



A Country Called Heaven

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Lesson #1: The Five Steps to Heaven

Dear Friend,

Have you ever wondered what Heaven is like? Heaven is more beautiful than anything we could ever imagine. The city of God is made of pure gold and all kinds of precious stones. Twelve gates lead into the city, and the Bible says each gate is "of one pearl."

In Heaven, there is no need of the sun or the moon, because the glory of God lights this land. From the throne of God and of the Lord Jesus there flows the river of water of life, clear as crystal.

In Heaven, there will be no sickness, no pain, no sin, and no death. There will be no sorrow, for God, Himself will wipe away all tears from our eyes. Our loved ones who are there will know us, and we will know them. Best of all, we shall see our Savior, the Lord Jesus, who made it possible for us to be in Heaven.

In Heaven, everyone loves and worships the Lord Jesus. You can walk the streets of Heaven for a million years, and you will never hear anything but words of praise for Jesus.

Heaven is where Jesus is. Jesus called Heaven "My Father's house." Those who love the Lord Jesus will be with Him forever in this wonderful place called "the Father's house." For those who refuse Jesus and will have nothing to do with

Him, there can be no Heaven. Jesus Himself is the way to Heaven, the only way. When He talked to His disciples about Heaven, Thomas asked, "How can we know the way?" Jesus said, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes to the Father, but through Me*" (John 14:6).

Now let us consider some very important questions:

- *Where did we come from?*
- *Why are we here?*
- *Where are we going?*

WHERE
is Heaven?

WHERE
did we
come from?



Life is full of questions, but these are the most important questions of all, and the Bible gives us the answers to them. **We came from God.** The universe is not an "accident," and neither is a man. God created the universe, and He created man. The Bible says, "*The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being*" (Genesis 2:7).

Man is a created being. He did not come up from lower forms of life. The man was created as "a living person." Man is the highest of all God's creatures because he was created in the image of God. The Bible says, "*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them*" (Genesis 1:27).

In the beginning, everything was good and beautiful because God made it that way. God was pleased with His work. The Bible says, "*God saw everything that He had made, and, indeed, it was very good*" (Genesis 1:31).

Today everything is not good and beautiful. There is hatred, fighting, stealing, lying, murders, wars, sickness, sin, and death in the world.

What went wrong? Man turned away from God! Man chose to go his own way instead of God's way. Even though man has turned away from God, God still loves the man and wants to bless him. Man is God's special creation, made in the image of God. God has lost a man, but He cannot bear to lose him forever.

WHY
are we
here?

God made us have fellowship with Him so that He could enjoy us and we could enjoy Him. But sin has separated us from God. God has given us the Bible so that we can find our way back to Him.



WHERE
are we
going?

We are headed for eternity. You and I are going to live forever in one of two places—Heaven or hell. Where we live in eternity depends on the choice we make in this life. God wants us to choose to return to Him. God wants us to choose Heaven!

Lesson #1: The Five Steps to Heaven (Cont'd)



The Two Roads

Jesus told us that there are two roads in life. One road is a broad road leading down. Many people are on this road. The other road is a narrow road leading up. Few people are on this road.

Jesus told us where these two roads lead. The narrow road leads to Heaven. The broad road leads to separation from God, in hell, forever. How terrible! To get on the narrow road to Heaven, we must repent and take the Lord Jesus as our Savior. The Bible says, *"God now commands all people everywhere to repent"* (Acts 17:30).

What does it mean to repent? To repent means to *"turn around."* The reason we need to *"turn around"* is that we have been going the wrong way. We have been going our own way instead of God's way. The Bible says, *"...Each of us has turned his own way; But ..."* (Isaiah 53:6)

I have repented when I can honestly say, *"I see that I have been going the wrong way, but with God's help, I am turning to God,"* That can take place in a moment's time, and it brings joy to God's heart.

If you are not saved, dear friend, you are lost from God. But God loves you, and He cannot bear to lose you forever. You are very valuable to God. You can

know how valuable you are to Him by what He was willing to do to get you back. God showed His great love for you by giving His Son to die on the cross for you. But He will not make you come back to Him. You must choose to come.

Perhaps, right now, God is speaking to your heart. If you see that you have been on the wrong road, turn around! Say to Him, *"Lord, I do not want to go the way of sin any longer. I want to go Your way, on the road to Heaven."*

The Five Steps to Heaven

There are five steps that lead to the narrow road to Heaven. There are words in each step. Let us see what they say. Start at the bottom and read up. Pause a moment and read the steps again. Say them quietly to yourself. Now let us talk about them. We will have a Bible verse for each step.



STEP 1:

I have sinned.

"For all have sinned, and have fallen short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

The first step in becoming a child of God is to learn what I am in God's sight and to accept what He says about me. God says that we are all sinners. We have all said wrong things and done wrong things.

Sin is a terrible thing. It hurts us, and it hurts others. But the worst thing about sin is this—sin hurts God's heart. Do you know why sin hurts His heart? Because God is holy and loves us so much, sin hurts His heart. We cannot undo a single wrong thing that we have ever said or done. We might wish that we could go back and change what we have done, but that is not possible. But we can be forgiven. The Lord Jesus can forgive you of all your sins, and He wants to forgive you. He is *"the Friend of sinners."* He will never turn away anyone who comes to Him. He said, *"...him who comes to Me, I will certainly not cast out"* (John 6:37).

STEP 2:

God loves me.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Lesson #1: The Five Steps to Heaven (Cont'd)

Whom does God mean when He says "*the world*"? He means all the people in the world. That includes you and me! Whom does God mean when He says "*whoever*"? He means anyone. You can put your name in this verse. Why not do it right now?

For God so loved _____ that He gave His only begotten Son that _____ believing in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Now read it out loud with your name in the blank spaces. There, that is good news, isn't it?

STEP 3: Christ died for me.

"But God demonstrates [shows] His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

It is good news: God loves sinners! God is saying to us, "I love you! I have shown My love for you in giving My Son to die for you."

God cannot overlook our sins or pretend that He does not know about them. What did God do about our sins? He paid the penalty for our sins Himself in the Person of His Son.

The Lord Jesus Christ died for sinners. He died for you, and He died for me. You can say, "Christ died for me!" Say it right now—**"Christ died for me!"** Not only did Christ die for our sins, but He also rose from the dead. He is a living Savior! He has all power in Heaven and on earth. He can forgive your sins and make you a child of God.



STEP 4: I receive Him.

Our next verse tells us how to become a child of God. The Bible says, *"As many as received Him [the Lord Jesus Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God..."* (John 1:12).

To become a child of God, I must come as a sinner to the Lord Jesus and receive Him as my Savior. God has given Jesus to me to be my Savior, but I must receive Him; that is, I must take Him as my own Savior.

I must make it personal. It is not simply, *"We are all sinners,"* but *"I am a sinner."* It is not just, *"Jesus died for sinners,"* but *"Jesus died for my sins."* It is not simply, *"Jesus is the Savior,"* but *"I take Jesus Christ as my Savior."* When I take the Lord Jesus as my Savior, I become a child of God. You take Him as your Savior by asking Him to come into your heart. Your heart is like a house with a door. Jesus said, *"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: If any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in..."* (Revelation 3:20).



STEP 5: I have everlasting life.

"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life..." (John 3:36).

This verse tells us that if we believe in the Lord Jesus, we have everlasting life. Say the verse to yourself right now—*"He who believes on the Son has everlasting life."*

There, you understand that, don't you? We have been talking for a long time. Are you ready to make your choice?

You want to choose the road that leads to Heaven, don't you? You can take Jesus as your Savior right now. You will always be glad that you did. *(Since this is just between you and the Lord, it will be best if you can find a quiet place where you can be alone for a few minutes. So, right now, before you read the next part, find a quiet place where you can be alone with the Lord Jesus.)*

Now you are ready to talk to the Lord Jesus. Here is a prayer that will help you talk to Him:

"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I have been going the wrong way. I believe that You are the Son of God and that You died on the cross for my sins. Thank You for loving me so much. Please come into my heart and forgive me of all my sins. Right now, I take You as my Savior."



Lesson #1: The Five Steps to Heaven (Cont'd)

I can know that I am saved

We are saved by what God has done for us in the Person of His Son. When I believe that Jesus died for my sins and I take Him as my Savior, I am saved. God forgives me of all my sins and makes me His child. I have everlasting life.

How do I know that I have everlasting life? I know because God says so in His Word, and He cannot lie.

The Bible says, *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life..."* (1 John 5:13).

Whose word is this? It is God's Word, so we know that it is true.

God said it! I believe it! That settles it!

Being a child of God is the most wonderful thing in the world, but let me tell you a secret: The Christian life will not be easy here on earth. Jesus said, *"In the world, you shall have tribulation [trouble]: but take courage; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

We will have many troubles and trials as we travel to our home in Heaven. But if the Lord Jesus is living in our heart, we do not have to be afraid. He has promised, *"I will never leave you, nor forsake you"* (Hebrews 13:5).

If you have taken the Lord Jesus as your Savior, please tell us about it. At the bottom of your Question Page, you will find a place where you can tell us of your decision. If you are not sure that you are saved, read this lesson over again and ask the Lord Jesus to make it clear to you. Remember, being saved is the most important thing in the world. Jesus said, *"For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and lose his own soul"* (Mark 8:36).

Lesson #2: What is God Like?

Dear Friend,

This lesson is about God. We all need to know about God because we all need Him. The most important thing in the world is to know God. The Lord Jesus said, *"This is eternal life, which they [disciples] may know You [God the Father], the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent"* (John 17:3).

God is so great and so wonderful that we can never know all there is to know about Him in the Bible. From the Bible, we learn that there is only one God, yet He is in three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. **God the Father** is in Heaven. **God the Son** is the Lord Jesus Christ, who came into this world to be our Savior. **God, the Holy Spirit**, dwells in the hearts of all who have received the Lord Jesus as their Savior. The Bible tells us many other things that are true about God. We are going to consider **ten** of them in this lesson.



GOD is the Creator

Have you ever wondered how the earth, the sun, the moon, and the stars came into being? God created them! This universe did not come into being by itself. God created it! The very first verse in the Bible says, *"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1).

We know that there is a God because we see what He has done. We see the wonderful things which He has created. The Bible says, *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and their skies proclaim the work of His hands"* (Psalm 19:1).



