



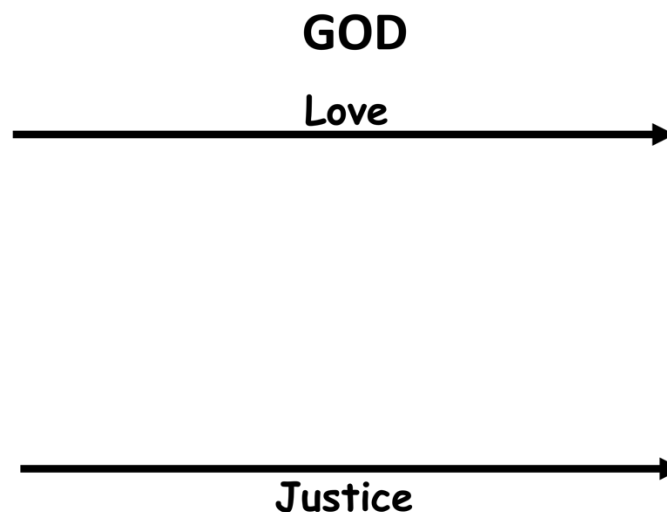
Living Out  
**LIFE**

# The Gospel Line Diagram

The ultimate question of life is,  
“How will you respond to Jesus Christ?”

To answer this ultimate question in life, we must understand the gospel, which is the “good news” about Jesus Christ. The gospel tells us who God is and how we can know Him personally. Begin by drawing two parallel lines representing two foundational aspects of God’s character. God is a God of love. Because God is both personal and a God of love, He created human beings in His image, initiated a relationship with them, and demonstrated His care for them.

God is also a God of justice. As the One who establishes and upholds justice in the universe He created, God is the Divine Judge of truth and error, and right and wrong. God rightfully punishes those who violate His word, His will, and His authoritative standards.



In the beginning, God created the first people in His image to enjoy Him and experience a meaningful relationship with Himself.

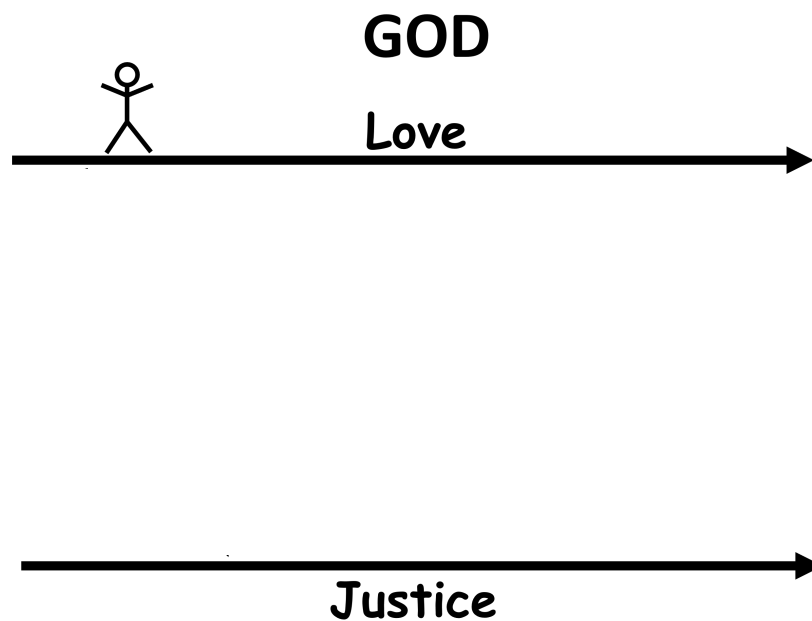
Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 1:26-27

Having placed them in the Garden of Eden, God provided all that they needed for life and gave them this command:

The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Genesis 2:16-17



However, the first couple in the garden disobeyed God and ate from the tree in violation of His command. This violation of God's revealed will is what the Bible calls "sin." With this initial violation of God's word, sin entered humanity, and man's sinful nature was passed on to each person and continues to this day.

Many people think that "sins" are things like murder, rape, etc. These are sins, but the most common sin is an indifference to or rejection of God and His word. We see this rejection of God in "active rebellion" or "passive indifference."

