

It's all about
Relationship



**RESTORING OUR
BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS**

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

and finding real love, acceptance, joy, peace, and hope

We live in a world of broken relationships where most people use others to achieve their own personal wants, wishes, dreams or pleasures and when they don't need them anymore or they find a "better deal" they ignore them or abandon them.

Few are faithful to the commitments they make with others. Selfishness seems the life theme for most. Life tends to be focused on "ME." It is pretty obvious if you pay attention to the world, national or local news. You will see a litany of stories of:

Wars	Misery	Human Trafficking & Slavery
Murders & Suicides	Sexual Abuse	Divorce
Unfaithfulness	Violence	Verbal/Physical/Emotional Abuse
Poverty & Starvation	Gangs & Prisons	Financial Scams
Political Fighting	Lawsuits	Racism
Sexism	Fractured Families	Scandals
Poverty	Corruption	Abandonment & Neglect
Child Abuse	Rape	Hate & Hate Crime
Robbery	Injustice	Alcoholism & Addiction
Out of Control STDs	Manipulation	Parental Neglect



SOME WOULD SUGGEST THAT THE SOLUTION TO ALL OF THIS IS:

More police, politicians, prisons, laws, lawyers, judges, religion, government programs, psychologists, therapy groups, or money...

The truth is, man has a relationship problem caused by a heart problem.

C.S. Lewis, a noted historian and one-time skeptic/agnostic, wrote later in his life, "God cannot give us joy and peace (*and salvation*) outside of Himself, because they don't exist." I think we can add to his comment that we are not going to find unconditional love outside of God.

The purpose of these presentations is to take a new look at our condition and the need for God's outrageous love for us.

All man-made religions teach us that we have to EARN or deserve the love, approval or acceptance of God. The God of the Bible is very different. It doesn't work that way with Him. He offers us something much better.

Let's take a closer look at it:

AN OUTLINE OF THE FOUR PRESENTATIONS

1. The Need for a Restored Relationship
The Cost of a Restored Relationship
2. The Revelation of the Restored Relationship
The Responsibilities in a Restored Relationship
3. The Steps to Having a Restored Relationship
4. Some Unique Results of a Restored Relationship



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IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

SESSION 1

The Need for a Restored Relationship

The Cost of a Restored Relationship



**RESTORING OUR RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH
A PEACE TREATY WITH GOD**

THE NEED FOR A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP

MAN

GOD

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT...

WE HAVEN'T REACHED THE IDEAL

"There is no one righteous, not even one; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" *Romans 3:10, 23*

CONSEQUENCE: "For the wages of sin is death..."
Romans 6:23

WE HAVE BROKEN THE LAWS OF GOD

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus Replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" *Matthew 22:36-39*

CONSEQUENCE: "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse..." *Galatians 3:10*

WE ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins..."
Ephesians 2:1

CONSEQUENCE: "But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead." *1 Peter 4:5*

WE ARE BLIND

"The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel..." *II Corinthians 4:4*

CONSEQUENCE: "...he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him." *1 John 2:11*

WE'VE LOST OUR WAY

"They wander far from the life God gives." *Ephesians 4:18*

CONSEQUENCE: "There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death." *Proverbs 14:12*

WE ARE HELPLESS TO SAVE OURSELVES

"The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, 'Who then can be saved?' Jesus looked at them and said: 'With man this is impossible.'" *Mark 10:26,27*

CONSEQUENCE: "Remember that at that time you were separated from Christ without hope and without God in the world."
Ephesians 2:12

We can't cross the gulf by doing good, being religious, not doing bad stuff, or belonging to the right church or religion. We are helpless to save ourselves. Isaiah 64:6:

"All our righteous acts are like filthy rags."

THE BIBLE SAYS THAT...

GOD IS PERFECT AND HOLY

"Your ways, O God, are holy. What god is so great as our God?" *Psalms 77:13*

GOD IS THE LAWGIVER

"There is only one Lawgiver and Judge..."
James 4:12

JESUS IS THE SOURCE OF LIFE

"Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned. He has crossed over from death to life." *John 5:24*

JESUS IS THE LIGHT

"...I am the light of the world..." *John 8:12*

JESUS IS THE WAY TO GOD

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

JESUS IS OUR SOURCE OF HELP

"Jesus looked at them and said, 'With man this is impossible but not with God; all things are possible with God.'" *Mark 10:27*



God's plan is not to give us what we deserve but to rescue us from what justice demands. That is called God's mercy.

THE COST OF A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP

“GOD HAS COME TO HELP HIS PEOPLE.” LUKE 7:16

God’s character, power, and outrageous love are revealed on the cross.

In the Bible, Jesus is called our heavenly priest. In Latin, the word “priest” means “bridge.” Jesus became a bridge, a way to God when He died on the cross.

“For he longs for all to be saved and to understand this truth: That God is on one side and all the people on the other side, and Christ Jesus, himself man, is between them to bring them together, by giving his life for all mankind. 1 Timothy 2:4-6 (LB)

We see the gravity of our situation in how radical the cure is.

He died to rescue and set us free from the consequences for our failures. He suffered a hellish death at the hands of the very creatures he created and for whom he was dying.

