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## Committed to His Mission



### QUESTION 1:

*What's your typical response when you lose something?*

## THE POINT

God desires for all people to hear and respond to the gospel.



## THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Every year, thousands of people get lost or hurt in our national parks. In 2017 alone, 4,194 search-and-rescue incidents were reported.<sup>1</sup> The National Park Service has trained personnel to lead these searches, but friends and loved ones naturally want to help. The reason is obvious: someone they care for is lost!

Families will spend whatever it takes to get their loved ones back safely. Well over three million dollars are spent each year funding these searches, but it is money well spent. Otherwise lives would be lost.

As much as we would desire to help rescue a loved one who was physically lost, God has a greater desire for those who are spiritually lost. It is estimated that over two-thirds of the world's population are without Christ and in need of a "spiritual search-and-rescue."<sup>2</sup>

One way we reflect our commitment to Christ is by sharing His commitment and desire to reach those who don't yet have a relationship with Him. Being committed to the mission of God means that each of us looks at this monumental task as our own personal responsibility.

# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

## ROMANS 10:9-10

**<sup>9</sup> If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.**

Romans 10:9-10 provides a powerfully concise explanation of the gospel message—and it’s not the route to a relationship with God promoted in other religions and worldviews. Our human tendency is to think we must do certain things to deserve salvation, and certainly God could’ve called for that. He could have designed things so that we would have to follow a list of dos and don’ts in order to have a relationship with Him. But God did not do that for a very simple reason. He knew we could not do it. God knew we could never be perfectly obedient and follow all the rules, so He sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus came to this planet and did what we could never do. He lived the perfect life of obedience to God we could not. His obedience was so complete that He even gave His life as a perfect sacrifice to pay the price for our disobedience.

This passage boils the Christian life down to one thing: belief. Paul used two verbs in writing about this, but these two things are two sides of the same coin.

► **Confess.** “Jesus is Lord” is the earliest Christian confession, and these three words pack a lot of meaning. *Lord* is the same Greek word the Jews would’ve used to refer to God Himself. This statement is an acknowledgment that Jesus of Nazareth is fully God.

How can we know that Jesus is God? We look at His life. He taught like no other, and the miracles He performed gave credence and authority to what He said. Jesus said He was the only way to God (John 14:6) and also, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30). And then there’s the resurrection! Christianity is centered on this key event, the moment God raised Jesus from the dead.

### QUESTION 2:

***What did believing in your heart and confessing Jesus with your mouth look like for you?***

By this singular event, God the Father authenticated Jesus as the Son of God.

▶ **Believe.** Our confession is an outward expression of our belief in who Jesus is: the resurrected Savior and Lord, the Son of God.

Confessing and believing are not steps one and two for salvation. In fact, the order of these two things in verse 9 is reversed in verse 10. They go hand-in-hand. What we believe in our heart we will openly confess.

Our role in salvation is as simple as that. That's why this message is called the gospel—the good news—of Jesus Christ. We have no greater news than the truth that Jesus made our salvation possible when we were hopeless in our sin. All that remains is for us to acknowledge that truth and put our faith in Him.

“One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation” (v. 10).

## ROMANS 10:11-13

<sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame, <sup>12</sup> since there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all richly blesses all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

### QUESTION 3:

*How do these verses both encourage and challenge you?*

Critics of Christianity have ridiculed it because of its exclusiveness: Jesus is the only way to God. We embrace that truth about Jesus, but let's also embrace another truth: the inclusiveness of the gospel. A relationship with God is available only to those who trust in Christ, but such a relationship is open to any and all who trust!

Earlier in this letter, Paul gave us the somber truth: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Sinners need God's salvation, and since all have sinned, it follows that God's salvation is available for all who repent and believe. By quoting Joel 2:32, Paul could not make it any clearer: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

When Joel first gave this prophecy in the ninth century BC, he was referring to the Jews living in Jerusalem, but the promise can be readily expanded to include the Gentiles. As God's chosen people, God called the Jews to be “a light to the nations” (Isa. 42:6). From

## PEOPLE NEED THE LORD

Look at the list of people groups. Circle the ones you've heard of. Then place a star by the ones for which God has given you a burden to pray, give, or go. Then answer the questions.

