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## There's a longing in every human heart for a sense of peace and security.

People have sought after peace and security all through history. We lack the things we hope for because of our broken relationship with God, our Creator.

First, we need to know what God we're talking about.

### What's True About God?

#### God is the Creator of all things

**John 1:3**, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

God made all things to display his nature and glory.

**Psalm 19:1**, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."

#### We are accountable to our Creator

We are here to display God's perfections in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

It's our duty to live in ways that show what is good and right in the eyes of God.

*Westminster Shorter Catechism* question 1: "What is the chief end of man?"

*The Answer*: "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him for ever."

#### God is sovereign and all powerful

God is so powerful that he cannot be hindered by anything he made. He always accomplishes his purpose.

**Psalm 115:3**, "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."

**Jeremiah 32:17**, "Ah Lord GOD! behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee"

(Note: In 1647 Bible scholars from around the English speaking world finished summarizing the teachings of the Bible producing the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. It continues to be an excellent teaching tool.)

*Westminster Shorter Catechism* question 4: "What is God?"

*Answer*: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth."

The first of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:3 says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

### What's the Problem?

#### There's a moral barrier that keeps us from enjoying God's fellowship.

**Romans 3:23**, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"

The entire human race was represented by Adam in Eden.

When he disobeyed God, we all became corrupted and inherited his guilt.

This produced the moral barrier that separates us from God.

**Romans 5:12**, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"

#### This fall into sin left every one of us morally corrupted.

Being cut off from God, no one is able to understand God's truth as it really is.

We cannot do what we are required to do to honor the purpose for which we were created.

**Romans 3:10-12**, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."



In Eden we all fell through Adam.

**Humans are so morally corrupted by the fall that no one is able to correct his problem, or remove his own guilt.**

**1 Corinthians 2:14**, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

*Westminster Shorter Catechism* question 16: "Did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression?"  
*Answer*: "The covenant being made with Adam, not only for himself, but for his posterity; all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression."

If this was the only truth revealed in Scripture there would be no hope.  
But there is more ...

## **The Barrier can be Removed.**

**God's justice requires death as the penalty for sin.**

**Romans 6:23**, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

That death includes an eternal separation from God.

Justice can't be ignored or set aside. It must be satisfied.

To be made right with God one of the parties of the broken covenant must die as God warned.

Since we fell into sin through a substitute in Adam  
we can be redeemed from our debt by a qualified substitute too.

**God came in the person of Jesus Christ to be a Savior for his people.**

Jesus is God who took on human flesh. He is not just a man or a good teacher.

He is the only one who qualifies to represent us.

- He was **both God and man** in a union that defies our full understanding.
- He had **no guilt** of his own, and did not inherit the guilt of Adam.
- He took upon himself all the guilt of those he represented.

Jesus suffered that infinite horror in those hours on the cross which we could not pay off if we suffered eternally.

That's why Jesus came to earth.

Not just to be a good man or teacher, but to redeem his lost people.

**Jesus Christ came to satisfy the demands of divine justice for his people.**

**Luke 19:10**, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

God's angel messengers announced this to the shepherds at his birth.

**Luke 2:11**, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

**Those whose guilt is removed by Jesus are restored to fellowship with the Creator forever.**

**This was predicted long ago by God through his prophets.**

Hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus Christ, God moved the Prophet Isaiah to write:

**Isaiah 53:5-6**, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

**This divine plan was completed by the work of Jesus as the promised Messiah**

**1 Peter 2:24**, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

**1 Peter 3:18**, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"

## **What Does God Call us to Do?**

**God calls us to turn to him trusting his promise of redemption through Jesus Christ.**

When God applies his grace, we evidence it by the things it produces in our lives.

If he did not change us by grace first we would not respond obediently to his call.

### **His grace stirs us to Repentance:**

We know God has changed us when we deeply **sorrow over our offenses** against God, and **want to stop sinning**.

This is not a mere regret about the *consequences* of sin that we might suffer.

It's a true repentance that we have sinned against God.

**Luke 13:3**, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

**Romans 2:4**, "... the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance"

### **His grace stirs us to Faith:**

We know God has changed us when we **trust in his provision for salvation** through the work of Jesus Christ alone.

Nothing else can be added to make us right with God.

This is not just a fact we accept. We put our **confidence in this promise** because God said that it's true.

The renewed heart understands that its own merits could never earn what it has come to possess by God's grace.

**Acts 10:43**, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins."

**Galatians 2:16**, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

### **His grace stirs us to Obedience:**

The changed heart begins living differently.

The redeemed person **seeks to obey God out of true gratitude**.

That person obeys as a way to thankfully honor the God who saved him.

Good works don't earn eternal life. They prove it's present.

One who doesn't show evidence of new life by sincere striving for holiness, casts doubt on the truth of his profession of faith and repentance.

**Ephesians 2:10**, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

**John 14:15**, (Jesus said) "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

God's work can never fail. We trust in what he did for us, not in what we do for him.

His promises assure us of the blessings earned for us by our Savior.

**John 1:12**, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"

**1 John 5:13**, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

**Ephesians 2:8-9**, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

**John 6:37**, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."

What was once separated from God by spiritual death is restored to fellowship with him in spiritual life.

**1 Peter 1:3**, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

## **We should be Growing Spiritually**

We are given life in Christ so that we will be growing spiritually.

There are certain things God tells us to do. By them he strengthens us.

### **1. Study the Bible**

It's important to **read**, to **study**, to **be taught**, and to **apply** what the Bible says.

It's good to have a **plan** to read and study the Bible some every day, and listen carefully to good sermons and lessons.

Those new to Bible study could start with the Gospel of John, Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, or Galatians. Read a Psalm every day, and start learning the history of God's people in the Book of Acts.

**2 Timothy 3:15-17**, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

**Psalm 119:18** provides us with a good way to begin our daily Bible readings.

There the Psalmist prays, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

## 2. Pray

Every true believer should **pray sincerely to God** throughout every day.

We should join with our hearts in the prayers said by the Minister during worship.

It's good that families pray together at meals, and when they studying the Bible together.

This shows their love for God, their gratitude for his grace, and their dependence upon the Savior.

**Matthew 6:6**, "But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

**Psalm 5:3**, "My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up."

## 3. Worship

Every believer should **worship sincerely and attentively** when the church comes together for that purpose.

By membership in a local church the believer is covenanted to Christ by Baptism, and enjoys the partaking of the Lord's Supper.

These are not magical rituals. They are obediences ordained by God for our spiritual growth.

All the parts of worship are used by God to make us grow to be more like Jesus Christ.

**Acts 20:7**, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."

**Acts 2:42**, "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."

**Hebrews 10:25**, "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another ..."

## 4. Become Part of a Sound Church

Every believer should **submit to the discipline and encouragement of the church and of other believers**.

In the church the believer comes under the care of the Shepherds God calls to guide them.

The officers guide and counsel him in his growth in Christ.

This discipline of the church both encourages holy living, and at times corrects those who wander off into sin.

**Hebrews 13:7**, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

It is by these means that God has ordained to display his grace toward his children.

These are not the causes of grace. They are evidences of grace at work in us improving our spiritual lives.

We are redeemed to live for Christ, not to merely rest in a promise of eternal life.

Those restored to fellowship with their Creator will evidence his work in them.

**John 15:8**, "By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

**Ephesians 2:10**, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

**Titus 2:14**, "who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds."

**Proverbs 28:20**, "A faithful man will abound with blessings, But he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished."