



THE PASSAGE

1

GOD'S DESIRE

In pre-Civil War America, thousands of African Americans escaped to freedom by way of the underground railroad, a secret network of relationships and safe houses. Harriet Tubman, an escaped slave herself, returned to conduct others to freedom nineteen different times via this passage. Many of us today, while physically free, still experience various forms of bondage. There is still a need for spiritual and lasting freedom. This need exists because, in our search for freedom and personal fulfillment, we make choices that lead us away from, instead of toward a relationship with our creator, God. This booklet will help you consider four principles that describe **THE PASSAGE** to true freedom and a personal relationship with God.

God created you in His image. He wants you to know Him personally, so you may experience the love, peace and freedom He offers.

(References contained in this booklet should be read in context from the Bible whenever possible.)

GOD'S DESIGN

"So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (*Genesis 1:27*)

GOD'S LOVE

"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*)

GOD'S PLAN

"Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." (*John 17:3*)

What prevents us from experiencing the life of love and freedom God desires for us?

2

OUR REFUSAL

People are sinful. Sin keeps us from knowing God personally and from experiencing His love, peace and freedom. Sin enslaves, blocks and separates us from God.

PEOPLE ARE SINFUL

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”
(Romans 3:23).

Sin is our innate refusal to go God’s way and instead, to go our own way and do our own thing.

God is holy, that is, perfect in who He is and all He does. Our sinful nature and actions offend God’s holy nature and result in a broken relationship and separation from Him.

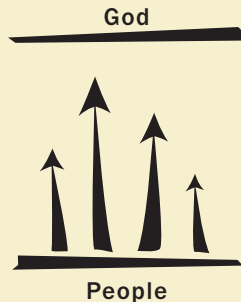
PEOPLE ARE ENSLAVED

“Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin’” (John 8:34).

PEOPLE ARE SEPARATED

“For the wages of sin is death...” [spiritual separation from God and His life] (Romans 6:23).

WAGES = PENALTY



People are sinful and separated from a holy God by a great gap. We may try to cross that gap by living a good life, not harming anyone, attending church or other religious meetings, or by giving money to our favorite charities. All of these efforts fail because the sinful condition of the heart remains unchanged, enslaved to sin.

The third principle explains the only way to cross this gap...

3

THE PASSAGE

Jesus Christ came to provide the passage back to God. Jesus Christ alone forgives and removes our sins so we can know God personally, and experience His love, peace and freedom forever.

HE DIED ON THE CROSS IN OUR PLACE

“For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God...” (1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus Christ was able to pay the penalty for our sins because He is free from sin. Even His enemies could not find Him guilty of any wrongdoing.

HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD

“Christ died for our sins...He was buried, He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. After that, He appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers...” (1 Corinthians 15:3–6).

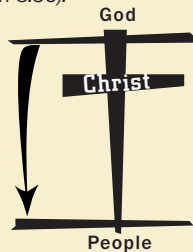
Christ’s resurrection proved that He has the power over death to enable us to live eternally with God.

HE IS THE WAY TO GOD

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’” (John 14:6).

HE SETS US FREE

“So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).



This diagram shows that God has bridged the gap which separates us from Him. He sent His Son, Jesus Christ to die on the cross for our sins, in our place. In this way He paid the death penalty that we deserve.

What would a person need to do in order to know God and experience the love, and freedom from sin that He offers?



4 OUR RESPONSE

We must individually receive Jesus Christ, because only He provides the passage to God. Only then can we experience His love, and live in freedom for eternity.

WE MUST RECEIVE CHRIST

“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).

WE RECEIVE CHRIST THROUGH FAITH

“By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works that no one should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB).

Faith = trust, dependence on God

WHEN WE RECEIVE CHRIST, WE EXPERIENCE HIS LOVE, FREEDOM, AND ETERNAL LIFE.

[Jesus speaking] “I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly” (John 10:10 NASB).

To receive Christ

- Recognize and admit you need to be forgiven of your sins.
- Admit you can do nothing on your own to free yourself from your sins.
- Turn away from your sins (repentance) and place your trust in Jesus Christ alone. When you trust Christ, you receive His complete forgiveness and an eternal relationship with God.

