

5. Here's Great Assurance

If you genuinely prayed the prayer to invite Jesus Christ into your life and truly meant it, you are now a true Christian and have the gift of a new spiritual life as well as eternal life. You are also a child of God and a member of his family.¹³ God promised this. Choose to accept it. Take it by faith and not feelings. Feelings change but God's Word never does.

God's Word says, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."¹⁴

When you pray to receive Christ into your life, you have a brand new spiritual life. This life needs care and nurturing just as your physical life does. If you prayed to invite Christ into your life, be sure to follow the instructions in the coupon below and we will be happy to send you the web addresses for helpful free articles.

FOOTNOTES: 1. John 3:16. 2. John 10:10.
3. Romans 3:24. 4. James 4:17.
5. Romans 6:23. 6. See Ephesians 2:8-9.
7. See John 14:6. 8. 1Timothy 2:5-6.
9. 1John 1:9. 10. Mark 1:5.
11. Acts 16:31. 12. John 1:12.
13. See 2 Corinthians 5:17 and John 1:12.
14. 1 John 5:11-13.

Written by Richard (Dick) Innes

My Decision

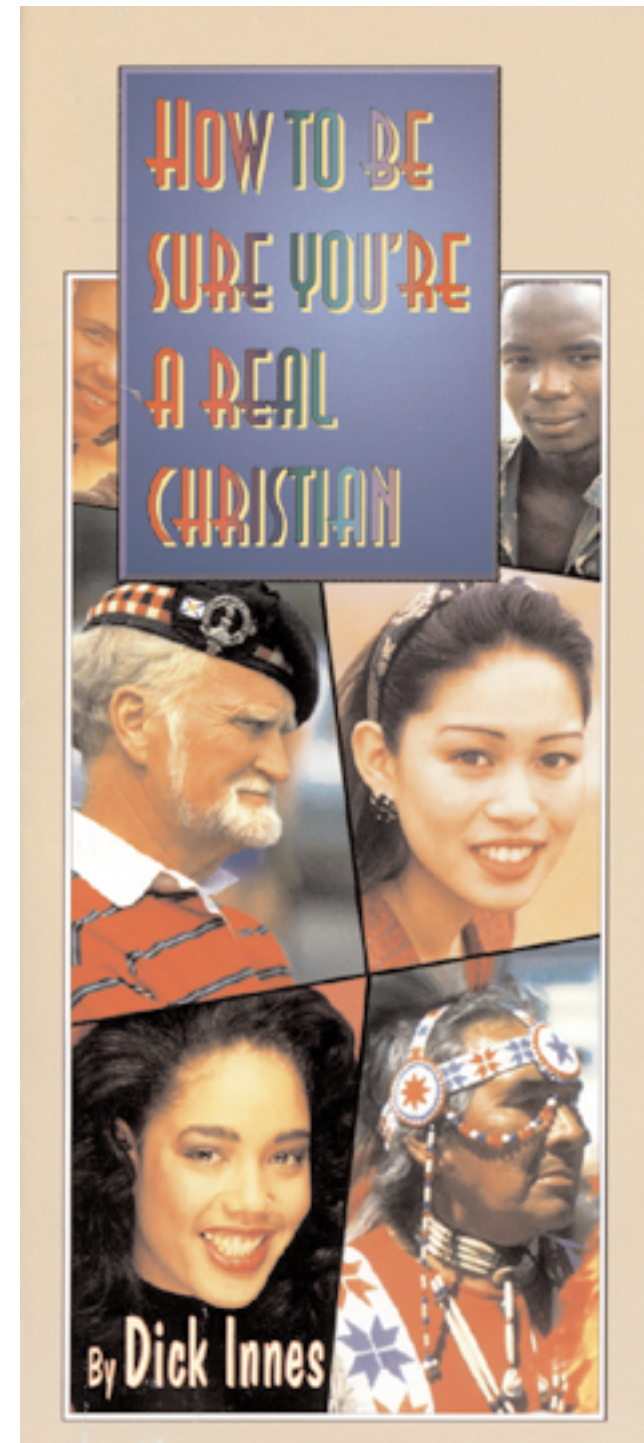
Dear Friend,

If you prayed and invited Jesus Christ to come into your heart and life as Savior, please go to www.actsweb.org/decision.php, fill in the "My Decision" form and we will send you the web address for a free copy of "How to Grow" and the web address for the "Living, Loving and Learning" free articles to help you grow in your new Christian life.

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How to Know God Without Having to Be Religious

I walked into a Religious Education classroom in a public school in Australia and with tongue-in-cheek wrote in large letters across the blackboard:

"I hate religion."

"Man, in this class, you'll get shot," gasped one student in amazement.

"But I'm sold on real Christianity," I responded.

"Well, what's the difference?" several chorused.

"Let me explain," I replied.

