

A new kind of life

God's Promise and Your Future

The life cycle of the butterfly is an amazing example of the Creator's power to change life. Every butterfly starts out as a caterpillar. But the beautiful adult does not look at all like the wormlike creature it came from. Its appearance, its body structure and functions, indeed its very nature, have totally changed.

This transformation is called metamorphosis.

How the bible message can change your life

Personal metamorphosis. That's what happens to you when you discover God's promises, when you accept the Bible's message and base your life on it. Your new life as a believer can be very different from the life you have now—as different as the soaring butterfly is from the crawling caterpillar.

Your life takes on new meaning and hope. You have true peace and contentment. You know God's final purpose with this world. You realize that He cares about the world and about you as a person.

A transformation takes place as you gain more and more knowledge of God's word and apply it in your life. This "renewing of your mind" is the beginning of a new kind of life.

"Be ye transformed* by the renewing of your mind." Romans 12, verse 2

You become like a new person:

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

II Corinthians 5, verse 17

God's promise of eternal life

A more meaningful life today is only the start. God's ultimate promise to true believers is life after death—a totally new kind of life in a trans-

formed world.

Whether or not you like to think about it, you will someday die. The Bible offers you a chance to be raised from the dead and made immortal.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Romans 6, verse 23

Eternal life involves sharing the very nature of God forever. It is a state of being which cannot be compared to the life you have now—no sin, sadness, pain or death; a perfect mind, character and body; and an ideal environment in the kingdom Jesus Christ will set up here on earth when he returns.

In the Old Testament the prophet Isaiah describes immortality as "everlasting joy".

Why isn't the world full of love, joy and peace?

The Bible invites you to accept the gospel of Christ and to become a part of God's family. Your life in Christ here and now can be filled with "the fruit of the Spirit", a sampling of what eternal life will be like.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."

Galatians 5, verses 22 and 23
(Revised Standard Version)

Few people on this earth can say they truly lead lives of love, joy and peace (and the other fruits of the

Spirit). Many are not content with their lives. Many have trouble coping with life's problems and stresses.

Unhappy or insecure with their own situation, human beings bring unhappiness on other human beings through direct actions or neglect.

People always seem to want more. More money. More power. More possessions. Individuals and nations seek satisfaction by any means.

Self-seeking is a fact of human nature. And human nature, with all its weaknesses, is the main source of what is wrong in this world.

The human factor

Human nature is a funny thing. It enables you to relate to God, yet it holds you back from Him.

First of all, you have a mind that sets you apart from the animals. You can think, understand ideas, make moral decisions, have ideals, love and hate. You have an intellect, emotions and a spiritual consciousness.

When the Bible describes how God created the first man, it mentions another quality unique to human beings.

"God created man in his own image."

Genesis 1, verse 27

"The image of God" is more than a mere physical likeness. It is your God-given potential to develop a character like God's, to strive to be the way God wants you to be.

Another fact about your human

*The New Testament was originally written in Greek. "Transformed" is the Greek word "metamorphoo". You can easily tell that our English word "metamorphosis" comes from the same Greek root.

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nature is that you are not a robot programmed to do what God knows is best for you. You make your own decisions. You can respond to God and experience the benefits and responsibilities of a life in Christ. Or you can choose to do things your own way.

If left to itself, your human nature will take you away from the ways of God. For human nature has a big weakness— sin.

What is sin?

Anyone with a sense of right and wrong recognizes obvious forms of sin, such as murder, cruelty and sexual perversion.

On the personal level, you know you have shortcomings. Whether or not you have clear values to live by, you sometimes regret your actions or find yourself unable to carry out your best intentions.

No doubt by your own standards you often miss the mark.

The original Hebrew and Greek words “to sin” both mean “to miss the mark”. Sin is coming short of the glory of God, missing God’s mark of a perfect mind and character.

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”

Romans 3, verse 23

No one can honestly claim to be perfect. Everyone is sinful. That is why life is so far from ideal.

Human law and human ideas of right and wrong are changeable, often arbitrary. One person may feel something is completely wrong, while another may think the same thing is quite all right.

The Almighty Creator has divine principles that do not change. These

principles, revealed in the Bible, give you positive values to live by.

Whenever you fall short of these values, you sin.

Sin, however, is more than simply doing wrong deeds. You can’t avoid sin by conforming to a catalog of “thou shalt not’s”.

Even if you avoid specific acts such as stealing, killing and adultery, you are sinful. Your natural impulses still conflict with God’s law. Your mind is not perfectly in tune with God’s. You still fall short of living up to the absolute goodness of God. Everyone does.

The only person who ever came up to God’s standard of perfection was Jesus Christ. Through him God offers you forgiveness and a new life outside the grip of sin.

The end result of sin

Sin started with the first man, Adam.

God created Adam and put him into a beautiful environment; the Garden of Eden offered all the advantages he could ever wish for. Only one law limited what Adam could do:

“Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Genesis 2, verses 16 and 17

God made it clear from the start that if Adam broke this law he would die.

When his wife Eve offered him a fruit from the forbidden tree, Adam had to make a choice. Would he obey God’s law or follow his own reasoning? He chose to disobey his Creator and eat the fruit.

From then on, death was a reality.

Adam did not die right away.

Rather, his nature became mortal and he had to leave the Garden. He died many years later. As a result of Adam’s sin, death became built into human nature.

“By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.”

Romans 5, verse 12

Is there a way to avoid death?

“For the wages of sin is death”

Romans 6, verse 23.

We all sin, and we all die. Death— with all the pain, sorrow and loneliness it brings— is inevitable because of human nature.

You can’t avoid death. But God has set down in the pages of the Bible the way you can be raised from the dead and receive the gift of a new and better life. Jesus Christ is going to come back to this earth. When he does he will raise his true believers from death and grant them the gift of immortal life. They will live forever on an earth no longer dominated by sin and its effects, but ruled by Christ himself.

“... gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6, verse 23

What you can do now

Life is full of problems. The world faces major global problems. You as an individual face a variety of personal problems.

Before you can solve a problem you have to identify its cause. Once you know what’s wrong you can take the necessary action. If you can’t

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solve the problem yourself, you look beyond yourself to someone who can help you.

Sin is the root cause of the problems which fill this present life. Sin in all its forms— hate, pride, dishonesty and greed, to name a few. Sin with all its consequences.

Sin is a part of your nature. You can control your sinfulness by applying the word of God in your life.

But human nature prevents you from completely overcoming it and freeing yourself from its influence.

This is where repentance and faith come in.

Admit you are sinful. Pray to God for help and forgiveness. Resolve to live your life His way.

And above all, know, believe and apply the word of God; it explains how you can be freed from “the law of sin and death” through faith in Jesus Christ.

So look beyond yourself. In the pages of the Bible God reveals His promise of a new kind of life free from sin and its effects.

The most important thing you can do for yourself right now is to learn and understand God's message and make it part of your life.

Recap

The Bible message can transform your present life and give you the hope of eternal life in the future kingdom of God on earth.

Sin— the source of all that is wrong in the world— can only be overcome through Jesus Christ.

Recommended Bible Readings

Sin and death enter the world: Genesis 1, 2 and 3.

Through Jesus Christ comes freedom from the effects of sin and a new kind of life, present and future: Romans 5 and 6. Galatians 5, verses 13 to 26.