A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Why Am I Here?

Starting Out with Christ · Book 11



Christianity 101, Lesson 1

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

Why Am I Here?

Christianity 101 | *Lesson 1*

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Published by Trinfinity Enterprises.

A note before you begin. This book is written to teach the Bible and encourage faith. It shares my understanding of Scripture and is offered for study and spiritual growth. It is not counseling, medical, legal, or financial advice. If you are facing a crisis, a health problem, or a legal or money problem, please reach out to a qualified professional as well as your pastor and church family. To the fullest extent the law allows, Andrew Dominguez, Trinfinity Enterprises, and Andrew Dominguez's heirs, estate, successors, and assigns accept no liability for how this material is used.

A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Study

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this study direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Why Am I Here?

Christianity 101 | Lesson 1

Passage	Ephesians 2:4-10, with Isaiah 43:7, Matthew 22:36-38 and Romans 3:23 and 6:23
Big idea	God made you on purpose, to love you, to be loved by you and to give you real life, and the way into that life is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
Memory verse	Ephesians 2:8-9
Session length	60-75 minutes
What to bring	Bible (SLB), this handout, pen.

Before You Meet (Leader Prep)

For the leader only. Read the passage at least twice during the week and pray for the group by name.

I have believed in God as long as I can remember, yet it took me years to understand what following Him really means. Leading Bible studies and serving as a lay pastor, I saw how many adults still wrestle with the basic questions of purpose and faith. I wrote this first lesson in the Christianity 101 series for anyone who wants plain, honest answers from Scripture.

When I was 16, I wanted to join the Air Force and work with computers. I passed the California High School Proficiency Exam early and aced the testing, so I thought my path was set. When they would not give me the computer job they promised, I walked

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away. Looking back, God had other plans: about 40 years in utilities, a computer repair business, building guitars and writing.

- Read Ephesians 1-2. Paul spends chapter 1 on what God has done for us before he gets to how we are saved in chapter 2.
- Think about your own story: when and how you came to know Christ. You may be asked.
- Expect some people in the room who are not sure they are Christians. Keep it welcoming. Nobody should feel put on the spot during the prayer at the end.

Opening (5-10 minutes)

At some point everybody asks the question: Why am I here? Why do I exist? For some people the answer is hard to find. For others it has been clear their whole life. People also ask a second question: How can I be truly happy? Both questions have the same answer, and it starts with God our Creator.

This first lesson in Christianity 101 covers three things: why God made you, what it means to be a Christian, and how you become one.

Icebreaker: When you were growing up, what did you want to be? How close did you get?

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The Passage (10 minutes)

Have one or two people read the main passage aloud. We will look at the other verses as we go.

> **Ephesians 2:4-10 (SLB)**
>
> [4] But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, [5] even us, being dead in the trespasses, He made alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), [6] and raised ***us*** up together and seated ***us*** together in the heavenly ***places*** in Christ Jesus, [7] in order that He might show in the coming ages the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. [8] For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this ***is*** not from yourselves; the gift ***is*** of God, [9] not from works, so that no one may boast. [10] For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them.

Setting the Scene (5 minutes)

For the main passage, Ephesians 2:4-10.

Who wrote it	The apostle Paul, who names himself in Ephesians 1:1 and 3:1. The church has always held this view; some modern scholars think a follower of Paul wrote it in his name.
To whom	Believers in Ephesus, a major city in what is now western Turkey (Ephesians 1:1). Paul had spent more than two years there (Acts 19:8-10). Some early copies leave out "in Ephesus," so the letter may also have been passed around to nearby churches.

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When and where	Paul wrote while he was a prisoner (Ephesians 3:1; 4:1), most likely in Rome around A.D. 60-62.
What comes before	Ephesians 2:1-3: without Christ we were "dead in the trespasses and the sins" (Ephesians 2:1), following the world and our own desires.
What comes after	Ephesians 2:11-22: Christ brings Jews and Gentiles together into one family, with Himself as the cornerstone.

What It Means (15 minutes)

1. Why am I here? Why do I exist?

Here is the short answer: we were put on this earth to **worship** God. God says His people are those "whom I created for My glory" (Isaiah 43:7). Heaven sings the same thing: "You created all things, and because of Your will they are and were created" (Revelation 4:11).

So how do I find true happiness? I can only find it when I find my purpose in life, and that purpose comes in three parts.

At 16, walking away from the Air Force left me wondering what I was supposed to do next. Later, even when my career was going well and my family was growing, there were seasons I drifted from God and lost sight of why I was here. Each time I came back to Scripture, I remembered that my purpose was never a job title. We exist to know God and walk with Him.

