

# DISCOVER

BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

# 6

## A Second Chance at Life





**COMMENTS LIKE THESE** from our students really make our day:

“One of the study guides mentions loneliness. I sure know what that feels like since I have burned my bridges with my family and friends. This is because of all the bad things I was involved in. I was encouraged by what you sent me. It always gives me a spark of hope to know that Jesus Christ is there next to me and walking with me in everything I do. Jesus truly is my Best Friend.”

“I’ve been a follower of Jesus for a while now. He has healed my broken heart, forgiven me of my sins, and is my Best Friend. I can’t wait to be with Him in heaven, spending eternity worshipping. Thank you for making the Word of God easier to understand.”

These individuals have found the only way to a second chance at life—Jesus! They’ve made the all-important discovery that, while it is a terrible experience to be lost, it is a fantastic experience to find salvation. What is the only solution for someone trapped in sin?

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16).

The gospel is a saving power for sinful people who believe fully in Jesus and accept Him into their lives.

The individuals who wrote the above comments accepted Christ by placing their trust in Him and giving Him their allegiance. The power of God and the power of the gospel transformed their lives, and they now enjoy an ever-growing friendship with Jesus.

## 1 | What It Means to Be Lost

Just as there are two kinds of life—spiritual and physical—so there are two kinds of death—spiritual and physical. It’s possible for a person to be physically alive—walking around town, doing business, having what some call a good time—and still be dead—that is, spiritually dead.

“You . . . were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:1, 2).

Satan leads a spiritually dead person down a descending spiral of sin and disobedience. However, the wonderful truth of the gospel is that God loves “doomed” people. He loves them even

while they are falling away from Him, dead in sin, and offers them a full and free deliverance from their predicament.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ . . . that . . . He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:4-9).

God loved us when there was nothing lovable about us. His grace created in us a spiritual resurrection to a new life in Christ. We can't change ourselves, but God can. He gives us a second chance at life.

## 2 | From What Do We Need to Be Saved?

In order to grasp the salvation that Christ offers, it's important to clearly understand our need.

### **A. We Need to Be Saved From Sin**

How many have sinned?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”  
(Romans 3:23).

Most of us do not live up to what we know is right. Sometimes we hurt each other emotionally. Sometimes we “forget” about a certain source of income at tax time. Sometimes we gossip, lie, or cheat on our spouse. “All have sinned,” and that's the human condition.

How does the Bible define sin?

“All unrighteousness is sin” (1 John 5:17).

We need to be rescued from all kinds of unhealthy habits such as lying, abusive anger, lust, and bitterness, to name a few. The Bible defines wrongdoing (“unrighteousness”) as breaking God’s moral law that He summarized in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20.

The Bible says, “Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). So we need to be saved from sin—violating God’s commandments.

## **B. We Need to Be Saved From a Broken Relationship With God**

“The Lord’s hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear” (Isaiah 59:1, 2).

Unforgiven sin severs our relationship with God, the Life-giver. There can be no love relationship without faith and trust in God. That is why Jesus spoke of sin as unbelief (John 16:9). Christ came to restore trust in God, which Satan had undermined.

## **C. We Need to Be Saved From Eternal Death, the Penalty for Sin**

“Through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12).

“For the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

## **D. We Need to Be Saved From a Sinful, Unhappy Life in a Sinful World**

“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10).

For the sinner, life is a dead-end street because a life of sin leaves an empty, aching void in his or her existence. God’s plan is to rescue us from a world full of sin and its results—heartache, loneliness, war, sickness, evil, and death.

# 3 | Who Can Save Us?

## **A. Jesus Can Deliver Us From Sin**

“You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

A Hindu told a Christian friend, “I find many things in Hinduism not found in Christianity, but there is one thing Christianity has that Hinduism does not have—a Savior.” Christianity is the only world religion that offers people a Savior.

## **B. Jesus Can Save Us From Our Broken Relationship With God**

God uses some of the close personal connections we have with one another—friendship, family, and marriage—as illustrations of the relationship we can have with Him.

To the church in the town of Ephesus, the Apostle Paul wrote:

“At that time you were without Christ . . . having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (Ephesians 2:12, 13).



**We need to be rescued  
from sin and its results:  
heartache, sickness,  
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When we commit ourselves to Christ, a relationship begins, followed by a lifetime of serving Him. Jesus is the perfect Friend; He loves to bring out the best in us. “By the blood of Christ,” our past life of sin is erased, and day by day, He gives us His acceptance, His power over sin, and His perfect life. Our love for Him, in turn, produces in us a desire to live in a way that pleases Him. And how can we know what pleases our Savior? Jesus says:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

The Bible, God’s Word, tells us how to live for Him. And the Holy Spirit will help us understand the Bible and live in harmony with its teachings.

