

Read this section as often as you'd like on your own, but in order to complete this step it's best to talk it over with a Christian friend who has completed it – or attend a Sunday morning 101 workshop at church.

The Defining Moment

Imagine a husband and wife going through old photos of their journey together. Dating, engagement, the birth of their children – moments that carry a sense of deep meaning and joy. But of all the moments in their lives, there is one that stands out above the rest. It is their defining moment as a couple, the moment that gives meaning to every other moment for them. Without this moment their relationship would be incomplete. *It is the moment they said “I do” to each other on their wedding day.*

In your pursuit of God there is also a defining moment. It's not when you started going to church or when you started reading the Bible. Those are “dating” moments – meaningful times that are very important and full of memories. But if you want to enter into a relationship with God, you'll need to go a step further and make a personal commitment to him.

The defining moment in your relationship with God is the moment you choose to put your faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible teaches that when you put your faith in Jesus, everything changes. Your life is re-defined. You are given a new sense of joy and freedom. It's even more life-changing than a person's wedding day.

This moment – the moment of faith – is the single most important decision of your life. This chapter is designed to lead you to that moment by laying out three fundamental principles taught in the Bible.

1 Your relationship with God needs to be fixed.

Society teaches us that we are all basically good people. It tells us that God is generally pleased with the direction of our lives. But that's not the truth. The Bible actually tells a different story. It says we're broken, and that we've broken God's heart with our actions and intentions.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

Simply defined, sin is choosing our own path instead of God's path. Sin is when we rebel against God, thinking we know better and making choices that go against what he desires for us. And the Bible says every one of us has sinned. So here's the problem: God wants to be in relationship with us, but our sin makes that impossible. The Bible describes the ultimate result:

The wages of sin is death. Romans 6:23

Discuss | Think about your own life: your emotions, actions, thoughts. Can you give an example of how sin has tainted some of those areas?

2 Jesus alone can fix your relationship with God.

Most people recognize that they're not perfect. It's no surprise to them that they've offended God. So they figure they can just pull themselves up by their bootstraps and start working to make things right. They believe that as long as the good outweighs the bad in their lives, God will be happy.

But that's not how it works. The Bible says we're all so broken that we can't even begin to make things right. Think of it like this: if fixing our relationship with God were a race, no amount of religious effort could even get us off the starting block. On a scale of 1 to 10, we're stuck at 0.

So we can do nothing to fix things with God. That's where Jesus comes in.

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless,
Christ died for the ungodly.* Romans 5:6

Jesus was born into the world and lived a perfect life. Even though he never sinned, he went to the cross and died a criminal's death. Three days later he rose from the dead, proving his authority over sin and death.

Jesus took our sin upon himself at the cross to fix our relationship with God. How much of it did we do? 0%. How much did Jesus do? 100%. We can add nothing to the generous work that Jesus completed for us on the cross.

Discuss | Most religions teach that you have to gain God's approval by your good deeds. Christianity is different. Can you explain what the Bible teaches?

3 Nothing gets fixed without faith.

It's foundational to know that your relationship with God needs to be fixed, and it's crucial to acknowledge that Jesus alone can fix that relationship. But without your personal response in faith to Jesus, his death does nothing for you. Faith is what activates the power of the cross in our lives.

Faith, simply put, is trusting in the finished work of Jesus. It's putting all of your confidence and hope in him. And like a coin, faith is two-sided.

Faith starts with the right information.

What you believe about Jesus matters. Some people say he was just a good man. Others say he was simply a prophet. That kind of Jesus doesn't save, because it's not the truth about him. If you believe in anything short of the biblical Jesus, you've got the wrong one.

If you want to have a genuine moment of faith – a moment that fixes your relationship with God – then you must have the right information about Jesus. You have to know that he's God himself, not just a good man or a wise prophet. You have to know that he died on the cross for your sins. And you have to believe that God raised him from the dead.

If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Romans 10:9

The right info about Jesus is the basic starting point for your moment of faith. Some people think they need to know the whole Bible before they can make a faith response to Jesus. But that's not true. Once you have learned the basics about the person and work of Jesus, you've got all the information you need.

Discuss | Make a list of the fundamental information about Jesus that you have learned so far in your pursuit. Do you have any questions about Jesus? Do you feel you have enough info about him to make a response of faith?

Faith is completed with the right attitude.

The "moment of faith" starts with the right information about Jesus. But the Bible says that even the demons have this information, yet demons are not right with God. There's more to faith than just intellectual agreement.

Genuine, saving faith in Jesus also involves the attitude of your heart. The Bible calls the proper attitude toward Christ “repentance”.

Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord. Acts 3:19

Repentance, the attitude of faith, says, “I’ve changed my mind about Christ. I accept Him as my Savior and Lord.” It’s a new direction, a new orientation of a person’s life toward Christ. Saving faith is part of a fundamental change in the life of the believer. It’s not just on the surface.

There’s no such thing as a one-sided coin. And there’s no such thing as one-sided faith. Saving faith always combines the right info with the right attitude.

Today, if you put your faith in Jesus, confessing the right information with the right attitude, welcoming him into your life as Savior and Lord, then you’ll be saved. Saved from the consequences of your sin. Saved from eternal death and separation from God. And saved to live a new and meaningful life here on earth in a growing relationship with him.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

Are you ready for your defining “moment of faith”? If so, pray a prayer like this: *“Jesus, I recognize I’m a sinner. I know that you died for me, and I want you to be my Savior and God. Thank you for this free gift. Amen.”*

Next Steps: Check the most appropriate box and determine your next step.

- Today I put my faith in Jesus.**

Today’s Date: _____

Next Step: Turn the page and prepare for 201

- This was a refresher course for me; I am already a Christian.**

Next Step: Turn the page and prepare for 201

- I’ve heard the basics, but I’m not yet ready for my moment of faith.**

Next Step: Continue to investigate and repeat 101 when ready

What's Next | The Big Picture

Before we move on to the next step in your pursuit of God, let's pause and consider the entire process in the big picture. This booklet – *Foundations* – is all about laying a proper foundation for your pursuit of God.

101 leads you to understand your defining “moment of faith”. It is the first building block, the cornerstone in your foundation.

201 lays out a useful blueprint for your pursuit of God that will help you as you build on your foundation in the years ahead.

301 is the final element in your foundation, a 6-month tour through the most powerful discipleship curriculum of all time – the Bible itself.

When you've finished laying your foundation, your lifelong pursuit of God can be simply defined in terms of two God-honoring tasks:

Building Up: Building on your own foundation by pursuing God through biblical truth, intentional relationships and outward purpose.

Building Out: Helping others establish their foundations in Christ by inviting them to pursue God and helping them through *Foundations*.

Visit rednotes.org/201 for the “What's Next” video on this topic.

