

Why SOME good people will not go to heaven



1

Why **SOME good
people will not
go to heaven**

a short test

To understand why some good people will not go to Heaven, we first need to take a short test. Score yourself on a scale of 0 to 7 on each question below. (0 = Never, 7 = Always)

1. I give to charities

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>							

2. I pray

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>							

3. I help strangers in need

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>							

4. I read the Bible

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>							

5. I forgive people when they hurt me

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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6. I love and help family members

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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7. I am loyal with my friendships

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>							

8. I put other people first when they need me

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<hr/>							

9. I am totally honest in the things I say and do



10. I see the best in people



Total up your score out of a possible 70. Put your score in the box below.

SCORE

68 - 70	Angelic
64 - 67	Saintly
35 - 63	Good
25 - 34	Struggling
under 25	Seek help

Thank you. We have found that most people like to 'do good', and therefore receive a 'good' rating on this test. They also think they are good enough to get into heaven. However, what they don't realise is that the standard for entrance into Heaven is one big step past being 'good' or even 'angelic' - it's perfection. The standard is so high because God and heaven are Holy.

Holy just means **perfect**.

The dictionary defines **perfect** as '*entirely faultless*' or '*never ever having faulted*.' If God and Heaven are **perfect**, how can people at death, who are not perfect, go to live in heaven with God? Logically, it would seem impossible. Yet, there is a way and this booklet explains how. The problem of our imperfection concerns our souls.

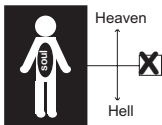
Your Soul.

Everyone has a soul. Your soul is the non-material (unseen) part of you that lives on after you die. It cannot be x-rayed or viewed with the natural eye. It is the life-force within you - the unseen part inside you that makes you uniquely 'you.' Jesus warned that if you lose your soul, you have lost something more valuable than the total value of the whole world.¹ When He said this, He was urging people to think seriously about what really matters in life and the critical issue of life after death. In this life you may live 60, 70, 80, maybe 90 years. Who knows? But one day you are going to die i.e. life here on earth is finite. Furthermore, if you don't like the place where you live at the moment, you can move to another town or city. In this life you can move around, but when you die all this changes.



What happens when you die?

When you die your body decomposes (or is cremated) but your soul will live on forever either in heaven or hell. Life after death is not finite, it's eternal.²



Before you can be certain of going to heaven when you die there are certain things you must do. Let's discuss these.

What we must do to be certain of going to heaven at death.

When God created the world, He established certain unchangeable laws in the physical world e.g. gravity. He also established certain unchangeable moral laws. Six of these moral laws are relevant to this discussion.

Bible References

¹ Matthew 16:26. "What good will it be for a person if they gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can a person give in exchange for their soul?"

² Matthew 25:46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life." Other references are: Isaiah 66:24; Luke 16:19-31; Mark 9:43-48; John 3:14-17.

1. The Law of Original Sin.
2. The Law of the Soul.
3. The Law of Infringement.
4. The Law of the Record.
5. The Law of the Perfect Sacrifice.
6. The Law of Forgiveness.

The Law of Original Sin.

The Bible explains that when God created the world, it was perfect. The first couple, Adam and Eve, enjoyed perfect friendship with God. However, soon after they were created they chose to disobey their creator, and something called 'sin' entered the world. The Bible calls the first sin of Adam and Eve 'original sin.' Not only was their friendship with God broken, but every person born from then on had what the Bible calls 'a sinful nature' i.e. we all have a natural tendency to follow the example set by Adam and Eve and do what we know to be wrong. Usually, people don't need much convincing that they have a sinful nature. Their conscience alerts them to the fact. There is evidence all around us that everyone struggles with 'sinning.' Most people struggle with lying, cheating, stealing, selfishness, gluttony, and being dishonest in subtle and not so subtle ways. The newspaper and television screens are awash with fresh reports of the out-workings of the sinful nature: rape, murder, war, fraud, incest, child abuse, corruption, unhealthy pride, greed, jealousy, pornography, injustices of every kind – just to name a few.