Lesson #2: What is God Like? (Cont'd)

God created us too! We are very special creatures because we were created in the image of God. The Bible says, *"...God created man in His own image..."* (Genesis 1:27).

Of all the great and wonderful things which God created, do you know what God loves most?

God Loves PEOPLE! And He is so great that He knows each one of us. He knows you, and He loves you! You are worth more to Him than the whole world!

GOD is ETERNAL

This means that God had no beginning and He will have no end. Everything else in the universe had a beginning, but there never was a time when God did not exist. The Bible says, *"Before the mountains were born or You gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God"* (Psalm 90:2).

GOD is everywhere

This means that God is present in every place in His universe. God is very, very great! *"Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the Lord* (Jeremiah 23:24).

No matter where we are or where we may go, God is there. Perhaps you are wondering, *"If God is everywhere why can't we see Him?"*

The reason we cannot see God is that God is a spirit. We cannot see a spirit. You have a body which we can see. But you also have a spirit which we cannot see. We can see your body, but no one can see your spirit. **God is all spirit.** He does not have a body, so we cannot see Him. But He sees us, and He hears us, and He loves us. He can be everywhere at the same time because God is God and because He is a spirit. He is always with us wherever we are.

GOD is ALL-MIGHTY

This means that God can do anything. There is no limit to His power. He is *"the Almighty God."* He has all power in Heaven and the earth. Even the most powerful men in this world are as nothing compared to God. The Bible says, *"...He does according to His will in the host*

of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can hold back His hand, or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" (Daniel 4:35)



GOD is ALL-WISE

This means that God knows all things. He knows everything that has happened, and He knows everything that is going to happen. God knows how many stars are in the sky. He calls them by name. He even knows the number of hairs on your head! Jesus said, *"Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered..."* (Luke 12:7).

God knows all that we have said and done. He even knows what we think! He knows every secret. And He sees us at all times. The Bible says, *"You are the God who sees me..."* (Genesis 16:13).

GOD is HOLY

This means that God is without any sin. God is all light and glory. Because God is holy, He hates sin and loves righteousness. In the Bible, darkness stands for sin. The Bible says of God, *"...God is light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all"* (1 John 1:5).

God once spoke to the prophet Isaiah in a vision. A vision is something like a dream. In that vision, Isaiah saw God upon His throne. Around the throne of God, angels were praising God. They were saying, *"...Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory."* (Isaiah 6:3).

When Isaiah saw the vision, he was afraid. The vision showed him that God is holy, and he knew that he was sinful. He fell on his face and cried, *"Woe is me! For I am ruined ..."* (Isaiah 6:5).

We, too, are sinful, yet God wants us to come to Him. And He has made a way so that we can come into His presence. When we take the Lord Jesus as our Savior, God sees us *"in Christ."* God says that we are clean and pure in His sight because we are *"in Christ."*



Lesson #2: What is God Like? (Cont'd)

GOD is RIGHTEOUS

This means that God always does what is right. Because He is holy and righteous, God must punish sin. We are sinners, and God cannot overlook our sins or pretend that He does not know about them. **The good news is** that when we turn to God and take the Lord Jesus as our Savior, God forgives us of all our sins. He does this because Jesus paid for all our sins by his death on the cross. The Bible says, *"...your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake"* (1 John 2:12).

GOD is LOVE

This means that God loves us and wants what is best for us. God showed His great love for us in sending His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins. The Bible says, *"God illustrates [shows] His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

Because God loves us so much, He wants us to love Him and to trust Him. Sometimes people say, *"If God loves me, why does He let me be sick? Why does He let troubles come to me?"* Even though we may not know why things happen to us, God wants us to trust Him. Even when we are sick, or when troubles come, we must believe that God loves us and that He does what is best for us.

GOD is Faithful

This means that God always keeps His word. He always does what He says He will do. Do you ever make promises? Do you always keep your promises? I am afraid that we would have to say that we do not always keep our promises. Sometimes we forget. And sometimes we make promises that we cannot keep. But God never forgets! And God always keeps His promises. The Bible says, *"...He who promised is faithful"* (Hebrews 10:23).

GOD is Unchangeable

This means that God is always the same in His holy nature and character. God is always holy. He is always righteous. He is always just. He loves always. God said of Himself, *"I, the LORD, do not change; ..."* (Malachi 3:6).

Now we come to an amazing truth:

Did you know that God once became a man? Yes, this is true. The Son of God once came into this world as a tiny baby. The Bible says, *"For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us...and His name will be called The Mighty God..."* (Isaiah 9:6).

You may ask, "Is Jesus Christ really God?" Yes, He most certainly is! He came into this world as a tiny baby, born in a stable; yet He is *"The Mighty God."* The Lord Jesus is a man, yet He is God.

The Bible says, *"...great is the mystery of godliness: God was revealed in the flesh..."* (1 Timothy 3:16).

Now we come to a very important question:

Why did the Lord Jesus come into the world?

He came because we needed a Savior! We are sinners. We have said wrong things. We have done wrong things. Because God is holy and just, He must punish sin. Because He is love, He gave His Son to die in our place. **The most precious truth** in the Bible is that the Son of God loved us so much that He left Heaven and became a man so that He could die for our sins.

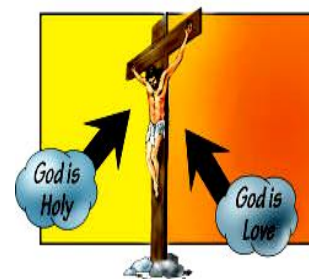
Now, because the Lord Jesus has died on the cross, God forgives the sins of all those who take Christ as their Savior. God does not overlook our sins, but He forgives them because He sees the blood of His Son which was shed for them. The Bible says, *"...we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins"* (Colossians 1:14).

Have you trusted the Lord Jesus as your Savior? If you have, then all your sins are forgiven. You are a child of God.

God is your heavenly Father, and you can depend on Him for all your needs. What a wonderful thing this is! After reading about how great God is and how much He loves us, what does it make you want to do? It makes you want to worship Him and praise Him, doesn't it? And do you know, that is what God wants you to do exactly!

Right now, why not find a quiet place where you can talk to God in prayer. Tell Him how great and wonderful you think He is. If there is some sin in your life, confess that sin to God. Thank Him for sending the Lord Jesus to die for your sins. Thank Him for saving you. Praise Him for His greatness and His goodness. The Bible says, *"Great is the LORD, and highly to be praised..."* (Psalm 145:3).

the Son of God



Lesson #2: What is God Like? (Cont'd)

DO I HAVE Saving Faith?

Saving faith comes from careful attention to God's exact statements in His Word. It is also important to understand that we are not saved by what we do for God, but by what God has done for us in the person of His Son. Read God's exact statements in the verses below and then answer the questions (for yourself — these are not for online submission). God says:

"There is none righteous, not even one ... For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:10, 23)

How many people are righteous? _____. Who has sinned? _____. Have you sinned? _____

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish [be lost], but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

Does God love sinners? _____. What is God's gift to you? _____. Do sinners have to be lost? _____

"God demonstrates [shows] His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8)

For whom did Christ die? _____. Did Christ die for you? _____

"As many as received Him [the Lord Jesus Christ], to them He gave the right to become children of God..." (John 1:12)

What must one do to become a child of God? _____. Have you received Him? _____

"He who has the Son has the life [eternal life]; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 John 5:12)

Who has eternal life? _____. Who does not have eternal life? _____

Do you know for sure that you have eternal life? _____

Can you say now, "I know that I have eternal life because I have received God's Son as my Savior"?

Lesson #3: The Way of Victory



Dear Friend,

From the very moment you took the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you have been on the narrow road that leads to Heaven. Along the way, you and I will meet other Christians who are also on the road to Heaven.

It is wonderful to be a Christian, but we must realize that the road to Heaven will not be easy. Why? Because we have many enemies.

The Bible tells us about three great enemies of the Christian:

(1) "the **world**," (2) "the **flesh**," and (3) the **devil**.

What do these enemies do? They try to get us to sin. But God has made way for us to have victory over them. In this lesson, we are going to see how we can overcome these three enemies.



The Bible uses the word "**world**" in several different ways. Sometimes, it refers to this earth which God created. Sometimes it refers to the people in the world as in John 3:16 where the Bible says, *"For God so loved the world..."* A third meaning is found in 1 John 2:15 where the Bible says, *"Love not the world..."* What is the meaning of "**the world**" here? It means the attractive things of the world which Satan uses to draw us away from God.

Lesson #3: The Way of Victory (Cont'd)



God wants me to love Him with all my heart. Satan does not want me to love God, so he uses the attractive things of the world to draw me away from loving God and wanting to do His will. What are some of the things Satan uses to draw me away from God? Satan may use T.V. or the movies, or a certain kind of music, or something else that I love.

Some of these things may not be sinful in themselves, but if they begin to take first place in my life, that is when they become sinful for me. If they cause me to spend less time in prayer and reading God's Word or keep me away from church on the

Lord's Day, they are sinful for me. The Bible says, *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him"* (1 John 2:15).

The Bible says that Christ *"gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world."* God wants us to overcome the world and its sinful attractions.



How can I overcome "the world"?

I overcome the world by loving the Lord Jesus with all my heart. The world has many attractive things and sinful pleasures, but they do not satisfy my heart. Only Christ can do this. If Jesus Christ is your Savior, remember that He lives in you. He is always with you. Wherever you go, you take Him with you. Whatever you listen to, Jesus listens to it with you. If you love Him, you will not want to do things that hurt His heart.

2 the Flesh

The second great enemy of the Christian is *"the flesh."* What is "the flesh"? The flesh is our sinful human nature. Another name for *"the flesh"* is **SELF**. It is what we are inside. Before I was saved, I lived for myself. I did what I wanted to do. I lived to please myself. SELF is on the throne of my heart. Let us see what SELF is like.



SELF is very proud. In fact, SELF thinks that he is the most important person in the world. SELF wants everyone to look up to him.

SELF is completely selfish. He lives to please himself. SELF always wants to have his own way—he hates to have to obey somebody else.

SELF never likes to admit that he is wrong. He always tries to blame someone else.

SELF is easily offended or "hurt." SELF hurts people's feeling and does not like to forgive others. SELF holds grudges.

