



FIRST STEPS: Session 2

Following Jesus

In Session One we learned...

When we become a Christian, God starts all over again with us – we're a **brand-new person!**

Our purpose in life? **to glorify God and enjoy him.**

And be his friend. Forever!

We also learned why we miss our purpose in life. We choose to ignore God and put god-substitutes in our lives. (*Remember what they're called? _____¹*)

The result? We go our own way. We don't honor God. We go rogue, become independent. That's **sin**, being independent from God. Sin separates God from us, because he hates the rebellion of sin.

Sin produces **sins**. Sins are thoughts, words and actions that aren't God-centered. Sins damage ourselves and others. They ruin our life.

"...your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you so that he will not hear." (Isaiah 59:2)

(Helpful Hint: look up each verse in your Bible, and underline it or highlight it)

What a mess! We're away from God. We've lost our way, can't get back to him. How do we ever discover his purpose and become his friend? _____

_____ (your answer)

God's Plan: God created you to be His friend. He planned a fulfilling life for you, encircled by his love. He'd love you. You'd love him and obey him. You'd love

others, yourself and his creation. Life would be full of joy. You'd not be lonely. You'd be at peace, safe and secure in his love, in his beautiful creation.

[Jesus] ...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10.10

Why isn't this our experience today? *We don't love God and have life-to-the-full from Jesus because* _____

_____ *(your answer)*

Our Choice: God didn't make us as robots. No, he made you and me as living, breathing persons. He gave us a will to decide, so we can choose. Tragically, you and I chose independence, not his love. We all did. Everyone disobeys him.

We picked our own way (that's *sin*, remember) and got separated from God. We weren't his friend.

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. Romans 3:23

Where do you notice this today? *I see sin and separation from God in* _____

_____ *(your answer)*

Maybe words came to mind. Abuse. Hatred. Lies. Rage. Murder. It's the stuff of news reports. It's our life condition.

The terrible truth is, we can't get back to God on our own. We're away from him, on our own. We'll live without him, die without him. It's the result of sin. A curse covers our world. How tragic!

All through history people tried to connect with God again. Tried and failed. Being good won't do it, because no one's good enough. We've all sinned. Religion won't get us back. Nor money, nor education...

There's a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death. Proverbs 14:12

God's Great Love: Jesus Christ is the only solution to this separation. He became the bridge to reconnect us with God. Jesus lived the perfect life we couldn't possibly do. He died on the cross as our substitute, then rose from the grave. Why? Because he loved us. His death paid the penalty for our sins. His resurrection gave us opportunity for a brand new life. Jesus became the bridge, the mediator between God and us.

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. 1 Peter 3:18

There is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity—the man Christ Jesus. 1 Timothy 2:5

God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. Romans 5:8

That's why we need Jesus. He's our Mediator between us and God. That's why we follow him. He became our substitute! And he came back alive for us, to help us.

How does it affect you, Jesus would love us enough to die for us? _____
_____ (your answer)

Our response: Each of us must put our trust in Jesus. That means stopping our rebellion and independence. We commit our life to him and start depending on him. How? Admit our sinfulness and accept his forgiveness. Invite Him to become Lord (Boss) of our life. He gives us gifts of forgiveness and eternal life. It's a personal choice, for us to receive him.

For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

[Jesus] I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They'll never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. John 5:24

Everyone needs a **BASE**², like a house's foundation. Here's how.

B – Believe: I believe Jesus died in my place, to give me forgiveness of sins

A – Accept: I accept Jesus' gift of a new life, of eternal life

S – Switch: I switch bosses, from me to Jesus. I do a U-turn to return to God.

E – Express: I express this, *God, I want this, I make the choice to trust in Jesus*

Do you have this **BASE**? If you became a Christian in the past, you prayed something like this: (if you didn't, is there any reason you can't pray now?)

Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I'm a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died for my sins. I want to turn from my sins. I now invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as the Lord and Savior of my life. In Your name. Amen.

If you've prayed a prayer like this to trust in Jesus, then the Bible says you can know you have eternal life. God made a great promise to us.

...everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:13

That's me and you, if we've trusted in Jesus. God's made us his friend. **Though Jesus!** He's the bridge back to God's love and life. He helps us find God's purpose, God's dream for our lives.

Next Session: Why baptism is important

¹ God-substitutes are *idols*. Idols can be almost anything. People, possessions, even a dream we have.

² Rick Warren's formulation