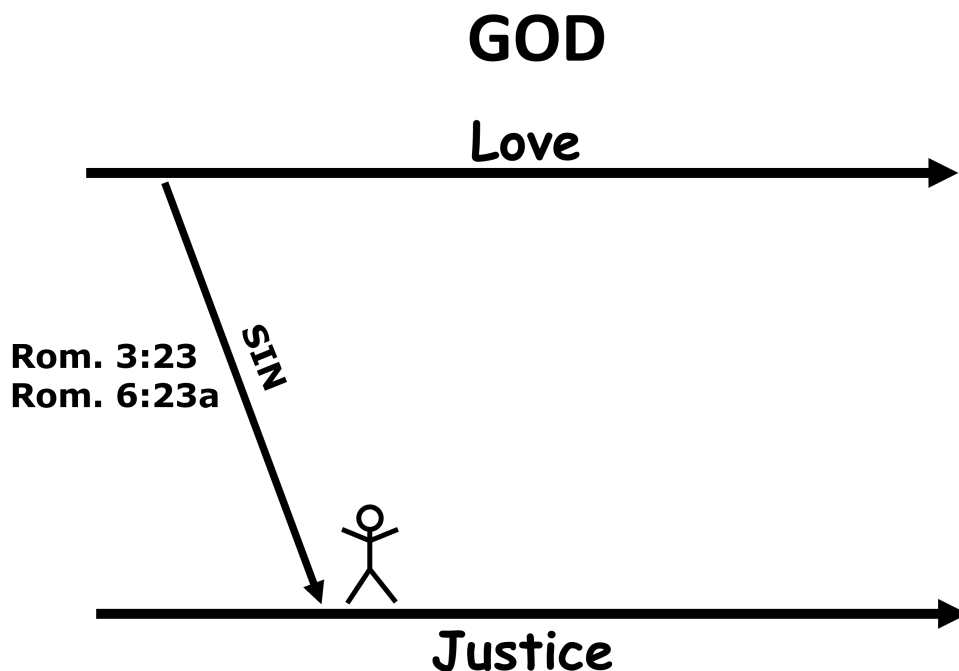
Sin is any deviation from God's divine, holy standard of right and wrong. Sin causes us to attempt to experience life apart from knowing God and obeying His word. Because of sin, each person is now under God's justice.

The Bible clearly states that every person has a sin nature and has sinned. As a result, each person is spiritually dead, guilty before God, and will personally face His just wrath against sin. for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:23

For the wages of sin is death,

Romans 6:23a

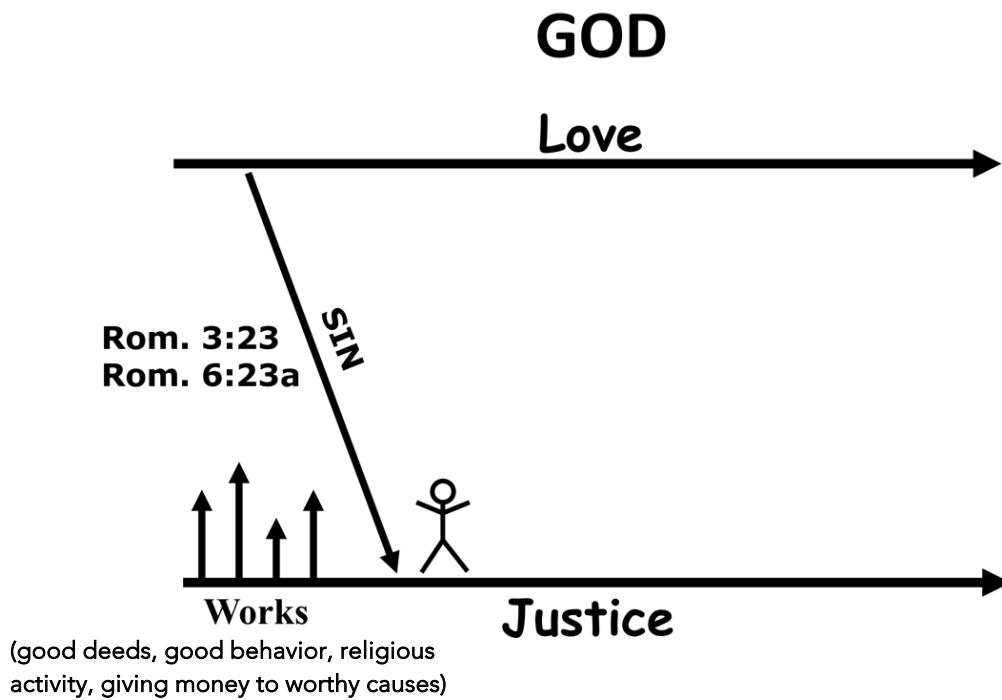


One of the terms for sin originally came from ancient Greek archery. When a person shot at the target or the animal being hunted and did not hit the bull's eye, it was called "sin," meaning to "miss the mark." If a person shot and only missed the bullseye by a small margin, or if he shot and entirely missed the target, both shots "miss the mark"; both are sin. So, in the spiritual sense, sin is missing the mark of perfection and failing to honor and know God as God and to follow His revealed word.

