

A Fresh Start with God ~ *beginning again, moving forward*
Week 1 – Where do I start? How do I connect with God?
October 8, 2006

Why does it feel like it's so hard to connect with God?

- **God said, "You must be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy."**
Leviticus chapter 19 verse 2 (94)
- **Jesus said, "There is forgiveness of sins for all who repent."**
Luke chapter 24 verse 47 (808)

Why do we need forgiveness?

A man loaned money to two people -- 500 pieces of silver to one and 50 pieces to the other. But neither of them could repay him, so he kindly forgave them both, canceling their debt.
Luke chapter 7 verses 41 & 42 (788)

We all need forgiveness because we're all in debt!

- **If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves & not living in the truth.**
1 John chapter 1 verse 8 (941)
- **For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.**
Romans chapter 3 verse 23 (859)
- falling short "of God's glorious standard" means I don't measure up to Jesus

We all need forgiveness because we're all in debt over our heads!!!

- **For the wages of sin is death....** *Romans chapter 6 verse 23 (861)*
- The sin debt that we each owe God is beyond our ability to repay!!

We all need forgiveness because we cannot cancel our own debt!!

- **For without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.**
Hebrews chapter 9 verse 22 (925)
- **Christ died once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people.**
Hebrews chapter 9 verse 28 (925)
- **God is so rich in kindness & grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his son & forgave our sins.** *Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7 (895)*

What is grace?

- **God is so rich in kindness & grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his son & forgave our sins.** *Ephesians chapter 1 verse 7 (895)*
- "grace" simply means that I get something for nothing!
- **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**
- **...through this man Jesus there is forgiveness of your sins. Everyone who believes in him is declared right with God...!** *Acts chapter 13 verses 38 & 39 (842)*

(over)

1. Grace is a free gift!
 - **...God's free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins.** *Romans chapter 5 verse 16 (860)*
 - Religion is spelled D-O
 - Christianity is spelled D-O-N-E

2. Jesus is the only one who can give grace!
 - **But even greater is God's wonderful grace & his gift of forgiveness to many through...Jesus Christ.** *Romans chapter 5 verse 15 (860)*
 - **Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth & the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."** *John chapter 14 verse 6 (823)*
 - **Jesus gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone.** *1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 6 (910)*
 - Jesus is the one who paid my admission price so I could enter heaven!

3. Grace is available to anyone & everyone!
 - **Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.**
Romans chapter 10 verse 13 (864)

4. Grace lasts forever!
 - **The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.** *Romans chapter 6 verse 23 (861)*

5. Grace changes everything!
 - **Jesus said, "My purpose is to give a rich & satisfying life."**
John chapter 10 verse 10 (819)
 - **God loved us & chose us in Christ to be holy & without fault in his eyes!**
Ephesians chapter 1 verse 4 (895)

6. I can have this new & eternal life simply by accepting it!
 - **God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.** *Ephesians chapter 2 verses 8 & 9 (896)*
 - Salvation is not based on my performance...it's based on God's promise!
 - Salvation is not based on my goodness...it's based on God's grace!
 - I get to heaven not because of what I do...but because of what Jesus has already done!

Next week: How can I build a rich relationship with God, so it's more than just duty, drudgery & empty rituals?

This study is based on the "Fresh Start" curriculum from Saddleback Church in California where Rick Warren is the lead pastor. Rick is the best-selling author of The Purpose Driven Life & Saddleback is a dynamic church that God is working thru to change tens of thousands of lives around the world. Visit them at www.Saddleback.com