

WALKING  
WITH  
*Jesus*

*Faith &  
Acceptance*







The headlines of the *Washington Post* needed no explanation: “*Texas Executes a Woman*”. “Karla Faye Tucker, the Pickax Killer turned born-again Christian, died of a lethal injection tonight, closing a long fight for her life as a crowd outside the Texas death house prayed for her soul.”

The trial seemed to confuse and divide America. Tucker was only the second woman to be executed in the past 100 years, since the reintroduction of the death penalty in 1976. Tucker’s conversion to Christianity also seemed to be a concerning fact: Was her conversion genuine or just a cruel ploy to avoid the death penalty?

Tucker recalls that as she waited in the Harris County jail for her trial, her head “began to clear from the years of drugs.” As she met with prison ministry workers, she stole a Bible from the church, not knowing they were freely given, and returned to her cell. “That night as I started to read the Bible, I didn’t know what I was reading and before I knew it, I was in the middle of the floor on my knees asking God to forgive me.”

During an interview with Larry King, he asked the key question, “How do we know, as a lot of people would ask who don’t know you, that this isn’t a jail house conversion?”

Tucker responded, “I don’t try and convince people of that. For me, if you can’t look at me and see it, then nothing I can say to you is going to convince you. I just live every day and I reach out to people and it’s up to them to receive from the Lord the same way I did, when somebody came to me.”

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Forgiveness, faith, grace, mercy and acceptance are key words in any situation but of particular importance in Tucker's case. For Tucker, these words needed to be lifted off the pages of the Bible and believed, accepted and cherished. Tucker experienced the transforming power of Jesus Christ. When she accepted Jesus, He gave her a new heart and her new walk with Him began. Tucker needed to accept the forgiveness of God and truly believe that she had been forgiven, not just in some mystical sense, but that God had taken her sin and cast it into the depths of the sea (see Micah 7:19). This is the power of God and the new life. God takes a convicted killer on death row and sets them free (Romans 3:23, 24).

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# SEEING SIN CLEARLY

Q1

*As we learn more about God's character and grow closer to Him, how will this change how we see our sinful behaviours?*



□ Ezekiel 36:31



□ Ezekiel.6:9; 20:43 □ Luke 18:13; 5:8  
□ Romans 6:21 □ Psalm 40:12 □ Ezra 9:6  
□ 2 Corinthians 7:9–11

Once you make the decision to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit will guide you each day to understand right and wrong. The Holy Spirit will help you to understand your thoughts and actions, making you more aware of the true evil that sin represents and the harm that it causes.

When you see sin for what it really is, you will look upon it with abhorrence. Sin not only separates you from Jesus, but enslaves and separates you from God. Sins fills our lives with selfishness and impurities that cause broken relationships, addictions and spiritual death. As you see your sinful condition, you will desire more than ever to be set free from sin and experience the perfect peace that God has promised you.

 "If we want to savour the sweetness of the gospel, we have to be honest with the horror of our sin." *John Piper*



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# EXPERIENCING GOD'S PERFECT PEACE

**Q2** *Who does God offer peace to?*



□ *Isaiah 55:1*



□ *Isaiah 41:17* □ *John 4:14; 7:37, 38; 12:32* □ *2 Peter 3:9*  
□ *Revelation 21:6*

God's peace is perfect; it reflects the mercy, forgiveness and love of Heaven. It is eternal and not of this earth. Money cannot purchase heaven's forgiveness, nor can intellect secure it. Instead, God offers it to us as a priceless gift: it is available to us, as long as we make the choice to accept it.

No matter what we have done, we are offered forgiveness and the peace that accompanies it. Isaiah 1:18 assures us that "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Such a dramatic transformation can only come from God.

**Q3** *How does God promise He will transform us from within?*



□ *Ezekiel 36:26*



□ *Ezekiel 11:19, 20* □ *Deuteronomy 30:6* □ *Jeremiah 32:39*  
□ *2 Corinthians 3:3; 5:17;* □ *John 3:3–6*

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You have confessed your sins and chosen to turn from them. Go to God and ask Him to cleanse you from your sins and give you a new heart. God is the only one who can cleanse you and make you new again.

