

International Conversation Café

Community Group: What It Means to Follow Jesus

One of the most famous verses in the Bible is John 3:16. It says,

God loved the world so much,
that he gave his one and only Son,
That whoever believes on him,
Will not perish,
But will have eternal life.

1. *Whom does God love?*
2. *“Eternal life,” means to share God’s life, now and forever. “Perish,” means to be ruined or destroyed. It is the opposite of eternal life. Explain your understanding of these concepts.*
3. *According to this verse, how does one receive eternal life?*
4. *Can you give an illustration or example of faith or trust?*

In John 6:25-29, John wrote about an interaction between Jesus and a crowd which had come out to see him after they had heard that he fed thousands of people with five loaves of bread and two fish:

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to *believe* in the one he has sent.”

1. *God does not require us to do good works to experience his love, acceptance and forgiveness. How do you feel about that?*
2. *Many religions teach that good things must be done to receive God’s love, acceptance and forgiveness. In such religions, the person doesn’t know if they have done enough good things to go to heaven until they meet God when they die. How are faith and works opposite of each other? In what ways are they connected?*
3. *How can Jesus save us from eternal ruin?*

“I believe in Jesus. Now what?”

The Bible teaches that believers in Jesus should do good works. However, it's important to remember that we don't do good works *in order* to receive God's love; we do them *because* we receive God's love. “We love him because he first loved us.” I John 4:19

Take a minute to look over the other gifts that God gives those who follow Jesus.

- a. Forgiveness of sins “In whom (Jesus) we have forgiveness of sins.”
Colossians 1:14
- b. The presence of Jesus with us. Jesus said, “I will never leave you or forsake you.”
Hebrews 13:5
- c. God the Father welcomes you into His family. “Think how much the Father loves us. He loves us so much that he lets us be called his children, as we truly are.” I John 3:1
- d. The gifts of love, joy, and peace. These are gifts from the Holy Spirit that we feel as we love God. God then gives us the strength to obey God and love others.
Galatians 5:22, 23

How do you think the gifts God gives motivate us to love and serve God?

Consider what God does not promise.

- a. Wealth. God promises to meet our needs, not our wishes.
- b. Ease. Jesus does not promise that our life will be easy. The disciples experienced opposition from their families and society. To be a Christian will involve some suffering and rejection of others. Jesus says, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”

To Sum It Up

Restate what the Bible teaches about “good works,” before and after one trusts in Jesus.

What gifts that God gives are especially appealing to you?

What seems especially hard about following Jesus?

What are your next steps?