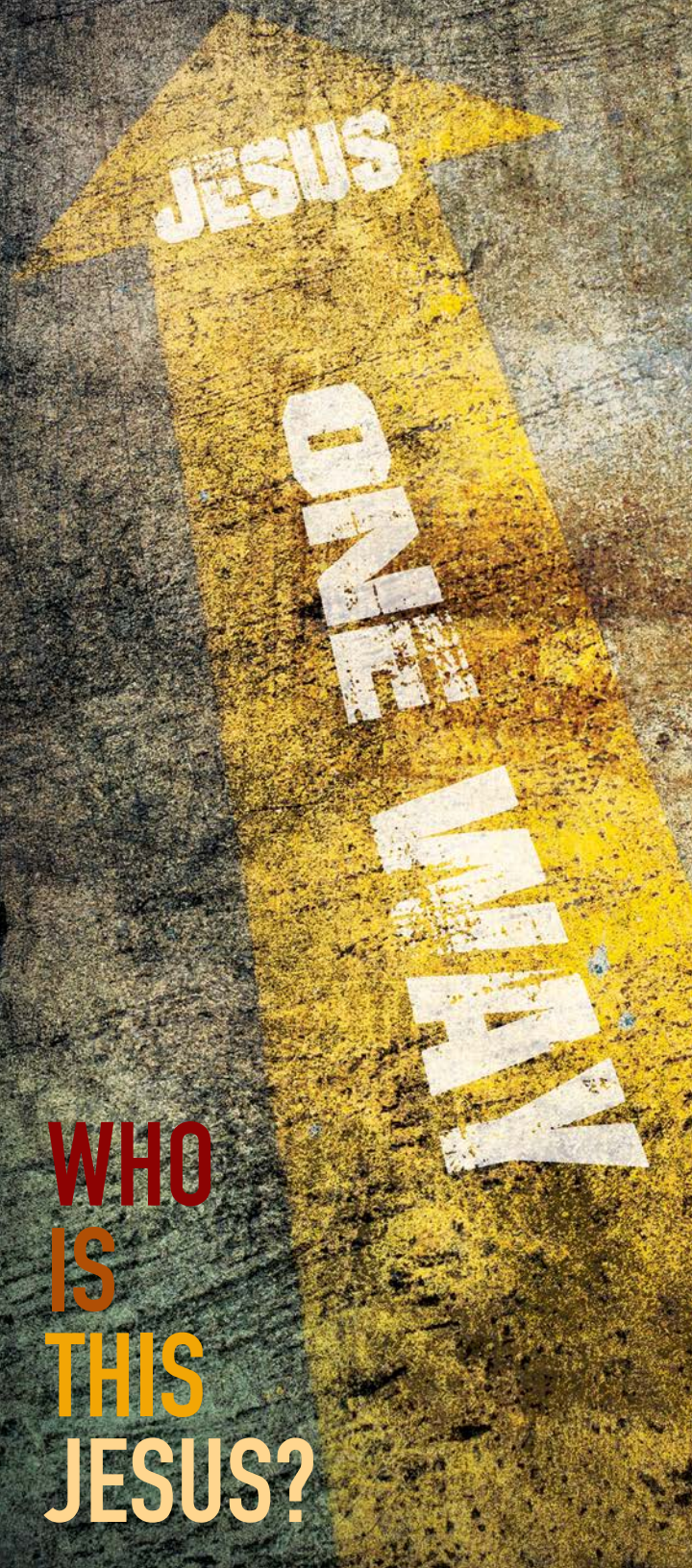


WHO IS THIS JESUS?

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By Dr. Tony Evans

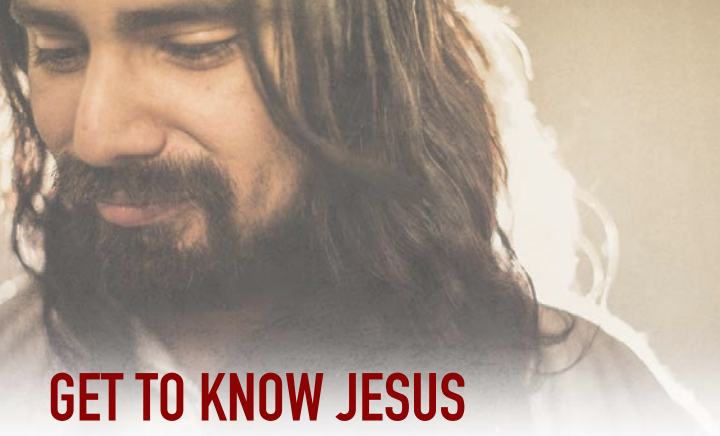
Does life have you going in circles? Do you ever find yourself going around and around searching for meaning and fulfillment in different areas, but never seeming to arrive at an intended location?

