



MAKING THE CONNECTION

God wants to Connect with you

There is One who loves you as His child, and wants you to enjoy a relationship with Him. He is the answer to your search for that ultimate relationship. He will fill the hole in your heart; give you peace here and now, and eternal life with Him in Heaven. He is the one Creator of the universe and all it contains, including you. You won't be complete inside until you have a personal relationship with the God who created you.

How do we know that?

How do we know that God wants a relationship with us? God is also the Creator and Author of the most important Book of all time. The Bible is God's owner's manual for human life. In His Book He says:

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

The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Romans 8:16

We broke our Connection.

We have hurt the One who loves us the most. Our sin has separated us from having the relationship with Him that He so desperately desires.

Being at peace with God is not automatic, because by nature we are separated from God. This separation is the "something wrong" that is at the root of our selfishness, loneliness, and emptiness. Through many immoral and amoral acts, thoughts, and attitudes, we continue to grieve the One who cares for us most. That includes all of us, no matter how moral and upright we may seem on the surface.

If you search your own heart honestly, you already know this is true. It has caused a split between us and the One who made us and loves us. This split is called sin.

But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.

Isaiah 59:2

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Romans 3:23

God looks down from heaven on the sons of men, to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. Everyone has turned away, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.

Psalms 53:2-3

There is a way out!

The Connection is the Cross.

Because He loves us, God cannot stand to allow this separation to remain. But because He is perfect, He cannot allow our sin to go unpunished without ceasing to be perfect; He would then cease to be God. The sin-bill must be paid; being religious and living a "good life" cannot pay it.

Jesus paid the sin debt for us. He came to this earth in human form with one mission in mind: to die. Someone had to pay the debt; however, the cost was more than man could pay. So God paid the price for us by sending His Son as the ultimate sacrifice to die on the cross for our sins. Three days later, Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The most important decision you will ever make is what you do with Jesus Christ and this sacrifice made for you.

He personally carried the load of our sins in his own body when he died on the cross.

1 Peter 2:24B (TLB)

The Choice is ours.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:4-6

You plug into God's family when you turn to God by asking Christ into your life. There's no such thing as a one-way relationship. God has done His part when His Son died for you, now it's your move.

We must be willing to turn from our sin and follow Him. The Bible calls this repentance. If we are facing west and turn to the east we can't face them both at the same time; nor can we face Christ and still continue in our sin. This doesn't mean that we will never sin again; it simply means that we have chosen to follow Christ instead of ourselves. The Bible says that once you invite Christ into your life, you have changed. The Creator of this universe now lives in you.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

2 Corinthians 5:17

How do you Accept God's Incredible Gift to Connect Back with Him?

1. **ADMIT** your spiritual need. Admit you are a sinner.
2. **REPENT** and be willing to turn from your sin.
3. **BELIEVE** that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.
4. **RECEIVE** Jesus Christ into your heart and life, by choosing this relationship over your current life of sin and separation from Him.

You can make the connection with your heavenly Father right now by faith through prayer.

The amazing thing about having a Savior who loves us unconditionally, is that no matter what is in our past or present, He will accept us as we are right now. We do not have to clean up our act before we come to Him. Isaiah 1:18 says "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

God tells us to come as we are.

Simply pray and ask Jesus Christ to come into your life. The Bible says in Romans 10:13 "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Prayer is talking with God.

God knows your heart and is not as concerned with your words as He is with the attitude of your heart.

The following is a suggestion of what you might say:

"Lord Jesus, I need You. Thank You for dying on the cross for my sins. I invite You to come into my life and receive You as my Savior and Lord. Thank You for forgiving my sins and giving me eternal life. Make me the kind of person You want me to be. Help me to continue to connect with You."

The connection has been made.

The moment you receive Christ by faith, the Bible says that many things happen to you.

- ◆ Your sins are forgiven (Colossians 1:14)
- ◆ You become a child of God (John 1:12)
- ◆ You receive eternal life (John 5:24)
- ◆ You begin the greatest adventure God designed

If you prayed to ask Christ into your life you can now trust Him for everything: His guidance, His forgiveness, His redemption and eternal salvation. Through Bible study and prayer, you will learn to stay connected and deepen your relationship with Him.

Steps to staying connected

There are some essential things you need to begin doing immediately. They're simple, but they take a little time and commitment on your part.

1. **Share Your Decision** ...with important people close to you who will help you and keep you headed in the right direction.
2. **Read and Study God's Word** ...and God will begin to reveal His plan and purpose for your life.
3. **Worship and Fellowship** ...with other Christians to strengthen your relationship with Christ by becoming accountable to other believers.
4. **Baptism** ...What is Baptism? It is the act of a BELIEVING Christian who wants to publicly confess his/her personal commitment to Jesus Christ. It is the symbolic WASHING AWAY of one's old, sinful past and the RISING again to LIFE, God's way. The act of baptism can be defined as an outward expression of an inward decision.

What does Baptism mean? It illustrates Jesus' *burial* and *resurrection*. "Christ died for our sins...He was buried...and He rose again" (1 Cor. 15:3-4). Baptism illustrates NEW LIFE as a Christian. "By our baptism then, we were buried with Him and shared His death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...so also we may live a NEW LIFE" (Rom. 6:4).

Baptism **does not** make you a Christian. It is a demonstration that you already believe. It is important to understand that baptism does not "save" you. You are "saved" only by your faith in Jesus.

Why do we get baptized? To follow the example set by CHRIST and because Christ COMMANDED it. "... Jesus came from Nazareth and was baptized by John in the river" (Mark 1:9). "Jesus said, Go then, to all people everywhere and make them my disciples, baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19-20).

When is a good time to get baptized? As soon as you BELIEVE! THERE IS NO REASON TO DELAY! As soon as you have decided to trust Christ with your life, you can and should be baptized. "Those who believe... were baptized...that day" (Acts 8:35-38).

How do I schedule a time to get baptized? Please call the church office (251-1515) to register for the next baptism.

Relax! It's a lot to think about, but you don't have to do everything at once. We are here to help you grow as a Christian. We have many environments for you to study God's Word and develop meaningful relationships with others who are also connecting with their Heavenly Father.

Membership 101 & 102

What is it? One of our requisites for church membership is the completion of Membership 101 and 102. These classes will acquaint you with who we are and what we believe.

When does it meet? Membership 101 and 102 meet once every six weeks on Sunday morning.

Membership 101 for Students It's the same class, but it's just for students.

Membership 101 for Children Topics are similar, but the structure is designed especially for kids.

Please call the church office (251-1515) to register for these important classes!

Bible Study & Small Group Ministry

Becoming part of a Bible Study class or small group is a great way to connect on a more personal level. These interactive classes offer the opportunity for spiritual growth and fellowship. We have Bible Study classes for all ages on Sunday mornings and a variety of small groups meeting throughout the week.

Various small groups meet throughout the week. To sign up for a group, go online and submit a small group interest form.

Call the church office (813-251-1515) or visit our website at www.dibc.org for more information.