

ETERNAL LIFE

What It Is and How to Get It

What is eternal life and why do you need it? The answers to these questions provide the most compelling reasons for becoming an authentic Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ. If you have already trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior, this unit will provide greater understanding of the eternal life you have in Jesus Christ.

Back to our original question: What is eternal life? In short, eternal life is *a growing relationship with God that lasts forever.*

***Now this is eternal life: that they know you,
the only true God, and Jesus Christ,
whom you have sent.***

JOHN 17:3

THINK ABOUT IT ...

How does the Bible define “eternal life?”

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Eternal life is all about knowing God and His Son, Jesus Christ. According to the Bible, knowing God requires us to have a relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. There are many benefits of this relationship, but let's focus a little more on how to enter the relationship first, and then we'll get to the benefits later. Entering a personal relationship with God is not hard to understand, but it is challenging to do. The following passages will lay the foundation for why we do not already have a relationship with God and what it takes to enter a relationship with Him.

8Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

GENESIS 3:8-9

THINK ABOUT IT ...

What does Genesis show God doing?

This passage in Genesis shows us God was in the habit of walking in the garden and conversing with the man and woman He created. From the very beginning, God has sought a relationship with the people, like you, He has created. He continues to this day to call the world's people to enter a personal relationship with Him. However, there is a problem between all humans and God.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.

ROMANS 5:12

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

ISAIAH 59:2

THINK ABOUT IT ...

According to the Bible, what separates us from God?

The man and woman in the garden hid from God because they had disobeyed Him. Disobedience to God is called sin. Because the first man sinned, sin became part of every human's life. No one has to be taught how to disobey. We all do it naturally from the time we are toddlers. Tragically, because of our sin, each of us has been separated from a relationship with God. The end result of this separation between us and God, because of our sin, is death. The biblical word "death" means separation. When we die physically, our spirit (that part of us that allows us to think and have feelings) is separated from our body. When we die spiritually, our spirit is separated from God. If our relationship with God is not restored in this life, then the punishment we must face is eternal separation from God—eternal death.

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For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ROMANS 6:23

Because of our sin, God tells us in the Bible that we earn the “wages” of death. But it’s far more serious than simply being separated from God. The Bible warns us of how serious the consequences of our sin are.

But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.

REVELATION 21:8

The list of sins that separate us from God includes simply “unbelieving.” If we do not believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we face eternal separation from God in eternal torment. That sounds incredibly harsh, I know, but God is an infinite being. Our sin against an infinite being is an infinite offense. To help us understand this more concretely, think of it this way:

Suppose I offered you a pan of fresh baked home-made brownies. As you were getting ready to receive them into your hands, suppose I said, “By the way, I was mixing these brownies out in my backyard while I was watching my kids play. I accidentally dropped the spoon on the ground where my dog does his ‘business’, but don’t worry! I wiped the spoon off on a paper towel before I went back to mixing the batter.” Suppose I tried to justify myself by saying, “I baked the brownies in the

oven. That should take care of any contamination.” After hearing that, how willing would you be to accept those brownies from me? I’m guessing you would be highly offended by my offering of tainted brownies. How much more offended is our perfect God when we try to give Him our lives that are filled with daily sin?

Thankfully, God loves us so much He has provided a way to clean us up completely. He bleaches us clean from the stain of our sin, which is infinitely worse than a contaminated spoon! *Thankfully*, He offers each of us a gift that can undo the eternal death we’ve earned for ourselves. *Thankfully*, God does not want you to experience eternal death. He wants to save you from eternal death. He *wants* to give you eternal life through an eternal relationship with Him!

³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 TIMOTHY 2:3-4

THINK ABOUT IT ...

What does the Bible say God wants for you?

God, our only Savior, *wants* you to be saved (have eternal life)! In order for that to happen, you must come to a knowledge of the truth. The truth is this: You are saved from eternal death and given eternal life by repenting of your sin and believing in Jesus Christ. Repenting and believing are two sides of the same coin.

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¹⁴After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

MARK 1:14-15

Jesus came to teach us that each of us needs to repent, meaning repent of our sins. Our sins are anything we have done that disobeys God’s commands, whether that is lying or disobeying our parents or *anything else* that is against His commands. Repent means that you are sorry for your sin and want to turn away from disobeying God and turn toward obeying God by believing the good news, also called the Gospel. What is that good news?

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

*³⁰He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”
³¹They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”*

ACTS 16:30-31

THINK ABOUT IT ...

In the verses found in Mark, John, and Acts, what is God asking you to do in order to be saved?

By repenting of your sin and by believing in Jesus, you are agreeing with God that you have been separated from Him because of your sin and that Jesus Christ forgives you and gives you eternal life. He can forgive you because He paid for your sin by dying on the cross. He can give you eternal life because Jesus won the victory over death and your sin by rising from the dead. Eternal life then is forgiveness of your sin and a restoration of the relationship you should have had with God from the very beginning of your life.

You may still have questions. You may be thinking, “It can’t be that easy!”

It’s easy, but it’s not natural.

— End of Excerpt —

Eternity:

Beginning Your Authentic Relationship with Christ

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