

# RIVERVIEW CHURCH

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## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN.

There's much confusion today in our culture regarding what a Christian is and how a person becomes one. Some believe that being a Christian means being born into a particular church or denomination and being baptized as a baby into that religion. Others would say that being a Christian means that you have to believe in God, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, attend a church and try to do your best in living an upright life.

With all the confusion out there, it's important that we look to the Bible for answers. God has provided for us a definitive and authoritative answer in His Word that allows us to navigate through all the confusion that we may encounter. To understand what Jesus taught regarding how to become His follower, we need to see what the New Testament teaches.

When we study the New Testament, we see that a person becomes a Christian by recognizing three things. First, a person needs to recognize that they are separated from God because of sin and under His judgment. We have a natural inclination to rebel against God and be hostile to Him.<sup>1</sup> We are corrupt in such a way that it's impossible for us to know God, love Him, or obey Him the way we ought to.<sup>2</sup> Sin has infested every area of our lives, and we sin against God because we are by nature sinners.<sup>3</sup> Since the very core of who we are is corrupt, it is impossible for us to change our condition.

The sad result is that we are completely separated from God. Sin has completely destroyed man's relationship with a holy, just and righteous God.<sup>4</sup> And because God is holy and just, He must righteously judge those who sin against Him.<sup>5</sup> The just punishment for our sin is to experience eternal separation from God in a place the Bible calls Hell.<sup>6</sup>

Second, a person needs to recognize that God has offered a provision for mankind that would heal that separation and protect us from His judgment. God, while being holy and just, also equally loves mankind and desires us not to experience His judgment but to be rescued from it.<sup>7</sup> To accomplish this, God provided an escape from His judgment by becoming a human being in the person of Jesus Christ.<sup>8</sup> As God, Jesus lived a completely sinless life and took upon Himself the penalty that our sin deserves.<sup>9</sup> He was willing to be judged on the cross in our place so that we could stand before God as innocent, our sins completely paid for and removed.<sup>10</sup> Because Jesus died on the cross on our behalf, God is able to freely offer us His gift of forgiveness.<sup>11</sup>

Third, a person needs to recognize that they need to receive God's free gift by responding in faith to what Christ has done for them. It's not enough to simply know, or even agree with these truths. True faith demands the action of humbly receiving what Christ has done for us by asking Him to save us. In doing so, we let go of trusting in ourselves to get to Heaven based upon our own achievements, and change to trusting in Christ alone based on what He has done for us.

A Christian is a person who has been freed from the enormous debt owed to God by accepting His free gift of forgiveness which is in Jesus Christ. When we trust in Christ, God changes us from the inside out, giving us the desire and the ability to follow Him. He gives us the Holy Spirit to lead us and teach us. And He introduces us to a new life that is everlasting.



## END NOTES

1. Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 2:1-3; Colossians 1:21
2. Romans 8:5-7
3. Romans 3:9-20
4. Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13; Isaiah 59:2
5. Romans 1:18; Nahum 1:1-6
6. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10; Revelation 20:11-15
7. John 3:16
8. John 1:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-3
9. 2 Corinthians 5:21
10. Colossians 2:13-14
11. Ephesians 2:13; 1 Peter 2:18

