

Why Follow Jesus?

Why We Come #3: We seek to connect our personal growth programs with God's word and the life of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

It's obvious by our presence in a recovery meeting that we have some level of a personal growth program. The question is, whose growth program is it? In my time of need, have I gone to a sure place where the real problem that plagues me can be addressed?

There are many programs and many strategies that can help us not pick up today. However, what keeps us sober and clean at any time in our life is our willingness to "get a life" instead of chasing after empty pain killers or promises of pleasure. Otherwise, we will work hard for a while but then something within me or my circumstances will be too much for the personal power I've invested in "doing the right thing" and we will become frustrated or just too tired to try again and we will falter.

The one place where we can safely learn what real life and real recovery looks like is the source of all life – His name is Jesus.

Jesus says: **"I am the way, the truth, and the life."** That's a pretty strong statement from someone to all of us who are used to doing things our way and basing our hopes and dreams on our own experience. We are also told in God's word that: **"There is a path before each person that seems right, but it ends in death."**

God alone knows what is best for each of us. Only God has all the information necessary to give good guidance over the long haul. We make choices that seem good for the time but before we know it we end up in trouble and wonder what happened. Sometimes we even blame God when we find ourselves burdened down by our troubles. We were never made to live on our own but were created to live in relationship with God through Jesus Christ. We were made to be forgiven and healed and saved from a life following our own inadequate plans. We were created to live in a new way that God would show us, and empower us, through the Holy Spirit to live. This new life would be meaningful and satisfying. It would be the way of life and truth.

God invites us today to consider the consequences of our own choices and to make a new and living choice. The Bible shows us how God sees us with these words: **You are saying, "Our sins are heavy upon us; we are wasting away! How can we survive?" As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people ...**

Why should you die? ...The good works of righteous people will not save them if they turn to sin, nor will the sins of evil people destroy them if they repent and turn from their sins. (Ezekiel 33)

If we are experiencing life in any way that is not what we hoped it would be, then there is some way that we are doing things on our own and some way that we are not surrendering ourselves to Jesus.

God makes some promises to us. God invites us to trust in these good words that He says are dependable when we face troubles. We often feel sorry for ourselves and choose to believe lies instead of standing up for something. We often cave in to frustration and disappointment instead of holding onto the truth until our emotions and circumstances line up with God's promised words of help and strength.

Here are some examples of promises God makes to us that we can hang onto and use to change our lives in positive ways:

Instead of saying, "I can't", God tells me that, **"I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength"** (Philippians 4)

Instead of complaining that I am weak and that what I have in my life is "too much" I can affirm the truth that **"the Lord is the strength of my life. I will display strength and take action because I know God."** (Psalm 27; Daniel 11).

Why should I allow Satan supremacy over my life when **He that is in me is greater than he that is in the world?** (1 John 4)

Instead of worrying and fretting about how things will work out, God tells us to **"cast all your anxiety on Christ who cares for you."** (1 Peter 5)

If I am missing something and feeling a lack, God has provision for me. It's His way that works and I'll have to make new choices for His way rather than my familiar ways of reacting with "fight or flight" when life doesn't go my way. I need to let go and let God help me behave in a new way that puts His promises into practice. It's time to follow Jesus because that's the only way to find the life I desperately want.

Questions For Reflection and Discussion

1. What does it mean, in a practical way, to connect my personal recovery program with God's word and the life of Jesus Christ?
2. What actions and attitudes in my life are those that God continues to ask me to turn from, that God considers harmful?
3. As I face difficulties and troubles, what are the new ways that I can face them with Christ in my life?