Then *believe* that God has transformed your life, just as He promised. Jesus taught us that we need to believe in God's promises and claim them for ourselves.

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**Q4**

*Why does the Bible tell us of the many miracles of Jesus?*



□ *John 20:31*



□ *Matthew 9:6* □ *Mark 2:7, 10*

□ *John 5:24, 39; 6:40* □ *1 John 5:10–13*

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When people came to Jesus seeking to be cured of their diseases or overcome their problems, as long as they had faith in His power, He gave them victory.

These acts of mercy helped people believe and strengthened their faith. They could see His power with their own eyes. This encouraged them to trust Him even with things they could not see, such as the power to forgive sin.

In the same way that they had experienced disease or infirmity in their physical bodies, sin acted as a virus in their hearts. Jesus repeatedly demonstrated His ability to heal and restore them physically. This guaranteed His ability to restore them spiritually.



“The desires of one's heart will determine the direction of one's life and ultimately one's eternal destiny. This simple but profound truth is obvious, yet it is often neglected... It is a battleground that can easily hijack our spiritual lives. How do we navigate around the seductions of this fallen world and faithfully follow Jesus in daily life? The key is in and with our heart's desires.”

— *C.S. Lewis*

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# RECEIVING FORGIVENESS FOR OUR SINS

Q5

*What do we need to do to receive forgiveness?*



□ *Mark 11:24*



□ *Matthew 8:13; 21:22; 9:6* □ *Psalms 32:10* □ *Ephesians 2:8*  
□ *1 Timothy 4:10*

One of the many people that Jesus healed was a man who hadn't been able to use his legs for 38 years. Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed, and walk." It would have been easy for the sick man to laugh or dismiss what Jesus was saying. He could have begged to be completely healed before he tried to walk. Instead, the man believed Jesus and took Him at His word. He trusted Jesus had the power to heal him and followed Jesus' instructions and found that he could walk and had full use of his limbs.

The lame man acted on the word of Jesus, and was made whole.

 "Do not wait to feel that you are made whole, but say, I believe it; it is so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised."  
*Ellen G. White*

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**Q6** Why can't we heal our own hearts?

  Jeremiah 17:9

  Jeremiah 13:23; 16:12  Psalm 51:5; 53:1–3  Genesis 6:5  
 Job 15:14–16  Ecclesiastes 9:3  Mark 7:21, 22  
 James 1:14, 15  Romans 7:14–20  Ephesians 2:3

We are sinners. We cannot save ourselves from our sin. Our sinful natures only leads us back into sin. Holiness is not something we can achieve by our own efforts.

 “Left to itself, a heart will run riot with sin. But if a heart responds to the ministry of the Word, there can be fruit and beauty.” *Warren Wiersbe*

God promises to give us His holiness through Jesus. All we need to do is believe in God's promise, admit our sins and give ourselves to Him. When we believe God has forgiven and cleansed us from our sins, God does it! We are whole, complete and holy. Just like the paralysed man who believed Jesus was healed, so we are made whole.

Because we claim God's promise of forgiveness, God will make our hearts clean and pure.

Do not wait for a mystical feeling or some kind of divine sign to know for sure that God has forgiven you. Once you give your life to God, God has forgiven you. It isn't about a feeling, it's about trusting in God to do what He has promised.

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**Q7**

*Why can we approach God with confidence?*



□ *Romans 8:1*



□ *Luke 11:11* □ *1 John 5:14, 15* □ *Psalms 86:5; 103:11–13*  
□ *Micah 7:18, 19* □ *Romans 5:8–10; 8:32* □ *Ephesians 2:4–6*  
□ *Titus 3:4–7* □ *Hebrews 4:15–16*

God wills that we should be cleansed from sin and be His children. He wants to empower us to live a holy life. So we should pray according to His will, asking for this power. Then we need to believe that we have received the blessings, and praise God that it is true! It is our privilege to go to Jesus asking to be cleansed. Then we can stand before His Holy law without guilt or shame.

In this way, we can approach God with confidence for two reasons;

1. We are no longer condemned. Jesus has transformed our sinful human heart and by His power we have been renewed.
2. You have been redeemed. The cost of your liberation from sin and death was Jesus giving Himself on the cross of Calvary. Because of this sacrifice, when you accept Jesus, you are born into the family of God.

