

619 Why Should We Follow Jesus?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

A Christian had a dream in which he stood on the Day of Judgment before God Himself—and Satan was there to accuse him. When Satan opened his books full of accusations, he pointed to transgression after transgression of which the man was guilty. As the proceedings went on, his heart sunk in despair. Then he remembered the cross of Christ—and turning upon Satan, he said, “There is one entry which you have not made, Satan.” The Devil retorted, “What is that?”

And the Christian answered, “It is this—the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sins.” We all need Jesus so much.

Following Jesus is the greatest privilege and honor you or I will ever have. Nothing can compare with wearing the name of Christ and being His servant. The privilege of knowing the Lord is worth every sacrifice, every challenge, and every effort. I can't imagine life without the Lord Jesus Christ. When I fall, He lifts me up! When I fail, He forgives! When I am weak, He is strong! When I am lost, He is the way! When I am afraid, He is my courage! When I stumble, He steadies me! When I am hurt, He heals me! When I am broken, He mends me! When I am blind, He leads me! When I am hungry, He feeds me! When I face trials, He is with me! When I face death, He will carry me home.

Many people can't decide whether they want to be a Christian. Paul once preached to a Roman governor named Felix at Caesarea. He preached righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come. Felix became frightened and said to Paul, “Go away for the present; and when I find time, I will summon you.” Felix talked to Paul for two years, hoping to get some money from him but never became a Christian. He never found time. I hope friend, you are not like him, putting off your obedience to the gospel. He had opportunity but never made a change in his life and never knew the joys of being a Christian. He never was able to enjoy the grace of God and the blessing of a relationship.

There are numerous reasons why you should be a Christian. **The first reason is that God loves you.** The God who created the world and made you, the Father of your spirit, loves you and wants to have a relationship with you that lasts for an eternity. Jesus said in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.” The love God has for each of us is greater than any of us can understand. God gave us love when we didn't deserve it. God gave us love—not because we are so good, but because He is so good. He gave His precious Son Jesus to a cruel cross so that we could have eternal life.

Paul said in Romans 5:6-8, “For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” We were helpless, ungodly, and sinners; but Jesus bore the cross for us anyway. We didn't ask Him to do that. He took the first step, the initiative, to say to us in a profound way, “I love you.” He loved us enough to pay a great price so that we could be forgiven from our sins. We could not save ourselves, and so He with love gave Himself to save us. Such love!

The kind of love that God has for us is not merely shown in the death of Jesus; it is also shown in the love and kindness He grants us day to day. The Lord hears our prayers. Jesus said in Matt. 7:7-11, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is

there among you who, when his son asks for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!”

God provides for us each and every day the things that we need most. In Philippians 4:19 Paul from his own experiences reassured the Philippians, “my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.” Paul knew that God keeps His promises and cares for His people through all the challenges of life. James said, “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow” (James 1:17). Whatever we have as Christians, we have from the hand of a loving God who keeps us and watches over us. We have a God who loves and cares for us because we have Jesus as Savior.

The Lord helps us through our struggles and temptations. He will never allow more temptation than we can bear. Paul said in 1 Cor. 10:13, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.” Jesus wants to keep us from the sin that hurts us and hurts those around us. He gives us strength to say no and also gives us a way of escape if the temptation is too strong. He teaches us good morals and helps us even when we get into problems. The love of our Lord Jesus Christ has no end.

What happens when we do sin as Christians? Does the Lord give up on us? No one is perfect, and we are all weak at times. Does God have a plan for all our weaknesses. John said in 1 John 1:7-9, “but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” All Christians sin occasionally, but they can find forgiveness when they confess their sins, repent of them and ask for God's forgiveness.

We know that if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we will have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus will cleanse us from all sin. Now, walking in the light means living for the Lord. Our lives will serve Him. Christians aren't perfectly sinless, but the mindset of a true child of God is to serve Him. Even when we do our very best, we still fail occasionally and still need the blood of Jesus to cleanse us. When we do fail, we are penitent and willing to confess our sins to the Lord. And He cleanses us from every sin. We stay in a cleansed state, because the blood keeps on cleansing us as long as we continue to walk in the light. God is with us as long as we walk with Him.

A second reason to be a Christian is because God's way of righteousness is the very best way to live. Every law of God is for our good, to bless our lives and to bring order to the world. Every law of God is a blessing when people follow it. Some people think God is out to oppress us with His laws, but that is really the devil talking, not God. God's ways are for our good. Paul said in Galatians 6:7-8, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Rebelling against God always has a price to pay physically and spiritually.

