

A photograph of a rural landscape at sunset or sunrise. A paved road with white dashed lines curves from the bottom left towards the horizon. The sides of the road are lined with tall, golden-yellow grass. In the distance, there are rolling hills and mountains. The sky is filled with large, billowing clouds, with bright sunlight streaming through them, creating a warm glow over the entire scene.

# An Invitation from God

# An Invitation from God

by David Liesenfelt

# An Invitation from God

## You Are Not Here by Chance

One of the biggest questions facing mankind is: Why am I here? We want to know why we are alive and if there is any purpose to our lives. The truth is, you are not here by chance. You were made for an incredible and eternal purpose. And as you search for understanding from the God who made you, you will find answers more amazing and awe-inspiring than you could ever imagine.

## The Creator God Made Everything

In the beginning, the Creator God made everything. All things seen and unseen in heaven and earth were made by Him and for Him. He made the sun, the moon, the stars, the oceans and streams, the flowers and trees. He made every animal, each after its own kind and able to produce after its own kind. But when it came to making mankind, God said, “Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” God gave man dominion over the earth, over all its vegetation and its creatures. And God placed the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden and told them they could eat whatever they wanted, except for the fruit of one tree, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They could even eat of the tree of life, the tree that would give them life forever.

*Scriptures: Genesis 1:1-2:3; John 1:1-3; Genesis 1:26-27; Genesis 1:26-2:25*

## The Dignity of Choice

God gave mankind the dignity of choice, the right to choose between following Him or rejecting Him. Eve chose to not follow God when she decided to listen to the Serpent, who is known as Satan the Devil. Satan tempted her with the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and Eve, seeing that it was good for food and desirable to make one wise, took of it and ate. And then she gave to Adam and he ate. And the eyes of both of them were opened and they were ashamed. And instead of giving them a better life, their disregard for God’s instruction actually ruined their life, bringing with it the biggest curse – death.

*Scriptures: Genesis 2:9, 16-17; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Genesis 3:1-24*

## The Shame of a Wrong Choice

Like Adam and Eve, we live in a world today that has been deceived by that same Serpent. We believe we can partake of things that are against

God's instruction without suffering the consequences. Nothing could be further from the truth! Men and women have continued to reject God's counsel and God's ways and the result is a world filled with hatred, lust, envy, greed, lying, cheating, immorality, murder and war. And like Adam and Eve, most people in this world live in shame, in guilt, with a low self-image, without a clue as to the reasons they were created in the first place. Maybe that is where you find yourself today.

*Scriptures: Revelation 12:9; Ephesians 2:2-3; Galatians 6:7-8; Romans 2:6-11; Romans 1:18-32; Romans 3:9-18, 23; Romans 5:12-14*

### **Know Your Enemy**

It is Satan's desire to keep you in bondage to sin, which can easily be summed up in one word – selfishness. Satan knows that he can keep you enslaved as long as you continue to reject God's ways to pursue those things which only please yourself. If Satan can keep humans' minds off God and on themselves, he knows he can control the world. Eventually selfishness always comes out in lies to get what we want, in unfaithfulness to get what we want, in cheating to get what we want, in hatred, in murder, in war, etc. Why do we have so much suffering in this world? It is because people live to pursue their own happiness without a concern for how their actions affect others.

*Scriptures: 1 Peter 5:8; Romans 6:16; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:2-3; Revelation 12:9; James 4:1-4*

### **Defeating the Enemy**

All the sorrows and troubles of this world can be defeated through one simple change. The only way for the world, for our communities and for us to defeat this world's evils is to turn back to the God who made us. The question each of us must ask is: Am I willing to turn to God to make my life and the world a better place? All the answers are found in Him. God made you in His image and likeness in the beginning and He desires that you turn and follow Him today so that you may be made in His complete image and likeness. You do this by confessing a need for God, by confessing that you don't have all the answers, by confessing that you need Him to teach you and show you the way to live.

*Scriptures: James 4:7-10; 1 John 3:7-15; 1 John 1:5-10*

### **Victory in Jesus**

When you come to see your need for God, He shows you the way to return to Him. There is only one way to God. It is through His Son, Jesus

the Christ. The way to victory over selfishness, the way to victory over sin, guilt, depression and a low self-image is to believe in Jesus Christ. In Him you will find a new life, a life of freedom, a life of hope, a life of renewed energy and zeal. This is the life that comes from knowing God, the kind of life God wants for you.

