

STEPS TO CHRIST

There are many today who claim that we live in an enlightened age. In a sense this is true. Discovery, invention, improvement, modernization, quicker and easier ways of doing things, all have affected business, farm, factory, kitchen, laundry room, travel--you name it.

But we have not done so well in improving the spiritual darkness and deterioration of our world. After many, many centuries, and lesson after lesson of resulting heartache and tragedy, the words of John 3:19 are still painfully with us, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Educators, inventors, wise businessmen and women, able political leaders, great minds, really cannot solve and improve this problem. Even our best religious leaders are limited. It rather is a problem that demands a one-person-at-a-time, individual solution.

God has sent the world Light--His Son. (John 1:4.) God has also sent His personal Enlightener--the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7,8.) God has made it clear that we must come to that Light if we are to find forgiveness for sin, and restoration to His likeness. And He makes the invitation to all to come. (Matt. 11:28.)

In this lesson, let us seek to discover the "how" of coming to Jesus. We have already studied "what" we need to do. The "how" is vital. The idea of "Steps to Christ" can be simple, and beautiful, and rewarding, or extremely difficult and frustrating. Alone, I cannot take even one step to Christ. (John 15:5.) I might try in my own strength, but I am doomed to failure. Rather, I must trust in God to enable me to take them, to inspire me to want to take them, even to believe it important to consider taking them. This is basic. (John 6:44.) WHAT ARE THESE STEPS?

1. We have already examined the **First step** in past lessons. It involves the need to open and **read the Bible**, find therein the sinful condition of all mankind, then consider the promised rescue and redemption of a lost human race by Jesus Christ. (Rom. 3:23; John 3:16; *Acts 17:11.)
2. The **Second step** we have also studied. We must come to **believe** in what we find in the Bible. (2 Chron. 20:20; *John 2:22; *John 12:36; Hebrews 11:6; *1 Peter 2:6.)
3. What is the **Third step**? Do you remember Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, no, not one?" Read Matthew 5:3,6 and identify what this third step is.

4. Study Matthew 5:4 and Psalms 34:18 and identify the vital **Fourth step** to Christ. After writing it down, compare this step to the condition many find themselves in when they sorrow simply because they got caught.

5. The **Fifth step** is imperative--we must be willing to **admit our sinfulness**, all of our many mistakes. When we face Christ, we cannot successfully hide anything from Him. Make a comparison of the reactions of people to God's confrontation, taking careful note of how God wants us to react.
 - (a) Genesis 3:7,8 _____

(b) Acts 3:19 _____

(c) Luke 18:9-14 _____

6. The **Sixth step** is not easy for many. Read Luke 19:1-9, especially verse 8, and summarize this step.

With your answer in mind, think these questions through: Could this step be eliminated? If not, why is it vital in connection with the acceptance of Christ? Could there be situations where it would be impossible to carry it out? If such are found, what should be done?