If this is you, I want to tell you more about the One who says, "I am the way, the truth and the life." When you link up with Jesus – He will take you to your purpose. He will guide you to your destiny.

He has a plan for your life.



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GET TO KNOW JESUS

In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. (John 1:1)

Jesus Christ did not make His debut on that first Christmas morning in Bethlehem. He existed before creation "in the beginning." In fact, it was "through Him" that "all things were made." (John 1:3) Even when we look back to the book of Genesis, we read that God said, "Let us make man in our image" (Genesis 1:26) referencing the presence of Christ.

The Word John speaks of as he opens his Gospel presentation is none other than Jesus Christ. We know this because later, in verse 14, John tells us, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Imagine the depth of that reality. The Word, who is God, came down to dwell among us.

Jesus walked among us. He was flesh, bones, sinew and blood, and yet He was also the perfection of the divine. At one moment He was hungry because He was fully human. The next moment, He miraculously fed 5,000 because He was fully God. One moment Jesus agonized on a cross and died because He was fully human. Three days later, He rose from the grave because He was fully God. We read, "God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him." (Colossians 1:19)



Without Jesus, we would have no chance of understanding God. "No one has ever seen God, but the only begotten Son, who is at the Father's side, has made Him known." (John 1:18)

How does God make Himself known? Through Jesus. To understand and know Jesus is to understand and know God.

Philip had been one of Jesus' disciples for almost three years when he came up with an interesting request. "Show us the Father," he said, "and that will be enough for us." (John 14:8) Jesus' answer puts His question in perspective. "Don't you know me Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)

Jesus took everything there is to know about God and put it on a shelf that we could reach. He is the complete revelation of God Himself. That's why you can't go around Jesus and get to God. He is the only begotten Son. Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius . . . no prophet, teacher or king can make that claim. "I am the way and the truth and the life," Jesus says, "No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

THE WONDER OF HIS NAME

Today, when we choose names for our children, we sometimes base our selection on how that name sounds. A first name that rolls off the tongue nicely when combined with the last name is a popular option for many moms and dads. In biblical times, however, parents cared less about the sound of a name as they did about its meaning. A name was more than simply nomenclature. It was, rather, a replica and revelation of the individual or thing itself.

As I've written in my book Kingdom Man[1] ,

"A name is so important in biblical settings that there are frequent mentions throughout Scripture of God Himself changing someone's name to reflect a new reality. Abram, which means "exalted father," was changed to Abraham meaning "exalted father of multitudes." Jacob, whose original name meant "grabber of the heel" and "deceitful," had his name changed to Israel after wrestling with God. His new name, Israel, means "one who prevails." In the book of Hosea, God changed the names of Hosea's son and daughter to signify the change in His relationship with them from Lo-Ammi meaning "not my people" and Lo-Ruhamma meaning "not-pitied"[2] to Ammi and Ruhamma which means "my people" and "one who is shown compassion."[3]

In Scripture, a name often both denoted and connoted purpose, authority, makeup, and ownership. It was frequently seen as an actual equivalency of a person or thing. When Jesus said that He had made God's "name known to them, and will make it known...,"[4] He was referencing more than just sounds put together in a word. Jesus, having come to earth in the flesh, unveiled God's heart, mind, will, character, and being through the revelation of His name.

Whether used as *shem* in Hebrew or as *onoma* in Greek, the translated word that shows up over 1,000 times in Scripture that we call "name" routinely carries with it power, responsibility, purpose and authority. A name not only expresses the essence and significance of the being or thing, a name – when duly authorized – accesses the capacity intrinsic within it."