1. God's Purpose

True, Christianity is a religion, but people can be religious without being Christians. Christ condemned the religious Pharisees of his day because they hid their real selves behind a facade of religion and external morality.

It may sound odd, but God isn't into religion or external morality. He's into relationships and reality. That is, he wants us not only to have a right relationship with him, but also with each other and with ourselves. And he wants us to be real—to see and admit what we truly are so he can help us.

Neither is it God's goal to make us good. It's to make us whole, for only to the degree that we are made whole will our actions, lifestyle, and relationships be wholesome!

Religion tends to want to fix us from the outside in. God wants to fix us from the inside out. The first can become an impossible burden. The latter is what brings freedom. Christianity is not a set of rules and regulations. It is experiencing divine love, divine acceptance and divine forgiveness.

It helps to realize that God isn't out to zap us for the wrongs we've done. In fact, no matter what we have ever done or have failed to do, he loves us with an everlasting love and has a wonderful purpose for our lives—for this life as well as the next! As Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."¹ And again, "My purpose is to give life in all its fullness."²

2. Man's Problem

On the outside we may look like we are doing very well, but on the inside everyone of us has a major issue. Seneca, the ancient Roman philosopher, put it bluntly when he said, "We have all sinned. Some more. Some less." God's Word, the Bible agrees. It reads, "We have all sinned and fallen short of God's standard."³ Sin, however, is not only doing harmful acts. It is anything that falls short of the standard of perfection that God envisioned for us. This includes nursing grudges and other negative emotions, pride, jealousy, mixed motives, etc. Most of us, too, are guilty of sins of omission; that is, not doing what we know we should and could do.⁴

Another misconception about God is that he is out to get us or to punish us for our sins. We bring sin's punishment on ourselves because sin has its own natural consequences. If we try to break the universal law of gravity, for instance, we can't. It will break us. Neither can we break God's universal moral law. When we do, it breaks us, and besides its painful effects in this life—suffering, sorrow, sickness and spiritual death—its ultimate and tragic consequence is eternal death or separation from God.⁵

We are like a burned out or "dead" electric light bulb that cannot respond to its power source. And because we are spiritually dead, we cannot respond to God's love and power either, without his first "fixing" us. Furthermore, because of our spiritual deadness, it is impossible for anyone to save him or herself. Only God can do this. This is why all the "good works" in the world cannot make us alive to God. Only when we see and admit this, is God able to "fix" us!

3. Christ's Answer

Because our sin has separated or disconnected us from God, we have been left with a God-shaped vacuum, or spiritual emptiness, within. As Augustine put it, "You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you." The world's many religions are all evidence of man's endless search to find God and fill this vacuum. However, because God loved us so much, he sent his own sinless Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from our predicament.⁶

Christ did this by dying on the cross in our place to pay the consequence of and ransom price for our sins—death. Thus, Jesus Christ is God's only provision for our sin, and he is the only way back to God and the only door into eternal life.⁷

God's Word, the Bible, says, "For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men."⁸ Had there been any other way to save mankind, Christ wouldn't have had to die for us. Because he was without sin, he was the only one qualified to die for our sins.

4. Your Invitation

If you were found guilty of a serious crime and were condemned to death, and if offered, would you accept a free unconditional pardon?

Because of Christ's dying for us, that's what God offers us, and with it the gift of eternal life. All we need to do is to accept his pardon. Here's how to do this:

First: Confess. God's Word says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins."⁹

Second: Repent. That is, we need to turn from sinful and selfish ways to follow God and his ways. Jesus said, "The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe."¹⁰ That is, we need to turn from sinful and selfish ways to follow God and his ways.

Third: Believe. "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved,"¹¹ declares the Word of God.

Fourth: Receive. God also said, "To all who received him [Christ], to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."¹²

Admitting our sinfulness, believing that Jesus died for our sins, inviting him into our lives as Lord and Savior, and accepting God's forgiveness is what makes us real Christians. The following prayer will help you do this:

"Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner and am sorry for all the wrongs that I have done. I believe that your Son, Jesus Christ, died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me. I invite you, Jesus, to come into my heart and life as Lord and Savior. I commit and trust my life to you. Please give me the desire to be what you want me to be and to do what you want me to do. Thank you for dying for my sins, for your free pardon, for your gift of eternal life, and for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen"

YOUR RESPONSE: "YES, I prayed and invited Jesus Christ to come into my life to be my Savior. I want to learn more about the Christian life." To do so, follow the instructions in the **My Decision** coupon on the next page and we will send you the web address for your FREE copy of the article, "How to Grow" to help you in your new Christian life and the URL for the "Living, Loving and Learning: Steps for Spiritual Growth" web articles—also without charge.



Inviting Jesus into your heart and life as your personal Savior is your Passport into Heaven. Whatever, you do, don't leave Earth without it!