

THE GOSPEL
I Corinthians 15:3-4

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

~I Corinthians 15:3-4

People today aren't as open to discussing *spiritual things* as they were in the past. No one wants to hear about what the Bible says about *salvation* and *eternal life* and the qualification that is necessary for *entering heaven*. This generation only cares about life now...today.

But people are hurting and they need hope. Everyday people must engage their *problems* or *challenges*. It's amazing how often people share their heartaches regarding their marriages, children, finances, addictions, depression...you name it. But they don't want to hear the truth about the *core* of their issues.

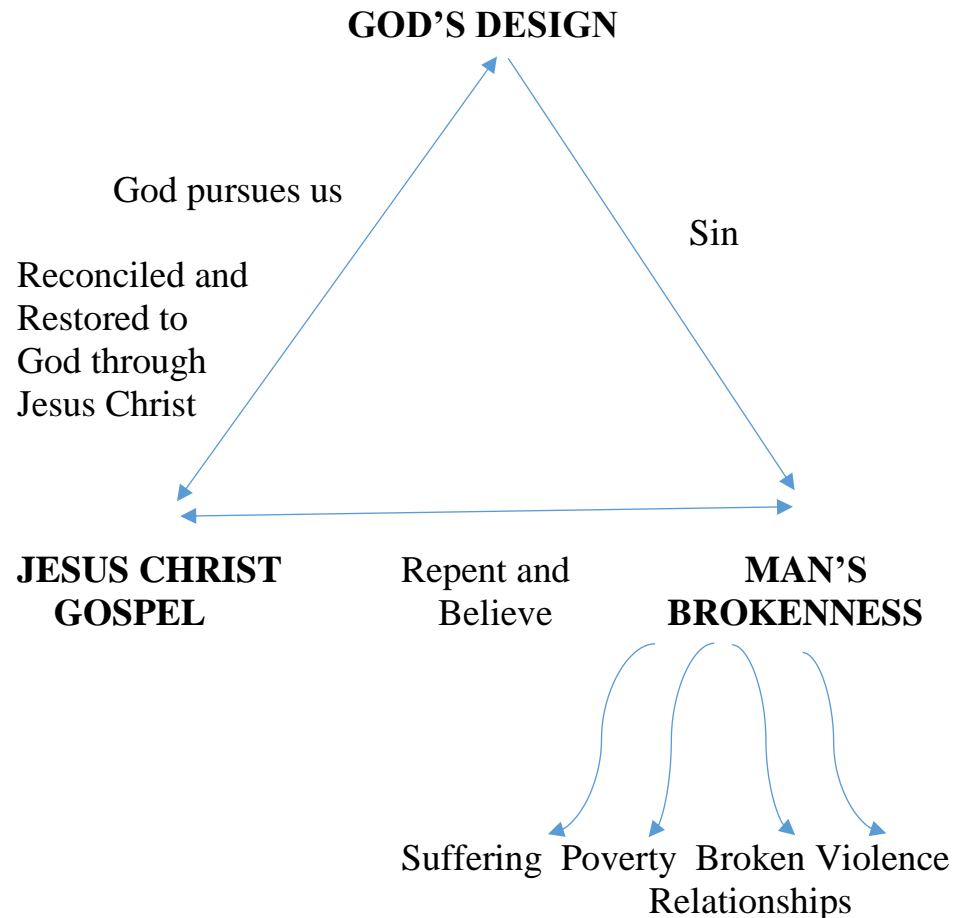
As you listen to popular views about **heaven** and **hell**, you can *test* what you hear with a few *biblically-discerning questions*:

- *Does this view of hell diminish the threat of God's justness and judgment?*
- *Does this view of heaven diminish the glory of God's grace, mercy, and justness?*
- *Does this teaching soften the urgency of repentance?*
- *Does this teaching offer the sinner any hope of salvation ...forgiveness of their sin...beyond this life? (a second chance).*
- *Does this teaching offer the sinner any hope of salvation other than through Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ alone?*

Modern views of **heaven** and **hell** typically don't survive the *test of biblical fidelity*. They allow the sinner to *feel more comfortable* and *complacent* by *redefining* God...by making Him appear *less severe* in His judgment. They *redefine* His *righteousness* and *holiness*.

Gospel...literally means *good news*. A call to respond to the *good news* that *sin can be forgiven*.

Hopefully, this diagram will help you turn conversations about problems into conversations about Jesus.



GOD'S DESIGN:

The Bible tells us that God originally *created* a world that *worked perfectly*...where everything and everyone fit together in perfect harmony.