SELF always wants to have its own way. SELF-says, *"I will do what I want to do, no matter what others say."*

SELF-hates God and will not obey Him. Self-says, *"I don't care what God says; I will do it my way!"*

Where does this spirit of rebellion come from? It comes from Satan! Satan was the first one to rebel against God. The spirit of rebellion comes from him. When I was saved, another Person came to live in my heart—the Lord Jesus Christ. I was so happy! But I soon discovered that I had a problem—**SELF-did not move out**. Not only is SELF still there, but SELF-wants to continue to rule in my heart.

If I allow SELF to continue to rule in my life, I will be an unhappy Christian. This is why so many of God's children are not really happy. They have allowed SELF to continue ruling in their lives.

What is the secret of victory over SELF? The secret is to make Christ the King of my life. I must take SELF off the throne and put Christ there. The Lord Jesus has the right to be King in my life. Why? Because I belong to Him. The Bible says, *"...you are not your own... for you have been bought with a price..."* (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20).

What was the price the Lord Jesus paid for us? The price was His own blood. He gave His life to redeem us. To whom do we belong now? We belong to Christ. He has the right to be King in our heart. But even though Christ has the right to be our King, He waits for us to tell Him that we want Him to rule as King in our life.

Lesson #3: The Way of Victory (Cont'd)

When Christ is on the throne in our heart, we will have His love, His joy, and His peace in our heart. We will not commit the sins of SELF.

You must choose between SELF and Christ. You must decide who is going to be on the throne of your heart. If you choose to make Christ the King of your life, it means that you must obey Him.

You do want Christ to be your King, don't you? Will you stop right now and tell Him that you really want Him to be your King? Here is a prayer that you may pray:

"Lord Jesus, I thank You for loving me so much and for dying for me. I belong to You now, and I want You to be on the throne in my heart and be King in my life. I want to obey You and do Your will."

Remember, if Christ is your King, you must live to please Him and not SELF.



The greatest enemy of the Christian is the devil. He is also called Satan. The Bible says that this world is under the control of Satan. He is called *"...the god [ruler] of this world..."* (2 Corinthians 4:4)

Satan's object is to destroy people, and he wants to destroy you. The Bible says of him, *"...Your adversary, the devil, prowls like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour [destroy]."* (1 Peter 5:8)

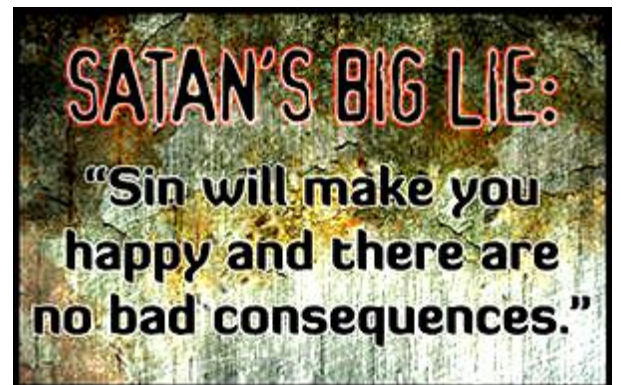
Satan uses the attractive things of the world to deceive and destroy people. Young people are one of Satan's main targets. He deceives them into using drugs, alcohol, and tobacco. Satan uses filthy music, dirty TV shows, and sexy movies to put wrong thoughts into their minds and get them involved in sex. He loves to see children and teenagers rebelling against their parents.

How does Satan destroy people? He destroys them by deceiving them. Satan deceives people by causing them to believe a lie. Jesus said to Satan, *"...He was a murderer from the beginning... because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."* (John 8:44b)

What is Satan's "Big Lie"? Satan's "Big Lie" is this: *Sin will make you happy, and there are no bad consequences.* In movies and television, you see people doing all kinds of sinful things; yet they all seem to be happy, and no one suffers the consequences of his sins.

This is a lie! There are always bad consequences for sin. The Bible says, *"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap."* (Galatians 6:7)

Satan is a terrible enemy! We cannot defeat him by ourselves. But the good news is that Christ has already defeated Satan for us. When Christ died on the cross, Satan thought that he had won a great victory, but he was never more mistaken! Christ rose from the grave as the mighty Victor over Satan and all the powers of darkness.



Lesson #3: The Way of Victory (Cont'd)

The Christian who trusts and is obeying the Lord Jesus does not have to be afraid of Satan. Christ, who lives in us, is greater and stronger than Satan, who is in the world. The Bible says, *"...greater is He who is in you than he [Satan] who is in the world."* (1 John 4:4)

The secret of victory over Satan is obeying the Lord Jesus and trusting Him to give us victory. A little girl had learned this secret. She said, *"When Satan knocks at the door of my heart to get me to do wrong things, I just say, 'Lord Jesus, will You please open the door?' When Satan sees the Lord Jesus, he bows low and says, 'I'm sorry, but I have come to the wrong place,' and he leaves."*

What was this little girl's secret? It was this—she recognized that Christ was living in her heart and she trusted Him to give her victory over Satan's temptations. This is what we must do also. Satan may tempt us, but he cannot make us sin. We can say **"No!"** to Satan. The Bible says, *"Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."* (James 4:7)

What if we sin?

What happens when we sin? Does God have a plan to take care of His saved children when they sin? Yes, He does. The Bible says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9)

What does this verse say? It says that, if we confess our sins to God, He will forgive us and cleanse us. What should we do when we sin? We should (1) confess that sin to God, and (2) believe that God has forgiven us.

To confess a sin means to call it by its right name and not make excuses. If we lied, we need to confess to God that we lied. If we got angry and lost our temper, we need to confess this to God. We should also make things right with other people. When we have done this, we should believe that God has forgiven us.

God wants us to have victory in our lives. The more we learn to trust and obey the Lord Jesus who lives in us, the more we will be able to say **"No!"** to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

God gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says, *"Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (1 Corinthians 15:57)

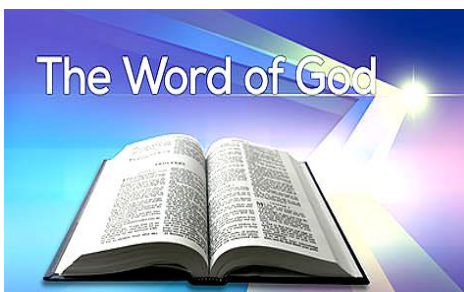
After we are saved, God wants us to win others to Christ.

The Bible says that *"The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life and he who is wise wins souls."* (Proverbs 11:30)

When I believe that Jesus died for my sins and I receive Him as my Savior, I have everlasting life. I know this is true because God says so! **God said it! I believe it! That settles it!**



Lesson #4: The Word of God



Dear Friend,

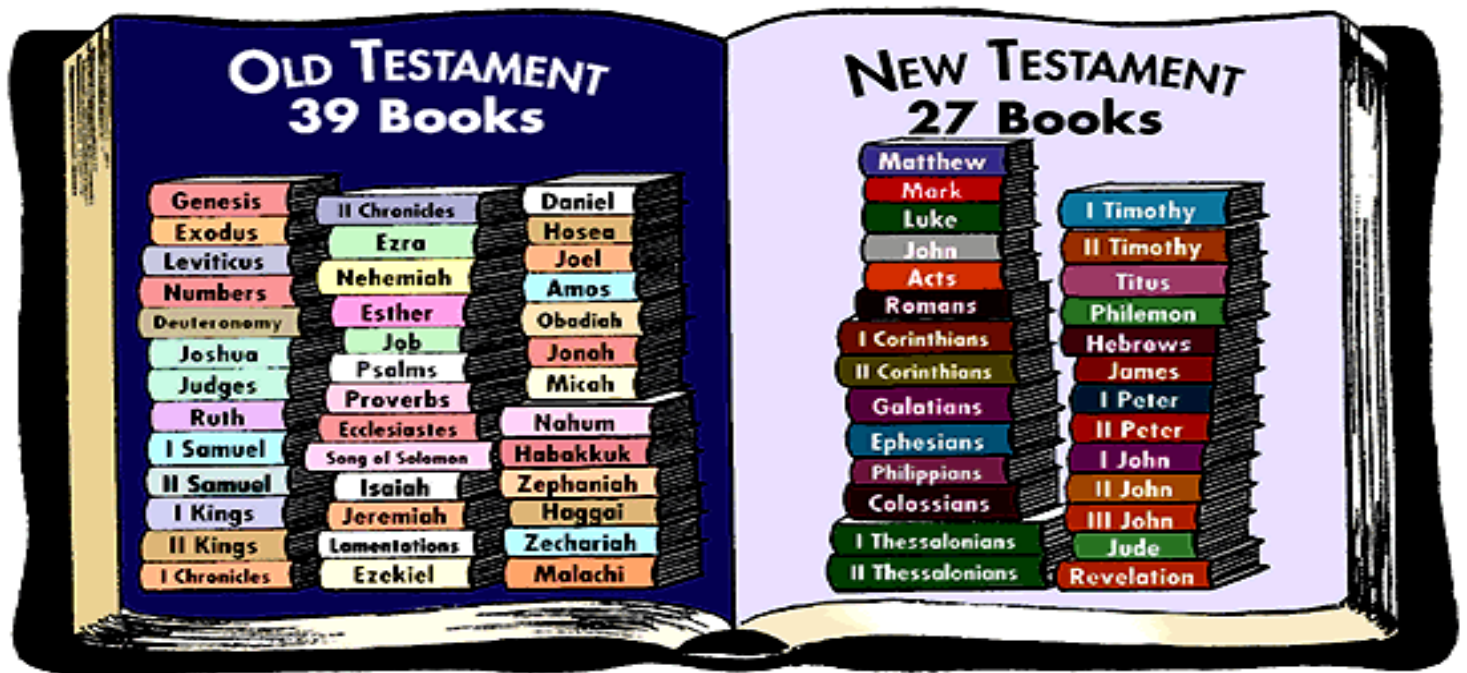
In our first lessons, we learned many things. We learned how to become a child of God by receiving Jesus Christ as our Savior. We learned many things about God, and we learned about the enemies of the Christian and how to have victory over them.

How did we learn these things? We learned them from God's book, the **Bible**. In this lesson, we will find the answers to some very important questions about the Bible: What is the Bible? How did we get the Bible? What is the Bible about? How can I understand the Bible?

What is the Bible?

