

FOREVER WITH GOD!

Common Questions
& Practical Answers
About our Salvation

THE CHRISTIAN
LIVING SERIES

Forever with God

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Introduction

In August, 1972, I understood for the first time the truth found in this book. I understood for the first time that there was nothing I could do to save myself, and that when Jesus died on the cross, He paid for all of my sin, past, present, and future. I trusted in Jesus Christ as my only way to Heaven and immediately was saved forever. My life has never been the same.

The man who led me to Christ said many times, “Eternal security is not a separate doctrine from salvation.” This is absolutely true. If you are not saved forever, you’re not saved at all. For it is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone that we are saved, and not of our works, either before or after we believe.

The same controversial issue back then in the area of salvation is still the main issue today: Grace versus Works. You are either saved by the undeserved favor of God, which is grace, or you are saved by living a perfect life of good works. According to the Bible, it must be one way or the other. There can be no in-between **BIBLICALLY** speaking! Since no one can live a perfect life, the only answer is salvation by the grace of God.

I believe the issue is even more intense today because the devil has found ways to confuse the issue with unbiblical terms and even false teaching, which leads to great confusion. Let it be said in no uncertain terms that cloudy theology does not come from the Bible. It comes from the works and teaching of men.

Another area of great confusion today has to do with the relationship between salvation by grace alone and living a godly life. Do the two go together? Absolutely! Do those of us who believe “once saved always saved” have any reason to live godly lives? Absolutely! Let me say that carnal Christian living is not cured by adding works to the gospel! This is why a true understanding of the two natures of the believer and how to grow as a Christian puts these issues into focus as well.

That is why this book, written by my friend, Dr. James Scudder, is so important. You will find many valuable insights and precious truths explained clearly. You will also find Dr. Scudder's explanation of vital issues to be both refreshing and, above all, full of Biblical common sense! He has been 'in the trenches' for many years as a pastor and knows the reality of ministry. It is not theory with him. He also knows that it is when people understand the truth that they are set free.

Forever With God is written from the heart of one who has a burden for the lost and knows what it is to lead people to Christ. It is written by someone who has a pastor's heart and understands people better than anyone I have ever known.

Dr. Scudder has done us a great service in explaining these eternal truths in simple, accurate terms. This is a fine book and deserves wide circulation.

Dr. Thomas M. Cucuzza, Pastor
Northland Bible Baptist Church



You Can Know For Sure!

Dear Friend,

Did you know you can know for sure you are going to Heaven? Have you realized that we obtain salvation through Jesus Christ apart from any works? It is my prayer that when you read this booklet, you will understand you can be saved for now and all eternity. I will also be covering other issues that confuse many people today.

In Chapter One, I cover faith vs. works. Is salvation by grace or is it by works? What does the Apostle James mean when he says, “Faith without works is dead”?

Chapter Two covers eternal security. Are you saved forever? Can you lose your salvation after you receive it?

Chapter Three will explain the two natures. Did you know once you trust Christ, there is a war going on inside you every day?

Chapter Four explains predestination. Do you have a choice about whether you go to Heaven or Hell? What does the Bible teach about this sometimes confusing subject?

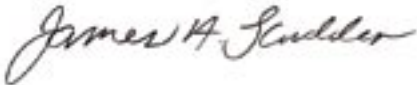
Chapter Five will explain repentance. Do you have to repent to be saved? What does repentance mean?

Chapter Six will explain water baptism. Is it necessary for salvation? Should we get water baptized?

And then finally in Chapter Seven, I will give you practical help on how to grow in Christ.

I hope this book will help you to understand the greatest news in all the world. We call this great news the gospel. There could be no greater news than the fact God sent His only Son to die for our sins. I love the gospel and am so glad you are taking the time to find out more about it.

God's Blessings on You,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James A. Studdler".

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

Romans 1:16

The Eternal Battle: Faith vs. Works

*Is going to Heaven man's way or God's way?
It is important that we realize we can do nothing to save ourselves.*

Do you understand the plan of salvation? Do you know for sure you are going to Heaven? The gospel is so easy to understand, yet sometimes it is made so difficult. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." To go to Heaven, all you have to do is believe that Jesus' shed blood on the cross of Calvary is enough. It is not Jesus Christ plus your good works or Jesus Christ plus anything. It is Jesus Christ plus NOTHING that gets us to Heaven. When we believe in His payment on the cross for our sins, His blood washes us from head to toe. Our salvation is not dependent on anything we do; it is only dependent on what Christ did on the cross.

As my good friend, the late Dr. Curtis Hutson used to say, "You don't spell salvation "d-o," you spell it "d-o-n-e."

Ephesians 2:8-9 says: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."

There will be no one boasting in Heaven about what they did to get there. We will only be there because Jesus Christ died for our sins and shed His blood.

But there are many who are confused about this issue of “grace vs. works.” Is salvation dependent only on what Jesus Christ did on the cross, or is it half and half?

One of the reasons this subject isn’t understood is because of certain passages in the book of James. I believe that they are easily explained and don’t contradict the many other places in Scripture which say salvation is a gift from God. But there are many who don’t understand those verses.

I have heard preachers say, “Salvation is all by grace, not by works. But if you are saved, you will automatically live the Christian life.” Then how could salvation be free? That would be like someone saying you won a free trip to Hawaii. However, once the plane started to fly across the ocean, the flight attendant announced, “This trip is free, but you have to pay to get off the plane!” Either the trip is free, or it isn’t free! It is the same with salvation.

A woman who had been married for a few weeks called her mother on the phone and said, “Mother, I have terrible news. I just found out that my husband doesn’t believe in Hell.” The mother calmly replied, “Don’t worry, after he lives with you for a few more weeks, he will believe in it!”

I think that after you read these chapters on salvation, you will believe that works can have absolutely no part in salvation. It is so important that we realize that it is only faith in Jesus Christ that gets us to Heaven. Let’s look at a verse in James.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations. James 1:2

Look carefully at the above verse.

Do you see the word brethren?

Nowhere in the Bible is someone called a brother who is not born again.

To be one of the brethren, you must have trusted Christ as your Savior.

You must believe that going to Heaven is Christ plus nothing.

I want you to see that the book of James is a training session for Christians. Look at these next verses.

“Do not err, my beloved brethren.” James 1:16

“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” James 1:19

These verses are talking about those in the house of God. They tell

*Salvation depends
on Christ —
not on us!*

me a Christian can fail. Why else would we need instruction like this? There are some who say, “If you are saved, you will see the fruit.” I don’t know any Christian who gets drunk at the Lord’s table, yet in Corinthians, we see this was happening. Fruit in the Christian life does not happen automatically.

I heard of a barber who decided not to charge a teacher around Christmas time. He said, “You have helped my children, and I want to help you by giving you a free haircut.” The following day, the teacher laid twelve apples on the steps of the barber shop. The barber was really happy. The next day, a policeman came in, and after his haircut, the barber said, “I know most people don’t appreciate you, but I appreciate you, so I’m not going to charge you for your haircut.” The policeman was so grateful that he laid twelve donuts on the steps of the barber shop the next morning.

Then the barber cut a preacher’s hair. The barber said, “I can’t charge you. You preach the gospel and most of you preachers are so underpaid it is pathetic. You are so unappreciated, I want to give you a free haircut.”

The preacher was so happy. The barber thought, “I wonder what will be on my steps tomorrow morning?” The next day, there were twelve preachers on the steps of the barber shop.

Salvation is free, like the haircuts the barber gave! We don’t have to pay for it! Salvation depends on Christ, not on us.

Let’s look at some of the other verses in James which contain the word “brethren.”

“My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.” James 2:1

“Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?” James 2:5

Can a Christian Sin After He is Saved?

After you trust Christ as your Savior, you can still sin. However, it is important for you to realize that you now have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. Because of your “new nature,” you have power over sin. You can choose to live above sin. You will also be chastened if you do sin, but God will never send you to Hell. That is because, as I said earlier, our salvation does not depend on what we do, it depends on what Christ has already done.

