Say, "this is the way most people live life." Write in different areas of life such as girlfriend, job, school, family, future, free time, friends and sometimes God gets a slice. Then say, "that is not what it means to be a Christian."
2. Draw a second pie chart. Draw a circle with a big cross in the middle and explain that Jesus leads you and empowers you to do each of these areas in a way that honors Him. Write in those areas and mention how He may impact those areas. Say something like, "it's an amazing blessing to have Jesus influencing every area of your life."
3. Simply ask: "Which pie chart would you like to most represent your life?"
4. It is often helpful to point out that you won't be able to live it out perfectly. That it is, "more about direction than perfection".