2 The Law of the Soul.

The Bible also says, “The soul that is not perfect (entirely faultless or never committed a sin) shall die (go to Hell).”³ Unfortunately, because of original sin, all of us are born with an imperfect soul. There are usually two thoughts people throw up in protest at this point. Some say, “Well, if God knew Adam and Eve were going to mess up, why did He create them in the first place?” The short answer is that God is a loving Person, and He created people to love and be loved. The very essence of true love is that it must be free and voluntary. If we force someone to love us, their love is not genuine. So God made people with freewill so that they could freely choose to love Him and each other. Adam and Eve chose wrongly, and we are now suffering the consequences of their wrong choice. There is a second objection some people have about original sin. They say, “If God is all powerful, why doesn’t He just get rid of evil?” Sadly, since most of the evil we experience and observe in the world is caused by people, because of their sin nature, to rid the world of evil God would have to rid the world of people. He does not want to do this because He loves us so much. Accordingly, He has provided a solution to our ‘sin nature’ problem. This is where Jesus comes in. I will talk about Him in a moment. First, I must mention the Law of Infringement.

Bible References

³ Ezekiel 18:4 *“For every living soul belongs to Me, the father as well as the son - both alike belong to Me. The soul who sins is the one who will die (i.e. go to hell).”*

3 The Law of Infringement

As I mentioned at the beginning, we live in a moral universe made by God. It's not hard to prove this is true. Every culture has a strong sense of right and wrong. Every culture also values the concept of justice i.e. there has to be some kind of punishment for those who break laws. This awareness of right and wrong and a need for justice is 'built into us' before birth by God. So when we break His laws (e.g. lying, thieving, cheating, committing adultery, etc) it is entirely reasonable to expect some kind of punishment from Him, seeing He made us and the universe.⁴ The punishment for breaking any of God's laws is eternity in Hell.⁵ Some people object to this saying, 'That seems very harsh! You mean just for one little white lie, I deserve to go to Hell?!' To God, who is perfect, all 'sin' is serious.⁶ Being Holy, His standards are infinitely higher than ours.

Others object to the idea of hell by saying 'How could a loving God create a place like hell, let alone send someone there?' The illustration over the page helps to answer this question.

Bible References

⁴ Jude 1:14-15 *"Look, the Lord is coming with thousands of His holy ones. He will bring the people of the world to judgment. He will convict the ungodly of all the evil things they have done in rebellion and of all the insults that godless sinners have spoken against Him."*

Hebrews 9:27 *"It is destined that each person only dies once and after that comes judgment."*

² Peter 3:9 *"The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."*

⁵ James 2:10 *"A person who follows all of God's law but fails to obey even one command is guilty of breaking all the commands in that law."*

⁶ Habakkuk 1:13 *"Your eyes are too pure to look on evil."*

Justice and Jesus

Imagine the person you love most in your life is murdered. The murderer is caught and is brought before the judge. To your horror the judge says "This is a really bad thing you have done, but because I am a loving judge, I am just going to let you off." You would rightly be angry. Why? Because we all know that when someone has broken the law, they must be punished, otherwise there is no justice.

Can I ask you a couple of personal questions?

Have you ever told a lie? So what does that make you?

Same as me - a liar. Have you ever taken anything that did not belong to you, even something as small as a paper clip, a pen, a piece of paper? A piece of food that wasn't yours to eat? Doing your own work in your employer's time [which is stealing time]? etc. So what does that make you? Same as me - a thief. Now, do you think that lying thieves like you and me will get into heaven without punishment for breaking the law? The punishment for breaking any of God's Laws is Hell.

You might say, "there is a big difference between lying and thieving and what the criminal did to the person I love!" True. But the Bible says that if we have hated someone in our hearts, we have murdered them in our hearts.⁷ I must admit I have hated someone in my life, even just for a moment. Have you ever hated anyone, even just for a moment? If so, you, like me, before God, are also guilty of murder. When we die, God can't just say to us 'Come on in to Heaven. Don't worry about all those laws of Mine you have broken!' If He did so, He would be unjust.