The Bible is God's holy Word. It is the most important book in the world because it is God's written message to us. There are two main parts of the Bible. The first part is called the Old Testament, and it was written before Christ came to the earth. The second part of the Bible is called the New Testament, and it was written after Christ came to earth and went back to Heaven. The Bible has 66 books, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New Testament.

Lesson #4: The Word of God (Cont'd)

**How did we get the Bible?**

Perhaps you are wondering, "Who wrote the Bible and how did we get it?" God, Himself is the true Author of the Bible, though He used many men to write it. God told these men what to write, and even the words to use. The Bible says, *"No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."* (2 Peter 1:21). Long, long ago, God told a man named Jeremiah to write a part of the Bible. God said to Jeremiah, *"Write all the words which I have spoken to you in a book"* (Jeremiah 30:2).

Jeremiah obeyed God and wrote the Book of Jeremiah. God's Holy Spirit told Jeremiah exactly what to write, and he wrote the words down. This is what we mean when we say that the Bible is *"inspired by God."* Every book in the Bible was written in this way. The Bible says, *"All scripture is given by inspiration of God..."* (2 Timothy 3:16).

This is how the Bible was written, and it has been passed down to us from one generation to another. *"Was any other book written in this way?"* No, the Bible is the only book which is inspired by God. The Bible was complete when the last book of the Bible, the book of Revelation, was written. The Bible warns against adding to it or taking away from it. (See Revelation 22:18, 19.)

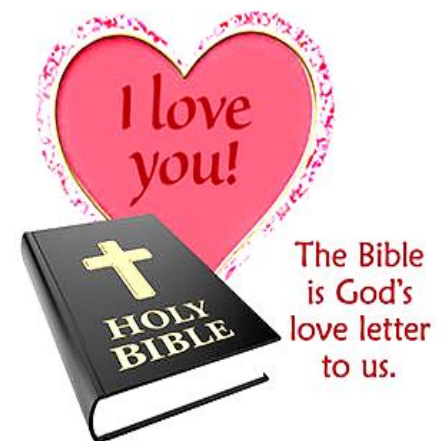
What is the Bible about?

The Bible tells us how man sinned and turned away from God and how God gave His Son to die for our sins. It tells us that God loves us and that He wants us to become His children by taking Jesus Christ as our Savior. **The Bible is the most important book** in the world because it tells us how to be saved. The Apostle Paul wrote to young Timothy, *"... from a child you have known the Holy Scriptures, which can make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:15).

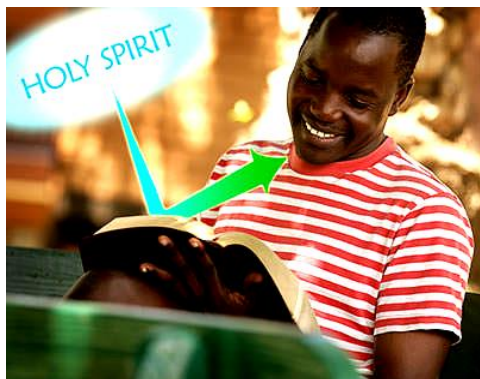
God gave us this wonderful book from which we might know the truth about ourselves, about sin, about Satan, about salvation, and about God.

How can we understand the Bible?

There are many things in the Bible that are hard for us to understand. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a teacher who knew all about God and His Word?



Lesson #4: The Word of God (Cont'd)



Well, there is someone like that! He is the Holy Spirit. God has given the Holy Spirit to us to teach us the Bible. The moment we take Christ as our Savior, the Holy Spirit comes to live in us. He lives in every believer. The Holy Spirit teaches us the things of God. The Lord Jesus said, "... *the Comforter [the Holy Spirit] whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you ...*" (John 14:26).

Without the Holy Spirit, we could not understand God's Word. How thankful we should be that God has given the Holy Spirit to us! Each time we read the Bible, we should depend on the Holy Spirit to teach us. This is what David meant when he prayed; "*Open my eyes, that I may behold (see) wonderful things from Your law*" (Psalm 119:18).

What does God want us to do with the Bible?

Here are four things God wants us to do:

- (1) **Read** the Bible each day,
- (2) **Believe** the Bible,
- (3) **Memorize** verses from the Bible, and
- (4) **Obey** the Bible.

1 Read the Bible each day!

Why should we read the Bible daily? We should read the Bible each day because this is the way God speaks to us and tells us what He wants us to know and what He wants us to do. Reading the Bible is as important to our spiritual life as eating food is to our physical life. The most important reason for studying the Bible is to get to know the Lord Jesus Christ better and to become more like Him.

2 Believe the Bible!

We cannot please God unless we have faith.

The Bible says, "*Without faith, it is impossible to please Him...*" (Hebrews 11:6).

What is faith?

Faith is taking God at His Word. Faith is to believe the Bible. Others may doubt the Bible, but settle it in your mind that the Bible is God's holy Word. The Bible says, "*Forever, O LORD, Your word is settled in heaven*" (Psalm 119:89).

Once a great preacher named D.L. Moody wanted to have more faith. He prayed and prayed for God to give him great faith, but he did not seem to have more faith. Then one day, he read this verse in his Bible; "... *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God*" (Romans 10:17).

Mr. Moody saw the truth! He saw that faith comes from careful attention to God's exact statements of fact in His Word. As Moody studied and believed God's exact statements in the Bible, his faith grew and grew.

3 Memorize verses from the Bible!

Would you like to have more faith? Then read God's Word carefully, believe it, and act on it.. The Bible is "*the sword of the Spirit.*" This means that it is our weapon to use against Satan. When the Lord Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness, Jesus used the Word of God. Jesus knew the scriptures, and He used them to defeat Satan. Each time Satan

tempted Him, Jesus said, "*It is written,*" and He quoted a scripture verse. Satan was defeated!

If we want to have victory over Satan's temptations, we must memorize God's Word.

This is "*hiding God's Word in our heart.*" The Bible says, "*Your Word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You*" (Psalm 119:11).

Memorizing God's Word will also help you to be a good witness for Christ. If you use your own words in talking to others, they may say, "*That's just your opinion,*" or "*Who are you to tell me what I ought to do?*" But, if you quote the Bible, your words will have power because they are God's words.



Lesson #4: The Word of God (Cont'd)



The Bible contains **facts** to be believed, **promises** to be claimed, and **commands** to be obeyed. The Lord wants us to obey Him. Jesus said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter."* (Matthew 7:21)

Obey God and then do it when He tells you in His Word that you should do something. God blesses those who obey His Word. The Lord Jesus said, *"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God, and observe it [obey it]"* (Luke 11:28).

Begin Now!

Begin now to read God's Word each day. Get a Bible with good print — one that you can read easily. Set a time each day to read your Bible and pray. Most Christians find that the best time to do this is the first thing in the morning.

Begin with the Gospel of John.

As you read it, watch for the words "*believe*" and "*believes*," and underline them in your Bible. The Gospel of John was written to help us believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and as our Lord and Savior. John wrote, *"These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name"* (John 20:31). After you have read the Gospel of John several times, you will want to read the entire New Testament and then the whole Bible.

When you come across a verse you especially like, memorize it. God promises special blessings to those who love His Word and think about it day and night. When you learn a wonderful truth from God's Word, share it with a friend. Remember, the most important reason for studying the Bible is to get to know the Lord Jesus Christ better and to become more like Him.

You can know that you are saved.

Before we close this lesson, let us look at three wonderful verses from God's Word.

Here are the first two:

"This is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life, and he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:11, 12).

What do these verses tell us? They tell us that the Bible is "*the record*" of what God has said. In the Bible, God tells us that He has given us eternal life and that this life is in His Son. If you have Christ as your Savior, you have eternal life; if you do not have Him, you do not have eternal life.

Our third verse tells us something God wants believers to know. Here is the verse:

"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13).

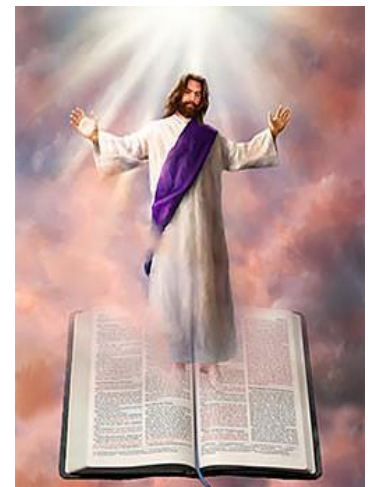
What does God want you to know?

He wants you to know that you have eternal life. A true believer does not have to say, "*I hope I am saved*," or "*I think I am saved*." He can say, "*I KNOW that I am saved because God says so in His Word*." How thankful we should be for the Word of God!

Helpful Hints **BIBLE READING: Fellowship with God.** Here are some ideas that will help you to have fellowship with God as you read His Word.

Why read the Bible?

We read the Bible first of all in order to have **fellowship with God**. The Bible is God's Word to us. He does not speak out loud to us, but He speaks to us in our hearts by His written Word. If we want to hear what God has to say to our hearts, we must read the Bible. The most important reason for reading and studying the Bible is to get to know the Lord Jesus better and to become more like Him.



Lesson #4: The Word of God (Cont'd)

How to read the Bible

Read it aloud. It will help to keep your mind on what you are reading. **Think!** Don't be in a hurry. Take time to think about what you are reading. **Talk to God.** Talk to Him about what you are reading. If you don't understand something, tell Him so. Ask Him to help you understand. When you read something helpful, tell Him so and thank Him for it. When you read something wonderful about God, tell Him right then how wonderful you think He is.

Wait on God. This means to be quiet before God with your mind on Him and His Word that you have just read. Ask Him to make it real in your life.

What to do about it

When God speaks something special to you, underline those words in your Bible. That is God's word to you personally. A colored pencil is best for this. (Do not use a ballpoint or ink pen. These will "bleed" through the paper of most Bibles). You may want to keep a notebook of the special things God shows to you.

Do what God tells you to do. Sometimes He shows us a sin that we need to confess to Him. Sometimes He shows us something that needs to be made right with another person. Be quick to obey.

Share with others the blessings that God gives you as you read His Word. It will help others, and it will help you, too.

Remember it. All through the day, let your mind go back to the word that God spoke to you. Talk to Him about it in your heart. This is fellowship with God.



Lesson #5: When Jesus Comes



Dear Friend,

In our last lesson, we discovered many wonderful things about the Bible. One amazing thing about the Bible is that it tells us about the future. God knows the future, and in His Word, He has told us many things that are going to happen.

