

christianity 101

Where to start ?

Good news, you are a Christian! So what does that mean? Today there are so many conflicting and opposing views of Christianity. Some of us have known people who claim to be Christians, but then we see they fail to live the Christian life. So how does a person really become a Christian and what does this mean?

The internationally accepted misconception held by people who don't know God states "good people go to heaven". By default, this means God accepts all 'good people' right? The only problem is, how can you clarify what a good person looks like? If being good means we are guided by our moral conscience, a problem arises because there doesn't seem to be a universal scale by which a person can measure how good they really are. Here's a thought, Hitler considered himself to be a good person too (gulp).

The truth is that only God can inform us of what is 'good'. He tells us how to live as a Christian and what it takes to live the Christian life. I don't want to disappoint you, but the reality is most people can't live up to God's expectations, so He gave us a way out...Jesus. This means that even if you don't measure up to his standard, he will still accept you and overlook the wrong choices you have made in your past and future.

This booklet is designed to inform you of some basic Christian beliefs. It will not answer all your questions but it will give you some factual information about God and the reality of the world you live in.

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Who is God ?

God existed before the creation of the world, we call this eternal existence. There is only one God and the bible gives us knowledge of who He is because He has revealed Himself to us. God created humankind and it's His desire to know us and to be in relationship with us. God doesn't want to hide Himself; he wants us to know who He is too. The bible gives us some basic definitions and descriptions of God;

God is Spirit – but this doesn't mean He is some impersonal being. God is a person with self-consciousness, self-determination, will, intelligence and emotions and feelings.

God is Light – how do you describe the glory of God? The bible simply describes his glory as light. Just as you can't stare at the sun, you can't look directly at God because he is full of light.

God is Love – God does not just have love, He is love. Love involves grace, mercy, kindness, goodness. God created humankind out of the abundance of His love and He deeply cares for you.

God is Holy – this is probably one of the harder ones to understand. He has never made a mistake and never done the 'wrong thing'. He is 100% holy, therefore God is able to judge the world on what is right and wrong because He knows.

What about Jesus ?

No one denies Jesus existed. There is much external evidence as proof that Jesus really existed. The real question is; who was Jesus? The bible teaches Jesus is the eternal Son of God and he existed before the creation of the world. He is both fully God and fully man at the same time.

Nearly 2000 years ago, Jesus became a man so he could live as we do, identify with humanity and ultimately die on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of the world. Jesus was the only person who could die for your sin because He was the only person in history to ever be completely sin free. Just the same as God, Jesus is 100% holy, therefore Jesus is able to judge the world on what is right and wrong because He knows.

More than just a Saviour, Jesus exists as a mediator between humans and God. The bible teaches that because God is 100% holy, he can't be around sin. However because Jesus died in place of you for your sin, you are covered by the grace of God through Jesus and able to speak directly with God because of Jesus' sacrifice for you.

Sin

Have you ever asked the question “why do bad things happen to good people?” The answer is sin. Human history and our own conscience shows the reality of sin in the world. The first record of sin can be found in the book of Genesis (in the bible), and it displays Adam and Eve’s disobedience to God’s word. Ever since this point in history, humans have tried to live without God’s help and in contradiction to God’s word.

Basically, sin is doing the opposite of what God wants us to do. God’s desire is for us to live in relationship with Him and He never desired for us to deal with the issues of pain or even death. Bad things happen to good people because God designed us with a will, intellect and emotion. He gives us the ability to exercise our will whenever we want and while some people exercise their will for good, others exercise their will for evil. God doesn’t want to control us, but because of our own sinful desires sometimes bad things do happen.

The good news is when you gave your life to Jesus; you were covered by his sacrifice for your sin and you will ultimately live in heaven with Him forever. This doesn’t mean you will never sin again, but it does mean that when you do, Jesus has already forgiven you.

Do I have to go to Church ?

Nope. That's right, you can be a Christian and not go to church, but it is really hard. Going to church is the best way to learn more about God and Gods plan for your life through the Pastor speaking on Sunday. Church is also a great place to come and worship God; and He deserves it because of all the good things He has done.

Also, the church is Gods idea and not created by man to 'institutionalize' relationship with God. Jesus said "I will build my Church" which means Jesus considers the church to belong to Him. In fact, Jesus refers to the church as his "bride" in the same way two people are wed together. One thing you can be sure of is that Jesus goes to church every Sunday.

Life is meant to be fun and being a Christian is a lot easier (and more fun) if you have some Christian friends to help you along the way. Church provides the best environment for this to happen.

The Bible

The bible is the word of God and one of the most valuable things you can ever own. It is Gods revelation of Himself to humankind. It doesn't have any mistakes, it doesn't contradict itself, it isn't just a book written by man -but literally Gods words written down.

The bible is a collection of 66 books and written over a period of around 1500 years. While there are many different people who wrote the bible, the bible was written by men who are inspired by God to write it. We call this scripture. The bible also says all scripture (the whole bible) is good for teaching and correction and training in righteousness.

If you want to learn more about God, the best thing to do is start reading your bible.



Prayer

Prayer is a very important part of the Christian life. The best thing about prayer is you get to speak to God directly without anyone being involved and even better, God will listen to you.

Sometimes people make the mistake of thinking God doesn't listen to their prayers because He doesn't answer them with a "yes". The reality is; God doesn't exist to serve and obey us, we live to serve and obey Him.

Prayer can give you Gods perspective of any situation and then you will know what to pray for instead of what you thought was important.



Where to from here ?

Becoming a Christian is the most important decision you can ever make in your life. It means you are connected to God through His mercy and grace and under His protection. This doesn't mean things will get easy from here, in fact the bible teaches us that we will not always have it easy in life whether we are Christian or not. The good news is you can pray and have a personal relationship with a God who cares deeply for you. The best advice is;

- Keep going to church so you can be taught
- Keep reading your bible so you can learn about God
- Keep praying to God so you develop your relationship with him
- Keep as many Christian friends as possible so you have support

If you would like to be connected to Activate Church we would love you to come. There are a few ways you can get connected;

Life Groups

Network Events

Sunday Service

Activate Church

Level 1, 20 Melbourne St Mall
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