Why was the law given? It was given to point us to Christ. I don't believe that we should break any of the ten commandments, but there is no way we can keep from breaking some of God's laws every day. The law is like a mirror. It lets us know we are dirty. It lets us know we are in need of soap and water to get clean.

There aren't too many people who would take a mirror and use it to clean their face. The mirror is simply to show that we are in need of cleansing. So is God's law. The Bible says if we break one commandment, we have broken them all. All of us have broken God's laws. His law is to show us there is nothing good in us and there is only good in the Lord Jesus Christ. He died on Calvary's tree to pay the penalty for our sins. His blood paid the price for us. The Bible says the law is like a truant officer to bring us to Christ.

A friend and I decided to cut school when we were in high school. We slipped out the door and went down to a store. From there we called a taxi. The taxi arrived to pick us up, and lo and behold, sitting in the back of the taxi was one of my teachers! She asked us, "Where are you going?" I said, "The school." The teacher raised one eyebrow. She couldn't understand why we couldn't walk one block to school. My truant officer that day was my teacher. She brought me to school just as the law brings us to Christ.

My daughter wrote the following poem about the gospel:

The Way of Salvation

*It sparkles with the deepest truths,
and glimmers with all of God's hope.*

*It is love, justice,
holiness, and mercy,
given all together.*

*It should be hid safely in our hearts
while boldly proclaimed.*

It should enlighten, not mystify.

It should transform, not blind.

*It should be so clear
that both the most learned,
and the simplest*

can drink its life-changing truth.

The curtain of doubt, works, and tradition

*of men should never block its simplicity.
Nor should it be kept back
from anyone who needs it.
It is alive, not muddy
with interpretations
and the strangled sayings of men.
It gives certain knowledge of Heaven,
bringing men from the kingdom
of darkness to the sureness
of eternal life.
The moment it is presented,
it is seen to be alive,
not a dead man's creed.
Its love should empower our hearts
and motivate us to
tell it to all who will hear.
A man can study it for a lifetime
but a child can understand
it in fifteen minutes.
It is the power of God.
It is the Gospel.*

James is Talking to the Saved

Fifteen times in this book, we see the words, “my brethren.” When you try to understand the Word of God, it is important you understand the context of what the Bible is saying. Throughout his book, James says over and over, “my brethren.” This epistle was written to show Christians how to better serve.

Let's look at the verse that has confused so many:

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?” James 2:14

This verse is not talking about salvation.

Let's look at the verses around it:

“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one

*For by grace
are ye saved
through faith;
and that not
of yourselves:
it is the gift
of God:
Ephesians 2:8*

of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” James 2:15-18

Let’s look at a situation that could illustrate the verses we just read. Perhaps someone comes to you in the community and you know that he doesn’t have enough clothing or food. You know you could help him. Instead you say, “I will pray for you.” This will not help you in your Christian life or your discipleship. God will not honor the prayer you pray when He knows there is something you can do to help that person. God works through means, and many times the *means are us!*

There is no way you could take this and say this means salvation. These verses are talking about our service to Christ. To be saved, we have to appropriate what Jesus did to ourselves. Yes, it does take works to get to Heaven, but Jesus did the work when He died on the cross of Calvary.

When did Abraham get saved? When Abraham believed God, it was counted unto him for righteousness. James 2:21-23 says: “Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

Abraham’s faith was made “perfect” (in this passage, this is another word for mature) when he offered Isaac upon the altar.

Abraham didn’t receive salvation because he offered Isaac. He had trusted Christ some time before but was now showing the world that he believed God.

I love the following verse:

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” Romans 4:5

It doesn’t get any clearer than that! So, James is talking to the saved, and Romans is talking to the lost. James is talking about our works before man, and Romans is talking about faith before God.

The greatest news in all the world is the gospel. All of us are sinners. Not one of us deserves to go to Heaven. Jesus Christ died

upon the cross to pay for our sin so we could go to Heaven. There would be no other way for us to go to Heaven. We could never work our way there. How would we know when we had enough works?

Here are some great verses about how there can be no works to get us to Heaven:

“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah 64:6

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” Isaiah 53:6

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” John 3:17

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” Acts 4:12

“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Acts 16:30-31

“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” Romans 5:9,10

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;” Titus 3:5

Jesus shed His blood, and when we accept His payment on the cross, we can go to Heaven. I hope you will trust Christ if you haven't already done so.

You might pray a simple prayer like this:

“Lord, I know I'm a sinner. I know I can't do any good works to go to Heaven. I believe that your Son died on the cross and rose again from the dead to pay for my sins. I accept that payment right now.”

My friend, by the authority of the Word of God, if you prayed that prayer right now, you are going to Heaven! Thank God for the gift of His Son today.

Am I Saved Forever?

*Can you be sure of your salvation? Can you be saved forever?
There is much confusion on this subject today, yet God's
Word is clear.*

I was raised as a Methodist preacher's son. My father was a good person and a great preacher. But I was never taught that you could have salvation forever. It wasn't until many years later that I grew to understand what this doctrine means and how important it is.

What did D.L. Moody teach about eternal security?

"I propose tonight to take a subject rather than a text, and the subject is conversion. One reason I am led to take up this subject is because I received a large number of letters asking me, "How can I teach that a man can be saved all at once? That salvation is instantaneous?" One of the writers goes on to say that it is clearly taught in the Word that conversion is a gradual thing. That it is a life's work. And that it is a dangerous thing to teach that a man can come into this tabernacle a sinner and go out a saved man. Now, let us see what is taught in the Word of God. Let us see that God teaches instantaneous salvation. I hold to it as I hold to my life. I would as quickly give up my life as I would give up this doctrine."

Charles Spurgeon said this, "Heaven and earth may pass away but that man shall never perish. If only one second ago, I trusted the Savior, I am saved, just as saved as the man who believed in Jesus

fifty years and who has all the while walked uprightly. I do not say that the newborn convert is as happy nor as useful nor as holy nor as right for Heaven. But I do say that the words ‘he that believeth on Him hath everlasting life’ is a truth with general bearings and relates as much to the babe in faith as it does to the man who has attained the fullness of stature in Jesus Christ.”

There are many preachers today who say that there is no way to tell whether someone is saved except by the way he is living. I’m sorry, my friend, but those who teach this are teaching works for salvation.

Since I am saved forever, can I live as I please?

I want you to understand this next point. Eternal life is guaranteed, but you cannot live as you please. A Christian is saved forever, but a Christian is going to reap what he sows. If you plant carnal, fleshly things, you are going to reap that type of work in your life. A Christian can sin, but a Christian is going to pay for what he does wrong. This doesn’t mean God can ever send us to Hell, but it does mean we will be chastened.

“How much can I get away with?” you might ask. Remember, chastening from God is personalized. He is long-suffering and wants you to live a good, upright life that honors Jesus Christ. Some Christians even get taken home to Heaven early but for each person, God keeps the score. Just as none of us raise our children in exactly the same way, so God doesn’t deal with us all in the same way.

A disobedient child is never a happy child. You never see a child in a grocery store throwing a fit who is happy. When we go against God, we won’t be happy. So remember this before you decide to go against God. He will never kick you out of Heaven, but like a loving Father, he will discipline you.

Job’s Three Friends

My father had ulcers his whole life. Years after my father’s death, they discovered that the real cause for ulcers is a certain strain of bacteria. Ulcers can now be cured with antibiotics, but at the time, doctors thought my father worried too much.

As a result of his ulcers, my father had to have an operation to remove part of his stomach. While sitting in the waiting room while my father was having this operation, three ladies in his church came to “comfort” me. I call them Job’s three friends. They didn’t really

want to comfort me; they wanted to confront me about eternal security.

