

6 DOES GOD HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE?

IN THIS LESSON YOU WILL STUDY THE FOLLOWING:

- *Does God Really Care About You?*
 - *Does God Care About What You Do?*
 - *What Does God Want You To Do?*
 - *What Does God Want You To Be?*
-

DOES GOD REALLY CARE ABOUT YOU?

DOES GOD CARE ABOUT PEOPLE?

Yes, God cares about each of us personally! He cares about every part of our lives. He cares because He is our Heavenly Father. Sometimes human fathers fail their children. Sometimes they do not care for their children. But our Heavenly Father is not like that.

The Holy Bible says: *Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me.* God's promise is: *I will never leave you; I will never forsake you.*

HOW CAN YOU KNOW GOD CARES ABOUT YOU?

You can know God cares about you because He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be your Savior.

Romans 5:8. "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus Christ died for your sins and for the sins of all people. He willingly paid the penalty for our sins. He did this to fulfill God's plan of salvation and to prove His love for us.

You can know God cares about you because He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus, to be your savior.

1 John 3:16. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us."

Not only did Jesus die for our sins, He also rose from the dead. He defeated both sin and death. Because He is the Son of God, we become God's children when we receive Jesus as our Savior.

John 1:12. "To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

God loves you with a love that is beyond human understanding. His love never changes. He does not love you one day and hate you the next day because you did something wrong. He always loves you.

TO HELP YOU LEARN

Fill in the blanks

- To all who _____ him, to those who _____ in his name, He gave the right to become children of God (John 1:12).
- What must we do to become the children of God?

DOES GOD CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

DOES ANYONE CARE?

We live in a world that is full of indifference. People often become consumed by their own problems and needs. We see people all around us who have far more serious problems than our own, yet we hurry on past them like we do not even see them. Sometimes we wonder:

- Does anyone care about those who are poor and in need?
- Does anyone care about those who are hungry or starving?
- Does anyone care about those who are sick or dying?
- Does anyone care about those who are deaf or blind?
- Does anyone care about those who are addicted to drugs or alcohol?

Sometimes people do not care about others who are in great need. But our Heavenly Father, the Almighty God, cares for all people everywhere. He cares so much about us that He even knows how many hairs we have on our heads.

Matthew 10:29–31. “Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”

WHY SHOULD GOD CARE ABOUT WHAT YOU DO?

Not only does God know the number of hairs on your head, He knows everything about you. He wants to know everything about you because He loves you and cares for you. And because He cares for you, He has a wonderful plan for your life.

God’s plan is not a secret. He is not hiding His plan from you. He wants you to know His will and purpose for your life. The Holy Bible says, “Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is” (Ephesians 5:17).

WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO DO?

SAUL OF TARSUS

A man named Saul asked this question almost 2,000 years ago. He was from the city of Tarsus, which is now in the country of Turkey. He was a leader of the Jewish religion. The elders in Jerusalem authorized him to persecute anyone who claimed to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

As Saul was on his way to Damascus in Syria to have the followers of Jesus put in prison, a bright light from heaven suddenly shone around him. He was blinded by the light and fell to the ground. Then he heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Saul asked, “Who are you, Lord?” The answer came, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:4–5).

During the days following this, Jesus gave Saul instructions through a man named Ananias. He was one of Jesus’ followers. Saul himself became a follower of Jesus. He eventually wrote several letters to other believers. Those letters are now part of the Holy Bible.

God knew exactly what He wanted Saul to do. The following instructions were given to Saul:

Acts 22:14–16. “The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.”

There are some important principles in the instructions to Saul that apply to all followers of Jesus.

GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU TO BE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS

The very fact that you are reading these lessons called *Searching for Answers to the Great Questions of Life* is an indication that God is calling you to follow Jesus. It is important for you to understand that He has chosen you just as He chose His twelve disciples in the Holy Bible.

John 15:16 "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name."

GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU TO KNOW HIS WILL

The very first thing that God wants you to do is to decide to be a follower of Jesus. When you make the decision to follow Jesus, it proves that He has chosen you. He knows whether you will decide to follow Him even before He calls you. It is God's will for you to be a follower of Jesus. It is God's will for you to receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

***God has chosen
you to be a
follower of Jesus,
to know His will,
and to see the
Righteous One.***

GOD HAS CHOSEN YOU TO SEE THE RIGHTEOUS ONE

Jesus is the Righteous One. It is possible that you may see Him in a vision or dream. Someday you will see Him face to face in heaven. However, right now God wants you to see Jesus as you read and learn about Him in the Holy Bible. God wants to reveal Jesus to you so that you will learn to know Him better and better.

GOD WANTS YOU TO HEAR HIS WORD

God speaks to us through His Word, the Holy Bible. So He wants you to read the Holy Bible. You should read and study it every day. You should study it with other people who are also followers of Jesus. In order to do this, you will need to meet with people in a church or house of prayer, or perhaps in someone's home.

GOD WANTS YOU TO RECEIVE FORGIVENESS FOR YOUR SINS

He wants to wash your sins away. This can happen because Jesus gave His blood on the cross when He died in your place. He took the punishment upon himself for your sins and for the sins of all people. All

our sins were nailed to the Cross in Jesus' body. Therefore, when His blood poured from His hands, His feet, His head and His side, it was poured out as a sacrifice so that our sins can be washed away.

1 John 2:2. "He [Jesus] is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world."

God wants you to confess your sins to Jesus and ask Him to forgive you. He wants you to repent of all the wrong things you have done. To repent means to turn around and go in the opposite direction. You have been going in the direction of a sinful, dirty life. So turn around; turn away from sin and turn to God.

***Jesus is the
atoning sacrifice
for our sins.***

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

GOD WANTS YOU TO RECEIVE HIS GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE

The Scriptures are very clear about this. All people have a sin problem. Sometimes we do not want to admit that we are sinners. However, we must all realize that we have done many things that are wrong. We have offended and harmed other people. We have been selfish and rebellious. We have chosen to go our own way, rather than God's way. We have allowed dirty thoughts in our minds. We have committed unclean and immoral acts. We have sinned against God, and that is why sin separates us from Him.

Memorize This

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

God offers us forgiveness and His wonderful gift of eternal life! You can receive this gift right now. You do not have to wait until you die to know that you have eternal life. Eternal life is in Jesus Christ. When you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you also receive the gift of eternal life. You can have this gift by praying to God and telling Him you want to receive His gift.

GOD WANTS YOU TO CALL UPON THE NAME OF JESUS

This means God wants you to pray in Jesus' name. Prayer simply means talking to God. You can talk to Him about anything. You can ask

Him questions. You can tell Him how you feel. You can tell Him your problems. You can ask Him to forgive your sins. You can ask Him to give you strength and wisdom. You can ask Him to meet your needs. You can ask Him to heal you from sickness. You can ask Him to bless your family and He will.

God wants you to pray in Jesus' name. This means you can talk directly to Jesus. He has promised that He will hear you. He has promised that God will give us what we need when we pray in Jesus' name.

TO HELP YOU LEARN

Fill in the blanks

- Who is the atoning sacrifice for our sins?

- If we confess our sins, what will God do in response to our prayers?

- What is the gift of God? _____

WHAT DOES GOD WANT YOU TO BE?

GOD WANTS YOU TO BE A NEW PERSON

When Ananias gave instructions to Saul, he said, ““And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name”” (Acts 22:16). Ananias was telling

Saul that his life would be completely changed. He would be a different person. His old sinful life of hatred and violence was going to leave. He would have a new life of peace and joy because of God's forgiveness and because Jesus would be his Savior. God wants you also to have this new life.

God wants you to have this same new life.