Perhaps one thing you have been wondering about is this: "Will the Lord Jesus ever come to this earth again?" The answer is, "Yes, He will!" The Lord Jesus said, *"I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN..."* (John 14:2, 3)

In this lesson, we are going to see what will happen when Jesus comes again. But, first, let us think briefly about what happened when He was here the first time. The Lord Jesus did many wonderful things while He was on earth, but the main reason He came was to die for us.

The Lord Jesus was crucified about nine o'clock in the morning. He died about three o'clock that afternoon.

A man named Joseph of Arimathaea asked for the body of Jesus. He and a friend named Nicodemus tenderly prepared the body of Jesus for burial. They wrapped His body in linen cloth. Then they placed Jesus' body in Joseph's new tomb which was carved out of the rock. A large stone was rolled across the entrance.

Jesus was dead. The disciples were very sad. Even though the Lord Jesus had told them that He would rise from the dead on the third day, they really did not believe it at that time.



Lesson #5: When Jesus Comes (Cont'd)

Early in the morning of the third day, three women came to put spices on His body. When they arrived at the tomb, they found that the stone had been rolled away. An angel spoke to them and said: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; He has risen, just as He said. Come and see the place where He laid."* (Matthew 28:5, 6)

The women saw that the body of Jesus was no longer in the tomb. They were puzzled and frightened. They ran to tell the disciples. When Mary Magdalene met Peter and John, she told them what had happened. Peter and John ran to the tomb. They, too, found the tomb empty except for the grave clothes.

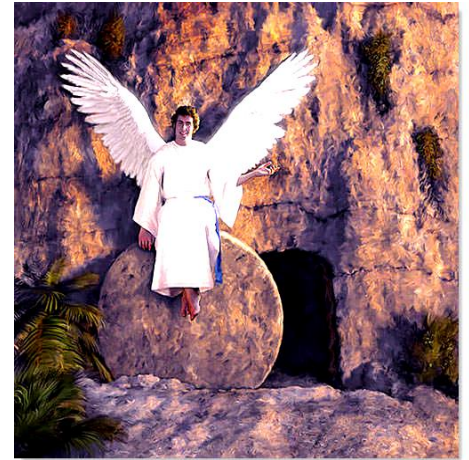
Later, Mary returned to the tomb. As she was standing outside the tomb weeping, the Lord Jesus appeared and spoke to her. She thought He was the gardener. She said to Him, *"Sir if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have laid Him."* Jesus said, *"Mary."* When she turned and recognized Him, she exclaimed, *"Master!"* That night, ten of the disciples met in a closed room. They were talking about the strange things that had happened that day. Thomas was not with them.

Suddenly, Jesus appeared in their midst, and He said, *"Peace be with you."* The disciples were frightened. They thought that perhaps they saw a spirit. But the Lord Jesus said, *"Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bone, as you see that I have."* (Luke 24:38, 39).

The Lord Jesus had risen from the grave in His resurrection body of flesh and bones! How did the disciples know that He had a body? They saw Him, they touched Him, they talked with Him, and they ate with Him.

Jesus was alive! They could hardly wait to tell Thomas the wonderful news! But when they told Thomas, he did not believe them. Thomas said:

"Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and pull my hand into His side, I will not believe." (John 20:25)



Eight days later, the disciples were again in the same room. This time Thomas was with them. Again, the Lord Jesus appeared to them and said: *"Peace be with you."* Then the Lord Jesus said to Thomas, *"Reach your finger here, and see My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side; and do not be faithless, but believing"* (John 20:27).

Thomas did not doubt any longer. He worshipped Jesus saying, *"My Lord and my God!"* The Lord Jesus said, *"Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed."* (John 20:29)

The Lord Jesus appeared on earth for forty days after His resurrection. Many people saw him. On one occasion, He appeared to over 500 believers. Before the Lord Jesus went back to Heaven, He said to His disciples, *"All power is given to Me in heaven and earth"* (Matthew 28:18).

Then, one day, when the disciples were with Him, the Lord Jesus went up, up, up into the sky. The disciples watched Him until He disappeared in a cloud. Jesus had gone back to Heaven. While they stood looking up toward the sky, two men in white clothing stood by them and said: *"You men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven."* (Acts 1:11)



Lesson #5: When Jesus Comes (Cont'd)

What does this verse say? It says that the **Lord Jesus will come again** in the very same way in which He went back to Heaven. The disciples saw Jesus go back to Heaven, and the believers who are living when Jesus comes again will see Him at that time. The Lord Jesus is preparing beautiful homes in Heaven for us, and one day He is coming back to take us to be with Him. He said, *"I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I WILL COME AGAIN, and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may also be."* (John 14:2, 3)

The Lord Jesus is coming again!

We know He is coming because He said, *"I will come again."* For those of us who have received Christ as our Savior, His coming will be a time of great joy. Why? Because He is coming to take us to be with Him. Here is what the Bible tells us about that glorious day:

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ (deceased Christian) will rise first: Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them (the revived) in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so we will always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

When Jesus comes again, all the children of God will be taken up to meet Him in the clouds, both *"the dead in Christ"*—that is, those believers who have died before He comes again, and *"we who are alive and remain"*—that is, the believers who are still living on the earth when He comes again. The believers who have died and the believers who are living on the earth when Jesus comes will be taken up together to meet Him in the clouds. What a happy time that will be! Of course, our bodies will be changed and will be made like His glorious resurrection body.

What about those who have never taken Christ as their Savior?



They will be left behind to face the Great Tribulation. This will last seven years, and it will be the most horrible time the world has ever seen. Jesus said, *"For then will be great tribulation, such as that has not occurred since the beginning of the world..."* (Matthew 24:21).

After these events, the Lord Jesus will return to the earth with His believers. All those who have been with Him in Heaven will return with Him to reign with Him. First, He comes FOR us; and then He returns WITH us. What a great time this will be! You may ask, "When is Jesus coming? Does anyone know?" No, no man knows exactly when the Lord Jesus will come again. Jesus said: *"But of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but the Father alone."* (Matthew 24:36).

Jesus may come at any time. Since this is true, we should be ready to meet Him at any time. How can we be ready for the coming of the Lord Jesus? We can be ready for His coming by:

- (1) **loving** Him,
- (2) **obeying** Him,
- (3) **serving** Him, and
- (4) **looking** for His return.

If we do these things, we will not be ashamed before Him when He comes.

The Bible says, *"Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence [boldness and joy], and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming"* (1 John 2:28). If we truly love the Lord Jesus, we will want Him to come soon. May our prayer each day be: *"Yes, I [Jesus] am coming soon."* Amen. Come, Lord Jesus (Revelation 22:20).

Lesson #5: When Jesus Comes (Cont'd)

Jesus is coming soon! I must be ready when He comes.

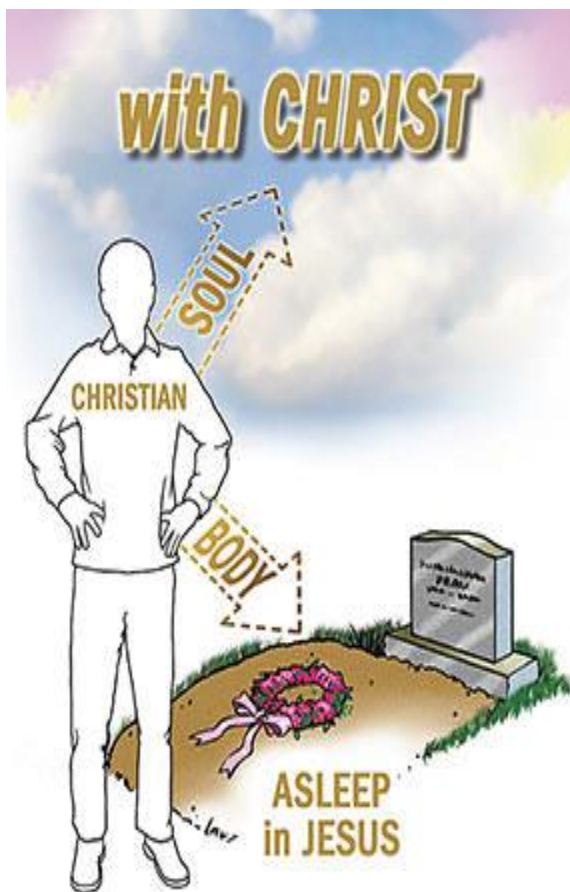
Memorize these Verses:

"In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may also be." (John 14:2, 3)

"For the Lord, Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17)

What happens when a Christian dies?

The Bible tells us that our body is the "house" in which we live. Our body is not really us; it is just the house in which we live. We can understand this because we live in a house. The house is not us; it is just the place where we live.



What happens when a Christian dies? His soul simply moves out of the "house," in which it has lived, and goes to be with the Lord. The apostle Paul said, *"For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain."* Why did he say that it was "gain" to die? Because to die is to be with Christ, and this is far better than being here.

We are sorrowful when Christians, loved ones, die because we miss them. This is natural; but we must remember that they are with Jesus, which is far better than being here. If we could see how beautiful it is in Heaven, we would never want to bring them back here.

We do not have to fear death. For a Christian, the Bible calls death simply *"falling asleep in Jesus."* The Lord Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies...."* (John 11:25).

When Jesus comes again, He will raise the bodies of those who belong to Him; and He will give them new, resurrection bodies, which can never die. The Bible says, *"For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God [with a new resurrection body], a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"* (2 Corinthians 5:1).

What will we be like then? We shall be like Jesus! The Bible says, *"We know that when He appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him just as He is."* (1 John 3:2).

In our next lesson we will learn the answers to these important questions:

Can we be saved by our good works?

What is grace?

How can we earn rewards?

What will happen to a child of God who continues to do things that displease God?

Lesson #6: Salvation and Rewards



Dear Friend,

We have been friends for some time now, and we have learned many wonderful things from our study of God's Word. This lesson is about salvation and rewards. We want to understand clearly what God's Word says about how we are saved. We will also learn about the wonderful rewards which we can earn after we are saved. But first, may I ask you a personal question? It is the most important question in the world. It is so personal that only you can answer it.

What is the question? It is this:

How are things between YOU and GOD?