It wasn't five minutes into the wait when one of the ladies said, "You believe in that 'once saved, always saved' doctrine, don't you? You believe in the doctrine that sends people to Hell."

"Ma'am," I said as politely as I could, "Believing that, once saved, always saved doesn't send people to Hell. If you had to keep yourself saved, wouldn't that be works? Isn't Jesus' payment on the cross enough to keep you saved?"

I had brought my Bible along to read for comfort during the surgery. Now I found I had to use it as a sword. The women were ready to battle with me over this doctrine.

"If I could show you a place in the Bible where a man had an affair with either his stepmother or mother and was still saved, would you believe?"

"That's not in the Bible," one of the women scoffed. "Eternal Security is one of those 'Baptist' doctrines that they made up."

I opened my Bible and read them the following verses:

"It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

1 Corinthians 5:1-5

I said, "Notice that it says 'To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.' If this wasn't describing a carnal Christian, then what would one be like? How bad do you have to be before you can lose your salvation?"

Because the ladies didn't have an answer, they quickly changed the subject.

You Cannot Lose It!

You can never lose your salvation! We are kept by the power of God.

This doesn't mean we aren't going to be disciplined. As children of God, we will feel the chastening hand of God, but once we are saved, we are eternally secure.

Note that even if the body is destroyed, you cannot lose your salvation.

The next verse I am going to cover is 1 Corinthians 3:11-15:

“For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”

I believe there are going to be rewards for what we did for Christ while on this earth. Paul is referring here to what is called the “Bema Seat” of Christ. The Bema Seat in the Greek culture meant the place where the athletes received their rewards.

Now in our lives as Christians, we can build for Christ either “wood, hay, or stubble” or “gold, silver, or precious stones.”

The choice is up to us. The Bible says that the man who builds little of value on his foundation, shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire. I don't think it gets any clearer than that.

Notice too, that it doesn't say that if a man's work abide, he shall receive a reward. It doesn't say “he shall receive salvation.”

Eternal Security is not a separate doctrine from salvation, for if you aren't saved forever, you aren't saved!

The Test of a Savior

I love this illustration of a savior. If you were walking by Lake Michigan and saw someone drowning, feeling pity in your heart, you would quickly throw him a book entitled, *Ten Easy Lessons On How To Swim*.

I don't think the man who is drowning is in a position to read at the moment!

*Jesus is
more than a
good example
or a great
teacher. He
is a Savior.*

Would the man who threw the book be a savior?

- Yes No

Perhaps you jumped into the water and showed the man who was drowning how to swim.

Would this be a savior?

- Yes No

There are many who view Jesus as a great teacher but not a savior. The poor man is still drowning. You jump into a boat and rescue the man. You bring him back to shore, feed him, give him dry clothes, take him back out to the lake and throw him back in so he can drown.

Would this be a savior?

- Yes No

The rescuer who would throw the one he rescues back wouldn't be called a rescuer at all. He would be a murderer.

Jesus is not a murderer. He is a Savior!

He will save us and take us all the way home to Heaven.

If you don't see Jesus as the God who takes you all the way home, my dear friend, you probably aren't saved. Have you trusted Jesus totally to get you to Heaven?

Here are some more verses that show that your salvation is forever:

“All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37

“My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.” John 10:29

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” John 3:36

“But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” John 4:14

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting

life.” John 6:47

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Romans 6:23

“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” Titus 1:2

“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” Hebrews 9:12

Thank God for His eternal salvation today!

The Two Natures

Did you know, Christian, that the instant you trusted Christ as your Savior, a battle began to rage in your being? A war between that which God wants and that which you want. But there is a way to win.

There is much confusion about the two natures. I venture to say that if you can understand the two natures every Christian has, then you are well on your way to understanding the Bible. You will also understand why there is a constant battle in you to do right.

A person who trusts Christ as Savior is sometimes confused. He or she might hear, “old things are passed away, behold all things are become new,” and not understand this verse is talking about the new nature.

Jesus had two natures. He didn’t have a sinful nature, but He was God and He was man. Let’s look at some of the characteristics of Jesus Christ.

*Jesus is worshipped. Jesus worshipped.
He is prayed to. He prayed to the Father.
He is called the Son of God.
He is called the Son of Man.
He is sinless. He was tempted.
He knew all things. He grew in wisdom.
He gives eternal life. He died.
The fullness of deity dwells in Him.
He has a body of flesh and bones.*

Jesus wasn't half God and half man. There is no way we can understand how Jesus was fully God and fully man, but He was. He had two natures, though not exactly in the sense we do. You see, we are born with a sinful old nature that never gets any better. Jesus didn't have a sin nature like we do. When we are born again, we receive a new nature.

An Illustration of the Old Nature and the New Nature

Imagine the old nature as my left fist. No matter what you do, you can't make this first birth fit for Heaven. You can dress it up, but it still sins. You can baptize it, but it is still filthy. The first birth never gets any better, no matter what you do to it.

Imagine my right fist as the new birth. This is the birth we receive when we trust Christ as our Savior. This birth cannot sin. This birth is spirit. While the first birth can be subdued, it never gets any better. But the new birth can dominate, and that is how you can have the power to live the Christian life.

Can You Know the Moment You Receive Your New Nature?

There are some who teach you can never know exactly when you trusted Christ. You can only know it as you live the Christian life and do what God wants you to do. Imagine what would happen if a woman was ready to have a baby but had to wait twenty-five years to have it? That would be a terrible thing! When a baby is ready to be born, the mother knows it! This is the same thing as when people say you can't totally know the moment you were saved.

This is what happens in even good, sound, fundamental churches where the Sunday School teacher who has been teaching for 40 years, suddenly gets saved. Suddenly, everyone in the church starts to think, "I wonder if I am saved." Then you have a church where everyone starts getting saved all over again, and confusion comes into the church. In

*Don't try to reform
your old birth! You
could clean up your
old birth your whole
life and never go to
Heaven! Trust
Jesus as your Savior.
He will give you a
new birth!*

many churches across America today, there is a lack of understanding about the two natures. This is why people who have been “saved” for 40 years start to question their salvation.

Some Honest Questions

Can someone who is saved sin again? Can I lose my salvation? Is it even possible to serve Christ?

When I was in junior high, a famous evangelist came to our church in Morehead, Kentucky. This evangelist painted the flames of Hell as being HOT! He told the congregation if they didn’t come forward then, their chances were great they would never get saved.

I was embarrassed. Being a Methodist preacher’s son, I didn’t want to come forward and have everyone see me, but I didn’t want to burn in Hell either. I came forward but the sad thing is, I never understood the plan of salvation. I left the altar just as unsaved as when I came to it.

My family went to eat with the evangelist after the service, but he never once asked me about my salvation. I decided to reform myself. I promised God that I was going to live a perfect life.

I tried from that moment to live a perfect life. By the end of the first day, I was miserable. By the end of the third day, I was so wretched that I said, “There is no way I am ever going to Heaven. I’m going to Hell, so I might as well have fun along the way.”

If I had understood the new birth, I could have saved myself a whole lot of misery.

Nicodemus

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it

listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” John 3:1-8

Nicodemus was confused about the new birth as well. Jesus explained to him that he must be born again. Look at the following words of Jesus: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Are you starting to understand? The first birth can never change. The first birth, your old nature, can’t do good. Your new birth is spirit. Your new birth wants to do right. Do you see why if you are a Christian, there is a battle going on inside you each and every day?

My salvation is based on what Christ already did. Was what Christ did on the cross of Calvary enough? Of course it was enough. One small drop of His blood would be enough to get me to Heaven as well as everyone else in the world!

Two Separate Births

Religions today teach that if you do enough good things in reforming your old birth, you will go to Heaven. As I’ve said before, your old birth can never change! To be changed, you have to be “born from above.” Have you been born from above?