God is incapable of injustice.⁸

What can we conclude from this illustration? If Jesus admitted us into heaven without punishment for His laws we have broken, He would be unjust. In summary, two things prevent us from entering heaven: God's holiness and God's justice.

Bible References

⁷ 1 John 3:15. "Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him." See also Matthew 5:21-22.

⁸ Psalm 89:14 "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne; love and faithfulness go before You."

You may ask, “What about my friend who is a fantastic person, who helps everyone and who goes to church? She prays, has done ‘nothing wrong’ all her life, has been baptised, christened and confirmed, has given time and money to good causes and has been kind to everyone and has lived up to her motto ‘do unto others as you would want them to do unto you’ - is she not going to get to Heaven?”

Your friend has done good things and we would acknowledge that, but like all of us, she has a sinful nature and has broken God’s laws.⁹ Check out the illustration below.

“Good” is a relative term.

A mother and daughter are going down the road in the car. The daughter says, “Look Mum, that sheep in the green field looks so white.” The mother agrees. One week later, the mother and daughter are going down the same road and the same lone sheep is in the same field but this time snow has covered the field. The little girl says, “Mum, the sheep looks so dirty!” The mother explains that the sheep is no more dirty than it was last week. It’s the background that has changed. It’s the same with us. When we compare ourselves with ourselves, we look like the clean sheep. But when we compare ourselves with the standard of Jesus’ perfection,, we all look dirty.”¹⁰

So far in this discussion we have explained the Law of Original Sin, the Law of the Soul, and the Law of Infringement. Now it’s time to move on to the Law of the record.

Bible References

⁹ Isaiah 64:6 “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”

¹⁰ A lot of people struggle to admit they are a sinner. Jesus urges us to make this admission. He gave the following illustration in Luke 18:10-14 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

4 The Law of the Record.

The Bible says God has a 'record' of all of our lives, both the good we have done and the laws we have broken (i.e. our sins).¹¹ Every time we break one of His laws, He writes it down.¹² You can imagine, as we get older, we have a whole library written against us. The bad news is that to enter heaven, we must have a perfectly clean (i.e. sinless) record before God. The good news is that we can be forgiven for all our lawbreaking, and friendship with God restored. This is where the Law of Forgiveness comes in.

5 The Law of Forgiveness.

As I said, there is no point in sitting around grumbling about Adam and Eve's bad choice, cursing God for allowing it to happen, or the fact that there is a place called hell. Our complaining will not make these things go away. They are as factual and inerasable as the Law of gravity. Therefore, it's much more profitable to focus on the solution, who is Jesus. Through Jesus complete forgiveness and restoration of friendship with God is possible. Through Him, anyone can be forgiven. Through Him, our records before God can be made clean. Let me explain. When God made the world, He decreed that 'without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness.'¹³ Acutely aware of this Law, and the need for forgiveness, people

Bible References

¹¹ Matthew 12:36-37. *"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."*

¹² See also Romans 14:12, Hebrews 4:13, Matthew 25:14-30

¹³ Revelation 20:11-15. *"Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from His presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*

¹³ Hebrews 9 :22 *"....without the shedding of the blood there is no forgiveness."*

placed animals on altars, laid hands on them, and then killed them. The animal was sacrificed so that the sins of the slayer could be forgiven i.e. the animal was taking the place of the person who had sinned. For thousands of years, this is how people found forgiveness. This system of forgiveness was imperfect, and cumbersome, for every time sin was committed, a new animal had to be sacrificed. With Jesus came a better way. This is where the Law of the Perfect Sacrifice comes in.

6 The Law of the Perfect Sacrifice.

When God made the world, His plan for forgiveness included the coming of the perfect sacrifice. For a sacrifice to be perfect, two criteria needed to be met. First, the sacrifice needed to be Holy (perfect) so as to satisfy a perfect God who lives in a perfect heaven. Second, the sacrifice needed to be human in order to take the punishment for the sins of all human beings. Only Jesus meets both criteria.

