

## **GOD'S DIRECTIONS ON HOW TO GET HOME**

Presented by

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Have you ever been lost, and didn't know where you were? It's really scary. No one likes the feeling of being lost. Imagine that one day you are with a friend, but you get separated and suddenly you realize that you are lost. After a while, you ask a kind old man in a candy store if he can help you find your way home. He asks where you live, and you tell him that your house is on Lincoln Street. He smiles and says, "I can give you directions to your house. My candy store is on Main Street. Go out the front door and turn to the right. Walk one block to the stoplight. Turn right, and you will be on Lincoln Street. Walk four blocks, and you will see your house at the end of the street." So you follow his directions, and a short time later you are back home—because you did everything he told you to do.

When God created the first two humans, Adam and Eve, He gave them the Garden of Eden as their home. It was a beautiful place where they had everything they needed. They also had a special friendship with the Lord. God had told them that they could eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Adam and Eve disobeyed God and ate the fruit from that tree anyway. When we disobey God, it is called "sin" because we do not follow God's instructions. When Adam and Eve sinned, God made them leave the garden, and they no longer had a special friendship with Him. Sin always causes our relationship with God to be damaged. The prophet Isaiah told God's people in Isaiah 59:1-2 that when they sinned it separated them from God. In other words, their sin caused them to be "lost," and as a result they couldn't find their way home to heaven.

But God wants us to be His friends, and He wants all of us to live in heaven with Him when we die. How can we do that? Like the kind old gentleman in the candy store, God can help us find our way home. But we must be willing to follow the directions He gives us. We find those directions in the New Testament. There are five things that we must do in order to find our way home to heaven.

First, just as we had to listen to the instructions of the man in the candy store, we must listen to God's instructions. Paul wrote in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Hearing God's Word is how we know what God wants us to do to obey Him.

Second, we must believe that God sent His Son, Jesus, to become our Savior and to save us from our sins. In John 3:16, the apostle John said, "God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Third, we must repent of our sins. This means that we are sorry for the bad things we have done, and that we are willing to start doing what is right. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "Unless you repent, you shall all perish."

Fourth, we must be willing to confess before other people that Jesus is God's Son so that they, too, can be saved from their sins if they follow His instructions. Paul said in Romans 10:9-10, "If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Fifth, we must be baptized to wash away our sins. Baptism is where someone puts us completely under water and raises us up out of the water. In Acts 2, the people who had murdered Jesus knew that they had done a bad thing. So they asked Peter what they could do to be forgiven. Peter told them in Acts 2:38, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins." If we are not baptized, we cannot get rid of our sins and we will not get to go to heaven.

After our sins have been forgiven, we must live a faithful Christian life. One of the reasons God gave us the Bible was so we would have the directions we needed to find our way home to heaven. But what if we do not follow those directions exactly as God gave them to us? If we had not followed the directions from the man in the candy store exactly as he gave them, would we have gotten home safely? No, we would not have. If we do not follow God's directions exactly as He gave them, can we be forgiven of our sins and find our way home to be with Him in heaven? No, we cannot. We need to remember that it is important to follow **all** of God's directions if we want to live with Him in heaven one day.