Unfortunately, there are going to be a lot of people who are trying to reform their old births who think they are going to Heaven. Don’t confuse the two births. Don’t think you can do something in your flesh to bring on the spirit birth.

You can clean up a pig and put a \$1,000 suit on it, but it will still go right back into the mud. That is what we are doing when we try to reform ourselves without the Spirit’s help.

Like reproduces like. The flesh can only reproduce flesh. The Spirit can only reproduce the Spirit.

Isn’t it great that when you go to the hospital to have a baby, the nurse doesn’t say to you, “Congratulations, you just gave birth to a hippo!”? So it is with the Spirit of God. Only through the Spirit of God are we able to walk in the ways of God.

I saw a bumper sticker that said, “The lottery is for people who aren’t good at math.” People who don’t understand the two natures aren’t going to be good at the Christian life.

The following verse will further explain the new nature:

“Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed

remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” 1 John 3:9

Does the new birth sin? Absolutely not!
Does the old birth sin? Absolutely!

Some people might ask, “But why does God continue to let me sin? Couldn’t I just trust Christ as my Savior and stop sinning?”

If God had to stop you from sinning, He would have to stop you from thinking evil thoughts. If He stopped you from thinking, He would control everything about you. If God did that, then obviously we would no longer have a free will. We make choices about what we are going to let control our lives.

Here is an excellent verse about the two natures: “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Galatians 5:16-17

While reading this verse, you should realize there is a battle going on inside of you! Your old nature says, “I want to do the things I used to do. I don’t want to go to church.” Your new nature says, “I want to go to church. I want to pray. I want to read my Bible.”

The Battle Rages On

Can you imagine there being a battle between me and the heavy-weight champion of the world? Unfortunately, there wouldn’t be much of a battle! I would probably lose in the first two minutes of the fight.

That is what happens when we don’t build up our new nature. We won’t have power over sin. We won’t have joy and happiness in our Christian life because our old nature is so strong. I pray I will never say, “I have been a Christian for so many years that my old nature is hardly even there.” Remember, no matter how many years you have been a Christian, your old nature is just as mean and ornery as ever! Be on guard, Christian!

The only reason I can live the Christian life is because I choose to let my new nature keep the old nature subdued. I’ve known some Christians who actually got worse after they got saved. This doesn’t

*Does the new
birth sin?*

Absolutely not!

*Does the old
birth sin?*

Absolutely!

mean they weren't saved. When I say this, remember that a Christian won't get away with his sins. We will be chastened by the Lord and sometimes even brought home to Heaven early, but we will never be plucked out of God's hand.

Walking in the Spirit

What does it mean to walk in the Spirit? When you walk in the Spirit, you will not be controlled by the flesh. When I am responsive to the Spirit of God, it is easier to walk in the Spirit. Don't you see how understanding the two natures can help you understand the Christian life?

Don't reverse the verse I have been talking about. Let's read it again:

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” Galatians 5:16

Don't say to yourself, “Okay, if I don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh, I will be able to walk in the Spirit.” That is not what this verse says. We need to walk in the Spirit so we don't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Don't put the cart before the horse.

You serve Christ by grace, just as you were saved by grace. Yes, you make a choice about which nature is going to dominate you, but we serve by grace. Whenever the Holy Spirit is talked about, He is always talked about in reference to a gift. You cannot live the Christian life on your own! You need the Holy Spirit to help you and to guide you.

You are only spiritual when the Spirit controls your life.

One of the ways you feed your new nature is to go to church. You need to be there as often as the doors are open. You will receive energy and help as you walk in the Spirit when you go to church.

Does Your Old Nature Rule?

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:19-23

You can see what the works of the flesh are when you read this passage. This is why it is so hard to serve the Lord in your flesh. Notice the word “they” in this passage – “that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” The word “they” is talking about the world. We are not to do as the world. The world that does the works of the flesh does those things against God. We are not to do those things as “they” in the world do.

What is the fruit of the Spirit?

Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. Do you see the difference between the flesh and the Spirit?

The Spiritual Test

Give yourself a test. Are you a spiritual person? Do you have love? Do you have peace, long-suffering, gentleness? Are you gentle person or a person who drives with “road rage”?

Did you fail the spiritual test? If you are walking in the Spirit, you are going to have the fruits of the Spirit. Every day you are still going to sin, but if you make the decision moment by moment to walk in the Spirit, you will start to show the fruits of the Spirit in your life. This is what I mean when I say you need to be controlled by your new birth.

I saw a sign in a grocery store that said, “Support bacteria, it’s the only culture some people have.” Sometimes there will be no evidence of “Spiritual Culture” in another person’s life, but God knows those that are His. Remember: salvation is free, but service is costly.

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

2 Timothy 2:4

“Abstain from all appearance of evil.” 1 Thessalonians 5:22

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ.” 1 Corinthians 3:1

“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” 1 Corinthians 15:44

Do you know which nature controls your actions? Do you allow the Holy Spirit to guide you, or does your old nature guide you? Determine to let the Holy Spirit of God control you, and you will experience incredible joy in your Christian life.

Time to Review

What do we have to do to go to Heaven?

State a verse that explains that it is only Jesus' blood that gets us to Heaven.

Write down one of the reasons you can be sure you are saved forever.

State one verse that gives assurance of salvation.

List some of the ways that you can let your new nature rule.

Do We Have a Choice?

The subject of predestination has confused many Christians and has even hindered some people from trusting Christ as their Savior. It is easy to understand this subject when we see what the Word of God really has to say.

Do I believe some people are born to go to Heaven without a choice, while others are born to go to Hell without a choice? No, I do not believe that. I believe every person on the entire earth can be saved. If I believed that only certain people were going to be saved, I wouldn't go to India every year and witness to thousands of people. I wouldn't spend my time preaching. I wouldn't waste my time if I believed certain ones were to be saved without a choice and certain ones were to be lost without a choice.

If there isn't really a battle between those who get saved by hearing the gospel versus those who don't, why would I continue to witness? I would just quietly bow out of the fray and spend my time doing something else.

I had a close friend who called me who believes in this doctrine of predestination. He said, "I am going to convince you that God chose you before the foundation of the world to take His irresistible grace." I said to him, "I was not predestined to believe in predestination the way you explain it."

I have seen this dangerous interpretation of the doctrine of predestination sap others of their evangelistic fervor. It takes away the impetus to

win souls for Jesus Christ.

I have some serious problems with this dangerous interpretation of this doctrine, just as I have a serious problem with telemarketers. To really drive them crazy, I put a busy signal on my answering machine. Whenever anyone tries to tell me that God doesn't give us a choice whether we believe in His Son or not, I put a busy signal on my answering machine!

It seems as if this doctrine of predestination makes people stop short of what the gospel means or go past what it means.

Rev. Robert Vanden Bosch, one of our staff members, was raised believing that some are going to Heaven without a choice while others are going to Hell without a choice. One time when he was young, he went to his Sunday School teacher and asked what this doctrine meant. The teacher said, "I'll talk to you after class," and the teacher never talked to him.

I heard a famous preacher say once, "I don't even know if I'm saved. I won't know until I die."

What Does the Bible Say?

And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation. 22:17

In the last book of the Bible, we have this wonderful verse saying all can go to Heaven.

When Jesus died on the cross, His blood flowed freely. There was no blood clot on the cross. He said whosoever will can take of the water of life freely. What a wonderful promise! His blood did not flow just to a few groups of people and skip the rest of the world. His blood flowed to everyone.

The devil loves the wrong teaching of this doctrine because if you don't know you're saved, then nothing else really matters.

Are You an Armenian or a Calvinist?

It seems people are always asking me, "Dr. Scudder, are you an Armenian or a Calvinist?"

The Armenian believes everyone can be saved but you can lose your salvation after you receive it. A Calvinist believes only the elect can be saved and you can't lose it, but you won't really know you have salvation until you die.

I have the perfect answer: I'm a Cal-Arm! I believe everyone can be saved, and you can't lose your salvation.