Jesus has unique qualifications. He was both a person and God. He never broke any of God's laws. When He died on a cross 2000 years ago, God the Father accepted His sacrifice as sufficient to forgive the sins of all people once and for all. His sacrifice was an act of supreme love and compassion.¹⁴ Jesus literally volunteered Himself to be crucified to take the punishment we justly deserve for our lawbreaking and to make a way for us to be friends with God. Furthermore, He rose from the dead to prove His claim that He was God, and that He had the authority to forgive. When you are forgiven by Jesus, He gives you a copy of His perfect record. A 'good' record will not be good enough for entry to Heaven. This is why, tragically, some good people (those without Jesus' perfect record and who have not been forgiven by Him) will not go to Heaven.

Bible References

¹⁴ Romans 5:8 *"But God demonstrates His own love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."*

The concept of 'God forgiving us and giving us a copy of His perfect record' is clarified in the three illustrations below.

illustration

God's book about your life:

Based on what the Bible teaches, we could say the following. When you make this decision to become a follower of Jesus, God takes your book with the record of everything you have ever done wrong. He rips out the pages within the cover and throws them into the deepest sea so they can never be seen again. He doesn't even remember what was written on those old pages. He then takes a copy of Jesus' perfect record and puts it inside the cover of your book. This book, with your name on the cover, now has a copy of Jesus' perfect record inside. This new book about you is stored in Heaven like a precious library book ready for the day you die. Between the point at which you made a decision to become a follower of Jesus and death, if your decision was genuine, your book is not touched again, even though you will break more of God's laws after you have made your decision to become a Christian. When you die, you will come up before Jesus at Judgment. Everyone does. He will command the angels to get your book with the record of your life. They will open it and exclaim, "You were perfect!" You will say, "No I wasn't!" Smiling, Jesus will say, "I know that, but I see you as perfect in My sight. I forgave you completely, once and for all, the day you asked Me to forgive you. Welcome to Heaven!"¹⁵

illustration

God's great love and forgiveness

In some parts of the world, people are executed by capital punishment (e.g. the electric chair or lethal injection). Imagine you're in the electric chair for the laws you have broken and just before they're about to turn the power on, Jesus bursts into the room and offers to take your place. This is an illustration of the love and forgiveness He is offering you today.¹⁶

Bible References

¹⁵ Colossians 2:14 *"Having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross."*

¹⁶ John 8:36 *"So if the Son sets you free, you will indeed be free!"*

To explain the big difference between having a perfect record before God and being a perfect person on earth.

In many countries, if a person has been convicted of a serious drug charge, they are unable to travel overseas.

Imagine that the Prime Minister or President of the country that the criminal comes from takes pity and wipes the criminal record clean. The criminal would have a clean record and would be free to travel again but would still not be a perfect person. It's the same with becoming a Christian. God offers to clean your record and to completely forgive you, but you will never become a perfect person on this earth.

Many people ask three questions about forgiveness:

1. What must I do to be forgiven and to receive Jesus' perfect record?
2. What happens to the record of all my Law breaking when I am forgiven?
3. If I ask Jesus to forgive me, what is it going to be like for me at death?

Receiving a perfect record and being completely forgiven for breaking God's Laws doesn't happen automatically. The Bible teaches that for this to happen, there are three things we must do. Please turn to the next section.

2

**THREE things we
must do to be
FORGIVEN**

**‘ADMIT’ ‘TURN’
and ‘SURRENDER’**

To be forgiven we must do three things:

1. "Admit."
2. "Turn away."
3. "Surrender."

1. Admit.

I admit that I have broken God's Laws and God would be justified in punishing me.¹⁷

I can agree with this ☐ *I can't agree with this* ☐

2. Turn Away.

I am genuinely sorry for living a lifestyle of ignoring Jesus and breaking His laws. Today I want to turn away from this lifestyle and this law breaking.