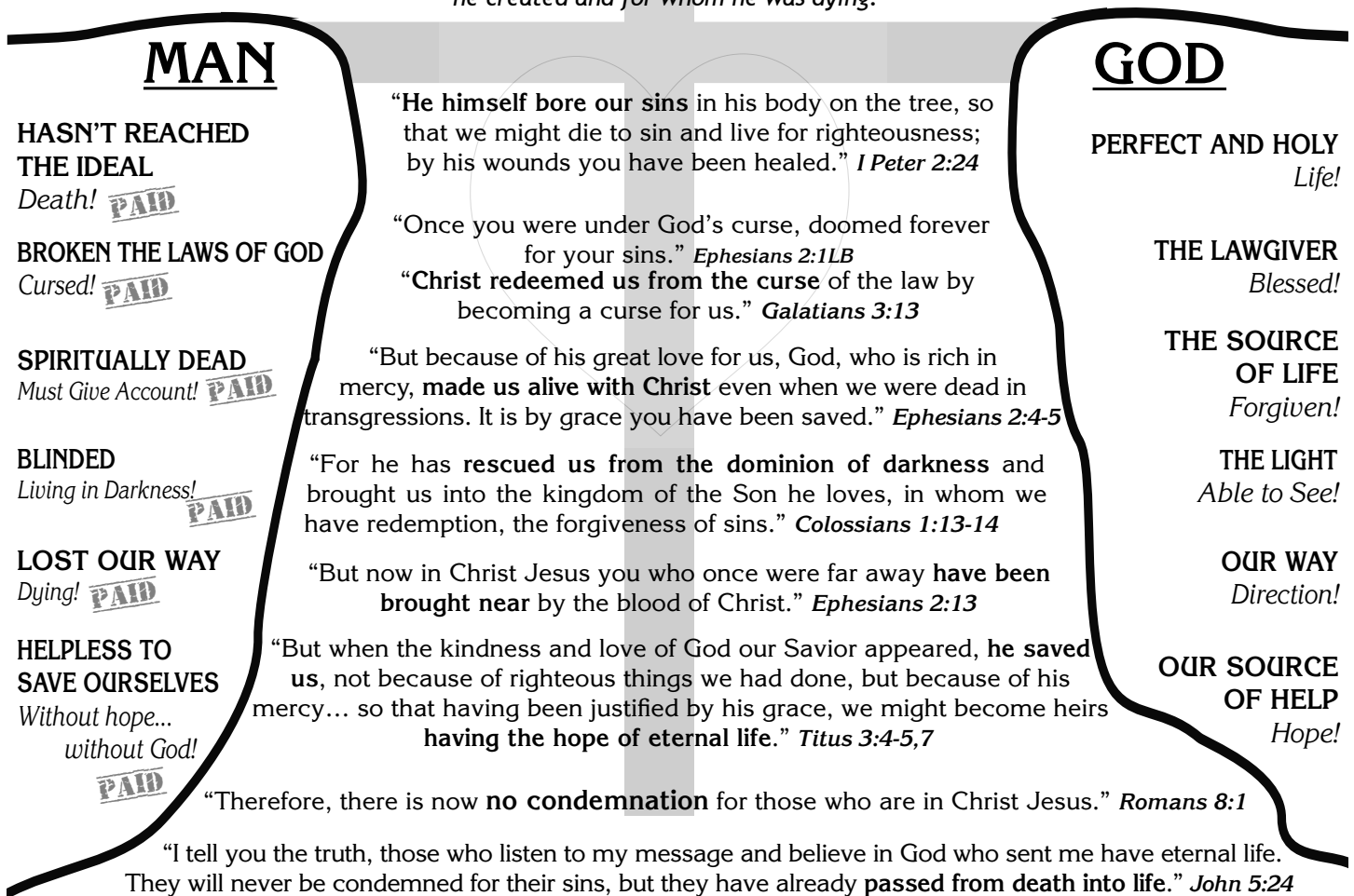


ILLUSTRATION OF JEFFREY DAHMER
IMAGINE YOU HAVE A FOUR YEAR OLD SON.

“And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” *Ephesians 3:18-19*

God considered us worth doing this for. It’s all about relationship and love.

Max Lucado: Finding this treasure of grace and mercy makes the poorest beggar a prince; missing this gift makes the wealthiest man a pauper.

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

SESSION 2

The Revelation of the Restored Relationship

**The Responsibilities in the
Restored Relationship**



**RESTORING OUR RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH
A PEACE TREATY WITH GOD**

GOD'S OFFER OF MERCY AND GRACE COMES THROUGH COVENANT....

The Bible is the story of God's efforts to have a loving and peaceful relationship with man. God reveals Himself to us and offers us love and life through a covenant. This page explains the entire outline, theme and plot of the Bible.

Covenant: a treaty, agreement, will, testament, alliance.

A covenant has at least four parts:

The Parties—the persons who enter the covenant: God and man.

The Terms—what man agrees to do for God when he gets into the covenant.

The Promises—what God promises to do for man when he accepts the covenant.

The Consequences—the results of rejecting or abandoning one's covenant with God.

When we study these covenants we learn that God is faithful to His Word. We can read about His track record. We see that He always keeps His promises.

“For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” Romans 15:4

All the previous covenants were to lead us to the last covenant God is going to offer to man, the New Covenant: the capsule, the prize, the treasure.

