

## WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

### MAN

### GOD

**IN THE BEGINNING . . .** The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

### MAN

### SIN

### GOD

**OUR CONDITION TODAY . . .** Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

### MAN

### JESUS

### GOD

**GOD'S PLAN . . .** God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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## TRANSFORMED FROM THE INSIDE OUT

A bumper sticker led to Jodie learning that trying to be a good person does not make a person good. She needed a change that only God could make!

By Jodie Hinkle



**A**t age eight, I attended a Sunday school class and learned about God and Heaven. The teacher described Heaven as a beautiful place without sorrow or pain, and it sounded so wonderful that from that time forward, I wanted to go. However, she didn't tell us how to get there. Instead, she said it was normal for children to be naughty, but if we loved God, we would try our best to be good. Right then, I decided that being good was the way to get to Heaven.

**While growing up, I did my best to live right while** never having any assurance that this was the right path to Heaven. In my teenage years, my friends started doing

drugs, getting drunk at weekend parties, and lying to their parents about where they were. They offered me drugs, and there was a lot of peer pressure to go to the parties, but being determined to get to Heaven someday, I resisted.

**While still in high school, I met my future husband at** work and one day told him I was a Christian. He replied, "No, you are not. You sin all the time." I did have a temper and was a compulsive liar, but I said, "No one is perfect, but I try to be good." He told me his mom had become a Christian before he was born and he had never seen her sin. I said, "That is impossible. No one can control all their actions all the time." He said, "With God, nothing is impossible. He can take away a person's sins." I felt he was just seeing what he wanted to see, so we ended the discussion.

### A CHALLENGE FOR GOD

**Several years after we married, something happened to** change my perspective. On September 28, 1987, I went to work and got into an argument with a coworker. The discussion became so heated that I stormed off and drove away in my car. While driving, I continued my side of the argument by yelling at my coworker and pounding my fists on the steering wheel.

**After a time, my angry rant turned toward others,** including my husband and his family. Then, because I had been planning to get a divorce, I shouted, "Good riddance!" Immediately, it occurred to me that God might not approve of divorce, and this could disqualify me for Heaven.

**Now I was angry at God and challenged, "Who are** You to sit up there so far away from us, never having anything to do with us until after we're dead, and yet making rules for us to live by? I should be the rule maker

because I live here and know what people need! If a couple can't get along, they need to divorce." Then I asked, "Are You against divorce or not? What is wrong with it anyway?"

**Several more life choices that I was uncertain about** came to mind. For example, I had overheard someone say that a couple who was living together without being married was living in sin. In each case, I asked God, "Are You against that too? What is wrong with it anyway?"

**By this time, I had driven across town and was very** worked up. I had one more question: "Why do we have to wait until it is too late to get answers and find out if we chose the right path to Heaven?"

## A SERIES OF ORCHESTRATED EVENTS

**Needing to calm down, I turned on the radio, which was** always set to a certain music station, but nothing came in. I pressed the preset button and there was only static. Frustrated, I started punching all the buttons and still, there was just static. Wondering if the radio was broken, I began running the dial back and forth trying to pick up anything.

**Right then, the driver in front of me slammed on the** brakes. The red brake lights caught my eye, and beneath the right one was a bumper sticker that read, "KPDQ 93.7 FM." To find out if my radio was broken, I turned the dial to that station, and it tuned right in. The program was a talk show in a question-and-answer format. I would not have listened, except that the first question was "Is God against divorce, and if so, why?"

**A man answered saying, "God doesn't want us to** divorce. He doesn't want us to experience the heartache that it brings." Then he gave statistics detailing the lasting damage caused by divorce. The second question was, "Is God against a couple living together before marriage, and if so, why?"

Statistics were used again and showed that this arrangement has harmful consequences also.

**As the discussion continued, I learned that doing things** God's way will keep us from hurting ourselves and others. Humbled, I thought, *I wanted to be the rule maker but didn't even know the statistics or consider the purpose for the rules.*

**By the end of the program, all my questions had been** asked and answered. I was stunned that God had been listening, cared enough about me to answer, and was capable of orchestrating events to do so. I wondered, *How did God know I would ask those questions? Did He break my radio? When was that program taped?*

**Upon arriving back at work, I sat in the parking lot** thinking. At the close of the program, the host had talked about the need for a Savior. He said, "No matter how well you behave outwardly, if your heart is filled with hate, you are a sinner going to Hell." My heart was overflowing with hate, but I said to myself, "It's justified, so it is okay." My thoughts went to someone who had harmed me, and I sneered in contempt. Then suddenly, it was as if a mirror was turned on me; I saw the ugliness of the hate in my heart for this person. I also saw my own hurtful actions and that my misdeeds came from the same source as this person's. My whole perspective changed. I realized that after spending my life trying to be good, I was no better than this person. I was just as much a sinner.

**Ashamed, I prayed, "God, I'm so sorry for tarnishing** Your name by calling myself a Christian while hurting others. I'm sorry for the hate in my heart and the wrong things I have done because of it. I don't want to do these things anymore. From now on, I will follow You and do what You want me to do." Then I said, "I don't know what makes a person a real Christian." In that moment, the conversation from years

before about my mother-in-law came to mind. I had never seen her sin and now wondered, *Could it be true that God takes away a person's sin?* I continued, "Whatever the truth is, I know You will do it for me." The moment my prayer was finished, I felt God's forgiveness wash over me. In addition, something took place in my heart, and I knew beyond any doubt that I was ready for Heaven. Then, all the hate in my heart began to lift like a fog, and as it went, joy flooded in.

## A TRANSFORMATION

**As I stepped from the car and returned to work, everything** seemed new inside and out. The trees were vivid with color, my thoughts were clean and clear, and I felt so light. A transformation had taken place, which became more apparent in the coming days as the change God had made in my heart began to manifest outwardly. One afternoon, I sat down to read a magazine, but the gossip in it made me feel so dirty that I threw it away. I turned on the television but found something offensive on every channel. Rereading a favorite book, I was disgusted by the foul language and violence. I thought, *Why didn't I notice this garbage before?* I did not yet understand the work God had done in my heart.

**Eventually, it occurred to me to read a Bible. As I did, a** marvelous thing happened: God's Spirit made me able to understand and apply His Word in my life. Within months of surrendering my life to God, He restored my relationship with my husband, helped me reconcile with my coworker, and taught me to tithe, discipline my children, dress modestly, and more.

**I am so grateful for the day God orchestrated events** to reveal Himself to me. Today, I know He is real and cares enough about us to want a daily relationship with us. And, at last I have an assurance of seeing Him in Heaven one day. ■

# STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

## ACKNOWLEDGE

**Admit that you have sinned and need God's help.**  
*For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)*

## CONFESS AND REPENT

**Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.**  
*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)*  
*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)*

## FORSAKE

**Determine that with God's help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.**  
*Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him . . . for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)*

## BELIEVE

**When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.**  
*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*

## RECEIVE

**God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.**  
*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)*