

1. BECOMING A CHRISTIAN

Only Christianity provides true redemption—a restoration to our created state and the hope of eternal peace with God. No other worldview identifies the real problem: the stain of sin in our souls. No other worldview can set free a tormented soul. . . . And having been liberated from sin, we are empowered to help bring Christ’s restoration to the entire creation order.

--Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, How Now Should We Live?

1. A caring God created us to know him and live in relationship with him.

* He has planted eternity in the human heart. (Eccl. 3:11 NLT)

* Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. (Gen 1:26-27 KJV)

* God, for whom and through whom everything exists. (Heb. 2:10b NIV)

* He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need there is . . . His purpose in all of this was that the nations should seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. (Acts 17:24-25; 27-28 NLT)

* That which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. (Rom. 1:19-20 NASB)

2. Selfish ambition drives many to accept the common lie that God can be ignored in this life with no consequences in the next. The root of this human condition is sin.

* The fool has said in his heart, ‘There is no God.’ (Psa 14:1 NASB)

* No one is good—not even one. No one has real understanding; no one is seeking God. All have turned away from God; all have gone wrong. No one does good, not even one. . . . They have no fear of God to restrain them. . . . For all have sinned, all fall short of God’s standard. (Rom. 3:10-12, 18, 23 NLT)

*For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (Rom. 1:21 NASB)

3. This condition of sin has serious consequences, including interpersonal conflict, lack of meaning and direction in life, and the prospect of eternal punishment and separation from God.

* Whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him. (John 3:36b NIV)

* Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, enjoying drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19-21 NASB)

* For the wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23a NKJV)

4. God's solution to this universal human dilemma was to send his Son to earth to live a perfect life, to die an undeserved death assuming the punishment we deserve, and to experience a physical resurrection, in order that our relationship with our creator could be eternally restored. Christ's initiative was absolutely necessary because no human efforts to restore this relationship could be sufficient.

* For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. (John 3:16-1s7 NKJV)

* But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8 NKJV)

* I passed on to you what was most important and what had also been passed on to me—that Christ died for our sins, just as the Scriptures said. He was buried, and he was raised from the dead on the third day, as the Scriptures said. (1 Cor. 15:3-4 NLT)

* 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. (Eph. 2:8-9 NIV)

* But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. (Titus 3:4-5 NIV)

5. God's offer of new life through Christ calls for our response. As we turn from our sinful past and place our trust in Christ alone for forgiveness, we are freely pardoned and joyfully welcomed into God's family.

* Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. (Isa.55:7 NIV)

*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31 NASB)

* But to all who believed in him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn! This is not a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan—this rebirth comes from God. (Jn. 1:12-13 NLT)

* 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. (Rom. 10:9-10 NIV)

PRAYER

Father, I long to enter into a life made new and alive by your Spirit. I confess that I have willfully and deliberately sinned against you and am in need of your cleansing. I believe that your Son died on the cross and shed his blood to pay the penalty for my sin and to bridge the gap between you and me. I hereby place my trust in Christ as my Savior and receive the forgiveness that you have made possible. I joyfully surrender my life to your control and ask that you would guide me as I take my first baby steps of faith.

PROMISE

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved. (Acts 16:31 NASB)