



# CHRISTIANITY EXPLAINED

A Biblical Guide to Jesus, Salvation, Grace, Faith, and Understanding Scripture

*"You do not have to be perfect to come to Him. You just have to come."*

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# How to Use This Study Guide

This guide is written for two kinds of readers at the same time: the person who knows very little about Christianity and the Christian who has heard church language for years but still feels confused about salvation, grace, repentance, obedience, and assurance. The goal is not to hand you a list of religious statements. The goal is to explain what Scripture says, show where the teaching comes from, and help you understand how the pieces fit together.

Whenever this guide makes a major claim, Scripture is placed directly behind it. The point is not to ask you to trust a ministry, a denomination, or a person. The point is to send you back to the Bible itself. A healthy faith is not built on fear, pressure, or tradition alone. It is built on Christ and on the rightly handled word of God.

The chapters are meant to be read slowly. You may want to read one section at a time, look up the surrounding verses in your own Bible, and ask whether the explanation fits the larger message of Scripture.

## 1. What Is Christianity?

Many people hear the word Christianity and immediately think of rules, church buildings, politics, arguments, or people who have hurt them in the name of God. But at the center of Christianity is not a building, a denomination, or a human system. At the center of Christianity is Jesus Christ.

The Bible begins with God as Creator and humanity as created for relationship with Him. The problem is that humanity has sinned. Sin is not merely breaking a rule; it is falling short of God's holiness, rejecting His ways, and living apart from the life we were created to have in Him.

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."*

**Romans 3:23 (ESV)**

That verse includes everyone. Christianity does not begin by dividing the world into good people and bad people. It begins by telling the truth that all people need grace. This matters because if all have sinned, then no one can stand before God based on personal goodness, religious activity, or comparison to someone else.

*"None is righteous, no, not one."*

**Romans 3:10 (ESV)**

The good news is that God did not leave humanity without hope. Christianity is not the story of people climbing their way up to God. It is the story of God coming down to rescue people who could not rescue themselves.

*"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."*

**Romans 5:8 (ESV)**

Notice when Christ died for us: while we were still sinners. God did not wait for humanity to become worthy. He acted out of love, mercy, and grace. That is why Christianity is not first about becoming religious. It is about receiving what God has done through Jesus Christ.

**Takeaway: Christianity begins with what God has done for us through Jesus, not with what we do to make ourselves acceptable to God.**

## 2. Who Is Jesus?

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Every major religion and many nonreligious people have an opinion about Jesus. Some call Him a teacher. Some call Him a prophet. Some admire His compassion but reject His authority. The Bible presents a far greater claim: Jesus is God in human flesh.

*"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

**John 1:1 (ESV)**

John calls Jesus "the Word" and identifies Him as both with God and as God. This means Jesus did not begin in Bethlehem. The Son of God existed before creation, and He entered human history for the purpose of salvation.

*"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."*

**John 1:14 (ESV)**

The Christian message is not that a man worked his way up to become divine. The message is that God came down and took on human flesh. Jesus truly became human, yet He remained truly God. That is why His life, death, and resurrection carry eternal significance.

*"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

**John 14:6 (ESV)**

Jesus did not present Himself as one spiritual option among many. He claimed to be the way to the Father. That claim can sound narrow in a world that prefers many paths, but it is also deeply merciful. God did not leave us guessing about how to come to Him. He gave us Christ.

*"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things."*

**Colossians 1:19-20 (ESV)**

Jesus is central because reconciliation with God comes through Him. Christianity rises or falls on who Jesus is. If He is only a teacher, then His words can be admired or ignored. If He is Lord, then every person must decide what they will do with Him.

**Takeaway: Jesus is not merely part of Christianity. Jesus is the center of Christianity.**

### 3. Salvation: Gift or Reward?

One of the most important questions in Christianity is whether salvation is something we earn or something we receive. Many people live with the idea that Jesus opens the door, but then it becomes their job to keep themselves saved by enough obedience, enough good works, enough religious effort, or enough personal improvement. That may sound spiritual, but it does not harmonize with the way Scripture describes salvation.

*"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."*

**Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV)**

Paul calls salvation a gift. A gift is received; it is not earned. The moment something is earned, it is no longer a gift but a wage. Paul is very careful to say salvation is "not a result of works," because if salvation depended on human performance, people would have reason to boast.

*"And to the one who does not work but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness."*

Romans 4:5 (ESV)

This verse is powerful because Paul says God justifies the ungodly. He does not describe a person who has finally become good enough. He describes a person who believes. The contrast is direct: "does not work but believes." Faith receives what God gives; works cannot purchase it.

*"He saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy."*

Titus 3:5 (ESV)

Titus says the same thing in different words. God saves according to mercy, not according to righteous works done by us. This does not make obedience meaningless. It simply puts obedience in the correct place. Works are not the root of salvation. Works are the fruit that grows from salvation.