God made me so that He could love me

"We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). God did not make us because He was lonely or needed something. He made us to pour His love on us. "But God demonstrates His own love toward

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us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

God made me so that I could love Him

When a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which commandment is great in the law?" (Matthew 22:36), Jesus answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37). "This is the first and great commandment" (Matthew 22:38). (Here Jesus is quoting the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 6:5.)

God made me so that I could have a full life

God "provides us all things richly for enjoyment" (1 Timothy 6:17). Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Abundant life does not mean an easy life or a rich one. Paul wrote some of his most joyful letters from prison. It means a life full of meaning, joy and peace with God, now and forever. "Fullness of joys is with Your presence" (Psalm 16:11).

So you are part of a masterfully designed plan. God made you for a **purpose**! You are not some cosmic accident that just happened. Life and the way this earth works are too exact to be an accident. As David put it, "in awesome ways I am distinguished" (Psalm 139:14). God created you so that He could enjoy you and love you, and so that you could praise Him.

2. What does it mean to be a Christian?

Followers of Jesus were first called Christians in Antioch (Acts 11:26). The word means someone who belongs to Christ.

To be a Christian means to accept the absolute authority of **Jesus Christ**. It means we do everything in Him, no matter what it is: eating, drinking, buying, selling, reading, working and playing. "Whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the God and Father through Him" (Colossians 3:17). When we live the way He wants us to, we are recognizing Him as the Master of our lives.

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It also means having a **personal** relationship with God. Not a set of rules, not just going to church, but knowing Him: "This is the eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You sent" (John 17:3). Here is how the Bible lays it out:

My family attended the Catholic church when I was young, and the routines did not become real to me. A neighbor, Pastor Jimmy Carter, led me to Christ as a boy. I was baptized on October 19, 1995, and in 2020 I had to face my own failures honestly. Being a Christian means trusting and following Christ every day, not checking a box on Sunday.

- **You were made for a relationship with God.** God made people in His own image (Genesis 1:27). In the beginning Adam and Eve walked with Him in the garden.
- **Sin broke that relationship.** Adam and Eve disobeyed, and the first thing they did was hide from God (Genesis 3:8). We all do the same. "But your iniquities have been separating between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear" (Isaiah 59:2).
- **Jesus came to bring us back.** Jesus is God's eternal Son. The Father sent Him to make peace between God and people. "Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, so that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). To be restored, you trust Him as Savior (believing He died to take away your sins) and as Lord (letting Him run your life).
- **Stay connected to Him.** Being a Christian is not a one-time event. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one remaining in Me and I in him, this one bears much fruit; for apart from Me you are not able to do anything" (John 15:5).

3. What must I do to become a Christian?

Before we can say we are Christians, a few things have to happen.

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First, admit that we are **sinners**. We are sinful by nature, not just by the things we do. As Paul wrote, "all sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

Second, admit that without God's **provision** we are doomed to die forever. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). A wage is what you earn. A gift is something you could never earn.

Third, recognize that God has provided the way of **salvation** for us. We are saved by grace. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; the gift is of God, not from works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). And we are saved for a reason: "For we are His workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we may walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Good works do not save us, but saved people do good works.

How could God do that? "He made the One who did not know sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Jesus took our sin, and we get His righteousness. Through Him "we have had access by faith into this grace in which we stand" (Romans 5:2).

That is the heart of it: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Son, the only begotten, so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. The one who believes in Him is not judged; but the one who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16-18).

There is only one way to God, and that is through His Son Jesus Christ. Jesus said it Himself: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Peter said the same: "And there is not salvation in any other; for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Without

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Christ's sacrifice on the cross we would have no way to spend eternity with God in heaven.

So what do you do? You turn to Him and trust Him. Paul wrote "that if you confess with your mouth Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him out of the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9). "But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

When I was a boy in Victorville, I mowed the lawn for Pastor Jimmy Carter, who lived down our street. He took me to church and showed me that I needed a Savior and that Jesus had already paid for my sin. That is still the same gospel I share today.

Key Terms

Term	Plain meaning	Where it appears
Worship	Giving God the honor He deserves, with your words, your heart and the way you live.	Isaiah 43:7
Sin	Anything we think, say or do (or fail to do) that goes against God. It separates us from Him.	Romans 3:23
Grace	God's kindness that we do not deserve and cannot earn.	Ephesians 2:8
Faith	Trusting God and taking Him at His word.	Ephesians 2:8

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Term	Plain meaning	Where it appears
Salvation	Being rescued by God from sin and its penalty, and brought into a right relationship with Him forever.	Acts 4:12
Righteousness	Being right with God. In Christ, God counts us as right with Him.	2 Corinthians 5:21
Lord	Master and boss. Calling Jesus Lord means He is in charge of my life.	Romans 10:9

Where Christians Read This Differently

Christians agree that salvation is God's gift through Jesus Christ. They describe how a person receives it in different ways.