Because God creates people, they desire to relate to Him and experience a sense of spiritual connection to fill the "God-shaped" void in their lives. People's attempts to be

religious, follow rules they believe will earn God's favor, and perform different good works show their effort to reach God. Humanity will attempt numerous ways to fill this void to experience a personal sense of identity, purpose, peace, and security.

But sin has separated human beings from God and brought about spiritual death. Just like physical death is a separation of body and soul, spiritual death is a separation of one's soul from God. No amount of effort on a person's part can bring about spiritual life or bridge the separation that exists between God and humanity. Divine justice must be satisfied by one who can pay the penalty of death for people's sins. No "good works," religious activity, or avoidance of certain sins can establish a saving relationship with God.



Have you ever seen the Grand Canyon? It is about a mile across. If we all lined up on one side of it and attempted to jump across, none of us could do so. Now, the world's record holder in the long jump will go much further than the rest of us. But even the world's record holder couldn't make it across, and all of us would end up at the bottom.

Just like none of us can jump across the Grand Canyon or swim across the ocean, our best efforts cannot bridge the gap between a holy God and ourselves. We have not resolved our sin problem.

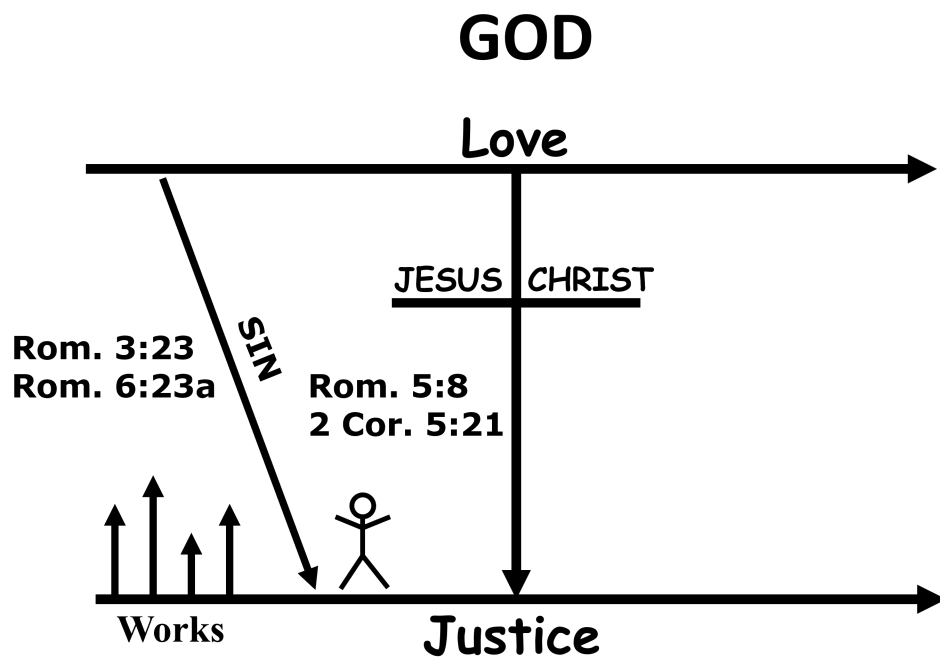
Because God is wholly loving and, at the same time, absolutely just, He has sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the full penalty for our sin. Because of God's love, Jesus entered into humanity and satisfied God's just wrath against sin by becoming a perfect sacrifice for sin.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

