

**CAN I GET A DO OVER?**

If you're getting this book, chances are you've just recently made the most important decision you could ever make. And it's that choice that we're going to be talking about in more detail as we go through these pages. But it all starts here.

Remember when you were younger and you were playing a game with either your brothers or sisters or with some neighborhood friends? If you were anything like me, there would be certain times that you had perfectly thought through a move or something you were going to do. Maybe it was as simple as you planned to win and then they surprised you and somehow they won. As a young child playing just for fun, I remember countless times when I'd yell out at that point,

“LET’S DO THAT OVER! I WANT A DO-OVER!”

Please tell me you did that once or twice too. I know I'm a competitive person, so I especially like to win, but I don't think any of us likes to lose. So when things had gone wrong, we wanted the chance to do it over.

Ever wish that you could do that in real life?

Wouldn't it be pretty convenient if there were a button you could push like you can on a computer that would just redo, reload, or refresh everything? A fresh start.

That's what happens when you make the decision to give your life to God. You accept the sacrifice that Jesus made for you and allow His Holy Spirit to live inside of you making you new. Some call it being a Christian, which is true, but it's so much more than just a name you wear.

There are plenty of people in our world that wear a name tag that says, “Christian” but have never experienced the abundant life and freedom that are found in letting God give you a fresh start in Him.

It’s why the Bible tells us, *“If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come”* (2 Corinthians 5:17). We’re a new creation, a new person, when we’re in Christ. That’s why I said that this is the most important decision you could ever make. What could possibly be more important than exploring and living out the life you were originally created to live? But that’s me getting ahead of myself.

See, I think in some ways the choice you’ve made to give God your life and accept His gift of salvation is incredibly simple and straightforward. It’s why anyone can do it. You don’t need to be some college professor, preacher, or perfectionist. It’s a message that meets you right at your level. But on the other hand, I know that there are a lot of things you should know about the decision you’ve made and all that it means for your life from here on...well...to eternity!

As we go through this book, we’re going to be answering some of the questions you may have. We’re going to try to cover as much of the basics as we can. But you should know that following Jesus thing is something that we get to do all our lives and learn about as we go. So ask questions, even as you’re answering the questions that we end each chapter with. Those questions are there to get you thinking, so think. And take a little time to write out your answers and any questions you may have as you go along.

You’ve just begun the greatest journey of your life. You get the do-over you’ve always wanted. Congratulations! Your new life has started!

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Do-overs aren't really that important if everything has gone perfect and as planned. But life doesn't usually work like that, does it? Why don't you take a minute or two to write down some of the different things that you know you've done wrong. You don't have to be specific. Just list where you could have and should have done something differently.

What does it mean to you, in your words, to be a new creation and get a fresh chance to live life like God planned for you?

If you got the chance to sit across the table from God and look Him in the eye and tell Him what you need from Him, what would you say?



WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Maybe you've heard the word "gospel" before. It's a word from biblical times where the Greeks used it to say "good news." Now you know why we talk about the gospel of Christ, because what could be better news than this? For the next couple of chapters, we're going to use "GOOD NEWS" to help us discover what this gospel is all about. So for this chapter, we start with where it all began...

GOD CREATED US TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM.

When you read Genesis chapters 1 and 2 (which I encourage you to go do right now!) you'll see that God created the world. Everything in it, even down to separating the land from the ocean, God created it. He just spoke it into existence, and it was there.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. (Genesis 1:1–3)

That may seem a bit far-fetched and hard to believe. But think of how the president works. If he gives orders to someone or some group of people under his leadership, guess what? They do it. He just says the word, and troops are deployed. He just says the word, and he has a coffee in his hand. His position means that he can just say that he wants something, and for many things, he'll just get them. But the president is just a man. Imagine God, who is above everything, bigger than everything, and perfect. Now if He were to give orders to the world to be created, it would happen. If He commanded the water to separate so some land could come up, it would happen. If He told

plants and trees to be there, it would happen. And that's what did happen.

Some say they don't have the faith to believe that. But I think it takes a lot of faith to believe the other option: that stuff was just there and that this world, as incredibly complicated as it is, just happened essentially by accident. You could put a few million monkeys at computers and give them all the time in the world, and they would still never end up writing *Romeo and Juliet*. You could put all the pieces to a Rolex watch in a box and seal it and throw it in the ocean where it would get tossed about for millions of years and it would never ever put itself together to be a working, ticking watch.

Our bodies alone are more complicated than a Shakespeare play or an expensive watch. So how could we possibly believe that this was just by accident? Instead, God tells us that He created us on purpose. And look at that relationship He had with Adam. They were in perfect relationship. Adam and his wife Eve were able to just walk through the perfect garden of Eden with the God that had just spoke the earth into existence. Can you imagine?!

And so the story starts here, and it has to. Without seeing this part of the story, we don't have any real assurance that God wants to even be in relationship with you and me. But look at how He created everything in the beginning. God created man in relationship with Him. And that's the way He wants it.

Some people have this idea that God is some distant, old man in the sky who is like a grandpa sitting on the porch yelling at kids for stepping on his lawn. That picture doesn't really fit with the one that He actually gives us. God shows us that He actually likes taking walks with humanity, talking about life and everything it includes.

This is how it was in the beginning. It was perfect. It was how God intended life to be with Him and us. We need to see this before we get

to what happens next.

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What did God create on each of the days of creation? You can look up the answers in Genesis 1.

DAY 01	
DAY 02	
DAY 03	
DAY 04	
DAY 05	
DAY 06	
DAY 07	

In the last chapter we talked about you being a new creation. Remember that? When you look at how God originally made creation, what does that show you about the relationship that He is looking to get back to with us?