THE NEW COVENANT

The new covenant started when Jesus died and shed His blood on the cross:

“Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from sins....”
Hebrews 9:15

“This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” *Matthew 26:28*

The New Covenant is better than the old:

“But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.” *Hebrews 8:6*

It's all about relationship

His invitation:

“Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.” *Matthew 11:28, 29*

“Now we rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God—all because of what our Lord Jesus Christ has done in dying for our sins-making us friends of God.” *Romans 5:11LB*

God has NO NEED to ever give us another covenant after the New Covenant. What could He offer us that we need that isn't covered in the New Covenant?

Long before you decided what you'd do with God,
God decided what He would do with you.

-Louie Giglio

The Bible is the history of a series of connected covenants that God offered man. They are different than contracts. A contract is selfish; it is to protect oneself from the other. A covenant is a peace treaty in which two parties agree to do only what is for the benefit and best interest of the other party; it is selfless. Covenants call us to come to the aid of the other party and protect them. It's an active partnership.

Since before creation, God planned to offer forgiveness and eternal life for mankind and provide him with a purpose for living.

“...a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time.” *Titus 1:2*

God's plan has been revealed over the centuries through a series of covenants. They are like the stages of a rocket; the capsule is the most important part of the rocket:

Let's start at the bottom with #1 and move up:

5-Then He made a better covenant with us through his Son's death. *Hebrews 8:6*

4-Then made a covenant with Israel (Abraham's descendants) *Exodus 19:5*

3-Then He made a covenant with Abram. *Genesis 15:18*

2-Then He made two covenants with Noah *Genesis 6:18 & Genesis 9:9,11*

1-God made a covenant with Adam. *Hosea 6:7*



What does God want?

The same thing he has wanted since creation: A family united in Him through love.
“God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ” *Ephesians 1:5-6*

God wants us to be in a healthy relationship with Him and others. It is not for us to become religious.

THE PARTIES OF THE NEW COVENANT

Our God, and anyone who gets into relationship with Christ. It's all about relationship. It is offered to all people, of any race, economic group or nationality; to alcoholics, adulterers, addicts, murderers, immigrants, prisoners, failures, the successful, religious or not, presidents, men, women, old, young, good or bad. But a person has to choose Christ. God is not going to force anyone to enter. Nobody can choose for you. You are invited, and you must accept it.

We're all oddballs, but God loves us anyway.

-Phillip Yancy

GOD'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THOSE WHO ACCEPT HIS NEW COVENANT:

All is made new in the New Covenant.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has gone, the new has come.” *2 Corinthians 5:17*

NEW...

Love—*John 3:16 & Romans 8:38-39*

Freedom from Accusation—*Colossians 1:22*

Forgiveness—*Acts 2:38 Exonerated*

Resurrection—*1 Corinthians 6:14 & 15:51-53*

Eternal Life—*1 John 5:11 & Romans 6:23*

Eternal Home/Place with God—*Revelation 21:1-4*

Life to the Full—*John 10:10*

Joy—*1 Peter 1:8*

New Birth—*John 3:3,7*

Adoption—*Ephesians 1:5 & Romans 8:15*

Family—*Galatians 6:10*

Presence—*Matthew 28:20*

Daily Help—*Romans 8:26-28 & Philippians 1:6*

Mind-Attitude—*Ephesians 4:23-24*

Purpose—*Ephesians 2:10*

Citizenship—*Philippians 3:20*

Spirit in Us—*1 Corinthians 3:16 & Romans 5:10, 8:9*

Power to Live—*Ephesians 3:21*

Security—*2 Peter 3:17*

Overwhelming Victory—*1 John 5:4-5 & Romans 8:37*

Persecution—*2 Timothy 3:12*

Motivation—*2 Corinthians 5:13-14*

Suffering—*1 Peter 1:29*

Hope—*2 Corinthians 1:10*

Loving Discipline—*Revelation 3:19*

Understanding—*Hebrews 4:15*

Inheritance—*1 Peter 1:4*

Accessibility and Confidence—*Hebrews 4:16*

In the New Covenant, God DOES NOT promise material wealth, good health, job security, or freedom from problems and sufferings.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” *John 16:33*

“Since we have been made right in God's sight by faith in his promises, we can have real peace with him because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us.” *Romans 5:1*

MAN'S RESPONSIBILITIES IN ACCEPTING GOD'S NEW COVENANT:

Everything that God asks of us can be summarized in two commands:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.” *Matthew 22:37,38*

“And the second is like it, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” *Matthew 22:39*

Everything written in the New Covenant writings is designed to teach us how to do these two things.

Our calling and privilege is to love God, to love as God loves, to celebrate as God celebrates, to embrace others as we have been embraced, and to draw near to others as we have been brought near to God.

Our model in how to do those two things is Jesus. (*Romans 8:29*) Jesus loved the good, the bad, the rejected, the lonely, the arrogant, the displaced, the outcast and the imperfect.

“Having such great promises as these, dear friends, let us turn away from everything wrong, whether of body or spirit, and purify ourselves, living in the wholesome fear of God, giving ourselves to him alone.” *2 Corinthians 7:1*

“In Him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace that He lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding...” *Ephesians 1:7-8*



ALL IS NEW...