I can agree with this ☐ *I can't agree with this* ☐

3. Surrender.

To surrender to Jesus is to make Him the main focus of our lives. When we 'surrender' to Him, we actively want to follow His plan for our lives.

To 'admit', 'turn away,' and 'surrender' we also need something the Bible calls 'faith.'

Faith.

What does 'faith' mean? When we believe and trust the truths discussed in section one, and we 'admit', 'turn' and 'surrender,' even though we have not personally seen Jesus die on the cross, or hear Him audibly tell us why He died for us, the Bible says we believe "by faith."

Bible References

¹⁷ Romans 2:2 "God, in His justice, will punish anyone who does such things."

To become a Christian, you will be asked to trust and accept the truths found in the Bible “by faith.”

I can agree with this ☐ *I can't agree with this* ☐

What should happen when we genuinely ‘admit’, ‘turn,’ and ‘surrender’ in faith to Jesus? It ought to result in a new attitude towards Jesus, the Bible, meeting with other Christians, and the world around us. If we are genuine, and agree with the first three attitudes, we will want to agree with the following four attitudes.

4. Being open to being changed by Jesus.

I understand that Jesus, from His heart of love, wants to change me for the better. Real change will only happen as I co-operate with Him.¹⁸

I am willing to let Jesus change me.

I either agree or am willing for God to change me in this area. ☐ *I can't agree with this.* ☐

5. The Bible.

I may not know what this Book teaches yet, but I understand it is God's message to me. It shows me how He wants me to live and how I can have a close friendship with Jesus. I want God to help me obey what it says with all my heart.¹⁹

I either agree or am willing for God to change me in this area. ☐ *I can't agree with this.* ☐

Bible References

¹⁸ Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”

¹⁹ John 14:21 “Whoever has My commands and obeys them, He is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him.”

6. The Church.

"I will consider going to church and contributing to the life of it."²⁰

*I either agree or am willing
for God to change me in this
area.*

☐

I can't agree with this.

☐

7. The World.

People need love. I want Jesus to help me be a loving, caring person.

*I either agree or am willing
for God to change me in this
area.*

☐

I can't agree with this.

☐

***How did you go? Write in the box what you
scored out of seven?***

<hr/> 7

If you genuinely agree with the first three attitudes, you are ready to be forgiven and begin your life as a Christian by praying carefully and sincerely through the prayer on the next page. If you couldn't agree on one or more of the attitudes, perhaps you need to do some more thinking. Don't give up. Ask God to help you change. He will give you the strength to replace your old attitudes with new ones. If you don't understand these attitudes, ask an enthusiastic Christian to help you. Thinking, asking questions and reading will help you on your journey to becoming a Christian.

After considering this carefully, are you ready to commit fully to becoming a Christian?

Bible References

²⁰ Hebrews 10:24-25 "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another - and all the more as you see the Day approaching." Another reference is: 1 John 2:19

We have put together a prayer for you, which will help you start your new life as a Christian and your relationship with Jesus.

“ *Dear Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to take my punishment for Your laws which I have broken. I cannot thank You enough. Words cannot describe the amazing love You have shown me. I want to become a Christian right now. Please give me Your perfect record. Help me live out the seven attitudes in this book. I want to turn from everything I know to be wrong and fully commit myself to following You.* **”**

You should conclude your prayer by asking God to come into your life and fill you with His Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will help you to live the new life you have chosen to the fullest. Here is a suggested way to do this. “Holy Spirit, I invite You to come into my life, to fill me and empower me to live for God. I want everything You have for me! Thank you, in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

Praying this prayer is like going through a gateway - forgiven, cleansed and empowered - to a new life as a follower of Jesus.

What now?

We encourage you as a new Christian to . . .