Knowing intellectually that Jesus Christ is the Son of God is not enough. Having an emotional experience will not free you to experience His love, peace and freedom.

We receive Jesus Christ by faith, as an act of our will.

THINK ABOUT IT...

These two circles represent two kinds of lives or paths that people choose:



SELF-DIRECTED LIFE

Christ is outside the life. The different areas of life represented by the dots are self-directed and not in harmony with God's desires.



CHRIST-DIRECTED LIFE

Christ is in the life. This person has received Christ and His forgiveness for their sins. Christ directs every area of life, resulting in harmony with God's desire and plan.

**Which circle represents your life right now?
Which circle would you like to represent your life?**

The following explains how you can change paths and receive Christ.

YOU CAN RECEIVE CHRIST RIGHT NOW BY FAITH THROUGH PRAYER. (Prayer is just talking with God)
God is not so concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart. You must mean what you pray, for God knows your heart and you cannot deceive Him.

Here is a suggested prayer:

Jesus Christ, I need you. I confess that I have sinned against you and have been running my own life and have sinned against You. Thank you for dying on the cross for my sins. Please come into my life and forgive my sins and set me free. Begin directing my life. Make me into the person you created me to be. Thank you for answering my prayer by coming into my life and giving me eternal life. Amen.

**Does this prayer express your heart's desire?
If it does, pray this prayer right now and Christ will come into your life, as He promised.**

HOW TO KNOW...

HOW TO KNOW THAT CHRIST IS IN YOUR LIFE

Did you ask Christ to come into your life? How do you know He answered your prayer and came into your life? You can know that Christ is in your life because of the promise of *1 John 4:14-15*:

“And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.”

God and His Word are completely trustworthy.

THE BIBLE PROMISES ETERNAL LIFE TO ALL WHO RECEIVE CHRIST

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.” (*1 John 5:11-13*, NASB)

Thank God daily that Christ is in your life and He will never leave you (*Hebrews 13:5*). You can know on the basis of His promise that Christ lives in you and you have eternal life, from the moment you invited Him in. He will not deceive you.

What if you don't feel any different?

DO NOT DEPEND ON FEELINGS

This train diagram illustrates the relationship between fact (God and His Word), faith (our trust in God and His Word), and feeling (the result of our faith and obedience). Read *John 14:21*.



The train will run with or without the caboose (feeling). In the same way, we as Christians do not depend on feelings or emotions. We rely on the promises of God's Word, not our feelings. The Christian lives by faith in God and His Word.



ENJOYING GOD

THE MOMENT YOU RECEIVED CHRIST BY FAITH, AS AN ACT OF YOUR WILL, MANY THINGS HAPPENED, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

1. Christ came into your life (1 Corinthians 6:17; Colossians 1:27).
2. Christ set you free from your sins and forgave you (Romans 8:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 5:1; Colossians 1:14).
3. You became a child of God (John 1:12).
4. God lavished His love on you (Romans 8:35-39; 1 John 3:1).
5. You received eternal life (John 5:24).
6. You began the new and satisfying life for which God created you (John 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).

**Being freed and loved by Christ is all good!
Would you like to thank God in prayer right
now for what He has done for you?
By thanking God, you demonstrate your faith.**

*To enjoy your new relationship with God to
the fullest...*

SUGGESTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN GROWTH

Our relationship with Christ grows as we trust God more and more with every detail of our lives. “The righteous will live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). This trust develops as we:

Go to God in prayer daily (Col. 4:2).

Read God’s Word daily (Acts 17:11). Begin with the Gospel of John.

Obey God moment by moment (John 14:21).

Witness for Christ by your life and words (Matthew 4:19; John 15:8).

Trust God for every detail of your life (1 Peter 5:7).

Holy Spirit—He is in you now. Allow Him control and power over your daily life and witness (Acts 1:8, Romans 8:9, Galatians 5:16-17).

GET INVOLVED IN A GOOD CHURCH

God’s Word admonishes us not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together...” (Hebrews 10:25; Acts 2:42-47). Several logs burn brightly together; but put one aside and its fire goes out. So it is with your relationship to other Christians. If you do not belong to a church, do not wait to be invited. Take the first step; call the pastor of a nearby church where Christ is honored and His Word is preached. Start this week and make plans to attend regularly.



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