1 Peter 1:18, 19 reminds us that we weren't redeemed with the things of this world like earthly wealth in silver and gold, instead we were redeemed because of the precious blood of Jesus, whose perfect life was given so that we might be saved.



“It is the will of God to cleanse us from sin, to make us, His children and to enable us to live a holy life.”

— *Ellen G. White*



“Now that you have given yourself to Jesus, do not draw back, do not take yourself away from Him, but day by day say, ‘I am Christ’s; I have given myself to Him,’ and ask Him to give you His Spirit to keep you by His grace.”

— *Ellen G. White*



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Q8

How do we stay close to God?



□ Colossians 2:6



□ Hebrews 11:6; 3:14 □ Galatians 5:16

□ Matthew 6:33 □ John 15:4–9 □ 1 John 2:6

□ 2 Corinthians 5:7 □ Ephesians 5:1, 2

Some people seem to feel that in coming to Jesus they are on some form of probation and must prove to God that they are reformed before they can be accepted by Him and claim His blessings. Remember, Jesus loves to have us draw near to Him as we are, helpless, weak and dependant. We can come to him with our mistakes, sinfulness and failure, falling helpless at His feet. It brings Him glory to wrap us in His arms of love, bind up our wounds and purify us from all our uncleanness.

 “Jesus gave all His riches, He gave His own life, He emptied heaven to supply every necessity to accomplish the salvation of a lost world.” *Ellen G. White*

Many people fail at this point. They do not believe that Jesus pardons them personally and individually, and fail to take God at His word. Believe that God’s promises are for you! They are for everyone. No one is so sinful that they cannot find what they need in Jesus who died for them. He will supply the strength and righteousness needed.

Jesus wants to clothe you in His purity and holiness.

# COMING TO JESUS JUST AS YOU ARE

Q9

*What are we to do?*



□ *Isaiah 55:6, 7*



□ *Isaiah 11:10; 48:17, 18* □ *Jeremiah 6:16*  
□ *Hebrews 4:1*

God has loved us with a love that is almost beyond understanding. He calls us to come and live a new life. How are we to do this? The prophet Isaiah, who lived around 700 years before Jesus, helps us understand how we are to now live.

In relation to walking with God, Isaiah counsels us to

1. Forsake sinful ways
2. Turn and seek the Lord

Because God

3. Will have mercy
4. Has already removed our sins.

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Jesus, in the same way, invites us to claim His promises and find rest in Him, just as we are—sinful and helpless. We don't have to earn His love or prove ourselves to Him; He calls us as we are, but promises not to leave us we were.

**Q10**

*What does God reassure us happens to our sin when we repent?*



□ *Isaiah 44:22*



□ *Isaiah 1:18; 43:25* □ *Jeremiah 33:8* □ *Micah 7:19*  
□ *Titus 2:13, 14* □ *1 John 1:9*

We can take God at His word because He will always do as He has promised. God has promised to forgive our sins when we repent and ask for His forgiveness. That means anyone who has truly repented, regardless of the scale of their sin, will be forgiven.

Jesus' perfect righteousness covers even the worst sin imaginable.

 “None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they may find deliverance in Christ.” *Ellen G. White*

**Q11**

*How does God treat us when we come to Him?*



□ *Psalms 103:10–12*



□ *Psalms 103:13–19; 130:3, 4* □ *Ezra 9:13*  
□ *Nehemiah 9:31* □ *Job 11:6*

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# EXPERIENCING GOD'S FORGIVENESS

It's important to remember that God's forgiveness is different from human forgiveness. As humans, our hearts are sinful, so even when we do our best to forgive others it can be difficult to fully let our feelings go. Some small part of us may cling to hurt, which we then throw back at the other person.

When God forgives us, He does so completely. He promises "abundant pardon" (Isaiah 55:7). God doesn't want anybody to die because of sin—He wants us to enjoy an abundant life now and eternity in the future.

Satan tries to obscure God's promises or make us feel things are more complicated. He wants us to doubt ourselves and to doubt God and question why we are worthy.

The Bible teaches that we aren't worthy, but God loves us anyway, and when we ask Him for forgiveness and surrender our lives to Him, we become His children. How God sees us *makes* us worthy. This transformation is nothing we can achieve or accomplish ourselves.