[1] Kingdom Man, Focus on the Family & Tyndale Publishers, 2012, Tony Evans.
[2] Hebrews 1:6-8, [3] Hosea 2:23, [4] John 17:26

When the angel Gabriel visited Mary to foretell the birth of the Messiah, he instructed Mary that she should call the baby Jesus because that name meant that He would save His people from their sins. Jesus is the New Testament equivalent of the Old Testament name Joshua which means "salvation." Jesus has other names as well. While they are not literal names you would use in conversation, they are descriptive names assigned to Him that give us insight into His character and mission. Look at Isaiah 9:6:

"and He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Let's work through these names individually.

WONDERFUL COUNSELOR

When members of my congregation come to me for counseling, the quality of the advice they receive depends on the kind of day I have had. People often come expecting that perfect pearl of wisdom that will immediately solve their problems and put their life instantly in order. Unfortunately, I am human; I can't hit the bull's eye 100% percent of the time.

That's what makes Jesus such a wonderful counselor. His perspective is infinite; His resources unlimited. His experience includes a lifetime on earth during which He experienced the same trials and temptations we face. Who could be better qualified to offer us guidance and direction?

MIGHTY GOD

The Hebrew word used here literally means "hero." Our society is suffering from a tragic lack of heroes - those who have traditionally inspired others to reach beyond their limits and seek the best in themselves and those around them. Heroes silently challenge

others to follow in their footsteps. And there's nothing wrong with that, as long as those footsteps lead in the right direction.

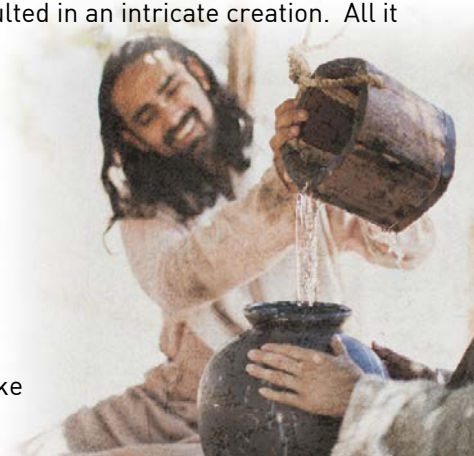
Human heroes of all kinds have disappointed us by failing to deliver on their promises. Jesus, on the other hand, never fails. He is God in the flesh. He is faithful. All the power of creation stands behind His promise to provide and care for us.

EVERLASTING FATHER

Have you ever spent time pondering where God came from? Don't. After you've gone back as far as you can imagine, you're no closer to the origin of God than when you started. "Everlasting" means forever. There is no beginning. There is no end. The fact is that God never did arrive. He has always been here.

That can be mind-numbing for us as finite, temporal human beings. That's why many have concluded that it's too hard to believe so they settle on evolution instead.

Yet evolutionists confuse me. They say they can't believe in an eternal God. But they have no trouble believing that nothing plus nothing results in something. They readily conclude that, way back when, one kind of substance accidently collided with another and resulted in an intricate creation. All it takes to destroy that theory is a simple question: Who created the substance? Rather, God transcends time and also penetrates time and space to make



Himself known to us through Jesus Christ. And He has done this, and will do this, forever.

PRINCE OF PEACE

Humanity wants peace desperately. Rulers will sit around tables and negotiate for peace. They will pay any price and make any compromise for peace. If that fails, they are even willing to go to war to get peace.

The truth is, few of us even understand peace. Many of us wouldn't recognize it if we saw it. This is because we are so frequently unsettled within. James understood the nature of our discontentment. He said, "What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something, but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want," (James 4:1-2)

In Jesus, we have an alternative to this life-long struggle. Paul the Apostle discovered this truth, enabling him to make this declaration:

> I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether filled or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I do everything through Him who gives me strength.
> (Philippians 4:11-13)

Most of us believe that peace is the absence of conflict. Yet Jesus gives us so much more. He promises peace that transcends our circumstances. It invades the inevitable conflicts that arise in living a life in the midst of a sinful creation. It makes perfect sense to be at peace when all is well. But Jesus who is the Prince of Peace promises us a peace that overcomes our trials. (Philippians 4:7)



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JESUS THROUGH THE BIBLE

The Bible, from cover to cover, addresses the question, "Who is this Jesus?" Consider the themes of the sixty-six books:

GENESIS	He is the Creator God.
EXODUS	He is the Redeemer.
LEVITICUS	He is your sanctification.
NUMBERS	He is your guide.
DEUTERONOMY	He is your teacher.
JOSHUA	He is the mighty conqueror.
JUDGES	He gives victory over enemies.
RUTH	Your kinsman redeemer, your lover.
1 SAMUEL	He is the root of Jesse.
2 SAMUEL	He is the Son of David.
1 & 2 KINGS	He is King of Kings and Lord of Lords.
1 & 2 CHRONICLES	He is your intercessor and High Priest.