1. Start reading your Bible regularly to gain insight and understanding into God's plan for you in life.
2. Find a good Christian church in your neighbourhood. A good church is one where you come away feeling lifted up, closer to God, challenged and encouraged to live out the seven attitudes described in this book. You will sense that the people in the church have a genuine, living, vibrant and growing relationship with Jesus. You will make friends with enthusiastic Christians in your new church environment. They will help you live out your decision to become a Christian.

3. Share with others what you have done and encourage them to do the same.

Genuineness

There have been people who have just “ticked the boxes” and “prayed the prayer” but have not been genuine in their decision to become a Christian. If you are genuine, then points 1-3 above will happen naturally and will continue to happen for the rest of your life. This will be the evidence of your sincerity to follow Jesus.²¹ Our hope and prayer for you is that your decision will be genuine, your life will change and that you will experience a close friendship with Jesus.

It would be good to contact the person who gave you this booklet and let them know what you have done. This will really encourage them. If they didn't leave a phone number or email address, please email info@proclaimthegospel.net, and tell where this booklet was given to you, and we will try to get a message to them.

Bible References

²¹ James 2:14 & 17 “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”

John 15:8 “This is to My Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples.”

Other references are: Ephesians 2:10; Matthew 3:8 & 10; Acts 26:19-20.

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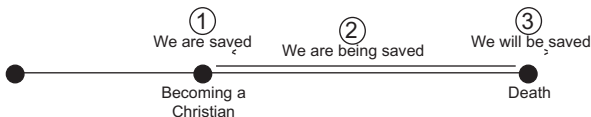
HOW
your life could change
if you admitted, turned
and surrendered
to Jesus

When you become a Christian, the Bible says you are 'saved'. What does this mean?

The Bible talks about being saved in three ways:

1. We **are** saved
something that happens the moment you are forgiven by Jesus. - a point in time
2. We **are being** saved
something that happens over a period of time - a process
3. We **will be** saved
something in the future that happens after death

Look at the time line below. For a Christian the most significant event in life is becoming a Christian.



We are saved²²

This is a point in time decision and happens instantly the moment we become a Christian. In Heaven, Jesus exchanges our imperfect record for His perfect record and we know for sure we are going to Heaven at death.

We are forgiven once and for all. This does not mean we can do whatever we like after we are forgiven and it does not mean we will ever be a perfect person on earth. It means that we are saved from the consequence of breaking God's Law and original sin, which is eternity in Hell.²³

Bible References

²² Ephesians 2:8 "You have been saved by grace through believing. You did not save yourselves; it was a gift from God."; 2 Corinthians 5:21 "Christ had no sin, but God made Him become sin so that in Christ we could become right with God."

²³ Colossians 1:21-23; Galatians 3:10-14 ; Ephesians 2:1-8.

We also start a journey through this life with Jesus, who adopts us into His family as a precious son or daughter of God.²⁴ He commits Himself to working with us so that we can make a success of life, which in turn brings honour and glory to Him – which is what life is ultimately all about.

We are being saved²⁵

This is a process and happens between becoming a Christian and death. During this time, God works through us and in us to ‘clean us up’. He wants to rid us of things which have the potential to ruin our lives and which take away from quality of life. Certain things (the negative) take away from this quality of life and certain things (the positive) add to it. Look at the table below.

<p>Things in us that take away from life -</p> <p>THE NEGATIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lying • cheating • lust • anger • jealousy • pride • greed • selfishness • laziness • resentment and so on 	<p>Things that God wants to bring into our lives -</p> <p>THE POSITIVE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • instead of being a liar, He wants to make you a person of truth. • instead of being a cheat, He wants to make you a person of honesty. • instead of lust, He wants to make you a person of love. • instead of anger, He wants to make you a person of peace. • instead of jealousy, He wants to make you an encourager. • instead of pride, He wants to make you a person of humility. • instead of greed, He wants to make you a person who is generous. • instead of being selfish, He wants to make you kind. • instead of being lazy, He wants to make you hard working. • instead of being bitter and resentful, He wants to make you able to forgive. and so on ...
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When we do the things that take away from life, we don't feel too good. On the other hand, when we are truthful, honest, loving, encouraging, generous etc we feel truly alive. Let's face it, most of us struggle with the negative and we know we are not living to our full potential. Why is this? Each of us is our own worst enemy.