*Scriptures: John 1:7-13; John 3:16-21; Romans 10:9-13; John 14:6; John 10:7-11*

### **Who is Jesus?**

Before He ever came to Earth in the flesh, Jesus was the One known as the Word, the One who was with God and was God from the beginning. He was the Great Creator who made all things seen and unseen, things both on earth and in heaven. He was the One who spoke to Abraham in the Old Testament. He was the One known as “I AM” from the beginning, who called to Moses from the burning bush. He was the One who volunteered to give up His life for you and me so that we could live with Him forever.

*Scriptures: John 1:1-3; John 1:14; Colossians 1:15-18; Philippians 2:5-8; Exodus 3:1-15; John 8:56-58*

### **Why Did Jesus Need to Die?**

Ultimately, there is only one thing that sin can produce – death. It cannot produce life and it does not lead to peace or joy. While sin can seem fun and exciting for a moment (that’s what allures and deceives you), it eventually leads to misery, pain and heartache. However, God made you in His image because He desires to share a good life with you. He wants you to be like Him, to live in a way of love, peace and blessing, a way that is good not just for you, but for every member of society. God’s way is not driven by selfishness, but by selflessness, a way based on doing unto others as you would have them do to you. However, sin is against this way and ultimately, it is against God. When you sin, you go against the only way that will ever produce peace. The consequence of sinning, according to God’s perfect law of love, is death.

*Scriptures: Romans 6:23; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Matthew 5:1-12; Luke 6:31-36; Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Romans 2:8-9, 12*

### **The Sacrifice of Jesus**

Since we have all sinned against God, we all deserve the punishment of death. Yet God created you because He wants you to live with Him forever. He wants you to be free from sin to know the perfection of His way. God’s way is the way of love, of outgoing concern for others. And

this perfect way is shown in the sacrifice of Jesus. He gave up being equal with God to become a man, His own creation, in order that He could pay for all of mankind's sins once and for all. As Creator, His death was enough to pay the penalty for every sin. Out of His great love for you personally, Jesus was willing to take your place and die for you. He left His glorified position as God to come to earth, to be a man, to have all our sins laid on Him and to be killed by His own creation in the hope that all would return to God and receive His gift of eternal life.

*Scriptures: John 1:29; Romans 6:23; John 3:16-17; Isaiah 53:4-12; Romans 5:12-21; 1 Peter 2:21-25*

### **Reconciled to God**

You are reconciled to God and brought back into a relationship with Him by belief in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Jesus did the work to bring you into a relationship with God, your Father, but you only experience that relationship through belief, believing that He truly died to pay the price for you to have eternal life. His sacrifice is only applied to your life through belief in Him and belief that He stepped in on your behalf to pay the death penalty for you. In so doing, your conscience is cleansed and you are brought back into fellowship with God. Your guilt and shame are washed away.

*Scriptures: Romans 5:6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:14-19; 1 John 1:1-4; 1 John 1:5-9; Hebrews 9:11-15; Hebrews 10:11-23*

### **Being Made Righteous**

Just as Jesus came to earth to take our place of guilt and die on our behalf, so did He come to earth that we would receive of His perfect righteousness. After being put to death by crucifixion, Jesus rose from the dead three days later. He showed His power not only to take our place and die for our sins, but also to overcome sin and death by His resurrection back to life. He did this with a hope as well: that just as He took our sins, we would take His righteousness. It is absolutely amazing! Jesus took all our sins upon Himself so that we could in turn receive all of His righteousness. This happens by faith as well. By belief in Jesus' death and resurrection, we believe that He imputes to us His righteousness, and having received of His righteousness by faith, we know that we are now made righteous, holy and accepted in the Beloved Jesus. We have a new image in God. We are new, living creatures, not held by the sins of this world and the bondage of it, but rather we are free to live with God forever, to practice His ways of love and righteousness.

*Scriptures: 2 Corinthians 5:20-21; Acts 13:38-39; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; Romans 4:1-8; Romans 3:21-26; Ephesians 1:3-14; Ephesians 4:11-16*

## A New Way

To know Jesus, to truly know who He is, is to know and comprehend the way He thinks and lives. He shares this with us throughout the pages of the Bible. He created us out of a love to share His life with others. His sacrifice for us came out of a love to see us experience that life of love. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we are also asked to accept Him as our Lord, the One who we follow, in whose counsel and direction we trust. In so doing, we seek to obey His will and keep His commandments. We seek to live a new way of life that rejects selfishness and is based on having an outgoing care and concern for others.

