

HARD OR EASY?

As **EASY** as A-B-C-D.

As **EASY** as receiving a Gift!
As **HARD** as admitting, "I'm helpless without You."
As **HARD** as putting yourself **UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT!**

HOW TO FIND LIFE AS IT'S MEANT TO BE

God made you, and loves you. He has a wonderful purpose for your life. How do we know that? His message, the Bible, tells us so. (And millions of people have proved it by experience too.)

"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 NIV)

THAT IS LOVE!

Jesus said, "I have come that they might have Life, and have it to the full." (John 10:10 NIV)

THAT IS GOOD NEWS!

BUT—you cannot experience God's love and purpose unless you are "in touch" with Him—that is, in a proper relationship with Him. Being a real Christian means having that proper relationship.

Just as the lamp that is not plugged in has no light, and as a branch broken off from a tree has no life, so apart from God you are spiritually "dead."

There are 2 reasons why people apart from Jesus Christ are spiritually dead:

1. due to their **SINS**: wrong words, thoughts, acts and motives (for sometimes folks do good actions for bad motives, and spoils everything. Like if a salesman attends church only because he hopes later to sell his products to people he meets there.)
2. due to their **SIN**: that is, the attitude of choosing to go your way, not God's way. If you are determined to run your life the way you please instead of seeking and following God's will revealed in the Bible, that is sin. For God made us and owns us, and we should put Him first. Jesus is our example, for He prayed to the Heavenly Father, "Your will, not mine, be done."

So we are separated from God and under His displeasure due to our Sins and our Sin. (And it is sin that leads to **sins**. Think about it!)

B-U-T, because of His love, at great cost to Himself God provided a way for us to become "alive" and to experience His wonderful purpose of giving us "life to the full." He did this through His Son, Jesus Christ.

**TO ESTABLISH THIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD,
FOUR THINGS ARE NECESSARY.**

They begin with **A, B, C, D**.

1. There is something to **ADMIT**: that you are a sinner and need a savior or rescuer. You have broken God's laws, whether by active rebellion (knowingly doing wrong) or by passive neglect and unconcern (failing to do good things because of selfishness).

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). Some people deny that they are sinners, but actually we all have at some time or other committed the **greatest** sin there is!! What's that?

The greatest sin is to break the **greatest commandment**. Jesus said the greatest commandment is, "**Love the Lord with ALL your heart and soul and mind and strength,**" and also "**Love your neighbor as yourself**" (Mark 12:30). Have you always **obeyed** those **two top commands**?

No! We **all have sinned**, and the **bad news** is that "the **wages of sin is DEATH.**" But the **good news** is that the **free gift** of God is **ETERNAL LIFE in Christ Jesus**" (Romans 6:23).

2. There is something to **BELIEVE**: that **Jesus** is the very **Savior you need**. He is **God's only solution** for our sin. He can save because

(1) He is Christ, the eternal Son of God;

(2) He died for our sins, to pay our penalty. "God did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all." "While we were still sinners Christ died for us." (Romans 8:32 and 5:8)

(3) He arose from death and is living now—present and active in the world today! He can change our lives. He is the **ONLY** one who can make us right with God. Jesus said, "I am the way—the truth and the life. **NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME.**" (John 14:6)

So there is something to **ADMIT**: I am a **sinner** and **need a Savior**. My good deeds and religion cannot blot out my guilt before God. He would be fully justified to punish me, for I deserve it. But there is also something to **BELIEVE**: Jesus is the Savior I need. But there's more...

3. There is something to **CONSIDER**, a **COST** to **COUNT**: You should realize that becoming a disciple of Jesus (that is, a **real Christian, not just a church-member**) involves:

(1) Not only believing in God and Jesus, but also **REPENTING** of your sins seeking to turn from them by God's help;

(2) **SURRENDERING** your life to Jesus (for He is **LORD** as well as **SAVIOR**). That means you determine to follow His commands and His wonderful plan for your life, as found in the Bible.

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet lose or forfeit his very self?" (Luke 9:23-25)

(3) We should **CONFESS OUR FAITH** in Him to other people. We do this in several ways: One is by being Baptized. That means to be submerged in water as an act of faith in Jesus. It is a symbolic act like stretching out your hands to receive His free gift of salvation. The apostle Paul reminded Christians that they had been "buried with Christ through baptism" and raised from the water to "live a new life: (Romans 6:4). We also confess our faith (and nourish it so it becomes stronger) by being active in a local Church that teaches the Bible and trusts in Christ. There we join other followers of His to study, worship and work together to serve God and other people.

"Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The Christians "devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of the bread (the Lord's Supper) and to prayer." And "they gave to anyone as he had need," and they "continued to meet together." (Acts 2:38 & 42-46, describing the earliest Christians)

We confess or show our faith in Jesus by our daily life, as we follow His standards in our thinking, talking and conduct. Those things do not earn salvation but they give evidence of it. We can never deserve the forgiveness and new life God freely gives us, but we can demonstrate them. Our goodness is not the cause of our salvation, but its result.

A, B and C take place in our **MINDS**. We think and agree that we need to **A**dmit we are sinners. We are convinced to **B**elieve that Jesus is the Savior we need. We have carefully **C**onsidered that we must surrender to Jesus as Boss but that while it costs to follow Him, it richly pays! Now you must make a **D**ecision in your **WILL**.

4. There is something to **D**ECIDE, to **D**O; a **D**OOR to Open. Do it! Turn to Christ in repentance and trust. Don't just think about it—do it! Receive Him as Lord and Savior. There is not only someTHING to Believe, but SomeONE to Receive.

"To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." (John 1:12)

Jesus says, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Rev. 3:20)

He pictures your life as a house, and He is outside. But He loves you and wants to come in and bless you, so he is knocking. He won't batter the door down; you must invite Him in or He won't come. But if you do open the door of your heart and life, asking Him in to be your Savior (forgive you) and your Lord (rule your life), He will gladly accept your invitation.

Receiving Christ is like **GETTING MARRIED**: In marriage you should forsake all others, commit yourself to your partner, and enter a permanent relationship. So in becoming a real Christian you forsake all other gods and religions; commit yourself to Jesus as a bride vows her faithfulness to her husband in good times and bad, in sickness and in health; and enter a permanent, ongoing relationship that will get better and better.

Putting your faith in Him is like making those vows of commitment. Being baptized is like exchanging rings in the wedding: the outward sign and seal of your commitment.

DON'T WAIT: RECEIVE HIM NOW!