

How to Begin a Relationship with God

To begin a personal relationship with God, please consider these four fundamental truths from the Bible:

- (1) God loves you and wants you to enjoy a forever relationship with Him. (John 3:16)
- (2) Failure to live up to God's standard of holy perfection (sin) has resulted in separation from God that will last forever for everyone who does not believe. (Romans 3:23, 6:23)
- (3) To solve the problem of sin that separates you from God, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for your sin by dying on the cross. (1 Peter 3:18)
- (4) Everyone who makes a personal decision to trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior from sin receives forgiveness from sin and enters God's forever family. (John 1:12)

If you want to make the decision today to begin a relationship with God, you can express your faith in Christ by personally praying the following:

"Father, thank You for loving me and wanting a relationship with me. I admit that I have sinned and that I need a Savior. I believe that Your Son, Jesus, died on the cross to pay for my sins. I trust Jesus alone as my Savior. Thank You for making me part of your family."

If you made a decision today to trust in Jesus as your Savior, let us know by indicating on the communication card OR by telling a pastor or elder. We want the opportunity to rejoice with you and help you take your first steps in this new relationship.



Jesus' Call: Mark 1:2-20

Textual Explanation:

Mark 1:2-8:

God _____ John the Baptist to _____ Jesus' coming.

Mark 1:9-13:

God declares Jesus' _____ and sends Him to be _____.

Mark 1:14-20:

Jesus comes _____ the good news and _____ disciples.

Theological Principle: God _____ His Kingdom by supernaturally announcing Jesus as Christ and inviting us to _____ by repenting, believing, and following.

Repenting-

Believing-

Following-

So What?

- 1) Keep _____ through times in the _____.
- 2) _____ behind your competing _____.

Personal Study

(1) Read Mark 1:2-8 (along with Isaiah 40:1-4 & Malachi 3:1-2). Make three observations that impress you about the ministry of John the Baptist: _____

(2) Read Mark 1:9-13 (along with Isaiah 42:1 and Psalm 2:7). Why is the Father's blessing on Jesus important? _____

(3) Read Mark 1:13. Read Genesis 7:4, Exodus 16:35, 24:18, 34:28, Numbers 13:25, 14:34-35, and Deuteronomy 2:7. Why is it significant that Jesus was in the wilderness *forty days*? _____

(4) Read Mark 1:14-15. Write down all the parallels you notice between John's message (as described in verses 4-8) and Jesus' message: _____

(5) Read Mark 1:16-20. Write down the words in these verses that are repeated more than once. Why is this significant? _____

(6) Read Mark 1:2-20 again. What do you believe is the main point of this passage taken as a whole? What patterns do you notice in the text? What emphasis is Mark trying to make with the way he has constructed the narrative (you can contrast with Matthew and Luke for help)? _____

Personal Application

(1) When was a time in your life when you went through *the wilderness*? How did God use that period in your life to shape who you are today? _____

(2) What kind of things can we do to stay strong in our faith when we are in the middle of a wilderness experience? _____

(3) Both John and Jesus came preaching, and then Jesus asked the disciples to follow his example. Why do you think God uses people to proclaim his message rather than simply writing it in the sky? _____

(4) What do you believe you must "leave behind" before you can fully commit to follow Jesus Christ? _____

(5) In what areas of your life are you trying to get Jesus to follow you rather than you following Him? _____

(6) A key phrase in the book of Mark is "immediately." The disciples are described in 1:18 and 1:20 as following Jesus *at once*. In what area of your life are you stalling rather than quickly obeying? _____