2 Corinthians 5:21

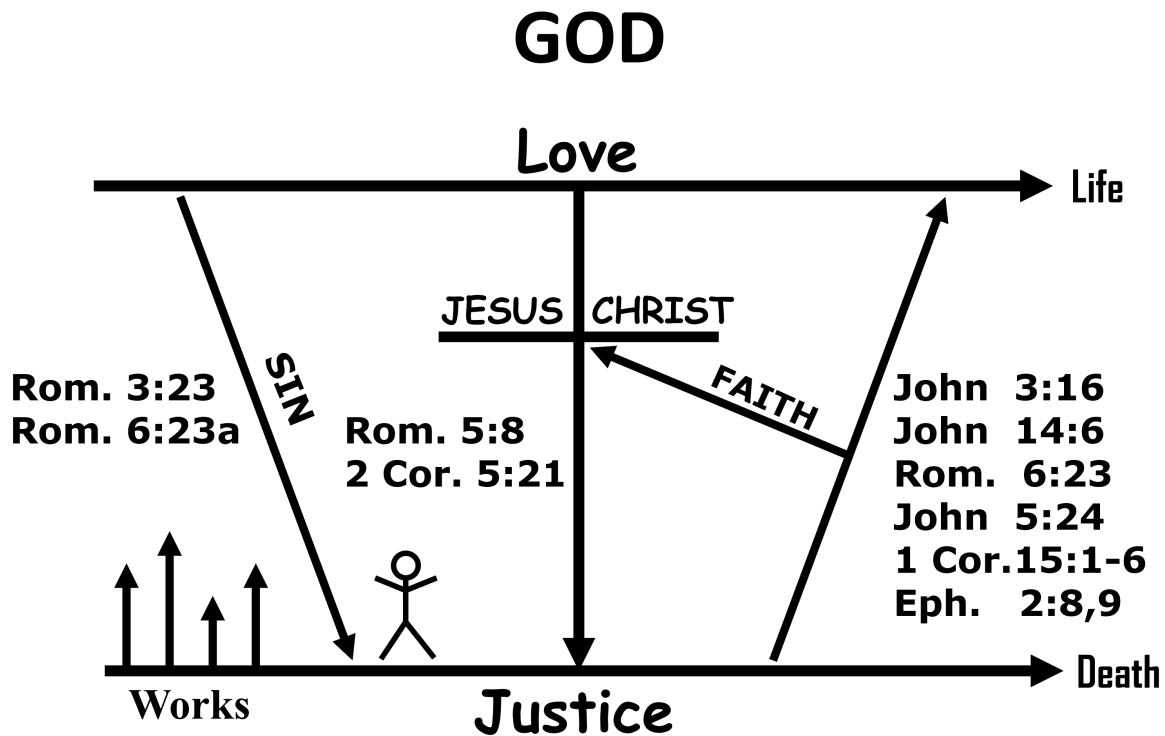


To illustrate how God requires justice to be upheld but also provides the payment that justice requires, imagine a person egregiously breaks multiple laws and appears before a judge. Because the individual violated the law, he pleads guilty. With the bang of his gavel, the judge declares the person guilty and sentences the person to either spend 100 years in prison or pay 100 million dollars.

Then, the judge does something surprising by stepping away from his bench and writing a check to pay the significant fine. Demonstrating great grace, he offers the check to the guilty individual. When that payment is applied, justice is satisfied. The decision before the guilty person is whether they will receive the gift being offered. Similarly, God's justice requires payment for our sins, but God paid for it Himself through the sacrifice of His Son. What we do with Jesus and the gift of His perfect life, death, and resurrection is the decision before us.

The Scriptures assure us that God forgives our sin by our believing in Jesus Christ alone and trusting in His death to pay the penalty for our sin. Faith in Jesus and His resurrection from the dead is how we receive spiritual life with Christ and a genuine relationship with God.

When we turn from our sin and trust Christ as our Lord and Savior, we begin an eternal relationship with God that comes through faith. Our sin is covered, and God's justice has been satisfied by Christ. Our faith in Christ, and Christ alone, is how we receive the righteousness and forgiveness that God provides through the perfect life, death, and resurrection of His Son.



For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:16

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

John 14:6

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

John 5:24

Faith is more than just knowing particular facts; it is actively trusting what you know to be true. Looking at a chair and believing it will hold my weight does me no good. Faith comes in when I not only think it will hold me up, but I also sit down and trust myself to that chair. Similarly, we enter into a relationship with God when we trust in Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin and Lord of our life.

Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep;

1 Corinthians 15:1-6

When people place all their faith in Jesus Christ, they receive the gift of His salvation from sin, which He secured at the cross. Because Jesus is risen from the dead, He offers the gift of eternal life and His perfect righteousness to all those who believe in Him.

