

## SESSION 1: A COMMON FAITH

### **THE GOSPEL STORY AND OUR STORY**

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing "WHY?" They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God's purpose for their lives. The most basic question a person can ask is, "What is the meaning of my life?"

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways:

- Some look for happiness by acquiring possessions.
- Some look for happiness by experiencing pleasure.
- Some look for happiness by gaining prestige and power.

*But real happiness comes from understanding and fulfilling my purpose in life through Jesus Christ.*

#### **WHY AM I HERE?**

##### **1. God made me to love me!**

*God says, I have loved you with an everlasting love! Jeremiah 31:3  
Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be His through our union with Christ... because of His love, God had already decided that through Jesus Christ He would make us His children--this was God's pleasure and purpose. Ephesians 1:4-5*

##### **2. We were created to enjoy a personal relationship with God and to manage all of the rest of god's creation! This makes us special!**

*So God created human beings, making them in His image. He blessed them, and said... live all over the earth and bring it under control. I am putting you in charge. Genesis 1:27-28 (TLB)*

*God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 1 Timothy 6:17*

*Jesus said, I have come in order that you might have life--life in all its fullness! John 10:10*

##### **3. When we know and love God, and live in harmony with his purpose for our lives, it produces tremendous benefits in our life:**

###### ***Clear Conscience***

Romans 8:1

###### ***Life and Peace***

Romans 8:6

###### ***Help with Weakness***

Romans 8:26

###### ***Purpose***

Romans 8:28

###### ***Confidence***

Romans 8:31

###### ***Security***

Romans 8:39

###### ***Power and Strength***

Philippians 4:13

###### ***Fulfillment***

Philippians 4:19

###### ***Freedom***

John 8:32,36

***This is the kind of lifestyle God intends for us to live. Why then aren't most people really happy?***

## **WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?**

**Man has a natural desire to be boss and to ignore God's principles for living:**

"Look out for #1. Do your own thing."

"If it feels good, do it - regardless of what God says about it."

"It's my life and I'll do what I please!"

**The Bible calls this attitude: SIN**

*All of us, like sheep, have gone astray, and each of us has turned to his own way. Isaiah 53:6 (KJV)*

*If we say that we never sin, we are only fooling ourselves, and refuse to accept the truth. 1 John 1:8*

**Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to fear God and try to live our lives outside of His will.**

*The trouble is that your sins have cut you off from God. Isaiah 59:2 (TLB)*

*All have sinned and fall short of God's glorious ideal. Romans 3:23*

**When our relationship to God is not right, it causes problems in every area of our lives - marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc. When people have problems, they often try many different ways of coping before turning to God.**

*There are ways that **SEEM** right to man, but only end in death. Proverbs 16:25*

**Even when we know that our deepest need is God, we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:**

- "My mother was a Christian so . . ."
- "It doesn't matter what you believe, just be sincere."
- "I'll give up all of my bad habits."
- "I'll work real hard and earn it."
- "I'll be religious and go to church."

## **WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?**

*Jesus Christ said, I am the way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except **THROUGH ME!** John 14:6*

**God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. If any other way would have worked, Jesus Christ would not have had to come. The Way is a Person!**

## **JESUS HAS ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF YOUR SIN PROBLEM!**

*The wages of sin is death, BUT the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 6:23*

### **God did this for us because He loves us and wants us to know Him.**

*God demonstrated His love for us in that while we were still separated from God by sin, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8*

*God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind. 1 Timothy 2:5*

God has already done His part to restore our relationship to Him. He took the initiative. Now He waits for each of us to individually accept what He has done for us.

## **WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?**

- 1. Admit that God has not been first place in your life and ask him to forgive your sins.**

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from every wrong. 1 John 1:9*

- 2. Believe that Jesus died for your sins and that he rose again and is alive today.**

*If you confess that Jesus is your Lord, and you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9*

*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name (Jesus) by which we must be saved. Acts 4:12*

- 3. Realize that you cannot earn salvation, accept gods free gift of grace.**

*For it is by grace you are saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8, 9*

Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but on the basis of what Jesus already did for us!

- 4. Invite Jesus Christ to come into your life and be the director ("Lord") of your life.**

*To all who receive Him, He gives the right to become children of God. All we need to do is to trust Him to save us. All those who believe this are reborn! - not a physical rebirth... but from the will of God! John 1:12-13 Jesus says, 'Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in...' Revelation 3:30*

**You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:**

*Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for dying on the cross for me. Please help me to understand it more. As much as I know how, I want to follow you from now on. Please come into my life and make me a new person inside. I accept your gift of salvation. Please help me to grow now as a Christian.*

*Whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. Romans 10:13*