

Discover South Main

SESSION 1 – “What does it mean to be a Christian?”

We are so glad you have chosen to find out more about South Main! This class is the basic introduction to our church family. Since we have members and visitors from many different church backgrounds, this class was designed to clearly explain who and what our church is all about.

THE BASIS FOR THIS CLASS

I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these instructions to you in case I am delayed, to let you know how people ought to conduct themselves in the household of God, because it is the church of the living God, the support and bulwark of the truth. (1 Timothy 3:14-15)

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT WHO I AM

Most people live their entire lives without ever knowing “**WHY?**” They exist year after year with no idea of why they live or God’s purpose for their lives. **The most basic question a person can ask is, “What is the meaning of life?”**

THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Everyone wants to be happy. People try many ways: Some look for happiness by acquiring possessions. Some look for happiness by experiencing pleasure. Some look for happiness by gaining prestige & power. But real joy comes from understanding your identity in Christ.

WHY AM I HERE?

God made me to love me! God says, *“I have loved you with an everlasting love!”* (Jeremiah 31:3). Every person has a “God-shaped vacuum” in their lives that only the Lord can fill. Everyone wants the purpose and fulfillment in life that only Jesus Christ can bring.

WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

People seek fulfillment, but are sometimes unaware of the real problem, which is **the natural desire to go our own way** and to ignore God’s presence and will. They believe the world’s messages like, “Look out for #1” / “If It Feels Good, Do It” / “You Deserve a Break Today” / “Have It Your Way”

The Bible calls this attitude, “Sin.” *“If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”* (1 John 1:8). Sin breaks our close relationship with God. It causes us to rely on our own strength, instead of depending upon God. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23)

When our relationship to God is not right, it causes defeat in every area of our lives — marriage, career, relationships, finances, etc. It also causes spiritual separation from God which, without God’s intervention, will lead to destruction. *“There are ways that seem right to man, but in the end it is a way of death.”* (Proverbs 16:25)

Even when we know that our deepest need is God, **we often try wrong ways of getting to know Him:** “My mom was a Christian” / “Believe anything; just be sincere” / “I’m a good person” / “I go to church”

WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

The only solution for us is Jesus. He said, *"I am the way, and the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father, except through me!"* (John 14:6). God Himself came to earth as a human being to bring us back to Himself. Jesus is God who became man. He died on the cross to pay for our sin. He rose from the grave and defeated death for us. Through Jesus we can be forgiven and have eternal life.

The **eternal life** Jesus offers to us **is a gift.** *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom. 6:23)

God did this for us because He loves us; **He died to pay** the death penalty we owed **for our sin.** *"But God demonstrates His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."* (Rom. 5:8)

But the story doesn't end there. The Good News is that **Jesus was resurrected** from the grave. He defeated death for us. If we trust in Him, we have an eternal home with God in heaven. *"For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to Scripture."* (1 Cor. 15:3-4)

WHAT IS MY RESPONSE?

Confess that God has not been first place in your life and ask Him to forgive your sins. *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous and will forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

Believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins, that He rose again, and that He is alive today and forevermore. *"If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is your Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* (Romans 10:9)

Receive God's gift of salvation. You can never earn it so accept it as God's gift! *"For by grace you are saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves, it is God's gift — not from works, so that no one can boast."* (Ephesians 2:8,9). Our relationship to God is not restored by anything we do, but is based upon what Jesus already did for us on the cross!

Receive Jesus Christ into your life as your Lord and Savior. *"But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name. (John 1:12). You receive Christ by inviting Him into your life through prayer. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."* (Romans 10:13). You can take these steps by praying a simple prayer of commitment to God:

"Dear Jesus, thank you for making me and loving me, even when I've ignored you and gone my own way. I realize I need you in my life and I'm sorry for my sins. I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for shedding your blood for me on the cross and rising from the grave to save me from my sins. As much as I know how, I want to yield my life to you and follow you as Lord. I accept your gift of salvation and welcome you into my life. Please help me to grow as a Christian, and be the person you want me to be."