

THE BRIDGE ILLUSTRATION

A Summary of the Gospel of Jesus Christ

History and archeology document Jesus Christ, the apostle Paul, and others as having actually lived in the places and situations described in the Bible. We can trust the Bible! The Bible shows us who God is, reveals His plans and purposes, and explains to us how to allow God to renovate our lives in ways that please Him and benefit us.

The Bible teaches that we all tend to stray onto paths contrary to God's plans and purposes for us and for the world. Often people are unaware of their need for reconciliation with God. We can too easily neglect Him and follow our own independent paths.

The Bridge Illustration explains from the Bible how a person can become a true follower of Christ and receive the gift of eternal life. It has been used in many languages, cultures, and across a broad spectrum of denominations and religious backgrounds. To you, it may be a review of what you already have applied to your life. Or some of these Bible truths may be brand-new. "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

As you read each Bible verse, you will find it helpful to locate where it is used on the graphic. For example, Romans 6:23 (the book of Romans, chapter 6 and verse 23) is part of describing "Our Problem." You don't need to look up the verses in a Bible; they are supplied for you in the text.

1. GOD'S PURPOSE < John 10:10 Full, Abundant Life
John 3:16 Eternal Life

God loves us and offers us a full, abundant life, and eternal life.

In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."



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

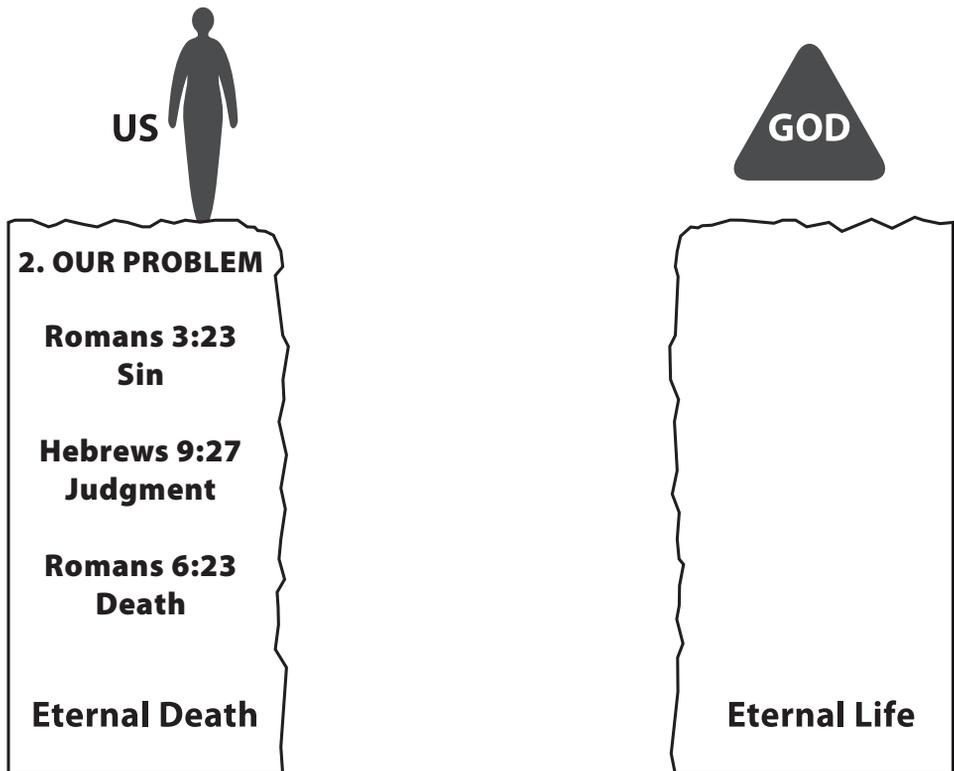
Why are so many people not experiencing this kind of life? We see part of the answer in the Bible's description of the BAD NEWS side of our situation. Later we look at the good news side.

2. OUR PROBLEM

The Ten Commandments and other Bible passages define God's guidelines for human behavior—which are impossible to follow and obey perfectly. And God did not create us as robots to automatically love and obey Him—He gave us a will and freedom of choice.

None of us has met God's standards of morality. In many ways and to varying degrees we all have sinned and continue to sin. **Our sins separate us from God.**

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. —ROMANS 3:23



Each of us will die physically and then stand before God as our judge.

Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.