*Scriptures: Colossians 3:1-17; John 14:15, 23-24; John 15:9-14; 1 John 2:3-6; 1 John 5:2-5; 1 John 3:22; Revelation 14:12; Romans 12:1-2, 9-21*

## A Coming King

After Jesus' death and resurrection, He showed Himself to His disciples and many others, literally hundreds of people, and then ascended into heaven. Today, He is at the right hand of God, interceding on our behalf, until the day that God our Father sends Him to earth again to gather His saints and to establish His Kingdom on earth. Jesus will return to earth as a triumphant King and He desires for you to be a part of His kingdom forever.

*Scriptures: John 20:24-31; John 21:1-14; Luke 24:50-53; Mark 16:19; Acts 1:1-11; Matthew 24:27-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; Revelation 11:15-18; Zechariah 14:1-9; Revelation 19:11-16*

## The Kingdom of God

God's kingdom will be different than any other kingdom or nation that has ever existed in this world. Instead of ruling over others to oppress them and have dominion over them, God rules in order to bless, protect and serve the inhabitants of His kingdom. God's kingdom will be a kingdom of peace because all its inhabitants will be ruled by the law of love, of outgoing care and concern for others. Instead of being driven by greed and the "get" way of life, those in God's kingdom will be driven by the "give" way of life. And the result of governing and living this way is peace. When all volunteer to live in a godly way of love, it insures peace and freedom for every member of society. There will be no more pain, no more crying, no more war, no more death. It will be a society truly given

to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

*Scriptures: Luke 22:24-30; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7:13-14, 27; Micah 4:1-5; Psalm 110:1-4; Revelation 20:4-6; Revelation 21:1-7; Revelation 22:1-5*

## You're Invited

You are invited to be a member of this kingdom, and even more importantly, a member of the family of God. You were made in God's image with the hope that you would live with God forever as His own child. You are invited to receive the Spirit of adoption, to accept God as your Father and Jesus as your brother. God wants to bless you with eternal life, with unspeakable peace and lasting joy. You were made to be an heir of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ.

*Scriptures: John 15:15-16; Acts 2:39; Acts 17:24-31; Revelation 22:12-17; John 1:12-13; Romans 8:14-17*

## How to Accept this Invitation

To accept this invitation, you must be willing to live as Jesus, who laid down His life in service to God and others. True life is not found in seeking your own life (selfishness) but, rather, in losing your life for Christ's sake (love). You have been called to live out your life here on earth as a living sacrifice for God, to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus, to overcome sin and the things of this world, to know and practice the love of God. To begin your journey, you must:

1. *Confess your sins* and realize that the penalty for your own sins before God is death. (Romans 3:20; Romans 6:23; 1 John 1:9)
2. *Accept the sacrifice Jesus made* on your behalf by believing that He took your place and died on your behalf so that you would be freed from sin. Believe that Jesus took upon Himself all your sins, all your guilt and all your shame. Believe that He paid every price for your sins so that you could live a new life with God, apart from sin. (John 3:16-17; Hebrews 9:14; Romans 3:21-26)
3. *Believe that Jesus overcame sin and death* by rising from the dead after three days. Believe that Jesus imputes to you His own righteousness, not only cleansing you, but making you accepted by God, completely restoring you into a relationship of faith, hope, love and confidence in God. (Romans 4:5-8; Romans 10:9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
4. *Repent*, turn away from your own way of life and follow God. Make Jesus the Lord of your life. (Acts 2:38-42; Acts 17:30-31; 2

Peter 3:9)

5. *Be baptized in water* in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit for the forgiveness of sins, picturing your acceptance of your own death to sins and your resurrection to life as a child of God who now bears God's name and lives for His righteousness. Receive the baptism of the Spirit through the laying on of hands and prayer of another believer, if possible (or through your own prayer, if not), believing in God's promise that you will receive the Holy Spirit upon your repentance, belief and water baptism. (Acts 2:38-29; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16)
6. *Commit your life to be a disciple of Jesus*, to trust Him as your Lord, to search out His will and desire for your life, to keep His commandments. Join with other believers who will encourage you in your relationship with Jesus Christ, who will help you to grow as a believer in the grace and knowledge of our Savior. Pray daily and often. Read and study the Bible diligently. Walk in faith, knowing you are the child of God and are now living here as a representative of the way of love and of a coming kingdom which will be ruled in perfect peace and love. (Acts 5:29-32; Acts 17:24-28; Romans 6:1-23; Romans 12:1-5; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Ephesians 6:10-18; Hebrews 11:23-25)

As you do these things, an incredible peace and joy will fill your heart and mind. Be glad and rejoice, for your life is now in God's hands and there is nothing in this world that can separate you from His love (Romans 8:38-39).

All the concepts in this booklet come directly from the Bible. We encourage you to study the scriptures for yourself, that you may know and believe the love God has for you (1 John 4:16).