Let me ask it another way. If you were to die tonight and stand before God and if He were to ask you, "Why should I let you into My Heaven?" What would you say? Perhaps you would say, "I haven't been so bad. I've been as good as most other people." Or you might say, "I always went to church." Again, you might say, "I did a lot of good things for other people."

What would you say?

If you think you would say anything like the above answers, you could be making a terrible mistake. "But why?" you ask. "Aren't these things good?" Yes, they are, but the Bible says that no one will ever get to Heaven by doing good works. No matter how hard we try, we can never be good enough to be saved.



Having **Christian parents** will not save you.

Going to **church** and giving money to the church will not save you.

Doing **good deeds** will not save you.

Trying to keep the **Ten Commandments** will not save you.

Being **baptized** and joining the church will not save you.

These things are good, but the Bible says, "*a man is not justified by the works of the law...*" (Galatians 2:16).

How are we saved? We are saved by God's grace and not by our own good works. The Bible says, "*For by GRACE you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*" (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

What is grace? Grace is something God does for us because He loves us. Because God loves us and wants us to be saved, He has provided wonderful salvation for us. Now in the next few seconds, you are going to read one of the most amazing statements you have ever read.

What is it? It is this:

Eternal life is a gift!

That's right—it is a gift. Eternal life in Heaven is the most wonderful thing any person could have. According to God's Word, it is a gift. The Bible says, "*The wages of sin is death; but The GIFT OF GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 6:23).



Lesson #6: Salvation and Rewards (Cont'd)



How long does it take you to receive a gift? - Just a moment in time. When someone gives you a gift, you reach out and take it, and it is yours. You do not have to work for a gift, and you do not have to pay for a gift. All you have to do is receive it, and it is yours. You ask, *"But how can I receive the gift of eternal life?"*

You receive the gift of eternal life when you take the Lord Jesus as your Savior. Eternal life is in a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ. When you receive Him, you receive eternal life.

The Bible says, *"...God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life...."* (1 John 5:11, 12).

But you say, *"Is it possible for me to know for sure that I will go to Heaven when I die?"* Yes, it certainly is! If you have Christ, you have eternal life. You know that you have eternal life because God says so in His Word. The Bible says, *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life..."* (1 John 5:13).

If God were to ask you, "Why should I let you into My Heaven?" you could reply, *"Because Jesus Christ is my Savior. He died for my sins. Your Word says that I have eternal life."* Remember, salvation is a gift. You receive eternal life as a gift when you take the Lord Jesus as your Savior. Now, let us think about rewards.

What about rewards?

Rewards are earned. Did you ever receive a reward for doing something well? God gives rewards to His children for the good things that they do. God does not give rewards to unsaved people, but only to His saved children. It will help us to understand salvation and rewards if we see that there are two great differences between them:

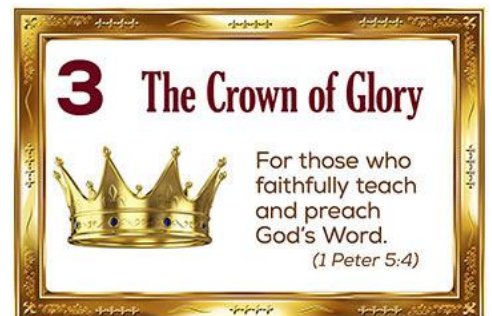
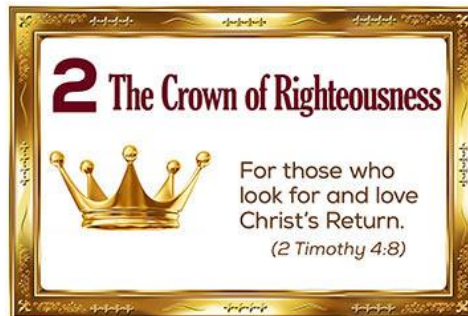
1. **Salvation is free, but rewards are Earned.**
2. **We have salvation now, but rewards will be given to us when we get to Heaven.**



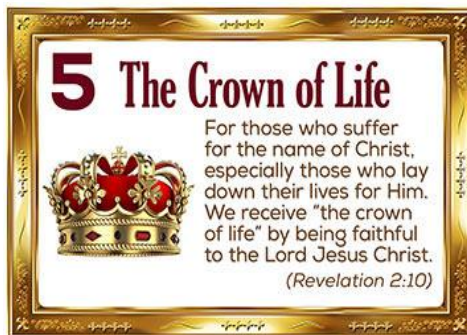
Remember, salvation is a **gift**, and you have it now. Rewards must be **earned**, and they will be given to us when we get to Heaven.

How do we earn rewards?

We earn rewards by faithfully serving Christ. Those who have been saved may earn wonderful rewards for the work they do for the Lord. The Bible speaks of some very special rewards for those who faithfully serve the Lord Jesus. They are called *"crowns."* Crowns speak of glory—reigning with the Lord Jesus. There are **five beautiful crowns** which will be given to believers as rewards:



Lesson #6: Salvation and Rewards (Cont'd)

**What happens if we do not live for the Lord?**

If we live for ourselves and do not serve the Lord Jesus, we will not receive any rewards at all. Instead, we will be ashamed when we stand before the Lord. Perhaps you are saying to yourself, *"I want to live a life that is pleasing to the Lord, but how can I know whether or not I should do a certain thing?"*

We should see what God says about it in the Bible. For example, God tells us that we should not curse or lie or steal or have no forgiveness in our heart toward someone. So we know that we should not do these things. What about those things that are not mentioned in the Bible? In this case, we should ask ourselves, *"Would Jesus like to see me do this?"* If you think that He would not like for you to do it, then don't do it.

What will happen to the child of God who continues to do things which are not pleasing to God? God will chasten (spank) him! A good father chastens or corrects his child when he does wrong. Does he chasten his child because he hates him or because he loves him? He does it because he loves him.

Our Heavenly Father is a good Father. He loves us too much to let us go on in disobedience, ruining our lives and bringing shame to His name. God will speak to our hearts when we do wrong, but if we do not listen to Him and turn from our disobedience, He will chasten us.

How does God chasten us? He chastens us by letting trouble come into our life. When our Heavenly Father chastens us, let us remember that He does this because He loves us. The Bible says, *"... whom the Lord loves He chastens (disciplines) and He scourges every son whom He receives."* (Hebrews 12:6).

Christians will be judged!

By now I am sure that you have realized that it is very important how you live your life as a Christian. The Bible says that one day, we must stand before the Lord Jesus to be judged. Every believer will be judged for the things he did after he was saved, whether good or bad. This judgment is called *"the Judgment Seat of Christ."* The Bible says, *"For we [believers] must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."* (2 Corinthians 5:10). This judgment is not to see whether or not we will go to Heaven. Every believer will go to Heaven. This judgment is for rewards.

If we have faithfully served the Lord Jesus, this will be a time of great rejoicing for us because we will receive rewards from the Lord Jesus. If we have lived for the *"good times"* of this world instead of living for the Lord Jesus, we will be ashamed. Perhaps some of us will wish that we could live our lives over again, but that will not be possible. The time to live for the Lord Jesus is now.

"Only one life, it will soon be past; only what's done for Christ will last."

You can be a Soul-winner!

Do you know some people who do not know Christ as their Savior? Would you like to win them to Him? Then start praying for them. Tell them about the Savior.

If you win them to Christ, you will be rewarded in Heaven. You will receive the Soul-Winner's Crown, and you will shine as the stars forever and ever. The Bible says, *"...those who lead the many to righteousness [will shine] like the stars forever and ever"* (Daniel 12:3).



Lesson #6: Salvation and Rewards (Cont'd)

Salvation is a gift, but rewards are earned by faithful service.

Memorize these Verses:

"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast (praise yourself)." (Ephesians 2:8-9)

"For whom the Lord loves He chastens (disciplines), and He scourges every son whom He receives." (Hebrews 12:6)

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in his body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10)

Lesson #7: 4 Things God Wants You to Know

Dear Friend,

When you trusted Christ as your Savior, all of your sins were forgiven. Every sin you have ever committed was paid for by Christ's death on the cross. The Bible says, *"...your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake."* (1 John 2:12).

This is wonderful, but you must remember that you have a terrible enemy, Satan. You have taken a step that has made him very angry. You have left him and joined those who belong to the Lord Jesus. Anyone who tries to live for Christ will soon be attacked by Satan.

Satan cannot take you out of God's family, but he will do all he can to discourage you. He will try to make you doubt your salvation. He will tell you that you will never be able to overcome temptation. He will try to get you to doubt God's love for you. But God has begun a good work in you, and you can be sure that He will continue that good work. The Bible says, *"...He who began a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Philippians 1:6).

In this lesson, we are going to tell you **four things God wants you to know**. We will give you

verses for each one. We want to show you how you can use these verses to answer Satan's temptations. Be sure to memorize each verse.

1. God wants you to know that you are saved.

"The testimony is this that God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has eternal life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 John 5:11, 12)

One of the first things Satan will do after you are saved is to try to make you doubt your salvation. Perhaps he will put questions like these into your mind:

"You don't think you are saved just by believing in Jesus, do you? That's too easy. Besides, you are still the same person you were before. And how can anybody know for sure that he is saved?" When Satan puts these thoughts into your mind, what will your answer be? You cannot say, *"I know that I am saved because I have such a good feeling."* You may not have a good feeling tomorrow.



The way we know that we are saved is by the Word of God and not by our feelings. Our feelings change every day, but God's Word is always the same. What does God say in His Word? He says that if you have Christ as your Savior, you have everlasting life. You can say, *"I know that I am saved because God says so in His Word!"*

The Lord Jesus not only saves us, but He also keeps us. He calls us His *"sheep,"* and He says that we will never perish. Jesus said, *"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish..."* (John 10:27, 28).



Lesson #7: 4 Things God Wants You to Know (Cont'd)

The word "perish" means to be lost. Jesus says that we will never be lost. Jesus tells us that we are in the hands of His Father. No one can ever take us out of the mighty hands of God. Jesus said, *"My Father... is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of My Father's hand."* (John 10:29).

2. God wants you to know that you can overcome temptation.

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

Here is another way the devil may attack you. He may put thoughts like these into your mind:

"All right, so you're a child of God, but you are a defeated Christian, and you always will be. You have certain sins in your life which you will never be able to overcome. You have failed before, and you will keep on failing."

Here again, our weapon to defeat Satan is the Word of God. Let us look at this verse and see what it says. It is a long verse, so let us think about it in four parts:



"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man;"

This means that other people are tempted by the same things that tempt you.