Love—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. *John 3:16*

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, **will be able to separate us from the love of God** that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8:38-39*

Freedom From Accusation—But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation. *Colossians 1:22*

Forgiveness—Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the **forgiveness of your sins.**”

Acts 2:38—**Exonerated**

Resurrection—By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and **he will raise us also.** *1 Corinthians 6:14*

Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. *1 Corinthians 15:51-53*

Eternal Life—And this is the testimony: **God has given us eternal life,** and this life is in his Son. *1 John 5:11*

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

Eternal Home/Place with God—Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death’ or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” *Revelation 21:1-4*

Full Life—The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and **have it to the full.** *John 10:10*

Joy—Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an **inexpressible and glorious joy.** *1 Peter 1:8*

New Birth—Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” *John 3:3*

You should not be surprised at my saying, “You must be born again.” *John 3:7*

For **you have been born again,** not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. *1 Peter 1:23*

Adoption—The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about **your adoption to sonship.** And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” *Romans 8:15*

Family—Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those **who belong to the family of believers.** *Galatians 6:10*

Presence—And surely **I am with you always, to the very end of the age.** *Matthew 28:20b*

Daily Help—In the same way, the **Spirit helps us in our weakness.** We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who **have been called according to his purpose.**
Romans 8:26-28

Mind-Attitude—...be made new in the **attitude of your minds;** and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
Ephesians 4:23-24

Purpose—For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which **God prepared in advance for us to do.** *Ephesians 2:10*

Citizenship—But **our citizenship is in heaven.** And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ. *Philippians 3:20*

Spirit In Us—Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that **God's Spirit dwells in your midst?** *I Corinthians 3:16*

Power To Live—...**To Him be glory** in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. *Ephesians 3:21*

Security—since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from **your secure position.** *II Peter 3:17*

Overwhelming Victory—For everyone born of God **overcomes the world.** And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. *I John 5:4-5*

Persecution—In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus **will be persecuted...**
II Timothy 3:12

Motivation—For **Christ's love compels us.**
II Corinthians 5:14

Suffering—In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little **while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials.** *I Peter 1:6*

Hope—On him **we have set our hope** that he will continue to deliver us. *II Corinthians 1:10b*

Loving Discipline—Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent.
Revelation 3:19

Understanding—For **we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses,** but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. *Hebrews 4:15*

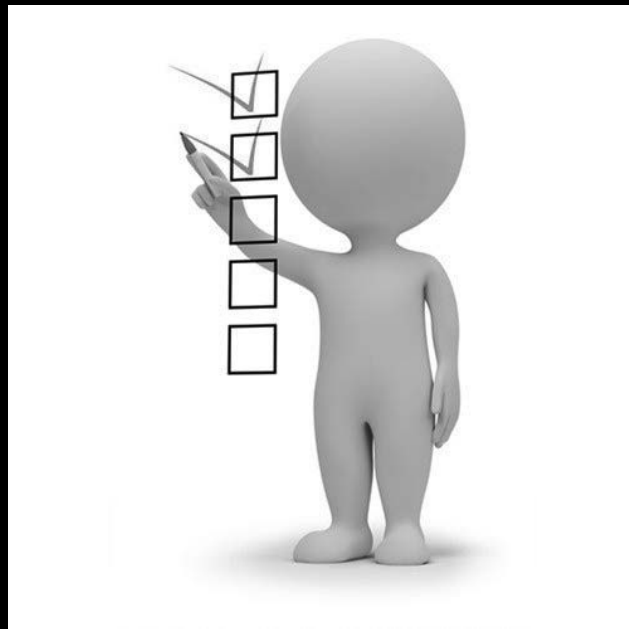
Inheritance—And into an inheritance that can **never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you.** *I Peter 1:4*

Accessibility and Confidence—So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most. *Hebrews 4:16*

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

SESSION 3

The Four Steps to Having a Restored Relationship



**RESTORING OUR RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH
A PEACE TREATY WITH GOD**

THE FOUR STEPS TO HAVING A RESTORED RELATIONSHIP

Step 1—Faith

A new relationship with God begins with faith in Him.

“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.” John 3:16

Faith, or belief, is having confidence in another—trusting their word based on their faithfulness, track record, their history of actions and attitudes. Faith in God is **“being fully persuaded that God has power to do what he has promised.”** (Romans 4).

“Then what can we boast about doing, to earn our salvation? Nothing at all. Why? Because our acquittal is not based on our good deeds; it is based on what Christ has done and our faith in Him.” Romans 3:27

THIS IS GOOD NEWS!

We can not win, buy, deserve, be good enough, make enough sacrifices or do enough good works to earn God’s love and salvation.

We can do NOTHING to make God love us more than He already loves us. God freely offers us His love and life, but we have to accept his invitation into His New Covenant.

Attempts at saving ourselves or being good enough to go to heaven will only result in exhaustion, frustration, and desperation.