The Calvinists teach the TULIP. Let's see what TULIP stands for:

T-Total Depravity

They believe there is nothing we can do for our own salvation. I believe this, but I also believe that while depraved, God gave us a choice about whether we are going to Heaven or Hell.

U-Unconditional Election

They teach our will has nothing to do with it. If you are one of the elect, then you are going to Heaven. If you aren't one of the elect, you are going to Hell.

L-Limited Atonement

They feel Christ did not die for all men, only the elect; therefore, the atonement of Christ's blood on the cross of Calvary was "limited" to those who would believe. If you weren't of the elect, then you wouldn't believe.

*God places
the same value
on all men or
women, boys or
girls. He loves
everyone the
same!*

I-Irresistible Grace

Calvinists teach that if you are supposed to get saved, then you will. Do you realize that nowhere in the Bible does it say you are saved and then you believe? The Bible is clear when it speaks of salvation. It always states that first you believe, and then you are saved. It sounds as though you have a choice, doesn't it?

P-Perseverance of the Saints

It is taught that the saints must persevere, and it isn't until they die that they will find out if they were saved.

The Holy Spirit's Gospel Tract

Some call the book of John the Holy Spirit's Gospel Tract. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." John 3:16-17

You could ask the smallest child what “whosoever” means and they would say it meant anyone. Aren’t you glad you are a whosoever!

Small children are so wonderful and teachable. One thing that is important to teach to children is sharing. Children have four rules when it comes to toys:

1. If it is in my hand, it belongs to me.
2. If I saw it first, it belongs to me.
3. If I take it out of your hand, it belongs to me.
4. If it’s broken, it belongs to you.

A Calvinist might say, “Well, this means whosoever of the elect.” I have a simple question to ask: “Does the Bible say that or does it just say whosoever?” Take the Bible for what it says, dear people!

Notice in John 3:17, it says “the world.” God doesn’t want anyone to be left out of the salvation through His Son.

All Can be Saved

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”
John 16:7-8

There is a group of people in India called the “Untouchables.” They are pariah or outcasts. Nobody wants them around. If the shadow of an untouchable passes by a higher caste person, it is considered very bad luck. Do you realize that there are no untouchables to God’s gift of salvation? He places just as high of a value on that poor untouchable in India as He does on the richest person in America. To God there is no difference. He loves all people the same.

We should thank God every day for His love. He has unconditional love, where our love is conditional. We love people because of what they can do for us. Think about this: God loved us while we were yet sinners. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners! Dear friend, God has His arms out and He says, “Whosoever will may come!”

A Confusing Verse

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among

many brethren.” Romans 8:29

What does this verse mean? Look carefully at it. God knew what your choice and what my choice were going to be concerning salvation. However, some people have it in their head that if God foreknows something, then that means He caused it to happen. That is not what this verse is saying.

One time many years ago, we were going on a bus trip up to our camp in Minnesota. We were traveling north on a four-lane highway, and I looked across the other two lanes and saw a car driving the wrong way. I said, “Oh, Lord, there is going to be an accident.” A police officer in a police car risked his life by traveling the wrong way on the highway and going after the car. Fortunately, no one was hurt.

But think about how I felt as I watched this scenario unfolding on the other part of the highway. From my vantage point, I felt there was going to be an accident. But it didn’t happen.

God knew if there would be an accident or there wouldn’t be an accident. He knew what would happen if there was an accident, and He knew what would happen if there wasn’t an accident. God knows everything! But just because He knows everything doesn’t mean He causes everything to happen.

God knows what you will do. But He also knows what you would do if you made a different choice. God doesn’t look at life as past, present, and future. To God, everything is present. God is not in time as we are in time. God sees everything at once.

Just because God knows everything doesn’t mean He causes things to happen. He gives people a free will to believe or not to believe. He didn’t have His Son die on the cross so only some people could get saved.

Because God foreknew, it doesn’t mean He predetermined. This is an important point to understand. If you could see the future as God sees the future, you would know what was going to happen, but this doesn’t mean you would make those things happen. Look again at the verse. *For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Romans 8:29*

What does this verse actually say we are predestined to become? Those that are saved are predestined to become like Jesus Christ. Someday when we get to Heaven, all Christians will be like Jesus Christ. It doesn’t ever say in the Bible that we are predestined to go to

Heaven or Hell. We have a choice. We can all choose to accept Christ as our Savior, and it is our job to persuade others to believe on Him as well. This is why it is so important for us to win people to Christ. We need to point others to the life-giving water of salvation that is offered freely!

What Does Repent Mean?

Does repent mean that you have to “turn from all your sin” to be saved? Many preachers and teachers use the word “repent” in that sense. I believe the Bible gives us a clear explanation of what it really means to repent.

In this chapter, I am going to cover a very controversial subject, repentance. It seems that I always heard the word “repent” as I was growing up in the Methodist Church. I don’t know that anyone in the congregation understood what it meant, but we always heard the evangelists telling us to repent.

If you look this word up in Webster’s Dictionary, it says “to feel sorry for sin.” When some people present the gospel, they say you must feel very sorry for your sin to be saved.

When I was growing up there was a mourner’s bench in the churches I attended.

The bench was for people to work up enough sorrow for their sin so God could save them. It amazes me that we would mourn for God to save us when that is something He has already done. He has already died on the cross for our sins. He has already paid the price for our transgressions. This concept of repentance meaning “feeling sorry for sins” is not found in the Bible.

A person may feel sorry for his sins after he is saved but that is a result of repentance. Feeling sorry for your sin before salvation is not what repentance means.

Other people teach that repentance means to “turn from sin.” I would like to ask some simple questions: *How many sins do you turn from? How could you know you’ve turned from them all? What if you miss a few sins when you are turning from your sins?*

If repentance means to feel sorry for your sin, then how do you know when you feel sorry enough? If repentance means to turn from your sins, how do you know when you’ve turned from enough of them?

Imagine holding a milk bottle that is sealed. You can turn the bottle, but the milk turns with the bottle. That is what it is like when you try to turn from your sins before you are saved.

I have heard people say this about salvation: “Salvation is free but it is going to cost you everything.” Now that is ludicrous! Don’t say something is a free gift if it really isn’t a free gift.

Remember, we are *dead in trespasses and sins*. Ephesians 2:1 states, *And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins*. We’re not sick, we’re dead! There is no way we can turn from our sins before we are saved. We don’t have the power to do that on our own!

The gospel is not to make bad people better, the gospel is to make dead people alive. It is important that we understand this. A dead man can’t do anything to improve his life. It is going to take giving of life to make that man better. How do we get life? Through Jesus! You have to be born again to go to Heaven.

All Men From Adam Until the Present Day Had to Repent

Remember though, you can’t be saved without repenting. All men from Adam on had to repent. But what do I mean when I say “repent?” Repent is “metanoeo” in the Greek and it means to “think differently, or reconsider.”

If you don’t “think differently” about salvation, that is, the means of salvation, then you won’t be saved. Before salvation, every person thinks they have to work their way to Heaven. All religions in the world have good works that get people to Heaven. Only Christianity says salvation is not by works, but it is a gift.

*Why make
something as simple
as salvation so
complicated?*

There are some who go under the name of Christianity who say salvation is a gift, but to receive it, you have to stop all your sinning.

Let me ask you, have you stopped all your sinning? I know I haven't. I know the people in my church haven't. I know none of us have.

*It is foolish for
us to speak of a
free gift that costs
everything!*

Then, if you tell an unsaved person that they have to stop all their sinning to be saved, you are asking them to do what you haven't done.

Why make something as simple as salvation so complicated?

Did you ever feel like your shins are to help you find the furniture in the middle of the night? Well, the meaning of this word "repentance" will help us find more than furniture in the middle of the night! We can find the truth of the Word of God when we study the word in the Bible.