"God is faithful."

This means that God always does what He says He will do. You can count on the fact that God is faithful.



"Who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able,"

God promises that He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear.



"But with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you may be able to endure it."

This means that God will always make a way to escape for you so that you do not have to sin.

Be sure to memorize this verse. It is a long verse, and it may take you awhile to learn it perfectly, but work at it until you know it by heart. Then use it in times of temptation. Sometimes Satan tries to make us think that we have sinned because we have been tempted to do some terrible thing. But temptation is not a sin. We sin when we give in to temptation. The Lord Jesus was tempted many times as we are, but He never sinned.

As long as you are in this world, you will be tempted. But, with God's help, you can overcome temptation. God does not want you to be afraid of Satan and his temptations. The Bible says, *"God has not given us the spirit of timidity (fear) but of power and love and discipline (a sound mind)."* (2 Timothy 1:7).



Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles [temptations] of the devil." (Ephesians 6:11)

God will give you the power to overcome temptation so that you do not have to sin.

3. God wants you to know that He will forgive you when you sin.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9)

It is true that we do not have to sin. It is also true that we still have a sinful nature, and we often fail. The Bible says, *"If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* (1 John 1:8).

What happens when we sin? Immediately Satan comes to condemn us: *"Now you've done it! You are supposed to be a Christian and look what you have done. Christians aren't supposed to do such things. Now God is displeased with you, and He will not forgive you."* When we think about our sins, we have to admit that they are wrong and that they are displeasing to God. But what does God say in His Word? He says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins."*

Lesson #7: 4 Things God Wants You to Know (Cont'd)

No matter how many times we fail, God promises to forgive us when we confess our sins to Him. God does not like our sins, but He loves us. His love for us never changes. God says in His Word, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love..."* (Jeremiah 31:3)

God loves all people, but He has a special love for His children. You may wonder how God can love us when we are so weak and sinful. The reason God loves us so much is that we belong to Christ. When God looks at us, He sees us **"in Christ."** God loves us as He loves His only Son. This is hard for us to believe, but it is true. The Lord Jesus said, *"The Father Himself loves you because you have loved Me (Jesus), and have believed that I came out from God the Father."* (John 16:27).



4. God wants you to know that He hears and answers prayers.

[Jesus said] *"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, so that your joy may be made full."* (John 16:24)

Becoming a Christian does not mean that we will not have any more problems. In His Word, the Lord Jesus tells us that we will have many troubles and many problems in this world.

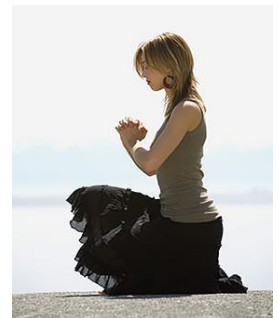
When you have a great problem, what does Satan do? He tries to make you doubt God's love and His faithfulness. Satan may put thoughts like these into your mind:

"God doesn't care about you. If He did, He wouldn't let this happen to you." Or he may say something like this, "God is far away, and He is concerned with more important things. He is too busy to care about you and your problems."

But what does the Bible say?

The Bible says that God is our heavenly Father and that He hears and answers the prayers of His children. God loves us, and He wants us to come to Him with all our problems. The Bible says, *"Cast all your anxiety on Him (God); because He cares for you"* (1 Peter 5:7).

What should we do about our needs? We should pray to the Father in Jesus' name. Jesus taught us that God is our heavenly Father. We are to come to Him and ask Him for what we need. Jesus said, *"...ask and you shall receive, so that your joy may be full"* (John 16:24). God does not hear our prayers when we have some sin in our life that we are not willing to give up. But, if we obey Him and do the things that are pleasing to Him, God will give us what we ask for. The Bible says, *"Whatsoever we ask, we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight"* (1 John 3:22).



Remember these four things.

We have learned four wonderful things in this lesson. Let us go over them:

1. God wants you to know that **you are saved**. (1 John 5:11-12)
2. God wants you to know that **you can overcome temptation**. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
3. God wants you to know that **He will forgive you when you sin**. (1 John 1:9)
4. God wants you to know that **He hears and answers prayer**. (John 16:24)

After thinking about all the wonderful things the Lord has done for you, what does it make you want to do? It makes you want to love the Lord, doesn't it? That is just what the Lord wants you to do! The Lord Jesus who lives in you is a Person. He loves you, and He wants you to love Him with all your heart. The Bible says, *"We love Him [God] because He first loved us"* (1 John 4:19).

To love the Lord Jesus with all your heart means to give Him first place in your life. You bring joy to His heart when you love Him with all your heart and do those things that please Him. God wants me to know that I am saved and that He will always take care of me.

How to Please God

One of the ways we know that we are truly saved is that we want to please God. Would you like to know how you can please Him? Here are some ways:

Lesson #7: 4 Things God Wants You to Know (Cont'd)

We please God when we **love Him**. Above all else, God wants us to love Him with all our heart. On one occasion a man asked Jesus what was the greatest of all commandments. Jesus replied, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind."* (Matthew 22:37)

We please God when we **love His Son**. God loves every person, but He has a special love for those who love His Son. Jesus said, *"For the Father, Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came from God"* (John 16:27).

We please God when we **obey Him**. The Bible says, *"This is the love of God, which we keep His commandments"* (1 John 5:3).

We please God when we **trust Him**. The Bible says that God takes pleasure in those who trust Him—those who expect Him to be loving and kind. *"The Lord favors those who fear Him and those who wait for His lovingkindness."* (Psalms 147:11)

We please God when we **thank Him**. The Bible says, *"In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ."* (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

We please God when we **study His Word and pray** to Him. God speaks to us through His Word. He is pleased when we take time to read His Word and pray to Him. *"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you."* (John 15:7)

We please God when we **let Christ live His life in us**. Jesus died for us to put away all our sins. Now He lives in us so we can live in a way that is pleasing to God. The apostle Paul said, *"For to me to live is Christ [His life in me], and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21).

Christ lives in every believer.

Every believer can say, "Christ lives in me!" Say it to yourself right now, "Christ lives in Me!"

I have a new privilege—to let Christ live out His life through me. This is what the Lord Jesus wants to do in every believer. Paul wrote, *"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself up for me."* (Galatians 2:20).

I have a new purpose in life. My purpose now is to please the Lord Jesus Christ. He is God, and He lives in me. My goal in life is to please Him in all that I do. Paul's prayer for believers was this:

"So that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).



Lesson #8: My Great Savior

My GREAT Savior



Dear Friend,

All believers know that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died on the cross for their sins and rose the third day again. But not all believers know what happened when God's Son went back to Heaven. First, let us see how Jesus was received when He was here on earth, and then we will see what happened when He went back to Heaven.

Jesus was rejected in the world.

Hundreds of years before the promised Savior Jesus was born; the Bible foretold that He would be rejected. The Bible says, *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed [the promised Savior], saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"* (Psalm 2:2,3).

Lesson #8: My Great Savior (Cont'd)

The prophet Isaiah foretold Christ's rejection. He said, *"He was despised and forsaken of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their faces; He was despised, and we did not esteem (respect) Him."* (Isaiah 53:3).

What happened when God's Son came into the world? He was rejected. Even His people, the Jews, rejected Him. The Bible says, *"He came to His own [people], and those who were His own did not receive Him."* (John 1:11).

Jesus told His disciples that He would be rejected by the religious leaders. The Bible says, *"And He [Jesus] began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again."* (Mark 8:31)

Christ rose from the grave.

Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins, just as He had said. But He rose again on the third day in a real body of flesh and bones. His resurrection proved that He was indeed the Son of God. The Bible says that Jesus Christ was *"who was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead..."* (Romans 1:4).

Jesus Himself had raised three people from the dead, but these people were simply restored to life in their human bodies. In time, they had to die like everyone else. But Jesus rose from the grave in a glorious, new resurrection body, different from anything seen before. Jesus said, *"I am the living one, and was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore..."* (Revelation 1:18).

One day Jesus will come back to take His believers to be with Him forever. When He comes for us, the Lord Jesus will give us glorious, new resurrection bodies like His. The apostle Paul said, *"For our citizenship is in heaven; from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself."* (Philippians 3:20, 21).

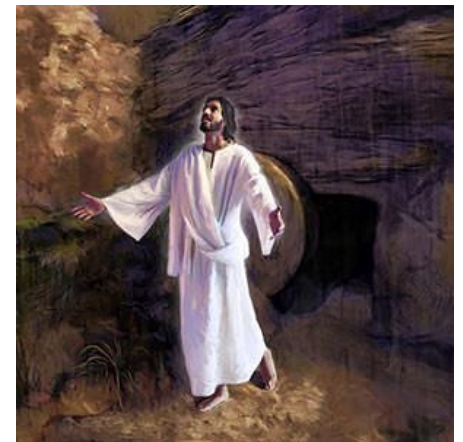
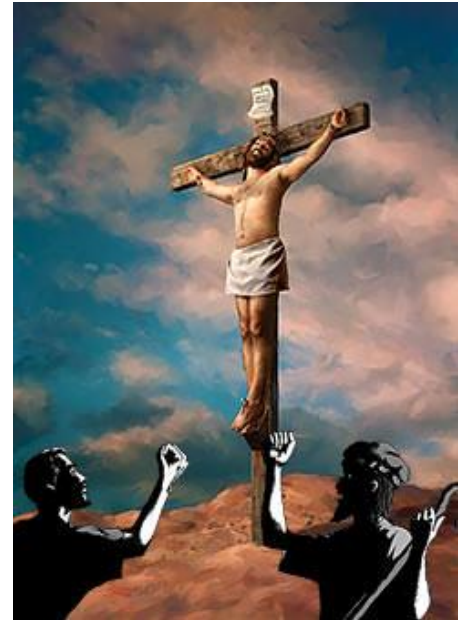
Christ returned to Heaven in triumph.

The ancient Roman generals used to return from their victorious conquests to a hero's welcome in Rome. The whole city would turn out in a giant celebration in their honor. The victorious general would ride into the city with his defeated enemies chained to his chariot.

When Christ returned to Heaven, He returned as the mighty Victor over sin, death, Satan, and all the powers of darkness. He made a display of His defeated enemies. The Bible says, *"When He had disarmed the rulers and authority, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him."* (Colossians 2:15)

Christ was exalted to the throne of Heaven.