### **C. Jesus Can Save Us From Eternal Death, the Penalty for Sin**

“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

We are spiritual lawbreakers, sentenced to die. The penalty for our sins is eternal death, but Jesus can save us from eternal death

and give us eternal life. He loved us so much that He died for us in order to pay the penalty for our sins.

“God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Because of His unfailing love, Jesus “died for us.” By accepting death in our place, He provided a pardon for each of us. He experienced the horrors of complete separation from God so we wouldn’t have to. Because He died for us and suffered the full results of sin, God can now forgive and accept sinners without trivializing sin.

#### **D. Jesus Can Save Us From a Sinful, Unhappy Life**

God not only provides forgiveness for our sins, but He also offers us healing and restoration. God promises to save us *from* our sins, not *in* our sins.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We can’t save ourselves from sin or change our nature on our own, any more than a lion can decide to become a lamb (Romans 7:18). Sin is simply stronger than our willpower. However, Christ is able to cause us “to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). He works to replace our destructive habits with His righteous qualities—love, peace, joy, kindness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22, 23). Christ lives His life through us. He loves to take on the most hopeless cases.

Harold Hughes had given up hope of ever changing. He had tried desperately to stop drinking many times. He knew only too well that his battle with the bottle had put his wife and two daughters through 10 years of hell. And so he stepped into his bathtub one cold morning and pointed a shotgun muzzle into his mouth. Before

pulling the trigger, he decided he'd better explain things to God. That prayer turned into a long, sobbing appeal for help.

God came through. Harold Hughes made a commitment to Christ and found the spiritual strength to persevere. He quit drinking for good, became a loving, dependable husband and father, and went on to earn a seat in the U.S. Senate. Senator Hughes, who passed away in 1996, is remembered as one of the pioneering leaders in creating legislation for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse. Today, the Senator Harold Hughes Memorial Award is given annually to someone in the field of alcohol and drug rehabilitation.

## **E. Jesus Can Save Us From a Sinful World**

The next four *Discover* Guides will provide a full explanation of how Jesus can rescue us from our sinful world.

# 4 | Finding Salvation and Growing as a Christian— Three Simple Steps

## **STEP 1: Ask Christ to Deal With the Sin in Your Life**

What is *our* part in getting rid of our sinful life?

“Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19).

What leads a person to repent?

“Do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:4).

My son,  
I would have  
forgiven you  
long ago  
**if you had  
only asked**



“I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance” (2 Corinthians 7:9).

Repentance is simply being sorry for our sins and then turning away from them—making a break from old habits, practices, and attitudes. It’s not sorrow for fear of impending punishment; it’s a response to “the goodness of God” that led Jesus to die in our place for our sinfulness. We reject sin because it hurts God—and ultimately us.

What else is part of repentance?

“He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

In addition to acknowledging and getting rid of the old life of sin, what else is necessary for the repentant sinner?

“If the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen, and walks in the statutes of life without

committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die” (Ezekiel 33:15).

Real repentance means not only turning away from sin, but, as far as possible, making past wrongs right.

What is God’s part in getting rid of our old life of sin?

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

“Him [Jesus Christ] God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:31).

The ability to repent is really a *gift* to us from God (Acts 5:31). Only He can move us to genuine repentance. And when we do respond, a loving Savior forgives our sins. The Bible describes it as taking our sins and throwing them “into the depths of the sea,” (Micah 7:19) cleansing us from all unrighteousness. There is no sin so terrible that our Savior who died on the cross can’t forgive. A person who trusts in Jesus needs only to ask Him.

It’s a sobering fact that our sins helped drive those nails through Christ’s hands and feet. In a real sense, we helped crucify the Savior, but always remember that Jesus endured the cross “for the joy that was set before Him” (Hebrews 12:2). He willingly paid the ultimate price for our ultimate redemption. And He is more eager than we can imagine for us to accept His gift of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Word reached a young runaway that his mother was dying. The news filled him with remorse over their broken relationship. Hurrying home, he rushed into the room and threw himself on his mother’s bed. In a flood of tears, he begged her to forgive him.

She drew him close and whispered, “Son, I would have forgiven you long ago if you’d only asked.”

If you have drifted away from God, or have not yet come to know Him, please think about how eager your Heavenly Father is to welcome you home. He demonstrated His forgiving love on a cross on the hill called Golgotha. More than anything, He wants for you to accept His offer of pardon and grace. He loves you. He died for you. He is always willing to forgive you.

So respond to His gracious invitation to repent. Confess your sins. Believe that God forgives you, and He will. Don't look to your emotions for reassurance. Trust in the clear promises of Scripture.