God made each of us with a purpose...to *worship* Him and *walk* with Him.

“God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good...”

~Genesis 1:31

“The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands.”

~Psalm 19:1

SIN:

Life doesn't work when we *ignore* God and His original design for our lives.

We selfishly insist on *doing things our way*. The Bible calls this **sin**. We all **sin** and distort God's original design.

The consequence of our sin is *death* and *separation* from God ...in this life and for all of eternity.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

~Romans 3:23

“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned...So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men.”

~Romans 5:12, 18

BROKENNESS:

Sin leads to a place of *brokenness*...and we live in a *broken world*. We see this all around us and in our own lives as well...surrounded by *broken lives...broken relationships*...and a *broken system*.

This *brokenness* is seen in *suffering...violence...poverty...pain...death...broken relationships*.

When we realize life isn't working, we begin to look for a way out. We tend to go in many directions trying different things to figure it out on our own.

Brokenness leads to a place of realizing a need for something greater.

“They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator...”

~Romans 1:25

“There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”

~Proverbs 14:12

At this point we need a remedy...some good news!

JESUS CHRIST:

Because of His *love*, God *did not leave us* in our *brokenness*. Jesus, God in human flesh, came to us and lived perfectly according to God's design.

Jesus came to rescue us...to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. He took our sin and shame and brokenness to the cross, paying the penalty of our sin by His death. Jesus was then raised from the dead...to provide the only way for us to be *rescued, reconciled, and restored* to a relationship with God.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”

~John 3:16-17

“But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many...For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.”

~Romans 5:15, 17-18

“There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved.”

~Acts 4:12

REPENT AND BELIEVE:

Simply hearing this Good News is not enough. We must **acknowledge** our sinful brokenness and stop trusting in ourselves...trying to be a good person. We don't have the power to escape this brokenness on our own. We need to be rescued.

We must ask God to **forgive** us...turning from sin to trust only in Jesus. This is what it means to **repent** and **believe**.

In trying to explain **repentance**, it is easier to tell you what repentance is not...

- ***It's not just admitting that you have done something wrong.***
- ***It's not even feeling sorry that you have sinned.***
- ***It's not paying penance for that which you have done.***

Question: If you were headed in the wrong direction, what would you do? Would you keep going in the wrong direction

even though you knew it was wrong? Or would you turn around...change directions? That is what **repentance** is...***it is a 180-degree turn...an “about face.”***

When we realize that we are sinners and that we cannot save ourselves, we must be willing to **repent** of our sin and see that God, through His Son, Jesus Christ, paid for our sins and offers us **forgiveness** as a **free gift**. We can receive this **gift** by **faith**.

Through **believing**, we receive **new life** through Jesus, and God turns our lives in a new direction.

“Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.”

~Acts 3:19

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

~Ephesians 2:8-9

RECONCILED AND RESTORED:

When God **restores** our relationship to Him, we begin to discover meaning and purpose in a broken world. Now we can pursue God's design in every area of our lives. Even when we fail, we understand God's pathway to be **restored**...the Good News of Jesus.

God's Spirit empowers us to be **reconciled** to His design and assures us of His presence in this life and for all of eternity.

“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation...He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our

behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

~II Corinthians 5:18-19, 21

“Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

~II Corinthians 5:17

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

~Ephesians 2:10

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Now that you have heard the Good News, God desires for you to respond to Him.

- **Acknowledge** that you have sinned and that your life is broken.
- **Believe** Jesus Christ came to forgive you and rescue you from your sin.
- **Repent** and ask God to forgive you.
- Know that **Jesus is Lord** of all...surrender and follow Him.

The Bible says...

“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

~Romans 10:9

“For whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

~Romans 10:13

WHAT’S NEXT?

As one begins their new journey, the Bible teaches how we are to *seek God with all our heart*. He has a design for Godly relationships.

- **Pray...just as you asked God to forgive you and save you from your sin...learn to talk with God.** God wants us to talk to Him about everything that matters to us.
- **Church...become part of the body of Christ...the church.** The local church is God’s family. It’s described as a body and is designed to help us walk with Him.
- **Bible...begin to read the Bible.** God speaks through the Bible. The Bible reveals God’s design...showing how to pursue Him.
- **Share...share with others what God did for you.** Now that you have experienced this Good News...tell others.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

~Matthew 6:33

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

~II Corinthians 5:20-21

“Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him.”

~Colossians 2:6