Bible References

²⁴ Ephesians 1:5

²⁵ 1Corinthians 1:18 *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

If we look back over our lives, we can see that many (but certainly not all) of our problems, heartaches and disappointments are the direct result of our own choices or attitudes.

Why are we our own worst enemies?

The Bible explains that all people are born with a sinful nature ²⁶ (We discussed this in section one.) This means we have a built in tendency to do wrong. This tendency is first seen in childhood, eg children do not need to be taught to do wrong. It just seems to be 'in them'. Doing wrong takes away from the quality of life. This tendency to do wrong can be reversed. The more this tendency is reversed, the more real life we will experience. In fact, Jesus said His intention for all people is that they really live. In the movie "Braveheart", William Wallace (Mel Gibson) said, "All men die, but not all men live." Jesus wants you to really experience a full, vibrant, purposeful life. ²⁷

We will be saved ²⁸

This happens at death and is in the future. Here, the decision we made to become a Christian at some point in our lives is confirmed or ratified. Instead of going to Hell, we go to Heaven. All suffering and pain finally ceases once and for all.

Bible References

²⁶ Genesis chapter 3

²⁷ John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

²⁸ Romans 5:9-11 *"So through Christ we will surely be saved from God's anger, because we have been made right with God by the blood of Christ's death. While we were God's enemies, He made friends with us through the death of His Son. Surely, now that we are His friends, He will save us through His Son's life. And not only that, but now we are also very happy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we are now God's friends again."*

God's two great intentions for us.

1. To love us.

His first great intention is to love us, know us, and help us. This is what God does for us. In the period between becoming a Christian and death He wants to restore us to wholeness and heal us from past hurts and disappointments. He wants to give us vision and strong hope for the future. He does these things in four ways: through the Bible, as you read it day by day; through the Holy Spirit, who will live in you and help you; through the love of fellow Christians; and through suffering: working through and overcoming difficult and painful experiences in life. Through these means He gives us the power to change. It's impossible to really change without His power. It is certainly impossible to get to Heaven and to be forgiven without Jesus' perfect record.

2. For us to love Him.

God's second great intention is that we love Him, know Him, and enjoy Him. This is our response to Him. He wants us to 'glorify Him' in whatever we do. What does this mean? It means that what we say and do points people who don't know Jesus to Him. The famous nun, Mother Theresa, was someone who glorified Jesus. She wasn't quiet about Him or ashamed of Him. She lived for Him and His purposes and spoke often of Him to others. It was obvious in the way she lived and how she chose to live her life that she loved Him. This doesn't mean we have to be a nun or a monk in order to become a Christian. We don't have to leave our job, or wear special clothes or eat special food. But what it does mean is that we will have a heart felt dedication to Jesus in whatever we are doing with our lives whether at work, university, school, home or in recreation. We live to make Jesus great and for others to do the same.

Summary. A Christian . . .

- Recognises that they are saved, are being saved and will be saved.
- In the first instance, has agreed with attitudes 1-3. Their agreement is genuine.
- Wants their life to glorify Jesus, and to receive His love.
- By 'genuine,' we mean there is evidence over time (i.e. for the rest of your life) of a gradual and progressive change of behaviour, consistent with attitudes 1-7. People who know you will notice your increasing love for Jesus and your desire to follow Him and fulfil His purposes. If you want to become a Christian right now, turn back to page 17.

Is all this true? How can I know? Where do I look if I want to explore some more? Check out the following website . . .

www.questionsoflife.com

Here you will find answers to questions on . . .

*Other religions
Creation and Evolution
The Bible - Is it really true?
Are there contradictions in the Bible?
Abortion
Relationships
Christian Living
Sex
...and much more*

This booklet is endorsed by mainstream Christian churches and organisations as a clear and accurate summary of the message of the Bible and the Christian faith.

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