—HEBREWS 9:27

God will judge us and then reluctantly assign us to the consequence of our sins—eternal death and separation from God.

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

Understanding our terrible dilemma should compel us to repent, which is having “godly sorrow for one’s sin and a resolve to turn from it.”⁴ We must turn from sin toward God.

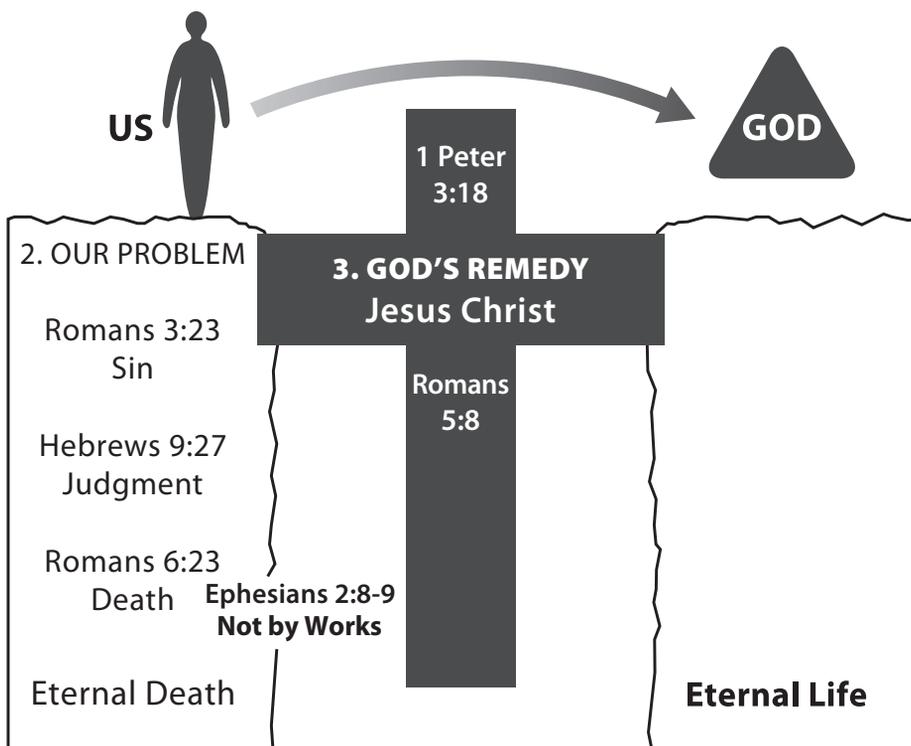
The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise. . . . He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. —2 PETER 3:9

God wants a close relationship with us and has provided the remedy for our alienation from Him. Here is the GOOD NEWS of the gospel.

3. GOD’S REMEDY

Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose from the dead, paying the penalty for our sins and bridging the gap between us and God.

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



For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. —1 PETER 3:18

It is incredible, but Christ died in our place. He took the penalty for our sins on Himself on the cross.

A common misconception: Some people believe that God is keeping score of what they do, whether right or wrong, and that at their death God compares the scores. They assume that if they have done more good than bad, they go to heaven. But the Bible is clear—eternal life is a free gift that cannot be earned by good works or deeds. Our good works do not bridge the gap.