EZRA	He is your temple, your house of worship.
NEHEMIAH	He is your mighty wall, protecting you from your enemies.
ESTHER	He stands in the gap to deliver you from your enemies.
JOB	He is the arbitrator who not only understands your struggles, but has the power to do something about them.
PSALM	He is your song and your reason to sing.
PROVERBS	He is your wisdom, helping you make sense of life and live it successfully.
ECCLESIASTES	He is your purpose, delivering you from vanity.
SONG OF SOLOMON	He is your lover, your friend.
ISAIAH	He is the mighty counselor, the prince of peace, the everlasting father, and more. In short, He's everything you need.
JEREMIAH	He is your balm of Gilead, the soothing salve for your soul.
LAMENTATIONS	He is the ever-faithful one upon whom you can depend.
EZEKIEL	He is your wheel in the middle of a wheel. The one who assures that dry, dead bones will come alive again.
DANIEL	He is the ancient of days, the everlasting God who never runs out of time.
HOSEA	He is your faithful lover, always beckoning you to come back---even when you have abandoned Him.
JOEL	He is your refuge, keeping you safe in times of trouble.
AMOS	He is the husbandman, the one you can depend on to stay by your side.
OBADIAH	He is Lord of the Kingdom.
JONAH	He is your salvation, bringing you back within His will.

MICAH	He is judge of the nation.
NAHUM	He is the jealous God.
HABAKKUK	He is the Holy One.
ZEPHANIAH	He is your witness.
HAGGAI	He overthrows your enemies.
ZECHARIAH	He is Lord of Hosts.
MALACHI	He is the messenger of the covenant.

MOVING ON TO THE NEW TESTAMENT...

MATTHEW	He is King of the Jews.
MARK	He is the servant.
LUKE	He is the Son of Man, feeling what you feel.
JOHN	He is the Son of God.
ACTS	He is Savior of the world.
ROMANS	He is the righteousness of God.
1 CORINTHIANS	He is the rock that followed Israel.
2 CORINTHIANS	He the triumphant one, giving victory.
GALATIONS	He is your liberty; He sets you free.
EPHESIANS	He is head of the Church.
PHILIPPIANS	He is your peace.
COLOSSIANS	He is your completeness.
1 THESSALONIANS	He is your hope.
2 THESSALONIANS	He is your glory.
1 TIMOTHY	He is your faith.
2 TIMOTHY	He is your stability.

TITUS	He is God our Savior.
PHILEMON	He is your benefactor.
HEBREWS	He is your perfection.
JAMES	He is the power behind your faith.
1 PETER	He is your example.
2 PETER	He is your purity.
1 JOHN	He is your life.
2 JOHN	He is your pattern.
3 JOHN	He is your motivation.
JUDE	He is the foundation of your faith.
REVELATION	He is your coming King.

From the beginning of the world to its end, there is no place you can look and not see Jesus. He is everywhere. He is everything. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:17)

The most unique person in human history - God in the flesh - deserves the highest place on our priorities. He should be our everything.

As the earth revolves around the sun, so should Christ be the center of our existence. Knowing Him intimately and personally will radically change your life.

Knowing about Him won't do much good. For example, I know about the President. I can tell you his name. I can even tell you his address. I can tell you some information that I've learned about him from radio and television reports. But that hardly qualifies me to say that I know him.

In order to truly know Jesus Christ, you must experience Him personally.

You must abide with Him.

Hang out in His presence.

Discover what brings Him pleasure
Get to feel His heartbeat
Explore what He wants to do with, in and through you

When you give **all of you to all of Him**, He is there returning **all of Him to all of you**. The power that created the universe is the same power that can strengthen you to grow, change, and to experience unspeakable satisfaction.