- **Personal decision:** Many evangelical and Baptist churches teach that a person is saved when they personally repent and put their faith in Christ, often marked by a prayer of commitment. Baptism follows as a public sign of that faith.
- **Baptism as a means of grace:** Catholic, Orthodox and Lutheran churches teach that God gives His grace through baptism, including the baptism of infants, and that faith grows within the life of the church. They point to verses like Acts 2:38.
- **God's work first:** Reformed churches stress that God makes a person spiritually alive first, and that faith is the response. They point to Ephesians 2:4-5, where God made us alive together with Christ "even us, being dead in the trespasses" (Ephesians 2:5).

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My view: There is only one way to God, through His Son Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith, not by anything we do, and we must personally accept Jesus into our hearts and our lives as Savior and Lord. Baptism and church matter a great deal, but they follow that decision; they do not replace it.

Discussion Questions (20-25 minutes)

What does it say?

1. According to Isaiah 43:7 and Matthew 22:37, why did God create us?
2. In Ephesians 2:8-10, what saves us, and what are we saved for?

What does it mean?

3. What is the difference between a wage and a gift in Romans 6:23? Why does that matter?
4. Why do you think so many people find it hard to accept that salvation is free and cannot be earned?
5. What is the difference between knowing about God and knowing God (John 17:3)?

How do I live it?

6. Which of the three purposes (God loves me, I love Him, I can have a full life) is hardest for you to believe right now? Why?
7. If someone asked you this week, "What does it mean to be a Christian?", what would you tell them in two or three sentences?

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Takeaway (5 minutes)

> **This week:** God made you on purpose and for a purpose. The way into that life is not by working for it but by trusting Jesus, who already paid for it.
>
> **Memory verse:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; the gift is of God, not from works, so that no one may boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9, SLB)

Prayer

God has told us these things so we can have real joy and peace. The first step is to ask Him. If you have never put your trust in Jesus, you can do it right now, in your own words. There are no magic words. God is looking at your heart. Here is one way to say it:

Heavenly Father, I know I am a sinner, and I ask You to forgive me. I believe Jesus is Your Son, that He died on the cross for my sins and that You raised Him from the dead. I turn from my sin and I trust Jesus as my Savior and my Lord. Come into my life and make me Yours. Thank You for Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you prayed that today, tell someone in this group or tell your pastor. That is a big deal, and we want to celebrate it with you and help you take the next step.

Going Deeper (Optional)

- Genesis 1-3: How God made us for Himself and how sin broke the relationship.
- Romans 5:1-11: Peace with God through Jesus, and what it cost Him.
- John 3:1-21: Jesus explains to Nicodemus what it means to be born again.

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- 2 Corinthians 5:17-21: In Christ we are new, and God has made peace with us.
- Galatians 2:20: Paul on living by faith in the Son of God.

Leader Notes

Question 1 (why God created us): For His glory (Isaiah 43:7), so that we would love Him with everything we have (Matthew 22:37), and so He could pour out His love on us (1 John 4:19).

Question 3 (wage and gift): A wage is earned; a gift is given. Death is what sin earns. Eternal life cannot be earned at all, only received. That is why no one can boast (Ephesians 2:9).

If someone asks "What about good people who are not Christians?": Romans 3:23 says all have sinned, so no one is good enough on their own. That is the point of grace. Jesus said no one comes to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). Answer with kindness. The goal is to point to Jesus, not to win an argument.

Fill-in version: If you teach this as a class, the key words in bold in "What It Means" make good fill-in blanks: worship, purpose, Jesus Christ, personal, sinners, provision, salvation.

Sources

Every outside fact in this study comes from one of these. Scripture is from the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB) throughout.

- Paul's time in Ephesus and the letter's setting: Acts 19:8-10 and Ephesians 1:1; 3:1; 4:1. Early copies without "in Ephesus," the circular letter idea, and the Rome date: "Epistle to the Ephesians," Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Ephesians.
- Church views on how salvation is received are summarized as each tradition states its own teaching; no outside text is quoted.

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Acronym List

SLB: Steadfast Literal Bible

A.D.: Anno Domini, Latin for "in the year of our Lord"

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Why Am I Here?

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Sooner or later everybody asks it: why am I here? This first lesson in Christianity 101 looks at why God made you, what it means to be a Christian, and how you become one, by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Built for one small group session of 60 to 75 minutes.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from yourselves; the gift is of God, not from works, so that no one may boast.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (SLB)

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