Dr. Charles Ryrie says, "In both the Old and New Testaments, the word 'repentance' means to change your mind."

Josephus, the great Roman historian, used the word the same way as the Bible uses it. In his writings, he said, "Herod thought the best course was to arrest John the Baptist rather than wait until a revolt broke out and they then had to repent of such trouble."

This word "repent" was used in the same way the Bible uses the word. Would it make sense to read the above statement if repent meant to turn from sin or feel sorry for sin? It makes perfect sense when you say it means to "change your mind."

People can weep and cry, but it won't save them. The only thing that will save you is when you believe Jesus Christ's payment on the cross of Calvary was enough for your salvation. I'm not saying it was wrong to weep and cry before you got saved or when you trusted Christ, but I am saying weeping and crying will not save you.

What Saves? Jesus' Blood and Nothing Else!

I am going to say again what I said earlier, "It is foolish to speak of a free gift that costs everything." We can show unbelievers everything believers are and have unbelievers promise to do what believers can't do. This is not offering the free gift of the Bible. It is important that we make the gospel easy to understand! The word "repentance" is not

the best translation. A better translation would have been “to change your mind.”

Many people think Christians are people who have given up things. Are the people who are living in a cave, having given up everything, the only true Christians?

Of course not. Those who live secluded lives trying to please God may or may not be Christians. The fact they are Christians isn't measured by their works; it is measured by their acceptance of Christ's free gift of salvation.

I do believe a Christian should change, but it is a result of being saved, not the cause.

Years ago, when I lived in Morehead, Kentucky, a group of us found our own private pool up on the hill. We didn't know it, but we had found the city's water supply. We had a wonderful time swimming in this secret place up on a mountain. Several weeks later, it came out in the paper that the city water was unsafe to drink. The article mentioned that the bacteria count was higher than it had ever been, and some boys were thought to be using the water supply to swim. The paper also said, “We haven't caught those boys yet, but when we do, they are going to jail!” That put the living fear into me! You can imagine I never swam in that water supply again!

Believe me, I repented about our use of the pool. I changed my mind about where I was going to swim.

Should we change after we are saved?

Do I believe that a person should change after they trust Christ? Of course! I teach Christian living.

Two men were standing in the foyer of the church after the service had ended. The first man said, “I bet you \$5, you can't say the 23rd Psalm.” The other man said, “I know it. Now, I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep.”

The first man said, “I can't believe you knew it” and handed him the money. I think we should know a little more than that about the Word of God!

Let's read my favorite verse: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Ephesians. 2:8-9

This verse is so clear concerning salvation and it doesn't even use the word “repent.”

Christians should automatically serve the Lord but they have to make choices. That is why the New Testament was written – so we could know how to live for Christ. I know that any preacher, including myself, wishes people would just automatically serve once they trust Christ as their Savior. But remember, how are we to serve? Only through the grace that God gives to us each day as Christians.

*We can't turn from
our sins on our own!*

*Only Christ can
wash our sins away!*

“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
Luke 13:1-3

Jesus wasn't telling the people to stop their sinning. He was saying, “Recognize that you are a sinner, or you will perish in your own self-righteousness.”

Jesus wasn't just part of the way to Heaven. He is the only way to Heaven. Unless you change your mind about how to go to Heaven, you will not go there. If once you thought it took works to go to Heaven, but you have trusted Christ as your Savior, you now think differently and realize it is only Christ that gets you to Heaven.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:24

“And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.” Revelation 21:6

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

Do you realize what this verse is saying? While we were “yet sinners” Christ died for us.

We don't have to “turn from our sin” to be saved. We can't turn from our sin; only Christ can wash away our sins.

Thank God today for washing away your sins through the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary!

Pray this simple prayer:

Thank you, God, for saving me. Thank you for sending your Son to die on the cross to pay for my sins. Thank you for shedding your blood so that I can go to Heaven. In your Son Jesus' name, Amen.

Do I Have To Be Water Baptized To Be Saved?

Can water add to the blood of Christ? When it is taught that water baptism is necessary for salvation, then works are being added to the simple message of the cross. The Bible is very clear that going to Heaven is faith in Christ ALONE and the only thing necessary for salvation.

A lot of churches teach that a person needs to be water baptized to be saved. There are even Baptist churches that teach that water baptism is necessary for salvation. I mention that specific denomination because I am a Baptist. However, I am not a Baptist who feels that water baptism is necessary for salvation. I hope in this chapter you will find out what the Bible truly has to say about this subject.

I believe in water baptism. I often baptize people. I feel it is something a Christian should do after he is saved, but I don't feel that it is necessary for salvation.

What is the most basic reason why I believe that? Because if water could somehow help you get into Heaven, then Jesus' blood would not be enough. Imagine if you came upon someone who had just been in a car accident and they asked you right before their last breath, "What must I do to be saved?" Would you reply, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved?" Or would you say, "Wait a minute. Don't die. You need to be water baptized to go to Heaven."

What saves?

I met a woman whose preacher told her that her baby was in Hell because her baby hadn't been water baptized. The lady felt terrible until I explained that no baby goes to Hell. Infant baptism is not taught in the Bible. I came upon a tract many years ago that said on the front cover, "All the Bible teaches about infant baptism." I opened the tract up, and it was blank! The Bible does not teach infant baptism, and the Word assures us that babies go to Heaven.

The Bible teaches that King David's baby by Bathsheba is in Heaven. Let's read the following verse. David is speaking to his servants in reference to his dead child.

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

2 Samuel 12:23

David knew he would go to his baby. His baby was never baptized, but God gave him assurance that he would see his baby again.

Can Water Help Save?

If one person can go to Heaven without being baptized, then ALL can go to Heaven without being baptized. God is no respecter of persons. He doesn't allow some to have a different way of salvation than others. The only way to go to Heaven is when we put our full trust in what Christ did for us on Calvary. When we believe this, we can be assured of eternal life before we die. Isn't that an exciting thought!

One of the illustrations I really love to use is the thief on the cross. Do you remember what the thief said to Jesus on the cross?

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Luke 23:42

Jesus' answer was clear.

"And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43

Jesus didn't say, "Wait a minute. Take this man down from the cross.

*If one person can
go to Heaven
without being
baptized, then all
can go to
Heaven without
being baptized.*

Remove the nails. He needs to get baptized before he dies.” That would have been ludicrous.

The thief on the cross went to Heaven without being water baptized. If one man went to Heaven without being water baptized, then all men and women can go to Heaven without being water baptized.

What Does The Bible Teach?

Many years ago, when I was teaching a Bible study for a group of teenagers in Kentucky, a youth group from another church came to visit. I found out they were from a denomination that taught water baptism was necessary for salvation. The subject I taught that night just happened to be the same one I am covering in this chapter.

At the end of the meeting, the entire youth group trusted Christ as their Savior, realizing water baptism wasn't necessary for their salvation. They were never allowed to come back to my Bible study!

We are saved by grace through faith, but what is it that actually saves us? Hebrews 9:22 states, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”

The blood is what saves us! Jesus' blood was so precious that one drop of it could pay for the sins of the whole world!

Why is it so easy for a child to understand the gospel? Because children haven't already been programmed to believe it is what they do that merits salvation. When presented with the gospel, most children find it easy to understand God's plan of salvation.

A lady went to a Baptist preacher and asked him if he would perform a funeral for her dog. He said, “I don't do funerals for dogs. Why don't you try the Methodist church down the street?”

The lady said, “I guess they would accept my contribution of \$10,000 for the funeral.” The preacher said quickly, “I didn't know your dog was a Baptist!”

Because the preacher performed the funeral, he earned some money. But that is not how salvation is. It is only faith in what Christ did on the cross of Calvary that gives us eternal life.

A Short Lesson in Greek

The word “baptize” was never translated from the original Greek in which it was written. It is called a “transliteration” because the Greek word is very similar to our English word today. This is because the word was never translated, but it was literally “carried over” into the

Bible we read today.