<b>Han Chinese</b>	<b>Welsh</b>	<b>Kenyans</b>	<b>Samoans</b>
<b>Peruvians</b>	<b>Guatemalans</b>	<b>Nova Scotians</b>	<b>Bangladeshis</b>
<b>Uighurs</b>	<b>Albanians</b>	<b>Libyans</b>	<b>Nevadans</b>

What are some ways you can pray for the people groups you've starred?

What are some ways you can give for the people groups you've starred?

What are some ways you can go to the people groups you've starred?

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*“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”*

MATTHEW 28:19-20

the beginning of God's covenant relationship with Abram, He promised, "all the peoples on earth will be blessed through you" (Gen. 12:3). That blessing ultimately came through Jesus Christ, who brought salvation to all peoples.

The kingdom of God is the polar opposite of a country club or a fraternity. In those organizations, the people who are already members decide together which outsiders are worthy to be admitted. Thankfully, that's not how God designed His plan of salvation. God doesn't have one plan of salvation for one group and a different plan for another group. Instead, any and all who look to Christ and call on Him receive eternal life.

- ▶ The gospel is for people we like and people we don't like.

- ▶ The gospel is for our friends and our enemies.
- ▶ The gospel is for people we would love to see become believers and also for people we deep down don't think they deserve to be saved.

The good news of Christ really is for everyone! Therefore, we should pray as fervently for the boss who treats us poorly as we do for a close friend. We should desire the salvation of the person of another belief system as we do for a family member. We can only be committed to the mission of God when we have the same heart for people that God has. After all, God "wants everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:4).

## ROMANS 10:14-17

**<sup>14</sup> How, then, can they call on him they have not believed in? And how can they believe without hearing about him? And how can they hear without a preacher? <sup>15</sup> And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news. <sup>16</sup> But not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, Lord, who has believed our message? <sup>17</sup> So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the message about Christ.**



We have focused on the opportunity before all to trust the good news of Christ, but let's focus now on our responsibility in this.

Being committed to the mission of God means we also have to be committed to share the mission of God. A popular phrase says, "Preach the gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." Of course we should live our lives in such a way that the gospel is evident through the way that we live. Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16). But this clever saying misses one key truth: Speaking the gospel is not optional. It is necessary to use words.

**QUESTION 4:**

***What obstacles might keep you from sharing the gospel?***

Paul made a direct connection between people calling on the name of the Lord for salvation and the necessity of their hearing the gospel. "How can they believe without hearing about him?" (v. 14). And to clarify his point, Paul asked, "And how can they hear

without a preacher?" Trusting in Christ does not happen in a vacuum. It calls for someone to preach the gospel.

"And how can they preach unless they are sent?" (v. 15). Lest we think we haven't been sent anywhere yet, remember the Great Commission Jesus gave us at the end of His ministry. We've already received the charge to go. Jesus Himself sent us; therefore, we are to proclaim the gospel of Christ to those we encounter as we go.

We are not responsible for how others react or respond to the gospel; we need only to be faithful to the call to go and speak. But if we don't step out and go with intentionality, they will never have an opportunity to respond to the gospel. Each of us has a short amount of time to make an impact for the kingdom of God. Let's seize the opportunity before us to join in the fight for those with whom we will one day stand before the throne of God.

**QUESTION 5:**

***What practical steps can our group take to see the gospel spread to all people?***



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# LIVE IT OUT

What will you do to give people the opportunity to respond to the gospel? Choose one of the following applications:

- ▶ **Write.** Take time this week to write out your testimony. Being committed to the mission of God to take the message of the gospel to those who haven't heard it must begin with a clear understanding of your own story and journey to Christ.
- ▶ **Share.** This week share the gospel with someone. Pray that the Holy Spirit would give you an opportunity and then look for that door to open. When it presents itself, simply share your story of how Jesus changed your life.
- ▶ **Go.** Pray about being part of God's mission around the world. For some of you that might mean giving to missions. For others that might mean supporting a missionary with your time, prayers, and support. Still others might sense the call to go yourselves. Pray that God will use you, and that you will have the courage to answer His call.

Hopefully you haven't been faced with a search-and-rescue mission that involved someone close to you. But all of us are commanded to be involved in the mission to search for those who are spiritually lost so that we can lead them to Christ.

