

Perhaps the greatest mystery of life is that the Creator of the universe loves you. He spins the galaxies and directs the course of history, yet he also wants to have a personal relationship with you. He wants to be closer to you than your parents, a best friend or even a boyfriend.

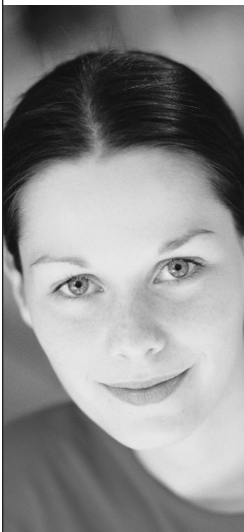
### First, some bad news.

Not only does God exist, but he's also holy. That means he's perfect. He's never made a mistake or done something he's regretted. He's never been guilty of a crime or broken a law. In short, God is free from any hint of sin. He's so holy and perfect that someone who sins can't even stand in his presence. Even worse news for us is that sin must be paid for—and the price is high. God said that the "wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23) and that "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). Sin is serious. The Old Testament describes how the Hebrew people offered sacrifices of lambs and goats to make payment for their sins (see Leviticus 1–7).

### Second, some good news.

After thousands of years of sacrifices, God provided a better way. God sent his Son, Jesus Christ, as the perfect Lamb. Jesus was both fully God and fully human. As God, he's perfect in every way. As a human, he knows what it's like to be us. He experienced the same temptations we experience, and he represents us before God at all times. He died on the cross for us (see Matthew 27:32–61). Proving he had power over all sin and death, he didn't stay dead. After three days he was raised to life again (see Matthew 28). Because he was without fault and sin, he was the perfect sacrifice—a sacrifice so complete that it's powerful enough to forgive all your sins—past, present and future (see Hebrews 10:17–18).

Jesus paid the penalty we deserve for our sins. In exchange, he gives us his righteousness. In other words, when God sees us, he doesn't see our sin any more; he sees Jesus' holiness, which has been given to us (see 2 Corinthians 5:17–21).



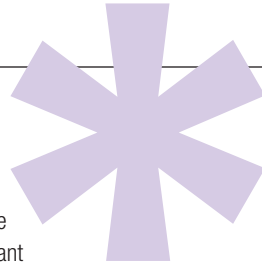
### So, what's Christianity?

Simply put, Christianity is aligning yourself with Christ.

- \* It's admitting that you have sinned and that your sin is really offensive to God (see Psalm 53:3).
- \* It's recognizing that there's nothing you can do to pay for your sins (see Romans 3:23).
- \* It's confessing your sins to God. Even though he already knows them, he wants you to confess them—to come to grips with them (see 1 John 1:9).
- \* It's following him—getting to know him, reading his Word and doing your best to follow him daily (see Romans 12:1–2).

### So, what's next?

If you'd like to become a follower of Christ and enjoy friendship with God, here's a great way to get started . . .



## Pray.

Here's a prayer that can help you give your life to Jesus:

“God, I believe in you. I know that I am a sinner. Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die for my sins and make me right with you. Please come into my life. I give it to you. I want to live for you from now on.”

## Read.

Spend some regular time getting to know God better. Start with the 30 Days for New Christians reading plan on page XXXX. Read some of God's Word each day. Spend some time thinking about what you read and talking with God. Tell him about your day, the things you're learning, the things that frustrate you and the things that you're excited about. As a true friend, he cares about you and your life.

## Don't go it alone.

The Christian life isn't meant to be lived alone. Spend time with other Christians. Get involved in a church or youth group that loves God and wants you to know him better.

## Remember . . .

Above all else, remember that God's friendship with you is permanent. Sure, there will be times when you make mistakes. You'll fail, you'll sin and you'll even feel guilty. There will be times when you disappoint yourself and others. In those moments, though, remember that God is your constant companion. He remains your proud friend, loving Father and faithful Savior. He'll never leave you; he'll never forsake you. He promises you that (see Romans 8:28–39).



If you've recently become a Christian, we'd love to hear your story. Log on to [www.TrueImagesBible.com](http://www.TrueImagesBible.com), click on the “Tell Us Your Story” link and tell us when and how you decided to follow Christ.