*"Whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life."*

John 5:24 (ESV)

Jesus uses present language: the one who believes has eternal life. Assurance rests on Christ's promise, not on the believer's ability to measure whether they have performed well enough. If salvation is partly Christ and partly our ability to maintain it, then assurance becomes impossible. But Scripture repeatedly points believers back to Christ's finished work.

**Takeaway: Salvation is a free gift received by faith. Good works matter, but they do not earn, purchase, or maintain eternal life.**

## 4. If Salvation Is Free, Why Obey God?

A common objection to grace is the question, "If salvation is free, does that mean people can live however they want?" The biblical answer is no. Grace is not permission to love sin. Grace is the power that brings a person into a new relationship with God.

The same passage that says salvation is not by works immediately explains that believers are created for good works.

*"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works."*

Ephesians 2:10 (ESV)

The order matters. Ephesians 2:8-9 says we are saved by grace through faith, not by works. Ephesians 2:10 says we are then created in Christ Jesus for good works. Good works do not create salvation; salvation creates a new life that produces good works.

Think of a tree. An apple tree does not become an apple tree by producing apples. It produces apples because it already is an apple tree. In the same way, Christians do not become saved by producing obedience. They begin to obey because God has made them new.

*"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."*

John 14:15 (ESV)

Jesus connects obedience to love. He does not say, "Keep my commandments so that I will love you." The relationship comes first, and obedience flows from love. A believer should pursue holiness, be baptized, forgive others, love like Jesus, serve people, study Scripture, pray, and grow. But those things are responses to God's grace, not payments toward salvation.

*"If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation."*

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)**

The Christian life is not self-improvement with religious language. It is new life in Christ. When a person trusts Christ, God begins transforming them from the inside out by the Holy Spirit. That transformation is real, but it is also a process.

*"He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."*

**Philippians 1:6 (ESV)**

God begins the work, God continues the work, and God brings the work to completion. Christians should take sin seriously, but they should not confuse spiritual growth with the basis of their salvation. The basis of salvation is Christ. Growth is what God works in us after we belong to Him.

**Takeaway: Obedience is not the price of salvation. Obedience is the loving response of someone who has already received grace.**

## 5. What Does Repentance Mean?

The word repentance is often used in Christian circles, but many people hear it as "clean yourself up before God will accept you." That misunderstanding can keep people away from Jesus. Biblical repentance is serious, but it is not earning forgiveness through self-reform.

The New Testament word commonly translated "repent" is the Greek word *metanoeo*. It carries the idea of a change of mind. In the context of salvation, repentance means turning from unbelief toward God and seeing sin, self, and Christ differently.

*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

**Mark 1:15 (ESV)**

Jesus connects repentance with believing the gospel. Repentance is not presented as a separate work that earns salvation. It is part of turning toward God in faith. A person who once rejected Christ but now trusts Him has experienced a real change of mind about who Jesus is and where salvation is found.

*"Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."*

**Acts 20:21 (ESV)**

Paul summarized his message with repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. These belong together. Repentance is not promising that you will never sin again. It is not becoming perfect before coming to Jesus. It is not cleaning yourself up so that God will finally be willing to save you.

Repentance means the direction of your trust changes. Instead of defending yourself, excusing sin, or relying on your own goodness, you turn toward God and trust Christ. The life changes that follow matter, but they are the result of God's work in a believer, not the payment that purchases forgiveness.

*"Repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations."*

**Luke 24:47 (ESV)**

Forgiveness is proclaimed in the name of Jesus. The focus is not human achievement but Christ's authority to forgive. True repentance does not make a person proud of their own improvement. It brings a person to Jesus in humility and faith.

**Takeaway: Repentance is a real turning toward God, closely connected to faith in Christ. It is not sinless perfection or earning salvation.**

## 6. Seeing God Clearly

Many people have been taught to see God mainly as angry, harsh, or waiting for them to fail. The Bible does teach that God is holy and just. Sin matters. Judgment is real. But if we read the whole story of Scripture, we also see that God is patient, merciful, loving, and eager to save.

*"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love."*

**Psalm 103:8 (ESV)**

This verse does not deny God's holiness. It reveals His heart. God's mercy is not weakness. His patience is not indifference. His steadfast love is central to how Scripture describes Him.

*"God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son... For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world."*

**John 3:16-17 (ESV)**

John 3:16 is famous, but verse 17 is often missed. Jesus did not come because God was looking for an excuse to condemn. He came because God loved the world and provided salvation through His Son.

*"The Lord... is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."*

**2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)**

Peter presents God as patient and desiring repentance. This matters because many people run from God under the assumption that He is only disgusted with them. Scripture shows a God who calls sinners to come home.

Jesus illustrated this in Luke 15 through stories of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. In each case, what was lost mattered. Heaven rejoices when the lost are found. The father in the prodigal son story does not stand with folded arms waiting to shame his son. He runs to him, embraces him, and welcomes him home.