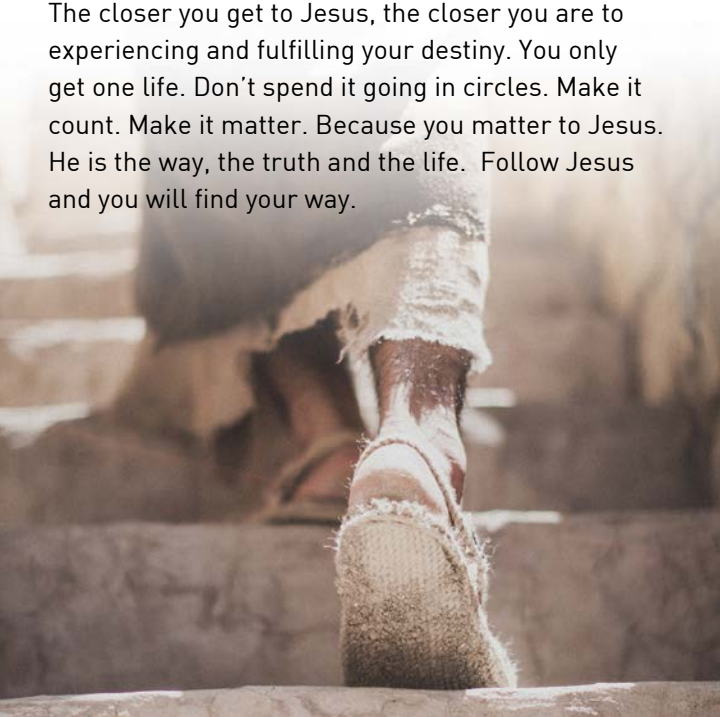
Jesus has a plan for you.

He has a purpose.

He has a path.

If you want to know your purpose, then get to know the One who knows it best.

The closer you get to Jesus, the closer you are to experiencing and fulfilling your destiny. You only get one life. Don't spend it going in circles. Make it count. Make it matter. Because you matter to Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. Follow Jesus and you will find your way.



SINNER'S PRAYER – RECOGNIZING THE NEED

The "Sinner's Prayer" is a term that describes the words spoken by a person when he or she has recognized their sin and their need for a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. It goes something like this:

> *"Dear Jesus, I confess that I am a sinner. I have failed to reflect your glory and deserve the punishment that results from sin. Jesus, I believe that you are holy and sinless, that you died on the cross at Calvary and rose from the dead to grant salvation. I now place all my confidence in you as my savior. Please forgive me of my sins and grant me eternal life. Thank you for saving me. I want to live my life for you. Amen."*

If you decided to repent of your sins and receive Christ today, welcome to God's family. Now, as a way to grow closer to Him, the Bible tells us to follow up on our commitment.

- Get baptized as commanded by Christ.
- Tell someone else about your new faith in Christ.
- Spend time with God each day. It does not have to be a long period of time. Just develop the daily habit of praying to Him and reading His Word. Ask God to increase your faith and your understanding of the Bible.
- Seek fellowship with other followers of Jesus. Develop a group of believing friends to answer your questions and support you.
- Find a local church where you can worship God.

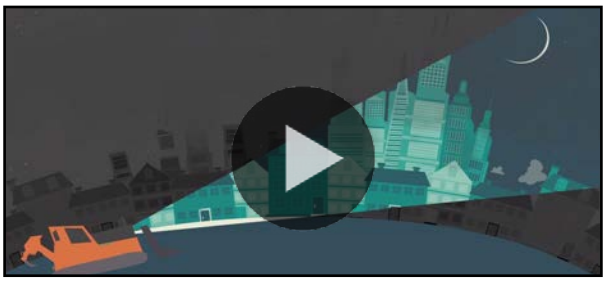
ABOUT THE URBAN ALTERNATIVE

The Urban Alternative (TUA) is a Christian broadcast ministry founded over 30 years ago by Dr. Tony Evans. At TUA, we seek to promote a kingdom agenda philosophy designed to enable people to live all of life underneath the comprehensive rule of God. This is accomplished through a variety of means, including media, resources, clergy ministries and community impact training.

The Urban Alternative's daily radio broadcast airs on nearly 1,000 radio outlets in America and in over 100 countries worldwide. Find us online at TonyEvans.org.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Tony Evans is founder and senior pastor of the 8500-member Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, founder and president of The Urban Alternative, former chaplain of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys, and present chaplain of the NBA's Dallas Mavericks. His radio broadcast, *The Alternative with Dr. Tony Evans*, can be heard on nearly 1000 radio outlets daily and in over 100 countries.



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