



God is love.

1 John 4:16

“We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.”

Psalm 86:15

“But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.”

1 John 4:7-8

“Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”



Think about it . . .

God is the definition of love, and He loves us deeply. God's love for us is reliable, everlasting, and has no limits! He loved us before we were born. And there is nothing we can do to earn His love; it is given to us freely. God still loves us when we do wrong, or when we feel shame. God loves us even when we reject Him or if we deny His existence! God not only loves you, but He loves the entire world—every person in every culture and religion! God's love is the most inclusive love in the universe. No one can escape His love.

It's like this . . .

God created everything, and even the simple things He created are examples of how He loves us. God has given us air to breathe and water to drink. He's given us the sun to keep us warm and give us light. God has given us every simple thing, because God thinks about us! As Max Lucado wrote, "If God had a refrigerator, your picture would be on it!"

In what ways have you experienced love?

In what ways have you seen or felt God's love?

More Bible verses to read:
Psalm 139; Jeremiah 29:11; John 3:16; Romans 8:38–39;
1 Corinthians 13:4–8; Ephesians 2:4–5

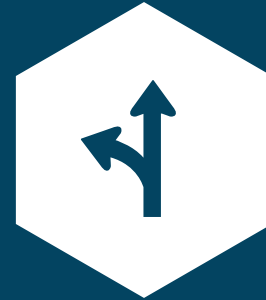
Our sin divides us from God.

1 John 3:4

“Everyone who sins is breaking God’s law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.”

Isaiah 59:2

“It’s your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.”



Think about it . . .

Sin is a problem every person has—a problem we all share. It happens when we miss the target of perfect love—God’s love. Sin is disobedience to God and includes both wrongful actions and even certain thoughts. It includes lawlessness, hateful behavior, violence, and failing to do what is right. Sin creates division between our friends and us, and between God and us. We as humans have a tendency or bias to commit sin. We begin life, and before long, start going our own way rather than following God’s way because of sin. All the problems of the human race, big and small, come from sin. Our sin doesn’t stop God from loving us; however, when we sin, we move away from God and create distance between us.

It’s like this . . .

Imagine an archer who draws back his bow and sends an arrow toward a target, but instead of hitting the bull’s-eye, the arrow veers off course and misses the mark. The arrow may miss by a little or by a lot, but the result is the same: the arrow doesn’t land where it’s supposed to. The same is true of sin—we miss the mark.

In what ways has sin created division between you and others?

In what ways has sin separated you from God?

Jesus died for our sin, then came back to life.

Romans 5:8

“But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

1 Peter 3:18

“Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.”

Romans 6:9-10

“We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and he will never die again. Death no longer has any power over him. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God.”



Think about it . . .

Although our sin divides us from God, the separation is not the end of the story. While we were separated because of sin, God showed His perfect love by sending Jesus, His Son, to live a sinless life and die a sacrificial death for us. God's perfect love resulted in the perfect action to pay for our sin: He erased it and reconnected us to Himself. Not only did Jesus demonstrate God's perfect love by dying, He also demonstrated His perfect power by conquering death and coming back to life. Through His death and new life, we also have hope for a new life!

It's like this . . .

When a crime is committed, society demands that justice be done. The criminal has to pay the price for his or her wrong action, usually by going to jail and/or repaying the victims. Jesus paid the price for all sins of humanity, all the sin—past, present, future—for all of time. He not only paid the price, He also came back to life victoriously!

Think of a time you did wrong and had to be punished or pay a price. What did that feel like?

What would it have felt like if someone were to take the punishment and pay the price for you?

More Bible verses to read:
Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4;
2 Corinthians 5:21; Titus 3:5-7

We need to decide to put our faith in God.

John 3:16

“For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

Hebrews 11:6

“And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.”

Romans 10:9-10

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.”



Think about it . . .

God's perfect love accomplished perfect justice through Jesus, yet that same love also gives us a choice to have faith in God or not. Faith is our belief, our firm conviction, of things we do not see. God does not force belief upon us; His love allows us to make the decision. Jesus paid the price to save us from our sin, but to receive that salvation we must put our faith in God. We do that by making Jesus our Lord and believing that God raised Him from the dead. When we put our trust in God, we have faith. Our faith enables us to receive God's grace.

It's like this . . .

Have you ever been given a gift card? We receive gift cards as gifts, but unless you use them, they are just plastic. You must act on the gift card offer. In the same way, our faith in Jesus makes His death, resurrection, and the forgiveness of sin effective in our lives. You must act on God's offer.

What are some things you believe exist even though you can't see them? (For example, the wind, the love of our parents or friends, etc.)

What is preventing you from having faith in God and in Jesus' death and resurrection?

The Holy Spirit will help us live for God.

2 Corinthians 5:15

“He died for everyone so that those who receive his new life will no longer live for themselves. Instead, they will live for Christ, who died and was raised for them.”

John 14:26

“But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.”

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



Think about it . . .

Jesus died for our sin, but He also died so that we could have a better life by living a selfless life—a life focused on God and His perfect love. It's hard to live unselfishly but God sent the Holy Spirit to help us! Like Jesus, the Holy Spirit is God. The Holy Spirit teaches us and gives us passion for God. The Holy Spirit also gives us power to be who God wants us to be and to do what God wants us to do. We can hear from the Holy Spirit through prayer and reading God's Word—the Bible. The power of the Holy Spirit is most often experienced in gatherings with other followers of Christ—the Church.

It's like this . . .