**Takeaway: The Bible presents God as holy and just, but also merciful, patient, loving, and eager to save.**

## 7. Why Context Matters

One of the most common mistakes in Bible study is taking a verse out of context and building an entire belief from it. A verse is not meant to be ripped away from the paragraph, chapter, book, and audience in which God gave it. Context helps us understand what Scripture is actually saying.

*"Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved... rightly handling the word of truth."*

**2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)**

Paul tells Timothy to rightly handle the word of truth. That means Scripture can be mishandled. A person can quote a Bible verse and still use it wrongly if they ignore what the passage means in context.

*"They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."*

The Bereans were praised because they did not simply accept claims without testing them by Scripture. That is a healthy model. A person should ask who wrote the passage, who received it, what problem was being addressed, what comes before and after it, and whether the interpretation harmonizes with the rest of the Bible.

For example, Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." Many people use that verse to mean they can accomplish any personal goal. But in context, Paul is talking about contentment in both abundance and need. The verse is not a blank check for success; it is confidence that Christ strengthens believers to endure every circumstance faithfully.

Another example is Matthew 7:1, where Jesus says, "Judge not." Some use this to mean Christians should never discern right from wrong. But the surrounding verses show Jesus warning against hypocritical judgment. He tells people to remove the log from their own eye first, and then they will see clearly to help their brother.

Context does not weaken Scripture. Context protects Scripture from being twisted. A verse should never be forced to mean something it never meant to the original audience.

**Takeaway: Good Bible study asks what the passage meant in context before applying it to our lives today.**

## 8. Common Questions About Salvation

Many people come to Christianity with questions, fears, and misunderstandings. Some have been told they are too sinful for God. Others have been told salvation is a gift but then live in constant fear that one mistake means God has rejected them. Scripture gives believers a foundation for hope and assurance.

### Can Christians still struggle with sin?

*"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."*

1 John 1:8 (ESV)

Christians are not people who never struggle. Christians are people who belong to Christ. Sin is still serious, and believers should not make peace with it. But the presence of struggle does not mean a person has no salvation. Growth is part of the Christian life.

### Can God forgive me?

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."*

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

Forgiveness rests on God's faithfulness and justice because Christ has paid for sin. Confession is not informing God of something He does not know. It is coming into agreement with Him and bringing sin into the light instead of hiding from Him.

### Am I too far gone?

*"Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more."*

Romans 5:20 (ESV)

This does not make sin small. It makes grace big. The gospel is not that only mildly broken people can come to Jesus. The gospel is that Christ saves sinners.

## How can I know I have eternal life?

*"I write these things to you who believe... that you may know that you have eternal life."*

1 John 5:13 (ESV)

God does not want believers trapped in endless fear. Assurance is not confidence in our perfect performance. Assurance is confidence in Christ, His promise, His sacrifice, and His ability to keep those who belong to Him.

**Takeaway: Christian assurance is not built on pretending we never struggle. It is built on trusting Christ and what He has promised.**

## 9. Where Do I Go From Here?

Christianity is not merely information to understand. It is an invitation to know God through Jesus Christ. If you are new to faith, a good place to begin is the Gospel of John because it focuses deeply on who Jesus is and why He came. Romans explains sin, grace, faith, and righteousness. Ephesians gives a clear picture of salvation by grace and the new life believers have in Christ.

You can pray honestly. You do not need religious language to speak to God. Tell Him the truth. Ask Him to help you understand. Ask Him to show you Christ clearly. Faith is not pretending you have no questions. Faith is bringing yourself honestly before God and trusting what He has revealed through Jesus.

You should also study Scripture for yourself. Do not build your faith only on short clips, online arguments, traditions, or isolated verses. Read passages in context. Ask what the author is saying. Compare Scripture with Scripture. Let the Bible correct assumptions, even when those assumptions came from religious environments.

Find healthy Christian community if you can. A healthy community should point you to Jesus, teach Scripture faithfully, call you toward love and holiness, and remind you that salvation rests on Christ. No church is perfect, because people are not perfect, but believers were not meant to walk alone.

Most of all, keep your eyes on Jesus. The Christian life is not about obsessing over your performance to see whether God still loves you. It is about learning to live from the grace already given in Christ. As you grow, obedience matters. Holiness matters. Love matters. But they flow from relationship, not fear-based performance.

*"Looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith."*

Hebrews 12:2 (ESV)

The same Jesus who saves is the One who continues to shape, strengthen, and keep His people. You do not have to be perfect to come to Him. You just have to come.

**Takeaway: Start with Jesus. Stay with Jesus. Let Scripture lead you back to Him again and again.**

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## Scripture Note

All Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version (ESV). This guide is intended for Bible study, teaching, and personal reflection. Readers are encouraged to open their own Bible and read each passage in its surrounding context.