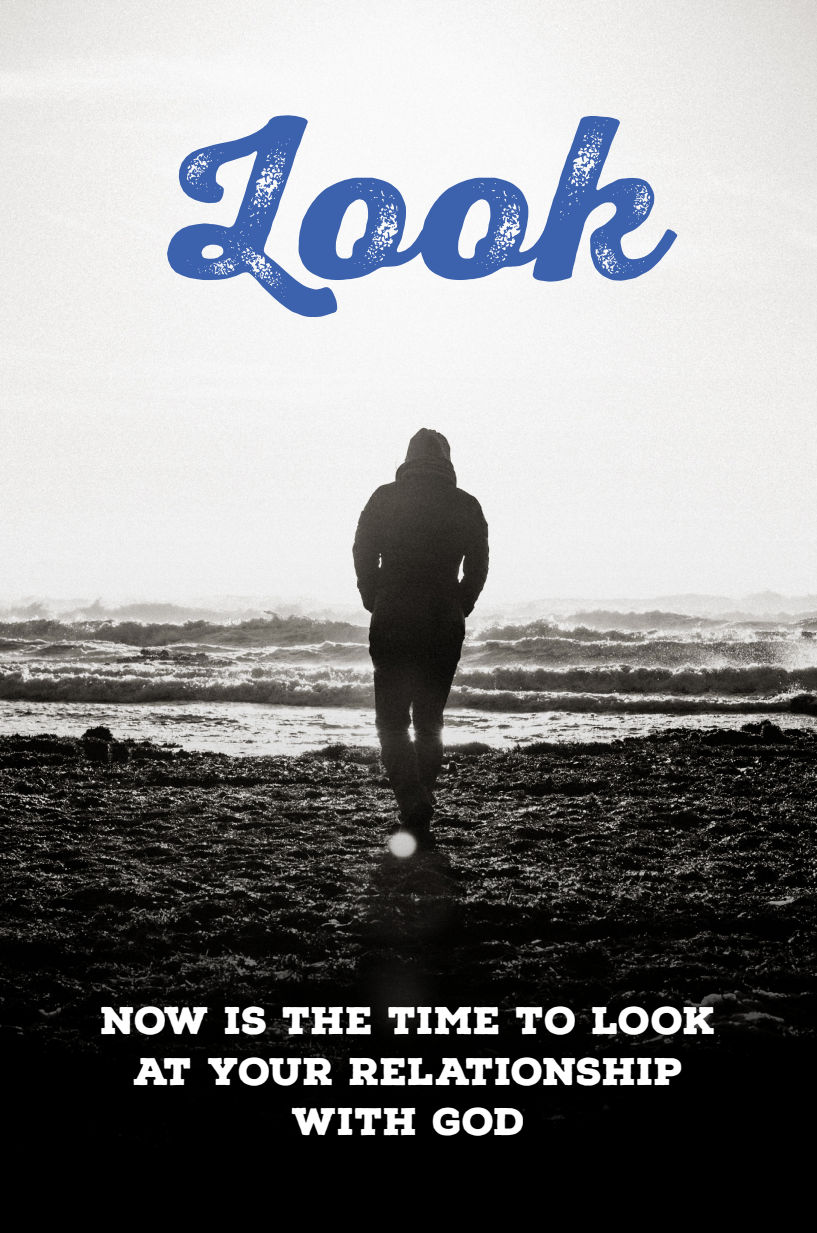


Look

A black and white photograph of a person in a hoodie walking away from the camera on a beach towards the ocean. The person is centered in the frame, and the ocean waves are visible in the background. The sky is bright and hazy.

**NOW IS THE TIME TO LOOK
AT YOUR RELATIONSHIP
WITH GOD**

#3

Look at God's Solution

One of the things the Bible teaches us about God is that he initiates – he seeks us when we are lost. In fact, without him reaching out to us, we would have no hope of finding him. Knowing that our very best attempts are not good enough to deal with the problem of sin, he paid a very high price to offer us his solution.

THERE ARE THREE KEY THINGS GOD DID TO OPEN A WAY FOR US

1. He sent his only Son, Jesus, to earth to become a man

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, „This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”) Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and f is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”

John 1:14-19

Though Jesus “became flesh” when he was born in Bethlehem 2000 years ago, the Bible teaches that he has eternally existed with the Father and the Holy Spirit. These three form the “trinity” or “three in one”. God is one, yet exists in three persons, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Ask the person who is doing this study to explain this more to you if you have questions.

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Why do you think it was so important that the “Word became flesh”?

What does it mean that he was “full of grace and truth”?

Why do you think no one has ever seen God?

How do you think Jesus made God “known”?

2. Though he was perfect, Jesus died on the cross and took the punishment for our sins.

“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.’”

John 1:29

“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Romans 5:6-8

“He himself bore our sins’ in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

1.Peter 2:24-25

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What do you think John meant when he called Jesus the “Lamb of God”?

Why do you think our sins required a punishment so severe as death?

Imagine how you feel when you have to carry the guilt and punishment for something you have done wrong. What do you think it would have been like for Jesus, who was totally clean and perfect, to bear that kind of pain?

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What do you think it means when it says, “by his wounds you have been healed”?

3. After three days, God raised him from the dead, breaking the power of sin and death.

Shortly before his death, Jesus predicted that he would come back from the grave:

“Jesus answered them, ‘Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days.’ They replied, ‘It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?’ But the temple he had spoken of was his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.”

John 2:19-22

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Why do you think it is significant that he made this statement before he died?

Why do you think his followers (the disciples) believed when they later remembered he had said this?

Just a few months later, after the resurrection, Peter, one of Jesus followers, described it this way to a group of Jews in Jerusalem.

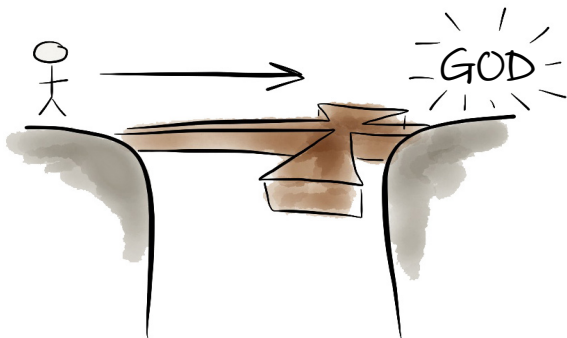
"This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him."

Acts 2:23-24

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Why do you think it was "impossible for death to keep its hold on him"?

Peter made this point a central part of his message. Why do you think the resurrection is so important?



Now we have seen three amazing things that God did to reach out to us when we were far from him. In the next lesson we will talk about what you need to do to make his gift apply to you.

A deeper Look

DID JESUS REALLY RISE FROM THE DEAD?

The resurrection is one of the key teachings of Christianity. When Jesus rose from the grave the power of sin and death was conquered, and a way was opened for us to also experience life after death. But did it really happen? Could it be just a fabrication the disciples made up after Jesus was crucified?

There is strong evidence for the reliability of the resurrection story. An elite Roman guard was assigned to guard the tomb, yet three days later it was empty. A huge stone was rolled over the entrance, and the seal of the Roman emperor placed on it to prevent it from being disturbed. Still, on the third day, Jesus was gone.

In the next 40 days he appeared on multiple occasions, and was seen by a total of over 500 people. Seeing their master alive turned his followers from a group of frightened outcasts to bold preachers who changed the civilized world in one generation.

The Romans or Jews could have stopped it all by just producing a body. If the disciples had made it up, would they really die for a lie? In the face of intense opposition, how did the message of his resurrection spread so effectively? Those who had seen the events for themselves concluded that it was true.