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.

Ephesians 2:8-9

Charles Blondin was a world-renowned tightrope artist and acrobat. On June 30, 1859, before a stunned crowd of 100,000 excited onlookers, Blondin was the first to cross Niagara Falls by tightrope. He traveled 1,100 feet on a single three-inch hemp cord, strung from 160 feet above the falls on one side to a spot 270 feet above the falls on the other. The breathless assembly watched him accomplish, step by slow step, a feat most believed impossible.

But Blondin was just getting started. In the years to come, the daring entertainer repeatedly crossed: on stilts, in a sack, and even pushing a wheelbarrow! The story goes that an exuberant onlooker called out, "You could cross with a man in that wheelbarrow!" Blondin agreed and invited the man to climb in. The spectator nervously declined. He didn't have the faith to trust Blondin with his life. To get in the wheelbarrow would require complete trust.

Total trust in Christ is what is needed to truly know God. Jesus is not calling us to add Him to our lives but to trust in Him with our lives. Faith in Christ is taking God at His Word and actively trusting in His Son for eternal salvation from our sin and genuine spiritual life.

Our new relationship with God is eternally secure because Jesus Christ has paid the penalty for our sin. Christ has risen from the dead. Jesus reigns as the living Lord of the universe and

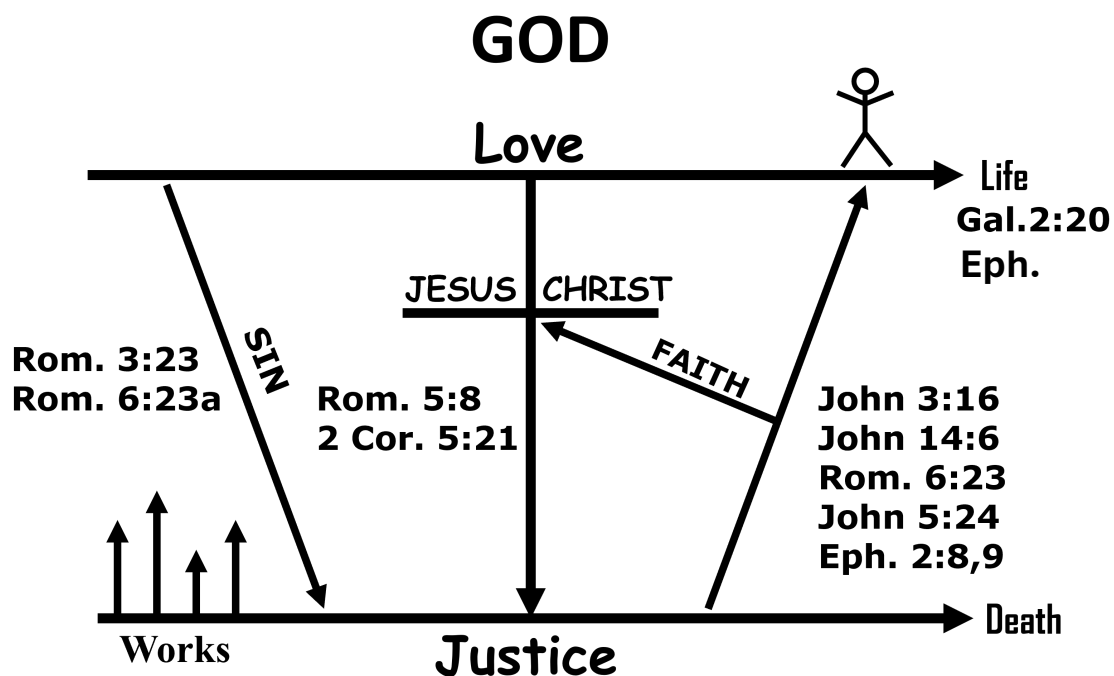
dwells forever in the lives of those trusting in Him. God never sees us in our sin, but always in His Son because we are united with Him forever (Heb. 8:12; 10:17-18). Being eternally united with Jesus Christ based on faith in Him results in Christ permanently living in, securing, and strengthening His people through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13-14).

I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Galatians 2:20

so that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,

Ephesians 3:17a



Where are you in terms of your relationship with God at this time?

Have you come to a point where you truly trust in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord of your life?

If not, what keeps you from placing your faith in Him today and beginning a genuine relationship with the living God?

**What is your answer to Life's Ultimate Question?**