

BEING BORN AGAIN

STUDY 1

We all need God. Throughout history and in all parts of the world, man has always made an effort to have a relationship with God. All cultures feel the need to draw closer to a superior being: God.

More than 2,000 years ago, God became human sending his son Jesus (the 2nd person of the Trinity) to be born of the Virgin Mary. People came to Him for different reasons and needs: some were sick and wanted to be healed, other wanted to know God in a deeper way, others felt the sin in their lives (felt bad about themselves) and wanted to be forgiven... everybody has their reasons.

Self-Reflection: What was my reason? What need drew me closer to God? (Answer below)

At least once in their lifetime, most men and women are conscious of their need of God and they start asking themselves “What does God think of me?”, “What sort of relationship do I have with him?”, “How can I please him and escape from the punishment I deserve of my sin?”

Here are a few answers that spring to mind when we think about these questions:

- God will forgive everyone because He is good.
- I am good; I’ve always believed in God, I will go to heaven when I die.
- To get closer to God I must behave and be good to others.
- To get closer to God I must be his child.
- All human beings are far from God because of their sin.
- There are people who will never be able to get close to God because their sins are unforgiveable.

The Bible tells us of a man who wanted to draw closer to God, to “see the kingdom of God”, so he came to Jesus for help. The answer the Lord gave him is found in the gospel of John, chapter 3 verse 3 (**John 3:3-5**). Read these verses carefully and complete the sentence:

In reply Jesus declared, “I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is _____ again”

Why do we need to be born again? To be children of God. This is the only way to be close to God. Only when we become His child do the doors of heaven open for us to reach the Father. It is not true that every person is a child of God. Nor is it true that those who are baptised are children of God.

The Bible speaks clearly on the subject:

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

Acts 3:19 *"Repent, then, and turn of God, so that your sins may be wiped out" (essential condition to becoming a child of God)*

Write down the previous Bible verses in your own words:

So, to be a child of God you must consider two important things.

Firstly, to **understand and believe** with all your heart that what you know is true. It is to have faith that what you believe in must be so.

To be able to draw close to God we need to believe certain things. Let's analyse each verse stated to complete the explanations below.

- **1 Timothy 2:4** *"Who wants all men to be saved and to come to knowledge of the truth"*

God wants _____ men to be saved.

- **Romans 3:23** *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*

We are all _____ and _____ cannot attain the glory of God

- **1 Timothy 1:15** *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners"*

Christ came to _____ mankind.

- **1 John 1:7** *"the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin"*

The shedding of Jesus' _____ (which is to say, His death) gives us the opportunity to be _____ from all sin.

- **1 Corinthians 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"*

Jesus' death on the _____ is God's act of power.

- **1 Timothy 2:5** *"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"*

There is only one true _____, and to reach Him there is only one way: through _____

- **John 14:6** *"Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"*

Jesus is the only _____ to come to the Father God.

This is followed by our second point which is repentance and the confession of ours sins.

Repentance

We can say that the biblical meaning of repentance is grief (sadness/pain) for having sinned and a sincere desire to not commit sin again.

But what is sin? According to you, which ones of the following could be classified as sin ?
(tick appropriately)

- Killing, stealing and that sort of thing.
- Thinking the worst of people.
- Knowing how to do good and not doing it.
- Missing a meeting.
- Eating meat.
- Cheating in a relationship.
- Blackmailing.
- Cheating in an exam (copying answers).
- Taking home things from work.
- Disagreeing with someone.

Sin is doing what doesn't please God. God can't stand evil, however small the act of sin might be. Our entire life is stained by various sins, which is why we all need to repent.

The repentance God wants touches every aspect of our lives:

- Our feelings, as we feel sad for what we have done.
- Our intellect, as we admit we are guilty.
- Our will, as we decide not to do that wrong again.

Confession

"For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved" **Romans 10:10.**

According to this verse, to be a child of God it is enough to:
(Tick appropriately)

- Believe in our heart.
- Obey the 10 commandments.
- Believe in our heart and say with our mouth what we believe in our hearts.
- Say "I believe in Jesus Christ as my Lord".

Being born again takes over our entirety. It is not something that happens only to our feeling and/or exclusively to our minds (it spreads from our spirit to our body). That is why God is so interested in us repenting and desiring to be his children publicly. If we ask him to renew us, He will do it, as it says in his word:

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you”

Matthew 7:7.

If you believe what we have studied and you have repented of your way of living away from God, but you still haven't decided to follow Christ wholeheartedly, now is your chance:

1. Ask God for forgiveness for your sins.
2. Tell God you believe His son Jesus Christ who came to save you and confess that He is God.
3. Ask Him to give you a new life.

After the new birth, a most wonderful path is opened ahead of us. We will have joy and happiness, as well as many sufferings and struggles which we will be able to overcome with the strength God gives us. Jesus didn't promise a path filled roses, he said in **Matthew 7:14**: *“but small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life”* He also said in **Matthew 16:24** *“ if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me”*.

God doesn't leave us on our own, he offers us his company. A few moments before going to heaven, Jesus said: *“surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age”* (**Matthew 28:20**). He is with us permanently, until the day we join him forever, in the place he is preparing: *“In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you”* (**John 14:2**).

Also, as if all this wasn't enough, our Father has left us powerful tools to walk this way and advance in strength which will be discussed in the next study.