

# 10 Practical Steps in Following Jesus

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## Step 2: For God So Loved the World

### God's plan

*“For God so loved the world (that includes you!) that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

(John 3:16)

God created a beautiful world, and it is His plan that man would serve and worship God. However, this plan has been spoiled by everyone from the first man until you and me. We have all rebelled against God, choosing to live as we want to, without Him. The Bible calls this sin. Because of this the human race has become spoiled bringing chaos and disaster to the world.

### God's Son

*“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

(Romans 3:23)

We deserve to suffer the consequence of our sin and rejection of God, which is to be rejected by God forever. However, God loves the world, you and me, so much that He sent His Son Jesus, who was also God, to share our life and hardships. But unlike us, Jesus did not sin. In fact, He went about reversing the effects of our rebellion. God's anger for our rebellion fell on Jesus, who was perfectly innocent. He was punished instead of us and died an agonising death. The Bible says that when He was crucified He took our sinfulness into Himself. Jesus did not stay dead though. God raised Him from the dead and He appeared to many on earth before God took Him up to be with Himself.

Jesus' life, death and resurrection opened up the way for us to have a restored relationship with God.

### God's forgiveness

*“He who conceals his sin does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.”*

(Proverbs 28:13)

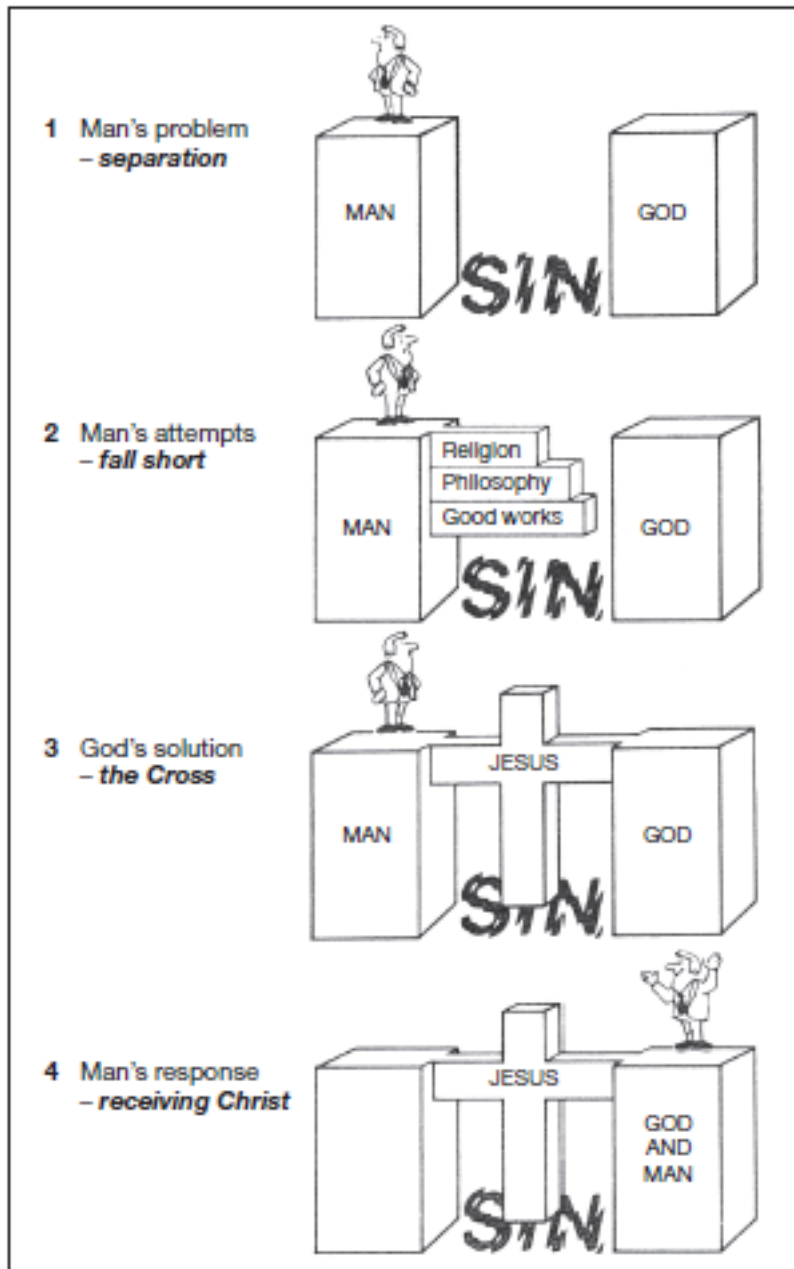
Before we are made right with God, we need to say we are sorry for our rebellion, admit that we are wrong and ask for God's forgiveness, believing that Jesus died in our place. When God forgives us, we are made right with Him and we can begin our lives again. It is really like being born again into a new life because God sees us as new. God even gives us the Holy Spirit, who is also God, to help us live the life that He wants for us.