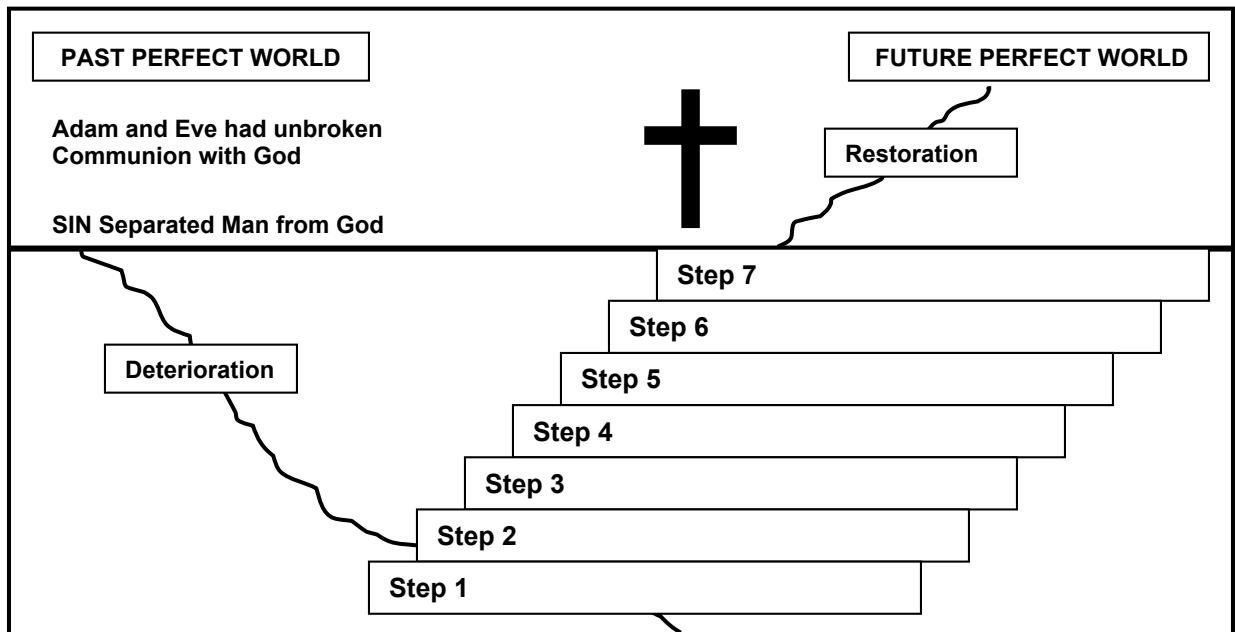
7. The **Seventh step** is glorious – **claim Christ's full forgiveness**, His full acceptance, and the fact that we can now live without guilt or fear. The core thoughts of these Scriptures will assure us that we have a right to these marvelous blessings.

(a) 1 John 1:9 _____

(b) John 6:35-37 (especially verse 37) _____

(c) John 8:1-11 (especially verse 11) _____

8. Read and memorize Isaiah 55:7 from the last lesson. What a wonderful assurance of acceptance and salvation! Here the healing of Luke 5: 30-32 begins, as we have come under the care of the Great Physician.



Introduction:**John 3:19**

¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

John 1:4

⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

John 16:7, 8

⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: . . .

Matthew 11:28

²⁸Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

John 15:5

⁵"I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

John 6:44

⁴⁴No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

1 (First Step) Read the Bible**Romans 3:23**

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

John 3:16

¹⁶For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Acts 17:11

¹¹These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily *to find out* whether these things were so.

2. (Second Step) Believe the Bible**2 Chronicles 20:20**

²⁰So they rose early in the morning and went out into the Wilderness of Tekoa; and as they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Hear me, O Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, and you shall be established; believe His prophets, and you shall prosper."

John 2:22

²²Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

John 12:36

³⁶**While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.** These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

1 Peter 2:6

⁶Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture,
*"Behold, I lay in Zion
 A chief cornerstone, elect, precious,
 And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*

3. (Third Step) Recognize My Need**Romans 3:10**

¹⁰As it is written:
"There is none righteous, no, not one;

Matthew 5:3, 6

- ³ **"Blessed *are* the poor in spirit,
 For theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
⁴ **Blessed *are* those who mourn,
 For they shall be comforted.**
⁵ **Blessed *are* the meek,
 For they shall inherit the earth.**
⁶ **Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
 For they shall be filled.**

Answer: As a sinner (one who is not righteous) I have needs which I cannot satisfy or take care of myself and which I need to recognize and acknowledge to myself and God before they can be taken care of by God.

4. (Fourth Step) Sorrow for Sin**Matthew 5:4**

⁴ Blessed *are* those who mourn,
For they shall be comforted.

Psalms 34:18

¹⁸ The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart,
And saves such as have a contrite spirit.

Answer: We need to have sorrow (be sorry) for our sins (David) vs being defensive or make excuses for our sins (Cain).

