

People use the word “God” in many different (often conflicting) ways. But there is only one true and living God—the One revealed to us in the Bible. Who is he, and do you know him yourself? Read on to find out.

1. **The God who created and rules over the whole world is holy, perfect and good in every way.** He promises one day to punish and make right all the evil and injustice that we see in the world. “Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth. Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns’ ... He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth” (Psalm 96:9, 10, 13).
2. **We are all offenders against God’s holiness—every man, woman and child.** Of course, we all want to see wrongs punished and the world made right. The problem is that criminals and terrorists aren’t the only ones who are guilty of evil and injustice. In the Bible’s language, we are all “sinners.” Not only do we do bad things, but also deep down we are bad people. So if God is to make things right, each one of us must be judged, too. “There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one” (Romans 3:10-12).
3. **The good news is: Not only is God perfectly holy, but he is also loving, patient and merciful toward the world.** He has made a way to show both perfect justice and loving patience toward us. In his great mercy, God has provided a way for us to escape the punishment we deserve. “Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:3-5).
4. **How can God be just and merciful at the same time? He came into the world as one of us: the man Jesus Christ.** Jesus announced that he was bringing God’s perfect kingdom, and he did it (surprisingly) by dying on a Roman cross, then becoming alive again. By dying, Jesus suffered just punishment in the place of his people. By becoming alive again, he secured the eventual end of death and evil for all those who trust in him. He invites everyone to trust him and so be rescued from sin and judgment. “This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:9-10).
5. **If we do not trust Jesus, then we must stand alone and face God’s justice. But if we turn away from our sins and trust Jesus, we find a whole new life following him.** For example, we become able to practice radical generosity out of love for God and concern for others. Beyond that, we will live forever with God and enjoy the world made right again. “Jesus said: ‘I tell you the truth: whoever

hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life' ” (John 5:24).

6. **Friend, we invite you to trust Jesus today.** If you want to learn more about the living God, or if you want to trust in Jesus and follow him, there are several things you can do: (1) *Read the Bible.* Start with the book of John and meet Jesus for the first time. You will be amazed at who he is and what he has done. (2) *Connect with a church.* Not all churches are the same. Be sure you find a church that believes and teaches the Bible. Learn from other people who follow Jesus. (3) *Pray to God.* Ask for his forgiveness and his help. Ask Jesus to rescue you and give you new life. (4) *Try giving money away to God's work.* It might surprise you how it will teach you more about God and his generosity to you. A generous giver is someone who, in the language of Scripture, is “rich toward God.”