

# YOU ARE LOVED

Everyone in this world wants to be loved. That's just how we are put together. We long for people who honestly care about us. Each of us needs a friend with whom we can share the joys of the good times and the hurts of the bad times.

This small booklet is about having that kind of a loving friendship with God.

Perhaps in your experience, God and Love don't seem to mix. But God really does want you to experience joy in your life as His love becomes real to you.

If you were to condense the entire Bible down to one phrase, it would be, "You Are LOVED." I've expanded each of the letters in L-O-V-E-D to explain how you can enjoy a deep friendship with God.

Let's take a look at the first letter, "L".

## L = LOVED BY GOD

### UNCEASING

Most people wonder if God really loves them. The fact is, God's love for you is UNCEASING. That means it never stops and it never runs out. The Bible says in Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

Every single moment of your life God's heart overflows with an unquenchable love for you. He wants you to know Him as a friend and experience this love for yourself.

### UNCONDITIONAL

God's love for you is also UNCONDITIONAL. This means it does not fluctuate up and down, depending on how good you are. It also means that you don't have to do anything to make Him love you more. God doesn't love you more some days and less others.

The Bible says in 1 John 4:8, "God is love." His nature is love. Just as it is natural for a bird to fly and a fish to swim, it is "natural" for God to love you.

Even though God loves us, it doesn't mean He approves of everything we do. Let's look at the next letter, "O".

## O = OFFENDED GOD

### SIN

God always wants us to do what is right. Yet each of us has fallen far short of that standard. The Bible calls it SIN. It says in Romans 3:23, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Most of us don't think of ourselves as "bad" people. But God looks at the selfishness, greed, jealousy, anger, and pride inside our hearts. He knows all our thoughts. He hears all our words. He sees all our actions. Each of us has missed the "bull's-eye" of perfection.

### SERIOUS

Our sin is a SERIOUS matter. Even though God loves us, He cannot overlook our sin. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:27, "man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment." Each of us will stand alone in God's courtroom after we die. God's ruling will be based on His standard of righteousness, not whether we were better than someone else, nor whether our good outweighed our bad. His verdict will be, "Guilty of sin!" The sentence will be eternal separation from Him in Hell. There will be no appeal. There will be no second chance.

Because He loves you, God has made a way for you to avoid Hell and go to Heaven. It's explained at the next letter, "V".



## V = VOLUNTARY SUBSTITUTE

### RESCUE

Because we are powerless to change our hearts and deliver ourselves from sin's power, we need someone to RESCUE us. That Someone is Jesus Christ. In order to rescue us, Jesus left heaven, came to earth and willingly suffered the judgment our sins deserved. This is the reason He died on a cross.

The Bible says in 1 Peter 3:18, "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous [Jesus] for the unrighteous [us], to bring you to God."

Because of His death, we can be completely forgiven of all our sins. He paid the entire penalty we deserved.

### RESURRECTION

Jesus demonstrated His ability to rescue us in a dramatic display of power by His RESURRECTION.

After dying on the cross, Jesus was buried in a solid rock tomb. The entrance was sealed with a huge rock and guarded by well-trained soldiers. But Acts 10:40 tells us that "God raised Him from the dead on the third day." Jesus overcame death! Jesus is alive! Christianity, unlike all the religions of the world, celebrates an empty grave.

Because of Jesus' death on the Cross and His Resurrection, a wonderful surprise awaits you at the letter "E".



## E = ETERNAL LIFE IS A GIFT

### NOT DESERVED

This gift is NOT DESERVED. The Bible says in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." The wages our sins have earned us is death. More than physical death, it means we deserve separation from God forever in Hell. But God offers us, as a gift, eternal life instead.

Eternal life means we will live forever with God in Heaven. But it also means that we will enjoy a far better quality of life here and now. We should be humbled by the fact that God extends mercy to us.

### NOT EARNED

This gift is NOT EARNED. The Bible says in Ephesians 2:8-9, "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." There won't be any proud people in heaven because none of us earned it or deserve to be there. Heaven isn't the reward that God owes you for good deeds. Heaven is a gift. Before you can give a gift, you must buy it. In the same way, Jesus could not offer you eternal life as a gift until He paid for it. The price for the forgiveness of all your sins, and your entrance into heaven was very high. It cost Jesus His life. When He died on the cross, He "paid the way" for you to enter heaven. But unless you are in possession of this gift, your sins will keep you out.

You will find out how to receive this GIFT at the last letter, "D".



## D = DECIDE NOW

### REPENT

The first decision you need to make is to REPENT. The Bible says in Acts 3:19, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out."

To repent is to turn around and change directions. It is like making a U-turn once we realize we are going the wrong way. You need to admit, "God, I have been going my own way, doing what I've wanted. I have committed sins that have displeased You. I want to change. I want to turn around and go Your way. I want to do what You want from now on."

### RECEIVE

The second decision you need to make is to RECEIVE Jesus Christ. The Bible says in John 1:12, "To all who received Him [Jesus], to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

Being a Christian is not simply adopting a new code of ethics. It is making a personal commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is opening your life to Him and inviting Jesus to become your Leader from this moment on. In effect, you make an unconditional surrender of your life to Christ. You invite Him to sit in the driver's seat and take over the steering wheel of your life.

Let's review briefly.



Do you understand that...

You are LOVED BY GOD, but you have OFFENDED HIM. Jesus DIED FOR YOUR SINS and offers you ETERNAL LIFE AS A GIFT. It can be yours if you will REPENT and RECEIVE Jesus Christ.

Would you like to receive Jesus Christ and His gift of eternal life right now? Read through the prayer below.

*"God, thank You for loving me.*

*I admit that I've sinned and offended You.*

*Please forgive me. Thank You, Jesus, for dying for my sins. Lord, I don't deserve heaven. Thank You for offering it as a gift. Jesus, please come into my life right now and be in charge of the rest of my life."*

Does that express what you want to say to God? If so, pray it to God right now.



### CONGRATULATIONS!

If you honestly said that prayer to God, then you have just started an exciting relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. As you get to know Jesus better in the days ahead, you will find that nothing else in all the world compares with knowing Him.

If you received Jesus today, it is your "spiritual" birthday. Write today's date here for future celebrations \_\_\_\_\_.

The following page will give you some helpful ideas of how you can get to know Jesus better and grow more deeply in love with Him.

## A = AMEN

Prayer is talking with God. Now that you know Jesus, you will find yourself praying often. Don't worry about using special words. You can talk to God as freely and naturally as you do with your best friend. Ask Him to lead you throughout your day. Tell Him often how thankful you are that He has given you new life. Ask Jesus to help you become the person He made you to be.

## B = BIBLE

The Bible is God's Love Letter to you. It will soon become the most important book in your life. You will find comfort, guidance, and encouragement as you read it.

A good place to begin reading is the New Testament. It opens with Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These four early followers of Jesus provide us with insights into the life of Jesus. The rest of the New Testament also will be exciting and very helpful.

## C = CHURCH

The Bible describes new Christians as spiritual babies. Just as physical babies need families to love them and take care of them, newborn believers in Jesus Christ need a loving church family to help them grow strong. If you are serious about following Jesus, attending a good church will be essential.

To find a good church, look for three things:

- 1) it teaches the Bible (avoid churches that elevate other books above the Bible),
- 2) the people love Jesus, and
- 3) the people love each other.

If you would like more information, please contact the person or organization in the space below.

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