5. (Fifth Step) Admit our sinfulness with Repentance and Confession**5a. Gen 3:7, 8**

⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they *were* naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

⁸And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden.

Answer: Adam and Eve thought they could hide themselves and their sin from God, but God came looking for them. God would rather have had them come directly to Him and admit they had made a mistake.

5b. Acts 3:19

¹⁹Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, . . .

Answer: God blots out (erases, removes, eliminates) from the record when we repent and change the course of our life by following where and how God wants us to live.

5c. Luke 18:9-14

⁹Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ ¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Answer: The tax collector (representing all who acknowledge their sinner status) acknowledged his sin and asked for mercy, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner.”

6. (Sixth Step) Restitution**Luke 19:1-9**

¹Then *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. ²Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³And he sought to see who *Jesus* was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. ⁵And when *Jesus* came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” ⁶So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. ⁷But when they saw *it*, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”

⁸Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

⁹And *Jesus* said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; . . .

Answer: We need to make restitution, make right, restore what we have damaged, pay back with interest.

7. (Seventh Step) Accept (Claim) Christ’s full forgiveness**7a. 1 John 1:9**

⁹If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Answer: We are cleansed (made right with God) when we confess our sins and accept the fact that God has forgiven us our mistakes and rebellions of the past.

7b. John 6:35-37

³⁵And *Jesus* said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. ³⁶But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. ³⁷All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

Answer: God will not cast us out (give up on us) but will meet our need as we actively eat and drink Him into our lives through His Word.

7c. John 8:1-11

¹But *Jesus* went to the Mount of Olives.

²Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them. ³Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, ⁴they said to Him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. ⁵Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?” ⁶This they said, testing Him, that they might have *something* of which to accuse Him. But *Jesus* stooped down and wrote on the ground with *His* finger, as though He did not hear.

⁷So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.” ⁸And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. ⁹Then those who heard *it*, being convicted by *their* conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest *even* to the last. And *Jesus* was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. ¹⁰When *Jesus* had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no

one condemned you?”

¹¹She said, “No one, Lord.”

And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”

Answer: God does not condemn us (rather He forgives us) when we repent of our sins, and He promises that we don't have to continue to sin.

8. (Memorize)

Isaiah 55:7

⁷Let the wicked forsake his way,
And the unrighteous man his thoughts;
Let him return to the Lord,
And He will have mercy on him;
And to our God,
For He will abundantly pardon.

Luke 5:30-32

³⁰ And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, “Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

³¹ Jesus answered and said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³²I have not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

Lesson 6, Notes

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Notes for the Instructor

Purpose of Lesson 6: This is a simple decision study. It continues the personal emphasis from Lesson 5. Help your student to see the quiet "how" of accepting Christ, and let the Holy Spirit lead to a genuine decision. He or she should know enough by this time to intelligently make a lasting decision.

During the study itself: The Scriptures in the introduction to the lesson are meant for reference, not for reading. In questions one and two, read only an asterisked text in each. The two points (steps) are review points, and a reading of one sample for each should be adequate. However, they are vitally important in this study. After question 2, suggest to your student that he has been studying the Bible for a number of weeks, and has also believed in what he has studied. Thus, he has already taken two of the steps! As you approach question 3, you could say, "We have already taken the first two steps, haven't we? Now, let's see what the others are so that we can take them, too."

In connection with the third and fourth steps, you might look up a modern translation to see what "poor in spirit," and "they that mourn" mean. They convey the idea of feeling one's need, and true sorrow for sin.

Question 5 blends the ideas of hiding from God, confessing to God, and repenting to God. Make this clear. Then help the student with the thought questions after question 6. In question 7, you might help your student put his answers in the first person.

Appeal: Both questions 7 and 8 combine to undergird the appeal. An excellent way to ask the student to accept Christ is to put your question in the framework of time: "Do you feel that the time has come for you to invite Jesus into your life?" A "yes" means that the time has come. A "no" means that the time hasn't come yet, but it soon will.

Illustration: Make the idea of steps prominent.