"I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am." *John Newton*

# We are God's children



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**Q12**

*How does God react when we turn away from sinning and ask Him for forgiveness?*



*Luke 15:20*



*Deuteronomy 30:2–4*  *Psalm 86:5, 15; 78:3; 145:8*

## CLAIMING GOD'S PROMISE

Our sin doesn't need to be the end of our story. God has given us a hope. Because God loves us and is ready to receive us, when we turn to Him and ask Him for forgiveness, a new life is given to us.

Even though we have made mistakes and waste chances and opportunities, God doesn't hold our past choices against us. He is ready and waiting to accept us as His children.

In the story of the prodigal son, the young son came intent on asking his father for forgiveness. But upon his return, before he could even say the words of the speech he'd so earnestly rehearsed, his father came running to greet him. His father had been waiting for him to come home, and was celebrating his return. In the same way, God is waiting for each of us and wants to celebrate with us when we come home to Him.

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**Q13**

*What does Jesus promise is something He will never do?*



*John 6:37*



*Matthew 11:28*  *Hebrews 7:25*  *Isaiah 55:7*  
 *Revelation 22:17*  *Romans 8:31, 32; 5:8*  
 *2 Peter 3:9*  *Psalm 102:17*

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Whenever you are anxious, remember God’s promises to you. He has promised to be with you always, to never leave you or abandon you. He will be with you to comfort you and bring you hope in the darkest of times and to celebrate with you in the good times. God wants you to be with Him in heaven for eternity, where there will be no more sin, suffering or pain. That is something to long for.

 “Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”  
*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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**Q14** *How do we know God will always be with us?*



□ *Hebrews 13:5*



□ *Deuteronomy 31:6, 8* □ *Malachi 3:17* □ *Romans 8:38, 39*  
□ *Jeremiah 31:33-35; 32:38-40* □ *John 10:27-30*

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God’s enormous love is too much for us to fully comprehend: His love knows no limits and His care and compassion knows no end. Because of His great love, we are redeemed and transformed.



“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved.”

— *Ephesians 2:4, 5*

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# REFLECTION

I recognise that I am a sinner in need of saving.

YES

UNDECIDED

I believe God loves me and sent Jesus as a sacrifice for my sins.

YES

UNDECIDED

I believe that if I confess my sins and repent, I will be cleansed and God will give me a new heart in the place of my sinful one.

YES

UNDECIDED

**You can claim all these promises today. If you've been waiting for the right time, you don't need to wait any longer. Pray this prayer with a sincere heart:**

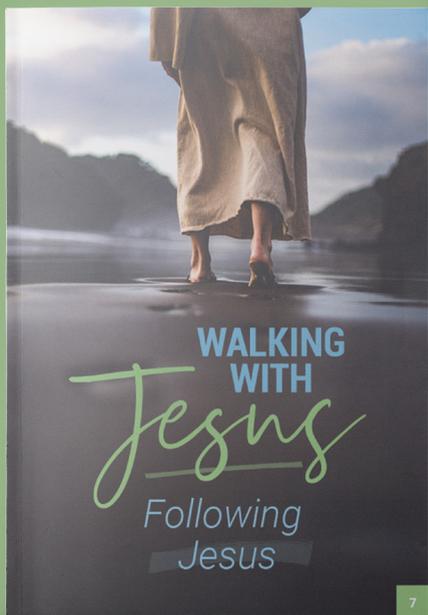
"Dear Father in heaven, I know that I am a sinner and I believe You sent Your Son to die for me.

I ask—in faith—to receive Jesus as my Saviour and for His precious blood to cover my many sins  
*[as much as possible, be specific].*

I choose to turn from my sinful ways and ask You to become the Lord of my life.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."





CONTINUE YOUR  
JOURNEY IN PART 7:

## FOLLOWING JESUS

As you follow the example of Jesus your life will be a living testament to God. You'll reflect His love, patience, kindness and goodness each day in your thoughts, words and actions. With the new heart that Jesus has given you, you will no longer be ruled by your own selfishness, instead you'll look at the world through Jesus' eyes of love.

### SHARING

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