### God's answer

*Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me.”*

(John 14:6)

Man has tried all sorts of things to restore his inner need to have a relationship with God including good works, charity and religion. These things fail to achieve their goal because they are not God's answer to the problem of our separation from Him. God's answer is JESUS.



## Our choice

*“If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”*

(Romans 10:9)

Jesus said that He will return one day to judge the world, both the ones alive and the ones who have died. When this happens the ones who have been made right with God will live forever in His presence. But if we have rejected God and His plan to rescue us through Jesus, then we still face the result of our decision: an eternity without God, without love, without friends, without hope and without anything good or beautiful. God has given us a choice; we must choose today before it is too late. It is the most important choice that we will ever have to make and it is a matter of life or death.

## Life to the full

*Jesus said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”*

(John 10:10)

God wants to change this world. He wants to do it through you and me by coming to live in our hearts, sharing our problems, our joys, our difficulties and sharing His Holy Spirit power to help us live life the way He intended.

## Our response

There are four simple steps in order to take a hold of the work Jesus did for us:

1. We need to admit that we do displease God (sin) and fall short of God's standard.
2. We need, with God's help, to turn from going our own way and go God's way instead (repentance).
3. We need to believe that Jesus Christ, God's Son, died on the Cross to take the punishment for our sin and therefore enabled us to have a relationship with God again.
4. We need to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and that He is now at the right hand of God the Father. We need to trust Jesus and

make Him our Lord and Saviour and commit our lives to Him. To make someone Lord means we make them the boss. When Jesus asks us to do something we need to obey Him.

## God's assurance

If you pray the prayer at the end of this study (or you have prayed another like it) and you prayed it from your heart, meaning every word, then you are a Christian. Whether you felt anything or not you are changed because God has promised this and He cannot lie. You have become a disciple or follower of Jesus. The step you have made is only the beginning. It is like being born again and starting a new life. You are now a child of God and He has given you the Holy Spirit so that you will have all the help and power you need to live a life pleasing to God. Just as a new-born baby has many needs in order to grow and mature, so does a new Christian. Read and study the rest of this book to discover some of the basic things God wants you to do now you are a Christian.

## Questions and tips

1. What do the following verses say about why God sent His Son Jesus into the world? (John 3:16-18; John 17:2)
2. What is the consequence of displeasing God (sinning)? (Isaiah 59:2)
3. What do we need to do? (Mark 1:15; Acts 3:19)
4. Forgiveness means to remove and forget. Read I John 1:9 in the light of this.
5. What will we do if we love God? (John 14:23)
6. Do we really receive the Holy Spirit when we become a Christian? (Ephesians 1:13,14)
7. Read the following verses for your encouragement: John 1:12; John 5:24; Romans 5:8; Hebrews 13:5; I John 5:11,12.

## Prayer

Almighty God, it is true that I do things that fall short of your standard. I honestly want to turn from all this that I recognise as sin. I ask your forgiveness for all I have done that is wrong in your sight. I want to go your way instead of my own way. Thank you for sending your Son Jesus to die on the Cross so that I can be free of the punishment I deserve. I am glad that you raised Jesus from the dead and that He is alive today. I make Jesus the Lord of my life. Please come into my life right now so that I may be made new. Thank you for hearing my prayer. Please help me now to live the rest of my life with the help and power of the Holy Spirit that you have given to me. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.