People who get drunk, get high on drugs, practice illicit sex, gamble, steal, lie, become violent, and live with anger usually get themselves into more trouble than ever wanted. The devil likes to deceive us into thinking these destructive habits bring us pleasure, but in the end they bring us misery and hurt. God's laws are to protect us not to enslave us; God is a friend to us by warning us of these evil things. They are evil because of the hurt and destruction they bring to our bodies, to our homes, to our marriages, and to our friends. The Lord's way is the right and best way to live. If you follow Jesus, you can avoid all the heartaches sin brings. Don't choose to make it worse by living in sin.

Jesus said in John 10:10, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." The abundant life of Jesus means one filled with good things rather than the evil that sin brings. It is filled with the joy of knowing that one is right with God, that he has the promise of salvation and heaven. It is filled with peace of mind that God is with us and blessing us. Jesus promised in Matt. 28:20, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Just knowing that we have such a good friend as Jesus with us every day helps to give us confidence, assurance, and peace. His goal is a relationship with me! He will never leave me, never forsake me, never mislead me.

He will never forget me, never overlook me and never cancel an appointment in His appointment book! He sees the best in me, even when others don't. He believes enough in me to die for me. I am a better man every time I study about Him and see His love, His balance, His compassion, His wisdom, His honesty, His integrity, and His character. I want to pray like Him, think like Him, act like Him, love like Him, and serve like Him. The more I become like Jesus, the better person I am, the more I bless the people around me, and the more I can help others know the Lord. I would not trade the true value of knowing Jesus for all the riches of men, because the riches of His love last forever and ever.

The third reason everyone should be a Christian is because Jesus really is who He claimed to be. Jesus did not make a bunch of foolish claims when He said that He is the Son of God or the Christ (the Messiah) or that He is Lord. He is all of these are much more. He created the world according to John 1:3, "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." Paul said in Colossians 1:16-17, "For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

How do we know that Jesus is Lord? Paul said in Romans 1:4 that Jesus "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." We know He is Lord because God raised Him from the dead. How do we know He really arose? We know this from two things: first, the tomb was empty; but his grave clothes were still there, and the stone was rolled away. If Jesus arose from the dead, you would expect to find his tomb empty, and it still is! If his buried body was wrapped in grave clothes and he arose, He wouldn't need those clothes anymore. They were found in the tomb. Someone rolled that stone away from that sealed tomb, sealed by the governor Pontius Pilate.

Pilate put guards around the tomb to guard against robbers and sealed the entrance. But when the women came to the tomb they found the huge stone rolled away and the guards frightened. Only an act of God could roll that stone away and frighten the hardened Roman guards. Jesus did indeed arise from the dead. A second reason to believe in His resurrection is the reaction of the doubting disciples who gave up on Him and hid in fear. They didn't believe the women's report of the empty tomb; but when Jesus appeared to them, He showed himself alive by many convincing proofs for forty days. The doubters like Thomas became believers, because they were convinced of the truth!

The same men who from fear hid behind closed doors became bold as lions and preached the death and resurrection of Jesus regardless of persecution or threats from enemies. Peter said, "we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). They kept speaking in spite of beatings, imprisonments, and even martyrdom. There would be no Christianity, no church, today if these men had not been fully convinced that Jesus arose from the dead. No one is willing to suffer like that for a lie or for a hoax; but if Christianity is true—and it is, then why they were willing to suffer becomes clear. They suffered because they believed the evidence, and we can believe it too.

I pray that you too believe, really believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. I pray that your faith will lead you to repent of your sins, confess the name of Jesus as the Christ, and to be baptized in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. Don't be like Felix and want for a more convenient time; there may not be one. Today is the very best day to get your life right with God and to become a Christian. I hope you'll obey the Lord today!

Every one is going to follow someone. When you pick someone to follow, you want to know where they will take you. Jesus will take you to the Father in heaven. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." You see, Jesus is the only way to the Father. That's why being a Christian is so important! Jesus will take you to love. He taught people how to love by loving them and how to forgive by forgiving them. He will take you to the truth. He not only taught the truth, He is the truth. He knew that people need the truth to be free. He talked straight about life and sin and repentance. He told us what we need to hear.

Some preachers today tickle people's ears with soft words and touching stories. They tell them everything but what they need to hear. Jesus speaks straight about righteousness, godliness, and the judgment to come. He speaks of heaven and God's forgiveness, but He also speaks of hell and God's wrath. Both are important to know about. Only the truth can make us free. That is why we need the Lord and His word to teach us. We won't find truth by listening to the world. We need to come to Jesus who will lead us to the Father. Who are you following, and where will they lead you? Put the Lord first in your life; study His Word, get back to church, and don't let anything keep you from serving God.

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