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 2:8-9

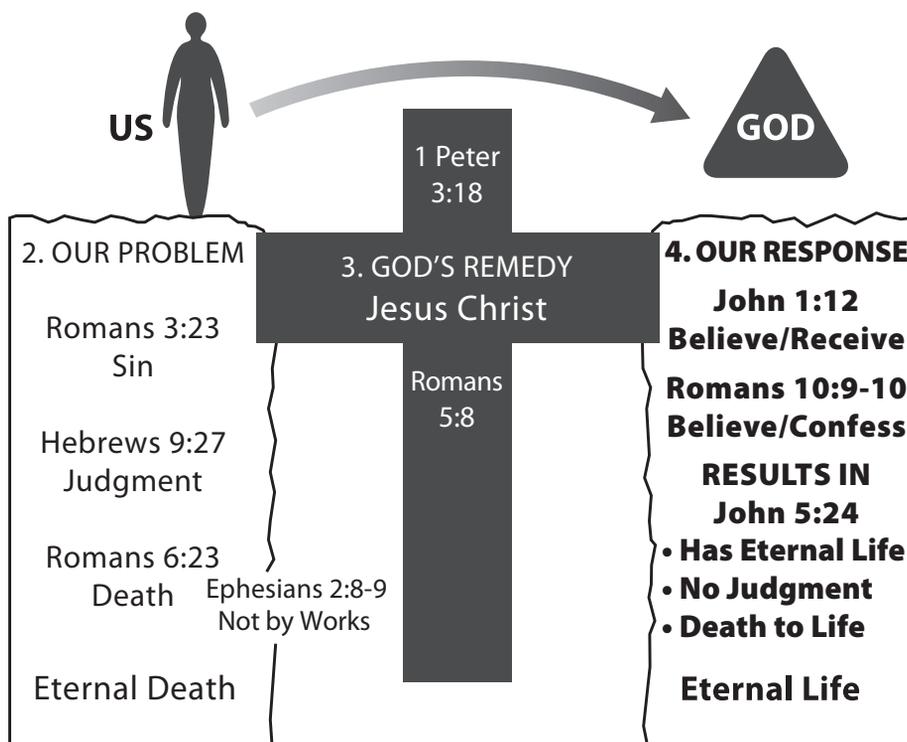
Please also see Romans 6:23 under “Our Problem.”

Only by appropriating Christ’s death on the cross can a person have the certainty of eternal life.

4. OUR RESPONSE

God sees inside our hearts and minds. In a prayer to God, express your gratitude for Christ's death on the cross for you, and **by personal invitation** ask Christ to be your own Savior and Lord.

1. GOD'S PURPOSE $\left\langle \begin{array}{l} \text{John 10:10} \text{ Full, Abundant Life} \\ \text{John 3:16} \text{ Eternal Life} \end{array} \right.$



Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. —JOHN 1:12

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

Christ's resurrection proves His Deity and validates His promise that believers' sins are forgiven. He lives again—so shall believers!

Next, let's look at John 5:24 and a summary of how we can make our response to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

HEARING, BELIEVING, RECEIVING

I tell you the truth, 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, EMPHASIS ADDED

HEAR: Do you understand the Bible message in The Bridge Illustration? Have you really heard it?

BELIEVE: In your heart do you understand and believe that Christ died on the cross for you and rose from the dead—that you are putting your full trust in Christ’s death on your behalf?

RECEIVE: Are you willing to reach out and accept God’s gift of eternal life—realizing that when Christ comes into your life in this way, He may begin to renovate your life in ways that could be uncomfortable, but best for you?

HOW TO RECEIVE CHRIST

1. Admit your need. (I have sinned and done many things wrong, which God will judge.)
2. Be willing to turn from your sins. (Repent.)
3. Believe that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross and rose from the dead.
4. Through prayer, invite Jesus Christ to come in and control your life through the Holy Spirit. (Receive Him as Lord and Savior of your life.)

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

(If you are alone, pray aloud). You might thoughtfully and sincerely talk to God in a prayer something like this:

Heavenly Father, I thank you that you love me deeply just the way I am—that you care about me and want the very best for me.

I understand and believe that I have done many things wrong in your sight. I have sinned in various ways, and I know that those things have hurt you deeply.

I also understand and believe that the penalty for my sins is eternal death—that I cannot be with you in heaven without having all of my sins forgiven.

I thank you so much that you sent your Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross for me—the sacrifice that paid for all of my sins. Thank you, Jesus Christ, for dying in my place—willingly enduring the horrible beatings and crucifixion that give me forgiveness and make me righteous in the eyes of God the Father.

Right now, Jesus Christ, I ask you to come into my heart and life. Please apply your death on the cross to me personally. I am willing for you to take over my life and to lead me on the best path. I give you permission to work in my life—to help me change and grow and become all that you want me to be.

I pray these things sincerely from my heart. Thank you for hearing me! I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE?

1. Share with a like-minded Christian that you have made this commitment to Christ.
2. Join a group that can help you grow in your Christian life. Sometimes one mature Christian can become a mentor for you.
 - a. Learn practical ways to read and study your Bible (to know God better and to find helpful things to apply to your life).
 - b. Learn more about talking to God in prayer (to pray for yourself and for others).
 - c. Learn effective ways to explain your faith in Christ to others.
 - d. Learn more about what God has done through history and what He is doing now.
3. Be part of a church where Christ is preached and the Bible is taught.
4. Develop a band of Christian friends you spend time with—to offset negative influences and together to help others come to faith in Christ.