

So you prayed...

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

If you're reading this, you've probably prayed to know God. This booklet will tell you what happened when you prayed that prayer, and what you can do now and in the future to keep and build the relationship you've begun with Him. There will also be Bible verses mixed in which will highlight some of the things we'll talk about. While they speak for themselves, we suggest you spend some time and read the chapters in the Bible that they come from. God's word has deeper meaning when read again in context.

We've divided our booklet into different sections based on questions you probably have. If there's anything we missed, or if you have any more to say, feel free to contact us at the following address:

## Chapter 2

# So I prayed already, what does it all mean?

**”I prayed to God, and all I got was this lousy booklet?”**

Whether it was by yourself, with a friend, or with a couple of complete strangers who doubtlessly left you with this booklet, you have prayed to know God Himself, and He will not deny you the gift of knowing Him. The Bible says that if you ask God to reveal Himself, He will do it. (Matthew 7:7-8, Exodus 33:18-22)

Your prayer is an expression of faith that God is real and that it is possible to know him. This belief, and the relationship it has begun, have saved you from the judgement of God, and given you eternal life. There is more about this in the next chapter.

God is pleased to have you with Him. You are no less valuable to Him than someone who has been a faithful Christian all their life. (Matthew 18:12-13)

### **Relevant Bible verses**

*“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.”*

*- Matthew 7:7-8, NIV Translation “What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, I tell you the truth, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.”*

*- Matthew 18:12-13, NIV Translation*

## Chapter 3

# A crash course in sin and redemption

**”Where was I? My theology is a bit fuzzy.”**

All people, men and women alike, are imperfect by God’s perfect standards. Everyone is that way, not just you, and there is nothing you can do to change it, yet that imperfection is enough to make you unworthy to enter heaven when you die and enough to make you undeserving of eternal life. It used to be that when people made mistakes and wanted to make amends for them in God’s eyes, they’d sacrifice an animal or some food to Him, and He’d consider the sin paid for, but people made more mistakes than they realized, or sometimes they wouldn’t have the resources to pay for some of the sins they committed, so their own limitations would keep them from meeting the standards God had for them. *All fall short of the glory, etc* Because we are all imperfect and do things that God doesn’t want us to do, He has the right, as our creator, to destroy us.

*Wages of sin is death, Noah’s flood story.*

### Relevant Bible verses

**”So am I screwed then? Why did I pray?”**

There’s hope though, because God provided a way to Him other than through the perfection we strive to achieve. He sent His only son Jesus to die in order to save us from our imperfection and sin. It is through a relationship with Him that our imperfections are overlooked, and we are reconciled with God. This relationship is the one you prayed for, and because you asked God for it, you have received it. *John 3:16*

**Relevant Bible verses**

*“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, NIV Translation*

## Chapter 4

# So what's next?

Now you're safe from being punished for your faults and destroyed, and connected with God through the relationship you prayed for. The next step is to learn to maintain and build the relationship you've started. This chapter describes some of the things you can do to make your friendship with God more deep and meaningful.

### Prayer

The easiest way to build your relationship with God is to pray to Him. Prayer is just talking to God. Through prayer, you'll learn what God wants for you, you'll see that God answers your prayers, and you'll start to see some things about Him that reveal His personality and character. If you don't pray regularly, you'll begin to lose touch with God, the same way you lose touch with a friend you never call or write to.

Praying is easy. All you need to do is tell God what's going on in your life and ask Him things, expecting an answer. God wants to know about every little thing that goes on in your life. Don't let yourself think that God doesn't have time for you, or that He doesn't care, or that what you're asking Him for is too small for him to care, or too big for Him to help you. The Bible says that God is infinitely powerful, so that means that He's able to listen attentively to everything you say to Him, understanding and caring about all of it. From your point of view, because he's infinitely powerful (*omnipotent*), it's as if you're the only one praying to Him. His attention is never divided, because infinity can't be divided.

Keep in mind that God always cares. If He cared enough to sacrifice His only son for you, and cared enough to send someone to bring you back in touch with Him, why would He think any concern of yours is too small to care about?

## Relevant Bible verses

*“Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”*

- James 5:13-16, NIV Translation

## The Bible

The Bible is important in getting to know God better. It's a written account of much of what God has told mankind since the beginning of time, and also records some stories of how God has interacted with mankind. By reading how God has reacted to different things people have done, and seeing how consistent He is, you will begin to understand His personality and will get a clearer picture of who He is. By seeing what God likes and dislikes, and why, you can understand better what will please or upset Him in your life and what things He will probably condemn or reward.

Here are some ideas on small studies to start you off:

- Read one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John) as though you never heard of Jesus, as though Christianity were a brand new religion and see what new perspectives you get about who He is.
- Take some of the verses in this booklet and read the chapters around them to get a richer sense of the context. You'll understand them better and also learn more about God and who He is.

## Church (study and fellowship)

By itself, the act of going to church does nothing for you. The importance of going to church is found in what is in it. In a good church, you can learn what God has to say to His people through the Bible by listening to what the pastor of the church is preaching. You also meet other believers like you who can help you grow closer to God, and who (because they too are saved from God's punishment and destruction) you will know as friends for the rest of eternity. Going to a church will also give you friends to pray with, and hearing some of their stories on how God has touched their lives will strengthen your faith.

### Relevant Bible verses

## Tithing

You won't be struck down with a bolt of lightning if you don't tithe, but God does ask that you give a tenth of your income as a sacrifice to your local church. The church then uses it for telling others about God, for paying expenses required to keep the church running, and for helping out people in need. *Malachi*

## Tell someone else

Once you start to see God working in your life, tell other people about Him. God has asked us to share who He is with others, and a great way to share is to tell someone what he's done for you, or what you've learned about Him.

### Relevant Bible verses

*Go forth and evangelize all peoples, or whatever.*

*I wish I could stay around for longer so I can spread God's word more.*



## Chapter 5

# To find out more...

### Resources

Here are some resources that might help you in your relationship with God:

#### The online Bible

Too poor to buy your own Bible? Too far from a bookstore? Don't feel like dragging it to the computer lab? Want to look something up in a translation of the Bible that you don't own? There is an excellent online Bible on the world wide web at: <http://www.gospelcom.net/bible>

#### God discussion on IRC

If you use *Internet Relay Chat*, point your program at [irc.ucf.org](http://irc.ucf.org) and join the channel `#questions` Mondays at 3am when the moon is full. We'll have a minister online who will answer any questions you have about God, and will discuss any issues you bring up relating to God. *Note: We won't use ucf.org on any of these, but*

*will have believe.ml.org or something instead.*

#### Email Bible study

Once a week we'll have an email Bible study mailed out (probably on Sundays). If you're interested, send email to [majordomo@ucf.org](mailto:majordomo@ucf.org) with the message `subscribe bible`. Each week we'll cover a different topic relating to knowing and obeying God.

### Local contacts

Here is the address of a church or someone near you who will answer your questions about God.

## Background

This document was put together to give people something to give to new believers after they've found God. At the time of publication, there was no such document available for free. If you would like to support this ministry, please contact [webmaster@believe.ml.org](mailto:webmaster@believe.ml.org) for details.