GOD WANTS YOU TO BE BORN AGAIN

To be born again does not mean reincarnation. The cycle of birth—death—rebirth is not God's plan for His children. He wants you to be a changed person right now.

John 3:3, 7-8. "Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. ... You should not be surprised at my saying, "You must be born again." The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'"

God wants you to be a new person and to be born again.

God wants you to receive this spiritual birth that Jesus described. When you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior, your life will change. Your old sinful ways and habits will leave. God will give you peace and joy. He will forgive your sins, and the Spirit of Jesus will come into your life. You will experience a spiritual birth that will change your life. This is what it means to be born of the Spirit.

Revelation 3:20. Jesus said, "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in."

Jesus is waiting for you to invite Him into your life now. His promise is, "I will come in." And when Jesus comes into your life, you will be changed. You will be a new person on the inside because a spiritual birth will take place.

Memorize This

2 Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

This is what happens when you receive Jesus as your Savior. He comes into your life by His Holy Spirit, and you enter into the ocean of His love. You are in Christ, and He is in you. When this happens, your life will change. And as you learn to know Jesus better, you will become more like Him in what you think and do.

TO HELP YOU LEARN

Fill in the blanks

- Jesus said, "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be _____ .'"
- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a _____ ; the old _____ , the new _____ .

GOD WANTS YOU TO BE BAPTIZED

God wants you to be identified with Jesus. He wants you to confess that Jesus is your Lord and Savior. One way to do this is to be baptized in water.

Perhaps you are wondering, why is it necessary to be baptized in water? The reason is because Jesus was baptized. A prophet named John the Baptist baptized Jesus. However, John did not feel that he was worthy to baptize Jesus.

Matthew 3:15-17. "Jesus replied, 'Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness.' Then John consented. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, 'This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.'"

Since Jesus was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, those who are His followers should also be baptized. Followers of Jesus want to follow His example in all things. Water baptism tells others we have received Jesus as our Savior from sin.

Perhaps you live in a community that does not believe in water baptism. It is possible your family and community might reject you if you are baptized. Therefore, it is very important for you to find a group of people who are also followers of Jesus. They will guide you and help you grow in your relationship with God. They will help you understand when it is the right time for you to be baptized.

It is important for you to keep good relationships with your family and community so that they will also come to believe in Jesus. Then with God's help, many of your family members and friends will be baptized with you.

GOD WANTS YOU TO BE HIS WITNESS

God wants you to show your family and friends that you are a follower of Jesus by the example of a changed life. He wants to fill you with peace and joy. He wants you to live so that others will see God has forgiven your sins and filled you with hope. He wants you to show the love of God by helping people in any way you

***God wants you
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can. He wants you to be a blessing to your family and friends by showing them kindness and love.

God wants you to be His witness, but He does not want you to offend people by trying to force them or entice them to become followers of Jesus. He wants you to love them, pray for them, and kindly and respectfully tell them about Jesus. One good way for you to be God's witness is to study these lessons with your family and friends. Then all of you can come to believe in Jesus together.

If you have not yet received Jesus as your Lord and Savior, please pray the following prayer. Make it your own prayer by adding your own words. Read it out aloud to God several times. Pray in Jesus' name.

*If you want to accept Jesus as your Savior now,
pray this prayer.*

Prayer

Father God, I admit that I am a sinner. I understand that my sin separates me from you. I believe that Jesus paid the penalty for all my sins when He died on the cross and rose from the dead. Lord Jesus, thank you for dying for me. I ask you to forgive all my sins. I repent of my ways and want to change the direction of my life. Lord Jesus, I open the door of my life. I ask you to come into my heart and be my Savior and Lord. I trust you alone for forgiveness of my sins. I receive your free gift of eternal life, in Jesus' name, Amen.

CONGRATULATIONS.

- You have completed Searching for Answers.
- Now complete the questions for lesson 6 in the Lesson Review Questions at the end of this book.
- Then send your answers to the address on page 2.

May God richly bless you!