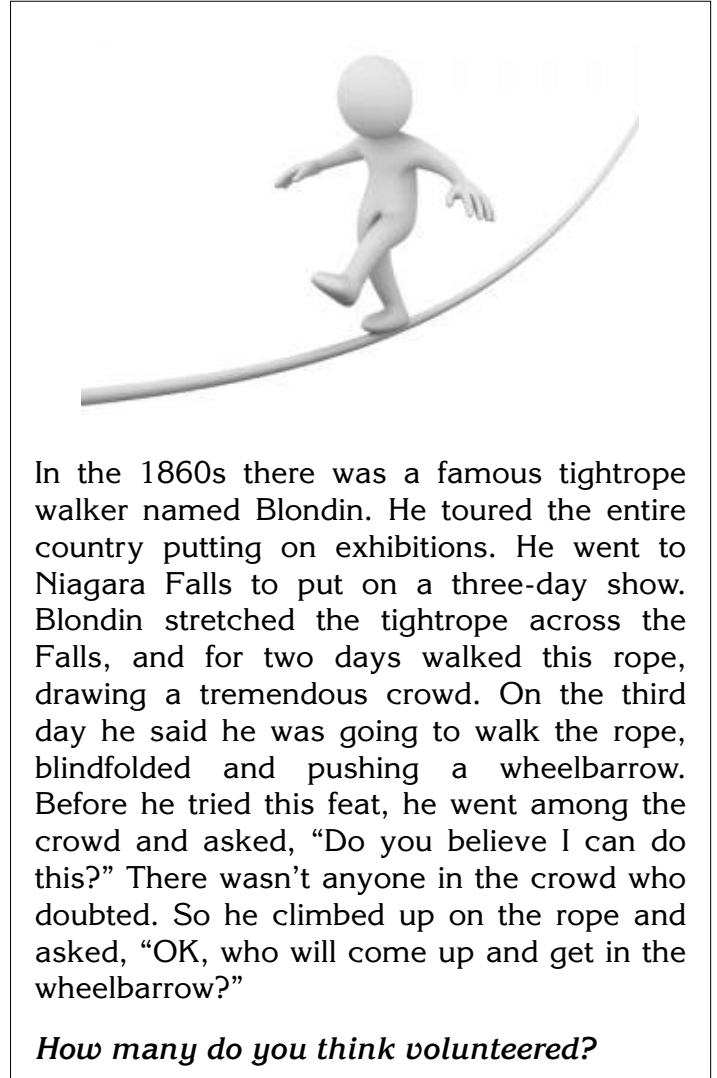
The Bible warns us about basing our ultimate faith for finding love, peace, joy and salvation in ourselves, our intelligence, other humans, relatives, our mate, a politician, a government, army, a church, a false religion, cult, pastor, priest, our fame, beauty, riches, abilities, self righteousness, or good deeds. Put it in Jesus and what he did for us.

Biblical Faith Is:

Believing (*using your brain*) that God became man in Jesus, that he died for our sins, was buried and was raised from the grave, all of which is based on historically accurate evidence (*See reference: I John 1:1-4 & I Corinthians 15:3,4*).

Biblical faith requires not only an intellectual belief, but also a response.

“In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.” James 2:17



In the 1860s there was a famous tightrope walker named Blondin. He toured the entire country putting on exhibitions. He went to Niagara Falls to put on a three-day show. Blondin stretched the tightrope across the Falls, and for two days walked this rope, drawing a tremendous crowd. On the third day he said he was going to walk the rope, blindfolded and pushing a wheelbarrow. Before he tried this feat, he went among the crowd and asked, “Do you believe I can do this?” There wasn’t anyone in the crowd who doubted. So he climbed up on the rope and asked, “OK, who will come up and get in the wheelbarrow?”

How many do you think volunteered?

If one has faith in the message he hears, he will respond by doing what God asks him to do.

Step 2—Repentance

“In the past, God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent.” Acts 17:30

In Acts 2:14 and forward, we read Peter’s Sermon on the Day of Pentecost (a Jewish holiday) in Jerusalem to a large gathering of Jews.

Peter’s Conclusion

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” Acts 2:36

The People’s Response

“These words of Peter’s moved them deeply, and they said to him and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?’” Acts 2:37b

Asking the question reveals that they BELIEVED the message. They asked what their response should be. They knew they had to do more than just mentally agree about Jesus! Now what?

Peter’s Answer

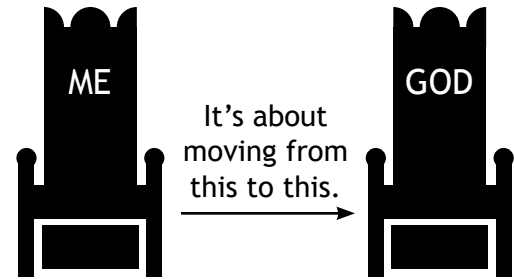
“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” Acts 2:38

Repentance means making a “U-turn.”

There is confusion between religious repentance and Christian repentance: **Religious repentance is trying to keep a long list of do’s and don’ts in order to be saved.**

Christian repentance is:

1. Turning from rejecting Jesus to trusting Him as my Lord and Savior for the rest of my life. This is the central issue—it’s all about loyalty.
2. Declaring that my loyalty to Jesus is superior to anyone or anything else.
3. It’s a statement of intent. It is like saying, “I do” in a wedding. It is a commitment with the person, that will result in being faithful to them.



It is taking myself, something, or someone else off the throne of my life

and putting God there in His rightful place.

Relationally, Jesus said we can’t serve two masters.

When we repent, we are saying “It will be Jesus.”

In God’s eyes, man either surrenders to Him or he is serving the devil. Satan wants us to surrender to him and he will do everything possible to interfere with us surrendering to God.

“Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.” II Timothy 2:25-26

God’s kindness and love, His mercy and grace are intended to lead us to repentance. He tells us and shows us that we can entrust ourselves to Him. He is on our side. He is for us. He loves us.

“Don’t you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can’t you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?”

Romans 2:4

Repentance is a freeing, exhilarating, exciting and refreshing time. It is putting God in control of my life. I am no longer alone, or on my own.

“Repent then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord”

Acts 3:19

Step 3—Confession

“That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 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 10:9-10

Can you imagine a person in their wedding ceremony refusing to say their vows or even “I do” because they’re ashamed, embarrassed, afraid, or unsure?

Step 4—Christian Baptism

“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...’ *Matthew 28:18-20*

In the Greek language, from which our New Testament was translated, the word baptize means “*to dip, plunge, or immerse.*” Historically, the early church only practiced baptism by immersion.

Some religious men changed the method to sprinkling or pouring 500 years after Jesus’ life: the method was not changed by God.

GOD CHOSE CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

(it was not the decision of a church)

AND HE COMMANDS US TO BE BAPTIZED

(It was a command, not a suggestion)

The Bible teaches us that you can be baptized:

- Any day
- In any water
- By any other disciple of Jesus *(over the years, denominations and religious leaders have altered this)*

We are baptized into Christ, not a denomination.

Christian Baptism is our oath or pledge of loyalty and obedience to God.

“...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also — not the removal of dirt from the body but the **pledge** of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ...” *1 Peter 3:21*

The word pledge in the Greek is the same word that was used when two businessmen would enter into a deal. The seller made a proposition and the buyer considered it. If he accepted it, he stood and said, “I pledge that I am going to live according to the terms of this agreement.” This was done before a witness, and that pledge finalized the agreement and made it binding.

When we are presented the gospel, we can either accept it or reject it. There is no neutral ground. We answer yes or no. If we choose to say yes, we finalize

the covenant by being baptized. This pledge is like signing your name on the dotted line of the covenant. The agreement is then binding on both parties.

When we turn to Christ and declare that we want to become a disciple of Christ, God asks us to take an oath. This oath is Christian Baptism. God has already taken His oath. He did it in the cross and signed it with His blood, our baptism “seals” the deal.



God, through baptism, makes us one with Christ.

“...for all of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ.” *Galatians 3:27*

God, through baptism, gives us His Holy Spirit.

We give ourselves to Him, and He gives himself to us through His Spirit.

“Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’” *Acts 2:38*

God through our faith and obedience in Christian Baptism cleanses us by the blood of Christ.

“And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on His name.” *Acts 22:16*



LET'S SEE HOW LOGICAL AND PRACTICAL ALL THIS IS
by comparing the covenant of marriage and the covenant with Christ.
We will see that this is not a “religious” issue, it is a relationship issue.

Marriage and Christianity are both covenant relationships.
and
It is all about Relationship.

A COVENANT IN MARRIAGE

This relationship begins with a special kind of faith and love that says, “I’ve found the one I’ve been looking for.” This love responds by...

Deciding to submit myself to the other’s best interest and being faithful to them by putting their needs before mine. **“You first, you only. The search is over.”** *(Are there other commitments to renounce?)*

Telling others of the decision made.

Wedding Ceremony

- An end and a beginning.
- Renouncing and leaving the single life for a shared life.
- It’s all about giving the oath of allegiance.

Now we can claim and share all the benefits and responsibilities of a covenant of marriage with our mate.

One can’t just sit back and do nothing! The depth and quality of the relationship will be determined by the amount of mercy and grace actively shown. The covenant calls for action.

A COVENANT WITH CHRIST

This relationship begins with a faith and love that says: “I’ve found the one I need: I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that He came to die for my sins and rose up to save me.” Faith responds by...

Deciding to submit myself to Jesus and promise to be faithful to Him and obey him. Putting his needs before mine as he already has done for me. I accept His invitation. **“You first, you only. The search is over.”** *(Are there other commitments to renounce?)*

Telling others of the decision made; making it public.

Baptism is to the covenant of Christ what the wedding is to the covenant of marriage.

- An end and a beginning.
- Renouncing and leaving the “self” life for a shared life.
- It’s all about giving the oath of allegiance

Now we can claim and share all the benefits and responsibilities of a covenant relationship with God.

One can’t just sit down and do nothing! The depth and quality of your relationship with Christ will be determined by you. God will be faithful. The covenant calls for action.

We can’t promise anyone that their mate will be faithful to them in the future, but we can promise that God will be.

Where are you in the process of accepting God’s offer of a restored relationship with Him? Let’s see...

IT'S ALL ABOUT RELATIONSHIP

SESSION 4

**Some Unique Results of a
Restored Relationship**



**RESTORING OUR RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH
A PEACE TREATY WITH GOD**

One person's definition of a Christian:

"A Christian is a person who is becoming what in God's eyes he already is" *(Source unknown)*.

A similar statement is found in the Bible: "...because by one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy." *Hebrews 10:14*

Understanding this verse is vital to our understanding what God does for us.