1 2017 Annual SAR Dashboard, <https://nps.maps.arcgis.com/apps/opsdashboard/index.html#/b526c87ae21f4a669eb6c9238c2c4bcf>.  
 2 Conrad Hackett and David McClendon, "Christians remain world's largest religious group, but they are declining in Europe," *Pew Research Center*, April 5, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/05/christians-remain-worlds-largest-religious-group-but-they-are-declining-in-europe/>.



**THE PATHWAY OF DISCIPLESHIP**

Growing in Christ is a journey—a lifelong journey—but what does that look like? LifeWay’s research reveals eight markers consistently present in the lives of believers who are growing spiritually. Each year, *Bible Studies for Life* engages all eight of these areas. Following this intentional plan for discipleship ensures progress on the pathway to becoming more like Christ.

Visit [www.BibleStudiesforLife.com](http://www.BibleStudiesforLife.com) for a fuller picture of this discipleship plan through 2022.

<b>8 MARKERS</b>	<b>FALL 2020</b>	<b>WINTER 2020-21</b>	<b>SPRING 2021</b>	<b>SUMMER 2021</b>
<b>BUILD RELATIONSHIPS</b>	After God’s Own Heart: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments			
<b>SEEK GOD</b>	All In: A Life of Commitment			
<b>OBEY GOD AND DENY SELF</b>		When Emotions Rise		
<b>ENGAGE WITH SCRIPTURE</b>		Spiritual Disciplines: Becoming More Like Jesus		
<b>EXERCISE FAITH</b>			The Essentials of Christianity	
<b>SHARE CHRIST</b>			How to Share Christ	
<b>LIVE UNASHAMED</b>				Walking in Confidence
<b>SERVE GOD AND OTHERS</b>				Discovering and Using Your Spiritual Gifts

# COMING NEXT QUARTER

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## WHEN EMOTIONS RISE

- Session 1      **Walking in Grief** // Psalm 116:1-9,15-17
- Session 2      **Shaking Off Fear** // Psalm 91:1-6,9-16
- Session 3      **Embracing Joy** // Psalm 95:1-3; Luke 2:4-14
- Session 4      **Redirecting Anger** // Psalm 35:1-3,13-18
- Session 5      **Overcoming Worry** // Psalm 23:1-6
- Session 6      **Weathering the Blues** // Psalm 31:1-8

## CREATED FOR A PURPOSE

- Special Focus Session      **Created for a Purpose** // Jeremiah 1:4-10

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES: BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS

- Session 1      **The Benefit of Spiritual Disciplines** // 1 Timothy 4:1-10
- Session 2      **Knowing God** // Psalm 119:17-24
- Session 3      **Intimacy with God** // John 17:1-5,21-26
- Session 4      **Maintaining Focus on God** // Daniel 9:1-7,17-19
- Session 5      **Connecting to Christ's Body** // 1 Corinthians 12:12-24
- Session 6      **Joining God's Work** // John 15:1-8

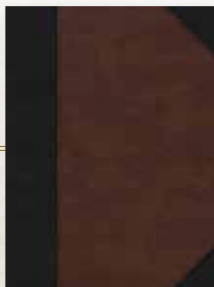


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The *Tony Evans Study Bible* includes extensive study notes and resources crafted and curated by Dr. Tony Evans. Through study notes, articles, Q&As, application questions, and more, Dr. Evans helps readers apply the truth of God's Word and live transformed lives that transfer the values of the kingdom of God to others.

The *Tony Evans One Volume Bible Commentary* also available.



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## AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART: A FRESH LOOK AT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

People want to live life on their own terms, but God has given us a succinct and clear path to follow through the Ten Commandments. Obedience to these Commandments leads to a rich and full life. King David knew this. Through David's life and psalms, he gave us good examples of what happens when we follow the Ten Commandments, and examples of bad things that can happen when we don't.

**Tony Evans** is senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship and president of *The Urban Alternative*.

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## ALL IN: A LIFE OF COMMITMENT

Commitment is a rather loose word in our culture, but we have no greater idea of what commitment means than when we look at the commitment Christ made for us. Our response to Christ calls for nothing less than a full, all-in commitment to Him. In this study, we will dig into what that commitment entails, and in the process, we will discover there is no greater place to be than "all in" for Christ.

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