

5

ONE GREAT COMMITMENT



What are some decisions you have enjoyed making?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLtruth

To be saved, I must trust in Christ.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Life is full of decisions. Lots of them. Columbia researcher Sheena lyengar estimates that we make about 70 decisions every day. Do the math and that's around 25,500 decisions a year—or about 1,788,500 decisions if you live 70 years.¹

- ▶ Some decisions come easy. *Yes, I will marry you!*
- ▶ Some decisions carry small consequences. *Do I order the chicken salad or the tuna salad?*
- ▶ Some decisions bring lots of stress. *Do I take the better job even though the move will uproot my family?*

The biggest decisions are life-changing, even eternal. The greatest decision we will ever make centers on what we do with Jesus Christ. Knowing about Jesus is not enough. Our need for salvation is answered in Jesus, but we each must decide whether we will commit to that truth and trust Him—or not.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul emphasized the critical importance of this decision. It's the choice of a lifetime.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Romans 10:1-3

¹ Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God concerning them is for their salvation! ² I can testify about them that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ Because they disregarded the righteousness from God and attempted to establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to God's righteousness.

The Jewish people of Paul's day had a great "zeal for God," so why didn't they already have salvation? Because their zeal was "not according to knowledge." The Jews believed they had good standing with God because of the law, their religious traditions, and their religious activity. They were sincere in their endeavors, but their sincerity was tragically misplaced. No matter how hard they tried, they could never be good enough to earn favor with God.

They weren't alone in their zeal without knowledge. At the core of most religions is the belief that people are basically good and can work their way to God. Even in the church, a lot of people fill their lives with religious activities and good morals, thinking these things will give them a connection to God. But merely being a religious person is not enough.

This is what makes Christianity unique. Christianity focuses on what Jesus did; other religions focus on what we should do. God came down to earth in the Person of Jesus and lived a sinless life. In His perfect righteousness He took our sin on Himself, willingly went to the cross, and died in our place. Then He rose three days later from the grave, having defeated sin and death. For this reason, there is no other way of salvation; Christ alone saves.

Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

Christians have been saved because of the blood of Christ. If that weren't amazing enough, when we trust Jesus for salvation, His righteousness is credited to our account. No one else can do this for us. No one else died to save us. Christ alone saves.

Where in our culture do we often see zeal without knowledge?

QUESTION #2

The answer we need is all wrapped up in Jesus. But knowing about Jesus is not enough. Having a zeal for God—or even knowing the truth about Jesus—does not guarantee salvation. We have to act on that knowledge.

Romans 10:8b-10

^{8b} This is the message of faith that we proclaim: ⁹ 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.

¹⁰ One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation.

If knowing the truth about Jesus isn’t enough, what do we need to do? Paul used two verbs to give us the answer.

- ▶ **Confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord.”** To confess something means literally “to speak the same thing.” The word “Lord” comes from the Greek word *kurios*, which signifies Jesus’ sovereign power and authority. So, when we confess, we are agreeing with God that Jesus is the sovereign Lord with authority over all—including our lives. We further agree with God by living in submission to the rule of Jesus.
- ▶ **Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.** To believe in the death of Jesus doesn’t go far enough. I know Jesus is Lord because even death cannot hold Him. He died for me, but He is alive because God raised Him. Without the resurrection, Jesus would have been just a really good man who died a very tragic death. The fact that separates Jesus from all other religious leaders is that Jesus died *and* rose from the dead—and is alive today. God approved of Jesus’ sacrifice by raising Him from the dead, and He is the One and only Lord.



What are the implications of confessing Jesus as Lord?

QUESTION #3

Confess and believe. We shouldn't view these as two separate actions. One is an inward belief and the other is an outward confession, but you really can't have one without the other. They are two sides of the same coin.

When you fully believe in your heart, you can't help but confess and live out that belief.

Confessing and believing are not a form of "easy believism." Far from it. "Easy believism" teaches grace without repentance, salvation without commitment. Many want Jesus to save them from hell, but they don't want to live their lives for Him. But we can't accept Jesus as our Savior without embracing Him as Lord.

Submitting to Christ's lordship is essential for salvation. When we confess Christ as Lord, we are essentially saying: "Jesus, You alone are sovereign. You alone have all power. You alone are my Master. Therefore, I surrender to You. My life is no longer mine—it's Yours."

What makes salvation both easy and difficult?

QUESTION #4



Romans 10:11-13

¹¹ Now the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on Him will not be put to shame, ¹² for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, since the same Lord of all is rich to all who call on Him.

¹³ For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Who is able to confess and believe in Jesus? Anyone and everyone. The gospel is for Jew and Gentile alike. The word “everyone” demonstrates the openness of God’s call to salvation. God makes no distinction between people; He desires for all people to be saved. Salvation is available for all people regardless of ethnicity, race, or background.

The only requirement is that every individual must trust in Christ to receive that salvation. God’s salvation is for all people by grace through faith in Christ. “The same Lord of all is rich to all who call on Him.”

God is rich to all! It’s not that He responds to everyone who prays a prayer, but extends special favor only to certain people, such the Jews or those who are especially upright or religious. No. God extends His riches—all the blessings of living in His presence—to everyone who calls on His name.

Those who call on the name of Jesus are changed, regardless of who they are (or who they used to be). I recently worked alongside a Japanese believer to share the gospel in Brazil. During the same time, a group from my church worked alongside believers from Nepal to reach kids in Kansas City through Vacation Bible School. This is a great expression of the power and extent of the gospel. The gospel extends around the world to save Americans, Brazilians, Japanese, and Nepalese. Everyone.

Any of us can come to faith in Christ—and we can share that faith with anyone. And we must share our faith. Because salvation in Christ is the only hope for a lost world.

How has the gospel changed your life?

QUESTION #5

JESUS IS LORD

How has your understanding of Jesus' nature and identity changed over the course of your life? Use the space below to record what you knew about Jesus in the following categories:

When you were a child:

When you were a teen:

5 years ago:

Today:

"The gospel is open to all.
The most respectful sinner has no more claim on it
than the worst."

—DR. MARTIN LLOYD JONES

LIVE IT OUT

What actions will you take this week in light of the truth that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ alone? Consider the following suggestions:

- ▶ **Accept.** If you have not yet believed in Jesus and confessed Him as Lord, do so now. Trust Him for forgiveness from your sin. Turn to Him for a new life. Read the inside front cover of this study for guidance on following Christ.
- ▶ **Examine.** Make time this week to assess your relationship with Jesus. Are you growing closer to Him? Are you studying His Word? Are you sharing the truth of the gospel with others?
- ▶ **Start.** Help launch a new Bible study in your church, neighborhood, or community with the purpose of reaching those who need to hear the truth about Jesus.



You're going to make around 70 decisions today. Be sure to make one that has the potential to be life-changing, either for you or for someone you know.

My thoughts

Share with others how you will live out this study: **#BSFLtruth**

1. https://www.ted.com/talks/sheena_ijengar_choosing_what_to_choose?