God makes us perfect forever by our Position:

(In the Bible this is often referred to as our JUSTIFICATION)

Our POSITION is:

A PLACE: "...And we are in Him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." *I John 5:20*

A GIFT: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast." *Ephesians 2:8*

UNCHANGING: "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." *I John 5:13*

ALL EQUAL: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." *Galatians 3:28*

NEW PERSON: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" *II Corinthians 5:17*

Our Condition refers to our being made holy:

(In the Bible this is often referred to as our SANCTIFICATION)

Our CONDITION is:

A JOURNEY: "...being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." *Philippians 1:6*

A WORK IN PROGRESS: "Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." *1 Timothy 4:7-8*

CHANGING: "And we... are being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit." *II Corinthians 3:18*

UNEQUAL: "My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you." *Galatians 4:19*

NEW ATTITUDE: "You were taught with regard to your former way of life, to put off the old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds, and to put on the new self, created to be like God." *Ephesians 4:22-24*

We don't try to perfect ourselves so He will accept us.

"That's Impossible"

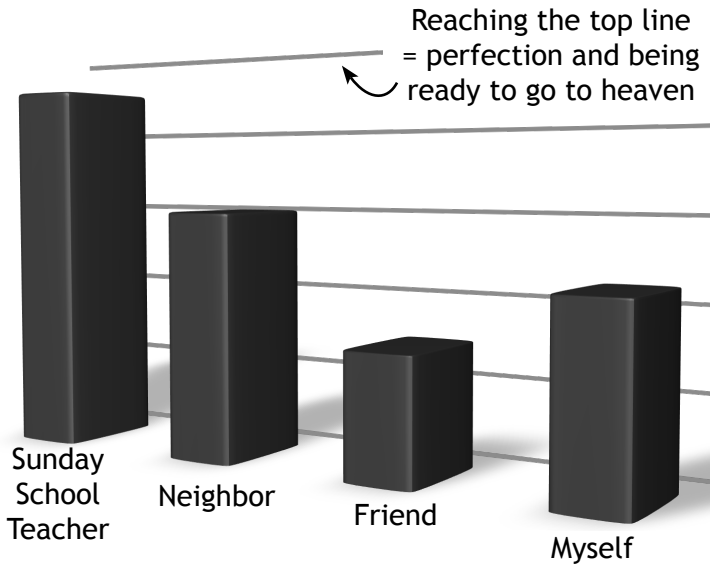
He accepts us and makes us perfect in His sight.

"By our position in Christ"

Then He helps us grow and mature to become like Christ.

"That's through our transformation"

The following illustration shows how most people incorrectly view all of this:

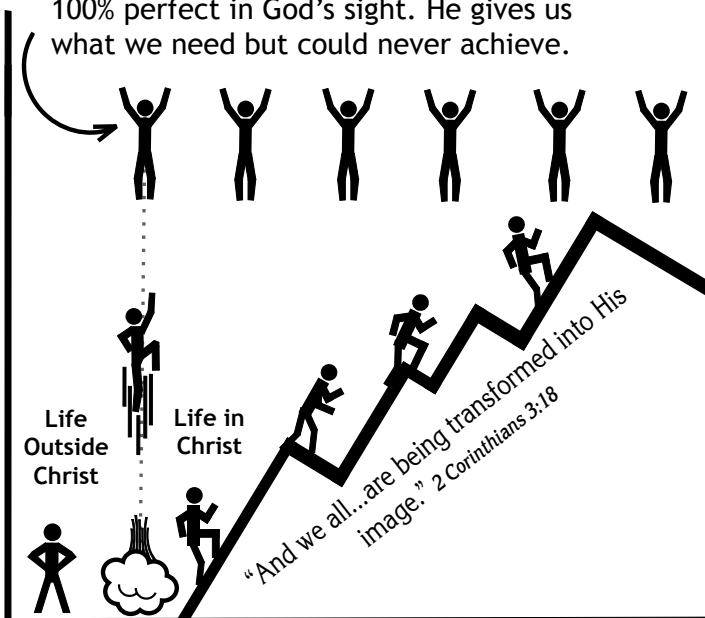


Many say things like, “Me? I want to go to heaven, but when I see where I’m at and where I have to get, it seems hopeless. There’s no chance.”

The truth is, when we accept Christ we are immediately made 100% perfect in God’s eyes (our position)—we are going to heaven. We are made perfect forever because of God’s grace and our position in Christ. He then works to help us become more like Christ as he works on our condition.

“...because by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.” *Hebrews 10:14*

When we accept Christ, we are made 100% perfect in God’s sight. He gives us what we need but could never achieve.



Becoming in real life what we are in God’s sight through Christ.

“God saved you by grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.” *Ephesians 2:8-9*

Our position gives us peace, joy, hope and confidence till the end of our life, during the conditioning or transformation.

“And I am certain that God who began the good work within you will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Jesus Christ returns.” *Philippians 1:6*

According to this verse, when will God be finished with our transformation?

Conclusion: We are saved because of our position, not our condition! That is the Grace of God.

Once we are in Christ we continue to be saved by our position.

For in the Gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last...” *Romans 1:17 NIV*

The conclusion stated above almost always raises the question: Does that mean it is not important to be good, that our condition is not important?

The answer found in The New Covenant is that IT IS important! We shouldn’t abuse or take God’s gift for granted.

“Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover up for evil; live as servants of God.” *1 Peter 2:16*

The apostle Paul wrote:

“I don’t mean to say I am perfect. I haven’t learned all I should even yet, but I keep working toward that day when I will finally be all that Christ saved me for and wants me to be.” *Philippians 3:12*

Christ accepts us as we are, but when He accepts us we cannot remain as we are.
-Walter C. Trobisch

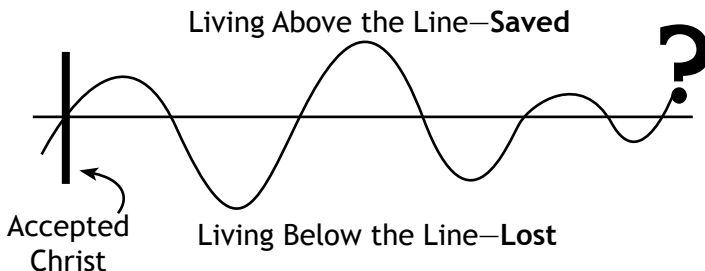
Understanding all of this changes our motivation in life. If I do what I do so I will look good enough to earn my salvation, **fear is my motivation and I will become self-centered, covering up, denying, and comparing.** I will never know if I have done enough. That is how man’s religion wants it; they can control us through fear.

Under God’s grace I seek to be good to honor God and show Him my love, gratitude, and appreciation for my salvation and all He has done for me. We will always know we can’t DO enough, but that He has already DONE what needs to be done for us to go to heaven.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN TO DO WHEN HE SINS?

We will sin after becoming a Christian! (see *1 John 1:8*). We are learning, growing, struggling and sometimes we fail. It's part of the transformation process. What shall we do when we sin?

Many Christians have a mistaken idea of God's forgiveness for them. They have a concept called "lined religion":



Everything starts fine. We accept Christ and are moving up, but then we sin and we think or feel like we have fallen below the line. We pray "Lord, forgive me!" We hope we are above the line again, at least until the next sin. With time the doubt arises: "Am I above or am I below?" We lose our sense of peace and security. **This is not how God works!**

What should we do when we sin? It is clear...

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

To confess is not saying, "I'm sorry," rather, it is saying, "I **did it.**" Confess means that we agree with God that what we did was sin.

Why do we need to confess? It's to keep the lines of communication open for love and honesty in our relationship with God.

Adam and Eve hid from God when they sinned. When we turn our back on God or try and hide our sins from Him, we shut Him out. We close our ears and heart to Him; we are weakened and more vulnerable to destructive behavior and attitudes.

God wants us to be close to Him, to trust and love Him. He is waiting for us to confess.

What if we don't confess?

"Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent." Revelation 3:19

That verse is a promise from God.

"Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Hebrews 12:10-11

God will discipline us for our own good. His most common form of discipline is to let us keep following our own chosen path, even if it is wrong, until we decide to confess and return to His path and trust in Him and His way.

"For God sometimes uses sorrow in our lives to help us turn away from sin and seek eternal life." 11 Corinthians 7:10 LB

SO, CONFESSION IS:

- Accepting responsibility for our actions
- Telling God that we agree that we sinned against Him by not trusting and obeying Him
- Declaring our intent to change
- Giving thanks to God for His forgiveness
- Determining we will seek to restore any damaged relationship

The New Covenant doesn't teach us to repeatedly ask for forgiveness; we already have it. It was promised!

To continually ask for forgiveness rather than confessing our sins to God reveals that we don't understand God's grace or that we don't have confidence that God will keep His Word. We need to continually confess our sins, thank God for His forgiveness, and then take steps to live according to God's ways.



ASK ME FOR THE PENCIL!

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from every sin." 1 John 1:7

Does this make sense to you? Do you have any questions?

WHAT NOW?

“If God is on our side, **who can ever be against us?** Since he did not spare even his own Son for us, but **gave Him up for us** all, won't he also surely **give us everything** else?”

Who dares accuse us whom God has chosen for his own? Will God? No! He is the one who has **forgiven us** and **given us right standing before Himself**.

Who then will condemn us? Will Christ? NO! For he is the one who **died for us** and **came back to life again for us** and is sitting at the place of highest honor next to God, **pleading for us** there in heaven.

Who then can ever keep Christ's love from us? When we have trouble or calamity, when we are hunted down or destroyed, is it because he doesn't love us anymore? And if we are hungry, or penniless, or in danger, or threatened with death, **has God deserted us?**

No, for the Scriptures tell us that for his sake we must be ready to face death at every moment of the day—we are like sheep awaiting slaughter, but despite all this, **overwhelming victory is ours through Christ who loved us enough to die for us**.

For I am convinced that **nothing can ever separate us** from his love. Death can't, and life can't. The angels won't and all the powers of hell itself cannot keep God's love away. Our fears for today, our worries about tomorrow, or where we are—high above the sky, or in the deepest ocean—nothing **will ever be able to separate us from the love of God** demonstrated by our Lord Jesus Christ **when he died for us.**” *Romans 8:31-39*

Get Involved!

I would like to invite you to join me and others on our spiritual journey.

- 1-Start Reading your New Testament
- 2-Start talking to God all day long.
- 3-Join us in a home group or weekend services.
- 4-Could we teach you how to use this Peace Treaty?
- 5-Spend the rest of your life getting closer to God.