The translators simply changed a letter in the word *baptizo* to the word “baptize.” The word in the Greek means “to engulf or to cleanse.”

Do You Have to be Baptized to Be Saved?

I believe you have to be baptized to be saved. Now, before you stop reading, let me explain what I mean by baptism. Does water help Jesus’ blood get us to Heaven? No! But you do have to be baptized to be saved. Stay with me while I share the following verses. There are several different uses for this word “baptize” in the Bible.

“The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?”

Matthew 21:25

Do you see another type of baptism? Now, we can see there is another type of baptism mentioned, the baptism of John. Let’s look at a verse in which John the Baptist speaks of two different baptisms:

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”

Matthew 3:11

“I indeed have baptized you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” Mark 1:8

Do you see the two types of baptism? John baptized with water, but Jesus would baptize with the Holy Ghost.

What is Baptism by Fire?

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake

with tongues, and prophesied. And all the men were about twelve.”
Acts 19:1-7

Compare the previous verses with Romans 8:9. This verse is one you really need to know if you are ever going to understand baptism.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Romans 8:9

This verse clearly teaches that if you don’t have the Holy Spirit, then you are not saved. You don’t get the Spirit after you get saved.

You get the Spirit the moment you trust Christ. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is instantaneous with salvation. So, the baptism by fire is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

There is not one place in the Bible that says if a man doesn’t get “baptized” then he isn’t saved. It says that if you don’t have the Spirit of God, then you aren’t saved. The Bible also says, if you believe not, then you aren’t saved. But it never says that if you aren’t water baptized, you aren’t saved.

And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, Revelation 1:5

*The very best
of our good
works couldn't get
us to Heaven.*

You are not washed in water for salvation, you are washed in Jesus’ blood!

Are You Washed in the Blood?

Jesus Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. How many people did Jesus water baptize when He was on this earth? Do you know Jesus didn’t baptize even one person? If water baptism was necessary for salvation, then Christ would have been withholding salvation to those He ministered to on this earth. It is unthinkable that Christ would withhold salvation from anyone.

“There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism. “Ephesians 4:4-5

“There is only one baptism that saves, and that is the baptism of the Spirit of God. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and

have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” I Corinthians 12:13

No believer is excluded from the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I think the previous two verses clearly explain the baptism necessary for salvation – the baptism of the Spirit. Isn’t it exciting to think that we are indwelt with the Spirit of God after we trust Christ?

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” John 1:12-13

The very best of our good works couldn’t get us to Heaven.

If water baptism was necessary for salvation, that would be good works.

Even if it was 1% of Jim Scudder’s works that would get me to Heaven and 99% of Christ’s blood, I would still be trusting in my own 1 % to get me there. It is 100% Jesus’ work on the cross of Calvary that gets us to Heaven. Nothing we can do could ever get us to that perfect place called Heaven.

The Key Verse For The Other Side

I am going to talk about the key verse for those who believe in water baptism for salvation.

You will no doubt hear this verse quoted when you talk to someone who believes water baptism is necessary for his or her salvation.

I don’t want to cause controversy by bringing up this verse, but I do want you to understand what the truth really is.

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38

The word “for” in the previous verse is a Greek word that means “upon,” “unto,” or “because of,” but never in order to obtain.

This verse could have been translated, “Change your mind and be cleansed, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.”

Do you notice that even if you don’t translate the words into what the Greek is really saying, the verse never says “water”.

Yes, we have to be baptized to go to Heaven, but we already know that the Holy Spirit baptizes us the moment we are saved. This is an entirely different baptism than the one of water that you should do after you are saved.

A Confusing Verse

Some people take the following verse to mean water baptism is necessary for salvation.

“He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” Mark 16:16

Some might say, “This verse is talking about water baptism!” Does the verse say “water baptism” or does it just say “baptism?” This word translated means to be “cleansed,” Don’t we have to be cleansed to be saved? How are we cleansed? By Jesus’ blood on the cross of Calvary!

Please note it is only through unbelief that a person is damned. There is no other way for a person to go to Hell except to reject the gospel of Jesus Christ. And, of course, the word *baptized* can easily be translated “cleansed.”

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” 1 Corinthians 6:11

How are you cleansed? You aren’t cleansed by water. You are cleansed by Christ’s blood on the cross. You are cleansed by the God who engulfs us and saves us and keeps us and purifies us.

Pastor, Have You Ever Read John 3:5?

It seems like people who believe in water baptism for salvation always have John 3:5 in their arsenal. They run up to me and say, “Pastor, have you ever read John 3:5?” They then read the following verse to me:

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” John 3:5

I always say to them, “Why do you think the word born means baptize?

It doesn’t say baptized of water at all. Notice what it says. It says born of water.”

If Jesus had meant to say the word “baptize,” He would have said “baptize.” Nicodemus understood what Jesus was saying.

“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” John 3:4

Nicodemus apparently knew Jesus was talking about physical birth.

That is pretty obvious from the verses around Jesus' statement in John 3:5.

Why do we substitute the word "born" to mean "baptize?"

We know when a pregnant woman's water bag breaks, the birth of the baby is near. There is a man in our church, who when his expecting wife told him that her water broke, he brought her a glass of water. I don't think he quite understood what had happened!

Water is important to the life of the developing baby. The water in the uterus protects the baby from injury and disease. If the water bag breaks and the baby isn't born in 24 hours, the mother and the baby are both in danger.

It is easy to see that Jesus is speaking of our physical birth in John 3:5, so it makes it easy to understand the verse. Let's read it again.

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." John 3:5

A man needs to be born of water (the first, physical birth) and of the Spirit (the second, spiritual birth) to enter into the kingdom of God.

So remember that while water baptism is an important part of the Christian life, it doesn't get you to Heaven. Water baptism is a picture of what Christ has already done for us.

Time To Review

Are there some people who are born to go to Heaven without a choice, while others are born to go to Hell through no choice of their own?

- Yes No

Write the reference of a verse that contains the words “whosoever will”.

What is the Greek word for Repentance?

What does this word mean?

Do you have to “repent” (change your mind) to be saved?

- Yes No

Do you have to stop all your sinning to be saved?

- Yes No

What part of the Godhead dwells within us after we trust Christ as our Savior who helps us to grow spiritually?

Do we have to be “baptized of water” to go to Heaven?

- Yes No

What do we have to do to go to Heaven?

- Go to church regularly
- Stop sinning
- Trust in Christ’s payment on the cross of Calvary
- Be water baptized
- Give money to church
- Make Jesus Lord of your life

How To Grow In Christ

Now that you know for sure you are going to Heaven, you can experience the joy that God wants you to have in your Christian life. God has given us many principles in His Word that help us with this process.

The Bible commands the believer to grow in the knowledge of Christ. This is accomplished by letting the Word of God affect every part of our lives. You will find your whole perspective changes when you accept Christ as your Savior. The Bible will become more alive to you. You will find yourself reading it and understanding it, perhaps for the first time. Maybe when you read it before you trusted Christ, the Book seemed dull and boring to you. Now you find when you read it, you understand what it is saying.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” I Corinthians 2:14

This verse teaches that the natural man (this means an unsaved person) doesn't understand the things of the Spirit of God. The Bible isn't interesting to an unsaved person. Now that you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit will help you to understand the Word of God.

Don't be discouraged if you don't understand everything you read right away. The Bible says to “grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.” Because God says to “grow,” He must know that a Christian

doesn't become "Super Christian" overnight!

Once you accept Christ as your Savior, you are sealed with the Holy Spirit. I have discussed this subject more at length in the third chapter of this booklet, *The Two Natures*. Because you now have the Holy Spirit, you will suddenly realize there is conflict where once there was none.

