



# Becoming a Christian

People have a lot of different ideas about what it means to be a Christian. Is it just part of being American? Is it going to church? Being a good person? And how do I know if I am one or not?

When it comes right down to it, you can cut to the heart of the matter with just a few simple points.

## 1. The built-in wish

We were made to connect with God. Deep inside us, there's a desire to know our Creator. It's how we're wired. Sometimes the desire gets pushed down or comes out in strange ways, but the bottom line is that universally, humans want to have a relationship with God.

Another thing that's fairly universal is a desire to avoid death. Immortality, living forever -- that sounds pretty great, doesn't it? Nobody likes to think about dying.

But for argument's sake, let's say you did die. Do you have any real hope of there being anything waiting for you afterwards? If you got up to the gate of heaven and God asked, "Why should I let you in here?" What would you say?

The average person on the street would say, "I've been a pretty good person. I haven't killed anybody. I'm probably better than most people."

## 2. The built-in problem

The problem is that God doesn't grade on a curve. He's 100% pure and perfect, or holy. And like wood burns up when it gets too near a fire, our imperfections can't survive being near God. There's too big of a gap. Even when we're good most of the time, we can never get good enough for God on our own. We couldn't survive eternity in heaven if it depended on us being "a pretty good person."

## 3. God's solution

Fortunately, God saw our plight. He knew that our attempts to reach him and be good enough for him were not going to work. And as much as we may want to connect with God, God wants to connect with us even more. He made us and loves us, and he was not going to let this problem prevent the possibility of a relationship.

Since we couldn't go his way, God decided to come ours. He sent his Son, Jesus down to earth as a human. Since he was still God, he was able to live a perfectly sinless life. But he voluntarily went to his death anyway, suffering the same consequences we suffer because of our sin. What's more, he overcame death by rising again.

It would be like a judge in a courtroom who handed down a verdict of guilty, then stepped in to serve the sentence himself. Jesus took our guilt on himself, and so there is now nothing that stands in the way of us having a relationship with God. God looks at us through the lens of what Jesus did on the cross.

## 4. My response

All that it means to "become a Christian" is to accept God's solution on a personal basis. I take what Jesus did and make it my own.

That's why becoming a Christian is the easiest and hardest thing to do. It's easy because all we have to do is say "God I need you." It's hard because I have to say "God I need you." I have to admit that in fact it is true I am not good enough on my own. I have to let go of my pride and go his way.

### So what do I do?

Talk to God. Just pray a simple little prayer to him. If you don't know what to say and you need some words, try these:

*Jesus, thank you for dying for me. I believe in you. I believe what you did took care of the barrier between me and God and that I can have eternal life because of you. Please forgive me for my sins. Please come into my life and take over. I want to follow you.*

### Amen

Once you've done that, tell somebody! Phone a friend, talk to someone in your family, wake up a neighbor. It's a life altering choice that deserves to be shared.

*Still confused? If you would like additional information about Christianity, please email us: [christianity@newdaynw.com](mailto:christianity@newdaynw.com). We'd be happy to answer your questions.*