

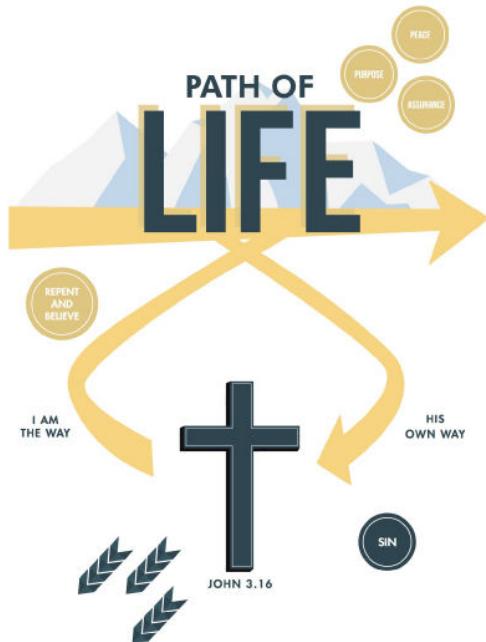


PATH OF LIFE



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THE PATH OF LIFE SUMMARY



WHAT PATH ARE YOU ON?

As you sit down to share the Gospel, you want to start with the reason God created each one of us in the first place. When God created the world, He created people with the desire and capacity to know Him in a deep and personal way. All of us were created like this. We all desire to know God and discover His purpose for our lives. As you share the Gospel, start out by drawing a line with an arrow on the end. You may say something like this: *"The path you choose in life determines your destination. If you are living in Dallas and you want to go to California, you won't get on a highway headed east. You might end up in Georgia, but you will never get to California that way because the path you choose determines your destination. And in the same way, the path you choose in life determines what kind of life you will have and where you will end up. This line represents God's path for your life. God created every person to know Him in a deep and personal way. (Psalm 16.11 ESV) says, 'You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.'*"

Write "Path of Life" along the line.

Then continue: *"Along this path you can know God. You can experience His peace and discover His purpose for your life, and you can have assurance that you will be with Him for eternity when you die."* As you say those words, you can write them at the end of the path line — peace, purpose, assurance.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

After you have drawn out God's path of life and written the words "peace, purpose and assurance" at the end of the line, you are ready to describe the problem. You may say, "While God has a path that is good for us, not everyone is on that path. All you have to do is look around to see that there is a lot of evil and hurt in this world. Something has gone terribly wrong."

At this point, you can draw a line coming off God's path that turns and goes in the opposite direction.

Say, "The problem is that we have lost our way and veered off course from God's path. (Isaiah 53.6a ESV) says, 'All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way.' The Bible calls this straying away from God's path 'sin.' (Romans 3.23 ESV) says, 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.' In a very real way, we all have fallen short of God's path. We have taken our own path, exchanging God's way for our way. Although we may not realize it, we are going the opposite direction from God."

Now draw a vertical line in front of "my path" on the diagram, showing a dead end.

Say, "Ultimately, if we continue down this road, we will hit a wall. Usually this comes in the form of a crisis or difficulty. It is then that we realize we are missing something. We don't have a relationship with God. We don't have His peace. We don't know His purpose. We don't have assurance of what will happen to us when we die. Oftentimes, this wall is God's way of getting our attention."

You may want to pause here and see if that resonates with them.

"However, if we continue to go down this road, then ultimately we will hit the wall of God's judgment. (Romans 14.12 ESV) says, 'So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.' Each one of us will have to stand before God and be judged for our sin. Because God is holy and perfect, He must judge the wrong in the world and the wrong in us. (Romans 6.23 ESV) says, 'For the wages of sin is death...' We have sinned against God, and our sin is leading us down a road that is far from God and will end in not just physical death, but spiritual death and separation from God forever."

This is the bad news of the Bible. We've lost our own way, and we are powerless to get back on our own.

DOES GOD REALLY CARE?

Once you have explained the problem, now comes the good news. God provided a way for us to be restored to Him, and that way is through the cross of Jesus.

You might say, "But there is some good news in this story. When we could not get to God, God came

to us in the person of Jesus Christ.”

At this point, make a cross out of the wall on the diagram.

Continue by saying: “Though Jesus was by nature fully God, He set aside His eternal glory and was born as a baby. He grew up just like you and me. He lived our life, yet He did it without sin. Because He was perfect in every way, Jesus could step in as a substitute for you and me and pay for our sin. In His ultimate act of love, Jesus was crucified and died on a cross for your sin, paying your punishment in full.”

Then explain that (Romans 6.23 ESV) says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Jesus died on a cross, and His body was buried in a borrowed tomb. Three days later He rose from the dead, conquering sin and death. (John 3.16 ESV) says, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

WHY IS JESUS THE ONLY WAY?

The hope of the Gospel is that because of Jesus’ death, burial and resurrection, we can now be reconciled to God. Jesus is the only way to the Father.

You might say, “On the night before His death, Jesus told His followers, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,’ (John 14.6 ESV).”

At this point, draw a road coming from the cross that turns back and merges with God’s path.

Jesus said He was the embodiment of truth, the giver of life and the only way to God. Only Jesus died for your sin, was buried and rose again. Jesus warned us not to go down another road. In (Matthew 7.13-14 ESV) Jesus said, “Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.”

As you read this verse, draw a wide road (think multilane highway) continuing in the wrong direction.

WHAT SHOULD I DO NOW?

Jesus has done all that is necessary for us to be right with God. All we must do is respond to Him in repentance and faith. The call to repent and believe in Jesus is all through the Bible.

You might say, “While Jesus made a way for you to be right with God, you still have to respond to all that Jesus has done. In (Mark 1.15 NIV) Jesus said, ‘The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and

believe the good news!"

Write the words "repent" and "believe" next to the path leading back to God.

Continue by saying: "Jesus said we must respond in two ways. First, Jesus said to 'repent.' Repentance means to TURN from the direction you are going, leaving your old wayward lifestyle behind to follow and obey Jesus. Second, Jesus said to 'believe.' To believe means to TRUST that Jesus died for your sin, was buried and rose again, and that He can forgive you. You are no longer trusting in your own good works or religious effort, but in Jesus alone to save you. In this way you are determining to follow Jesus and obey Him for the rest of your life."

Now is the time for a response. Ask these two questions to help them respond to Jesus:

- "Where do you think you are on this diagram right now?" This question assesses their spiritual need. They have to come to grips with where they are on the diagram and the fact that they are on the wrong road.
- "Would you like to repent and believe in Him right now?" This question assesses their receptivity. Are they open to receive Christ now, or do they need more time?

If they answer, "Yes, I want to do that right now," your response should be, "Great, let's pray together!" At this time, lead them to pray through the diagram. "God I thank you that you love me and want me to walk with you. I confess I have gone my own way and I have sinned against you. I believe Jesus died and rose again for me. Please forgive me. Today I choose to turn from the direction I'm going to follow you."

After you pray, affirm their decision. Talk about the difference Jesus has made in your life. Offer to meet with them again. "I have a small booklet that will help you start to follow Jesus and grow in your relationship with Him. I know you are busy, but I would be happy to meet and go over the booklet with you. Would you like to meet again?"

If yes, set up a meeting. If no, then direct them to a local church where you know they could connect and grow and say that you will follow up with them later.