"But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Romans 8:9

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" 1 Corinthians 3:16

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30

I remember going to a movie after I was first saved. After watching it for a few minutes, I knew I had to leave. The movie probably wouldn't even be considered bad by today's standards. But I had made a vow to my Lord that I wouldn't do anything that would keep me from thinking about Christ. So, I did something I wouldn't ever have done before I was saved: I left the movie. I wanted the Holy Spirit to control my life. Even though the people with me thought I was crazy, I didn't care – I wanted to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear friend, you will find the more you become like the Lord Jesus, the less you will want to see things that don't glorify Him. Because you now have the Holy Spirit, you will be surprised at the things that will bother you.

Don't ignore the Holy Spirit's prompting in your life! He is your faithful guide and friend. The more you listen to His leading, the more spiritual you will become. If you fail to do what He wants, you will not grow in Christ. God will deal with you as you would your own children. He will discipline you because He loves you, but He will never send you to Hell.

What is the Christian Life?

When I say to live the Christian life, what do I mean? I mean to live the life God has set out for you in the Bible. What is that life? You will never understand the map God has written for you if you don't ever read the Bible. If you are

*A daily quiet time
is a very important
part of the
Christian life.*

a new Christian, start with the gospel of John. This book will give you tremendous encouragement. Don't feel bad if you don't read more than a few verses at a time in the beginning.

I heard a man say, "If you only sample the Word of God occasionally, you will never acquire much of a taste for it." It is important that you frequently read the Word of God. Take your Bible with you wherever you go, and whenever you get a spare minute, take some time to read it. Even if you only read a verse or two at a time, get in the habit of reading it throughout the day. Reading the Bible throughout the day will help you to become more dependent on God's Word. It will help you to dwell on the things of Christ.

Another good book to read is the book of Psalms. I often read the Psalms when I am discouraged or down, and the Spirit of God lifts me up every time.

You need to recognize the Word of God's value in your life. Realize that you must put its words above everything else.

A Daily Quiet Time

Another important thing to do as you grow in Christ is to establish a Daily Quiet Time with the Lord. This is when you would daily read a portion of Scripture and then pray to the Lord. Perhaps you could write some prayer requests on a note card and keep it in your Bible. Then, as your prayers are answered, you could mark them off. It is exciting to see God answering prayer!

You should consider this time to be the most important part of your day. Nothing should crowd out this time with the Lord. He will become more and more precious to you as you learn what He wants you to do.

Another great way to have your Daily Quiet Time is to look on the back of this booklet for a toll-free number to order our monthly magazine. In this publication, you will find a devotional for every day.

The devotionals are taken from my sermons. They give verses to read, plus a thought to help you understand what you read.

You will find the monthly devotionals at our website as well.

Prayer

How important is prayer? It is so important to realize you have a constant friend who wants to help you and guide you every step of

the way. He wants to be your close companion. But the only way you can become close to Christ is to talk to Him. That is what prayer is all about – talking to God.

Do you realize you can talk to your Heavenly Father about anything that crosses your mind? Get in the habit of speaking to the Lord about everything that concerns you. Start the day in prayer when you have your Daily Quiet Time, and then stay in a constant state of prayer throughout the day. When you come upon a perplexing problem, take a moment to pray about it.

You will see God work in your life in a mighty way when you take the time to pray!

A Good Church

How important is a good church to your Christian life? I cannot overestimate its importance. You need to take the time to find a good church that teaches and preaches the Word of God.

At church, you will be fed spiritual food from the preacher, week after week. This will help you to grow spiritually and will open up new areas of the Bible to your understanding. You will be refreshed by the preaching, and it will help you to apply the things you are learning in the Bible.

You will also find other Christians there who will help you in your spiritual journey. They will hold you accountable to your new life in Christ. When you fellowship with believers, you will be encouraged and blessed.

I ask that you go to every service the church offers. Don't just show up on Sunday mornings for an hour! Take in Sunday School and the Sunday night services! Go to the Wednesday night prayer meetings and any other services the church might have. You want the Word of God to saturate your life as a Christian, and one of the greatest ways to do this is through the local church! I often say to my own people in the Quentin Road Bible Baptist Church, "Is it asking too much to give God three hours a week?"

Think of how much time you spend watching television or doing a hobby. Then translate some of that time into what really counts – the spiritual! You will find yourself growing in Christ and really learning the Word of God.

I have included a brief doctrinal statement from our church in this

chapter. This will help you in your search for a church. You need to make sure the church you go to believes everything the following doctrinal statement contains:

- Verbal Inspiration of the Bible
- Trinity of the Godhead
- Personality of Satan
- Genesis Account of Creation
- Original Sin
- The Virgin Birth
- The Blood Atonement
- The New Birth
- Justification by Faith
- Local Church Government
- Baptism by Immersion
- Commemorative Lord's Supper
- Security of the Believer
- Resurrection of the Body
- Pre-Millennial Return of Christ
- Hell–Eternal Torment
- Heaven–Eternal Glory
- Judgment

Here are some other things that are important to our church”

A Christ-Centered Church...

A person, Jesus Christ, not a program is the foremost. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” Acts 16:31

A Bible-Believing Church...

We stand for the historic fundamentals of Biblical Christianity. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the verbally inspired Word of God, the final authority for faith and life.

An Independent Church...

We are self-governing and therefore have no synod, conference, presbytery, or other form of human organization exercising control over the local congregation.

An Evangelistic Church...

We maintain a steadily expanding program of missions, seeking to bring all to the Savior.

A Fellowshiping Church...

Christian love, harmony, and unity are found in all of our activities.

Take the time to find a good local church. If you are in the Chicagoland area and are in need of a good church, then don't hesitate to check out the Quentin Road Bible Baptist Church!

You could also call the number on the back of this booklet, and if we know of a good local church in your area, we will be glad to tell you about it.

Witnessing

Another important aspect of the Christian life is witnessing. You need to tell others of your new-found faith.

Maybe you say, "I don't know how to witness to other people! What would I say? Maybe I wouldn't say what I should say."

Take some time to memorize the following verses. They will help you when you share your faith with others.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Romans 4:5

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." 2 Corinthians 5:21

These verses will help you when you witness. You will find that you don't need a lot of fancy theology to share your faith. Just share what Jesus Christ has done for you, and then share several of these verses with them. Victory In Grace has many witnessing tools available.

You will receive tremendous help in witnessing. I cover the questions most commonly asked when you are talking to an unsaved

person. I feel that they will not only help you to witness but will cement your own faith as well.

We also offer a *Sharing Your Faith Kit*. This kit contains the famous book by Dr. A. Ray Stanford entitled *Sharing Your Faith Kit*. This book will give you insight into sharing your faith. At the end of the book is a detailed and pictured explanation of how to use the Hand Gesture – a simple witnessing tool that I use often to explain the gospel. I use it at the close of each sermon to explain the gospel.

Included in this kit are 50 Heaven tracts.

These are the tracts I have used throughout my ministry. I have never found another quite as good. The tracts are easy to use, and you can give them to people when you don't have time to explain the gospel.

There are also five witnessing cards in the *Sharing Your Faith Kit* that are convenient and easy to use.

They contain the verses that will help you to witness to others and also prophecies that have been fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

They are sure to help you when you witness to your friends and loved ones!

They will help you to grow in the knowledge of your own faith as well.

These resources are sure to encourage you in your walk with Christ. You can call 1-800-78-GRACE or visit us online at victoryingrace.org/store to request these items.

Stay Faithful

If you consistently do the things I've outlined in this chapter, you will grow in Christ. You will find in your Savior a friend that "sticketh closer than a brother." He will be your companion and guide. Don't be discouraged if you fail sometimes.

Remember that God loved you while you were "yet a sinner." He doesn't expect you to become perfect overnight! I wish you the best, Christian! I pray that you will be able to keep growing every day in the Lord. I pray that you will read your Bible, pray, witness, and find a good local church. Keep on keeping on for the kingdom of God!

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- *THE END OF TIME*
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