

# Can I come back to God?

By

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Getting and maintaining a relationship with God › Living with God

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Many people who were raised in the Christian faith , said goodbye to God when they were growing up. Some realize later on: I was wrong, God is really there! Or: I cannot cope with life alone, I need God. Or: the love of Jesus is so special, I don't want to live without it anymore. Then the question can arise, is there a way back?

God brings people back

In Jeremiah 31, there is a prophecy about how the people of Israel, who have been taken to a foreign country as a judgment on their sins , will return to their own land. God Himself is bringing Israel back. It is written there as a promise: “ Your children shall come back to their own country. ” (Jeremiah 31:17) This promise is also for you if you have said goodbye to God. You may return where you belong, to the Lord God and to His church.

If you are reading this, it may be that you still go to church with your parents, but in your heart have already said

goodbye. Maybe you came across this blog post by accident. Maybe you are searching because you are seriously thinking about turning back. Maybe you are reading this because your parents find it hard that God has no place in your life, and they have asked you to read this to hear His invitation.

You are welcome to God

Let me tell you this: the invitation to come back is there for you, too. Israel came back through the desert. The way through the desert is open for you. Your parents love to see you come. The church loves to see you come. And most of all, the Lord God loves to see you come. In Jeremiah 31:19 it says “ After I had turned away, I relented, and after I was instructed, I struck my thigh ”. Striking one’s thigh was an expression of sorrow and repentance . “ I was instructed ” means: I now realize who I have been. I came to see that I am not the person I should be. That there are all kinds of things in my life that are not right. When I look at my life, I’m ashamed of it. But all this is no hindrance. You are welcome to God.

Maybe you're not so deeply ashamed at all. Because there is also a surprising verse in here: "after I had turned away, I relented" (Jeremiah 31:19a). We would expect to read: first, you are sorry for what you have done, and then you change your life. Here it is the other way around. It is possible that you are brought to a halt, that you suddenly realize that God is real after all and that you cannot do without Him, that you turn to Him – and only then do you begin to realize how much you need Him.

## Forgiveness and change

This chapter describes a new covenant (Jeremiah 31:33). It is a covenant between God and His people. The Bible shows us that in this covenant, two words always play a leading role: forgiveness and change. Forgiveness is about your past. When you return to God, He forgives you everything you did wrong, on the basis of Jesus' death on the cross. Change is about your future. Once you return to Him, a lifelong process of change begins, so that you will become more and more as He intended you to be.

I want you to know what the Lord God thinks about you. Here He speaks of Ephraim, that part of Israel that had forsaken God and wandered so far from Him. Jeremiah 31:20:

“Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he My darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do remember him still. Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him, declares the Lord.”

This is how He thinks about you. The Lord God is troubled about you. Come back to Him. He will surely have mercy on you.

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