How does one become a Christian?

Romans 10:9-13

9 - that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, <u>you will be saved;</u>

10 - for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

11 - For the Scripture says, "W<small>HOEVER BELIEVES IN</small> H<small>IM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.</small>"

12 - For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;

13 - for "W<small>HOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE</small> L<small>ORD WILL BE SAVED.</small>"

The Bible teaches that to become a Christian one must receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. Although this sounds very simple, this act of submission is a deep act of repentance that is contrary to our stubborn nature.

Romans 10:9-13 simply means that there is a body of truth that must be accepted by an individual before God will declare him forgiven and saved. Why is recognizing this body of truth so important to God? Because God has planned that only those who reject the lie and believe the truth will be declared righteous. Even as it says of Abraham, "Abraham believed God and therefore God reckoned him righteous" (Gen 15:6). God will not save anyone who puts his trust or hope in anyone or anything but Christ. There are two truths expressed in Romans 10:9-11: Jesus is <u>Savior</u> and <u>Lord</u>!

1. <u>One must decide to make Jesus Christ his Lord.</u>

How often do you hear people say, "I believe in God, therefore, I am a Christian." This is not necessarily true because there is a difference between believing Jesus is Lord and wanting Him to be your Lord. People can believe in God and Jesus as much as they believe in any historical figure such as George Washington, but that does not mean they have submitted themselves to the authority of God. To become a Christian one must want Jesus Christ to be Lord and King.

2. <u>One must decide to make Jesus Christ his Savior from sin</u>

If one believes in Jesus, but is seeking to get to heaven by his own good works, this person really hasn't made Jesus the Savior; He is making himself into his own Savior. The one who becomes a Christian acknowledges that he deserves Hell and that there is no self-righteousness in himself that will earn him a place in heaven. We can be saved only through Christ's payment for our sins on the cross. When a person finally trusts Christ alone for his salvation, God causes them to be Born Again.

The problem with many religious people is that they trust themselves and not Christ. If you ask a person why he should go to heaven, and he answers, "Because I've been a good person." It is evident in this type of answer that this man has never trusted Christ, but he is still trying to earn heaven by human merit.

But does it really matter where you put your trust? Oh yes, it matters very, very much to God. The Bible makes it clear that if a person has the wrong trust he will be lost.

Jesus taught that the self-righteous will not be justified (See Luke 18:9-14).

Luke 18:9-14

9 - And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt:

10 - Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 - The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 -I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.'

13 - But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'

14 - I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Paul taught that although his brothers, the Jews, were very religious, they could not earn their own righteousness before God. Many of the Israelites were too proud to accept the truth that righteousness must come to us as a free gift. Instead they believed their deeds of righteousness would be good enough to save them. Paul says that because of this, those Jews were lost.

Romans 10:1-4

1 - BRETHREN, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.

2 - For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.

3 - For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God.

4 - For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

In order to understand the seriousness of trusting oneself, one must understand the mind of God in this matter. God sees the man who trusts himself as one who is filled with pride and arrogance. Such a man does not acknowledge his rebellion and wicked heart. But the one who comes by faith in Jesus alone is truly humble and made worthy of salvation. Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Ephesians 2:8-9

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

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