When Jesus' disciples had their first encounter with the Holy Spirit, two key words were used to describe it—wind and fire. The Holy Spirit is like a powerful wind—we feel even though we do not see. A powerful wind can usher in change and move things around. In the same way, the Holy Spirit can move us and bring change to our lives or our situations. The Holy Spirit is also like fire—purifying us, exciting us, and drawing us closer to God.

In what ways do you need the Holy Spirit to help you live for God?

What church or gathering of believers can you be part of so that you may experience the power of the Holy Spirit?

More Bible verses to read:
Joel 2:28–29; Luke 24:49; Acts 2; Romans 8:16; 1 Corinthians 12–14;
Ephesians 4:22–24

It's time to decide. Are you ready?

Every person has to make his or her own decision to have faith in God. You can begin your faith journey with God by saying a simple prayer. A prayer is a way to express your faith and trust in Jesus. You might say something like the following prayer to God.

Dear God,

I believe that You are real, that You love me, and that I have been separated from You by sin.

I know I cannot save myself from sin. I know only You can save me.

Thank You for sending Jesus to pay the price for my sin.

I believe that Jesus is Lord, that He paid the price for my sin with His death, and that You raised Him from the dead.

Please forgive me as I accept You into my life and help me through Your Holy Spirit.

Help me to live for You.

Amen.

Not ready?

You may not be ready to put your faith in God and live for Him, but that does not change how God feels about you. God still loves you and He will continue to reach out to you. God is patient because He does not want anyone to perish, including you (2 Peter 3:9). When you are ready to follow God, He is ready to welcome you.

Have doubts?

It's natural to have some doubts about God's existence and His great love for us. In fact, having faith in something you cannot see is not easy. The following websites can help you explore your doubts, or explore more of the Bible:

**Something Amazing
Cold Case Christianity
Reasonable Faith
Read the Bible**

somethingamazing.net/still-exploring/
www.coldcasechristianity.com
www.reasonablefaith.org
www.biblegateway.com

Now what?

Becoming a part of God's family: The Church

The Bible calls the Church the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12–27). Placing your faith in God means you've become a part of God's family. Living a life of faith in God is easier when you are supported by other members of God's family who feel the same way. The Church is simply a group of committed followers of Jesus who meet together on a regular basis. We encourage each other, help one another grow in our faith, support each other in times of need, worship God, and work together to share His love with others. The Church is something God always planned for us to be a part of so we would be connected as a family.

Find a church that believes Jesus is Lord, believes and teaches the Bible, and that embraces the Holy Spirit as He helps us grow. Join that church and become an active part of the body of Christ.

Think about it . . .

What local churches could you become a part of? Who do you know that you can go to church with? How soon can you start going?

What do you want to say to God? What is the best time of the day for you to pray?

Pray: Talk with God

Pray with God on a regular basis—make it a daily habit in the morning or in the evening. Jesus prayed and taught His followers to pray (Luke 11:1–4). Praying is as simple as talking to God. You can pray anytime, out loud or internally. Tell God how you feel, what you are thinking, and how you need His help. Share your needs and desires with Him, and don't be afraid to pray for your friends and family as well. When you pray, also take time to listen to God because He will speak to you in those moments. He is always ready to connect with us through prayer.

Read the Bible.

The Bible is God's written Word to us, a guide that will strengthen our faith (2 Timothy 3:16-17), help us learn about God, and find answers to some of the difficult questions of life. For thousands of years, God's followers have relied on the Bible for guidance, direction, and learning. The Bible tells the story of how God's plan guided those in the past, His plan for each of us today, and His plans for the future. As we read the Bible, God reveals Himself to us through its pages and we learn more about Him.

Read a little bit of the Bible every day! If you don't know where to start, start with the Gospel of John in the New Testament. You can get the Bible for free as an app or through a website:

The Bible App—www.youversion.com

Bible Online—www.biblegateway.com

If you prefer a physical Bible, one you can hold, you can get one for free from the United States Bible Society at the following link: www.usbiblesociety.com/free-bible-order-form.

Find a spiritual mentor.

Mentors help us grow in our faith and give us guidance. A mentor can be a pastor, youth pastor, small group leader, or simply a person who is spiritually mature and more knowledgeable about the Bible than we are. In the Bible, Jesus was a mentor to His disciples, Barnabas was a mentor to Paul, and Paul was a mentor to Timothy. To find a mentor, seek out someone who is wiser and can offer sound advice and experience, and ask them to help disciple you and guide you in your newfound faith.

Think about it . . .

What is the best time for you to read the Bible? What will you do to get a Bible if you don't already have one?

Who can you ask to be your spiritual mentor?
When will you ask them?

Share your faith with others.

Jesus instructed us to tell others about Himself (Matthew 28:18–20). A big part of following Jesus is sharing God’s love with others, by both serving them and by telling them about what Jesus has done for us. It’s not difficult to tell others about God—it’s as simple as sharing your experience of faith, how God has worked in your life, and how God can work in the lives of those you are sharing with. You can even use this booklet to talk about God and what He has done for us.

You can get powerful free resources and training to help you talk about Jesus and serve others from Youth Alive. Youth Alive is an organization that helps students share the message of Jesus with other students. Get resources and help today at www.youthalive.com!

Think about it . . .

Who are the most important people in your life?

What can you do to serve them and talk about your faith with them?

Need more booklets? Order more at
www.MyHealthyChurch.com/AliveIn5

Alive in Five

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God
is love.



Our sin
divides us
from God.



Jesus died
for our sin,
then came
back to
life.



We need
to decide
to put our
faith in
God.



The Holy
Spirit will
help us
live for
God.



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