## **STEP 2: Receive a New Life From Jesus**

*Your part* in receiving a new life from Jesus is to believe that Jesus has really saved you. Accept without question the fact that He has forgiven and cleansed you, taken away your old life of sin, and given you an entirely new and changed life.

“As many as received Him [Jesus], to them He gave the right [the power, authority, privilege] to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (John 1:12).

As a child of God, you have “the right” to receive a new life from Jesus. As we have said, you can't achieve it on your own—it's a gift from your Heavenly Father.

Jesus gives this absolute promise so that all of our insecurities and doubts will be removed. However, if you do struggle with doubt, remember the man who, in the middle of an overwhelming crisis, called out to Jesus: “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24). Focus whatever trust you can muster on God's promises. It's not how much faith you have that counts; it's simply whether or not you exercise it.

What is *God's part* in giving us a new life?

“Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

According to Jesus, a repentant, believing sinner is actually born into a new life. The change is as dramatic as the birth of a baby, and it is a miracle that only God can perform.

What inner change takes place in a person who acquires a new life from Jesus?

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh” (Ezekiel 36:26).

Jesus transforms our heart—our feelings and behavior—and dwells “in you” (Colossians 1:27). This new life is not just a nice, spiritual idea. It’s much more than positive thinking; it’s a hard, solid fact. The new birth is a resurrection from spiritual death to an entirely new existence (Ephesians 5:14). Harold Hughes is just one example of Christ’s ability to give people a wonderful second chance.

## How We Receive a New Life From Christ

1. Believe in Him and receive Him as Savior and Lord.
2. Establish a relationship with Him (it is vital to set aside time for Bible reading and prayer).
3. Allow Christ through the Holy Spirit to replace our bad habits with His good qualities.

### STEP 3: Live for Jesus Every Day

The Christian life involves a daily turning away from selfishness as we spend time with Jesus, our Friend. We grow in this new life by strengthening our relationship with Jesus. This means spending quality time with Him—building honest and open communication. God has given us five divine aids for spiritual growth: (1) Bible study, (2) prayer, (3) meditation on Scripture, (4) fellowship with

other Christians, and (5) sharing our experience with others. (*Discover* Guides 14 to 20 give practical suggestions on how to live a satisfying Christian life.)

Living in Christ means we have God's power in our life. Sometimes we may stumble, but if we do, we can claim Christ's forgiveness and keep going. We're headed in a direction toward Jesus, and we know that He remains a living presence in our hearts every step of the way (Hebrews 7:25; Jude 24). Jesus provides two things that are essential for healthy growth: a sense of security through His unconditional love, and the motivation to reach higher through His inspiring Word—the Bible.

## 5 | The Joy of the Second Chance

Harold Hughes received many honors during his distinguished career as a U.S. Senator, but the one that meant the most to him came shortly after his commitment to Christ. He was studying the Bible alone in his living room one evening when he felt a nudge at his elbow. He looked up and saw his two small daughters, standing quietly in their nightgowns. He stared at them for a moment; they

had changed so much, and he had missed so much during his devastating battle with alcohol.

Then Carol, the younger one, said, "Daddy, we've come to kiss you good night."

The father's eyes blurred. It had been so long since the children had sought his embrace. Now their beautiful clear eyes held no fear. Daddy had come home at last.

*Continued on page 16*



# WordSearch

If you want to go deeper into this study topic, complete this section.

1. What did Jesus say was the reason He left heaven and came to live with us on earth as a man? (Luke 19:10)

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2. How did Jesus describe the radical change that occurs in your life when you accept the salvation He offers? How necessary is this change if you are to be saved? (John 3:3-7)

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3. Must you persuade a reluctant God to bless you and forgive your sins, or is He eager and willing to do so? (Matthew 7:7-11; Ezekiel 33:11)

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4. What is God's ultimate goal for you in your relationship with Him? (Jeremiah 31:33, 34)

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5. Will God ever give up on you? What assurance does He give concerning how long He will be with you and guide you? (Deuteronomy 31:6)

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Jesus Christ truly does give people a second chance. He takes on the most hopeless cases and creates new beginnings—“the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).

The Savior longs for each one of us to come home at last. Have you accepted Christ’s loving invitation? Receiving God’s forgiveness and cleansing is as simple and profound as opening your arms for a child’s embrace.

If you have not yet trusted in Christ as your personal Savior, you can do so right now by praying this prayer:

“Father, I am sorry for my life of sin. Thank You for sending Your Son to this world to die in my place. Please forgive my sins and come into my life. Help me to follow You and Your plan for my life as revealed in the Bible. I ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.”

## My Decision

- I choose to accept Jesus as my Savior. I ask Him to forgive my sins and to come into my life. I choose to follow the Bible and live for Jesus by His strength and power.
- I thank God for offering me a second chance at life.

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