The Father welcomed His beloved Son home to glory and gave Him the place of greatest honor and power. Throughout His life on earth, Jesus had glorified His Father. Just before He went to the cross, Jesus prayed, *"I glorified You on the earth having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. Now, Father, glorify Me..."* (John 17:4-5).



Lesson #8: My Great Savior (Cont'd)

The Father answered this prayer by giving Jesus the highest place in the universe. The Man, Jesus Christ, is now seated at the right hand of God the Father. The Bible says, *"...He [God] brought about [worked] in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come."* (Ephesians 1:20, 21). The position given to Jesus Christ is far above that of any person, an angel, or spiritual power in the universe. The Bible says that God has put *"all things under His feet."* This means that everything in the universe is under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The coming of the Holy Spirit

Before He was crucified, Jesus taught His disciples that He would be rejected by men, suffer many things, and be crucified. He would rise from the grave on the third day, and He would be glorified when He went back to Heaven.

He spoke of a wonderful event that would take place when He was glorified: The Holy Spirit would be given to His believers. Jesus said, *"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water. But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were later to receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given since Jesus was not yet glorified."* (John 7:38, 39).

Jesus told His disciples that, when He was glorified and exalted in Heaven, the Holy Spirit would be given to them. Pointing to that day, Jesus said, *"In that day [Whitsunday] you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you"* (John 14:20).

Fifty days after Christ rose from the grave, on the feast day of Pentecost, 120 of Jesus' disciples were in an upper room in Jerusalem. Suddenly there came a sound from Heaven, like a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting.

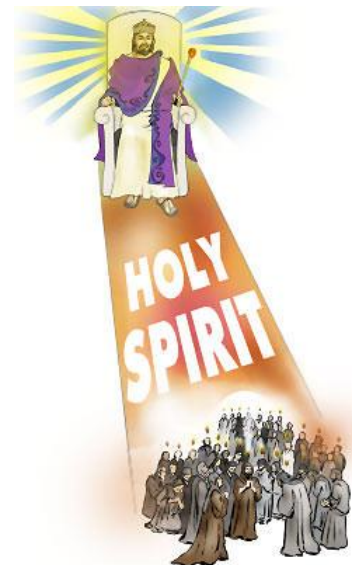
The Bible says, *"There appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit..."* (Acts 2:3, 4)

The Holy Spirit had come! What did this prove to the disciples? It proved to them that the Man Jesus Christ was now glorified and exalted in Heaven.

Soon a great multitude of people gathered. There were Jews from every nation. They spoke many different languages, but they were amazed because every man heard the disciples in his language. Peter stood up and said to the multitude, *"This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear."* (Acts 2:32, 33)

When we think of Pentecost, we often think of the miracles that took place that day, but the real meaning of Pentecost is that the Man Jesus Christ has been exalted to the throne of the universe. The Holy Spirit came down from the glorified Christ. Peter said, *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him [this Jesus whom you crucified] both Lord and Christ (Messiah)."* (Acts 2:36)

We have learned a great secret about which the world knows nothing. What is this great secret? It is this: Jesus Christ has been rejected in this world, but He has been exalted to the highest place in Heaven. If we could be lifted out of this world and taken to Heaven, the thing that would impress us most is that Jesus Christ has the place of greatest honor and power in Heaven. He has the highest place in God's universe.



Lesson #8: My Great Savior (Cont'd)

What does this mean to me?

As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, what does this mean to me? It means four things:

1. I have a Savior in glory.

A young man was very anxious about his soul. He said, "I will pray to Jesus on the cross." A Christian lady said, "But He is not there now."

When this young man realized that he had a Savior at the right hand of God, it made a great change in his life. And it will make a great change in our life as well. It is a great blessing to be able to see God's wonders in the spiritual realm connected with the glorified Christ. The unsaved people of the world do not know who Jesus is, nor do they know of His great power and glory. To them, He is just a man who taught some beautiful things and died for what He believed. But we know that Jesus Christ is now in Heaven at the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor. The Bible says, "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because He suffered death so that by the grace of God He might as well taste death for everyone*" (Hebrews 2:9).



2. My Savior loves me.

Jesus Christ loves His believers! He has always loved us. He will always love us. He proved His love for us by laying down His life for us. You may say, "Yes, I have failed so many times. I fail my Savior now." That may be true, but it does not affect Jesus' love for you. Jesus said to His disciples, "*Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide [remain] in My love.*" (John 15:9).



These disciples had been with Jesus for three years. They had seen Him do mighty works.

They knew that He loved them and they loved Him. When He was betrayed by Judas and arrested, all of His disciples abandoned Him. The Bible says, "*They all left Him and fled*" (Mark 14:50).

Did Jesus stop loving His disciples? No, He did not. The Bible says, "*...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them [disciples] to the end*" (John 13:1b).

The Lord Jesus knows all about me. He knows all about my failures, but that does not stop Him from loving me. It was a wonderful moment for me when I learned that Jesus loves me with all His heart.

3. My Savior is for me.

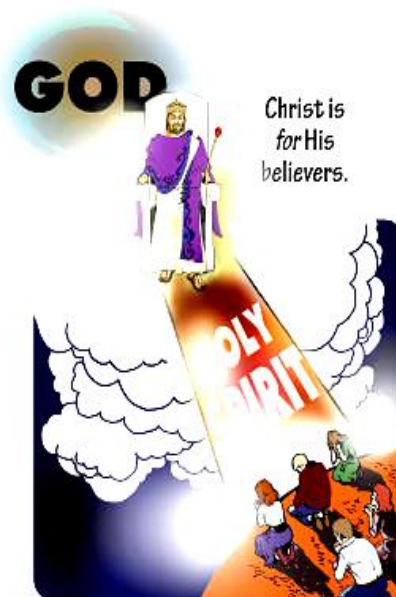
Jesus Christ, the Son of God, laid aside His glory and came into this world for us. Jesus said, "*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many [His believers].*" (Mark 10:45).

Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. We were the ones who had broken God's holy laws. We were the ones who were under the sentence of death. But Jesus took our place and died for us. The Bible says, "*For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust so that He might bring us to God...*" (1 Peter 3:18).

Jesus Christ was raised from the dead for us. The Bible says that He was "*delivered over because of our transgressions [sins] and was raised because of our justification*" (Romans 4:25).

Jesus Christ is now in Heaven at the right hand of God. He is there as a glorified Man, and He is for us—His believers. The Bible says, "*For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, [has entered] into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*" (Hebrews 9:24).

What does this mean? It means that the Man, Jesus Christ, is now on the throne of Heaven, and He is for His believers here on earth.



Lesson #8: My Great Savior (Cont'd)

4. The Holy Spirit connects me with my Savior in Heaven.

Our great Savior is in Heaven, but the Holy Spirit is here on earth. He dwells in every believer, and He is here to do three things for us:

(1) The Holy Spirit is here to comfort us. The Holy Spirit is our connection with our glorified, exalted Savior. He is here to comfort us while we are separated from Him. Christ said, *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever"* (John 14:16).

(2) The Holy Spirit is here to teach us. In the entire universe, there is only one Person who can reveal spiritual truth to us, and that Person is the Holy Spirit. Christ said, *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you."* (John 14:26).

(3) The Holy Spirit is here to tell us about Christ and His glory. The Holy Spirit does not speak of Himself, nor exalt Himself. He is here to testify of Christ and to exalt Him. He testifies of the glory of Christ at the right hand of God. Christ said, *"When the Helper comes whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me."* (John 15:26).

"He will glorify Me; for He will take of Mine [take what is Mine], and will disclose it to you" (John 16:14).

It is a great and wonderful thing to know that my Savior is glorified and exalted in Heaven and that He is for me. And it is a wonderful thing to know that the Holy Spirit now lives in me. He is my connection and my link with the glorified Christ.

Lesson #9: A New Family



Dear Friend,

The key to understanding the Bible is seeing that God deals with the human race by two men—Adam and Christ.

In the Bible Adam is called *"the first man,"* and Christ is called *"the second Man."* Sin and death came into the world because of Adam, God's first man, disobeyed God. Salvation comes to us through Jesus Christ, God's second Man. In this lesson, we will learn about these two men.

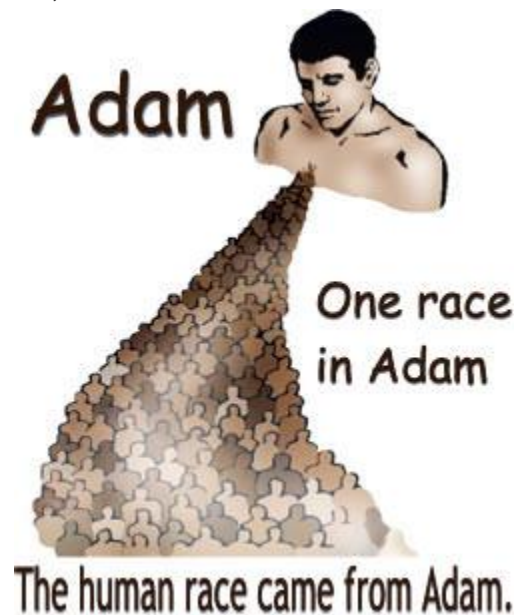
God's First Man

Adam is called God's "first man" because he was the first man—the head of the human family. Man did not come up from lower forms of life. God created him. And he was created in the image of God. The Bible says, *"So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them"* (Genesis 1:27).

God did not create millions of people to fill the earth. He created only one man, Adam, and He created a wife for Adam. Her name was Eve. From Adam and Eve came the whole human race.

Why did God create man? He created man for His glory and His pleasure. God wanted a whole race of people in His own image. He wanted a race of people who would glorify Him. He wanted a race of people in whom He could find pleasure. The Bible says, *"You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You have created all things, and by your will, all the things exist and were created."* (Revelation 4:11).

The man was God's special creation, created in His image, and created with a spirit so that God's Spirit could dwell in him and give life to his human spirit.



Lesson #9: A New Family (Cont'd)

Adam brought sin and death into the world.

Adam and Eve were placed in the beautiful Garden of Eden and given everything they needed to make them happy. God put only one restriction on them—they were not to eat of *"the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."* God said that, if they disobeyed Him, they would surely die. Satan deceived Eve, and she took the fruit and ate it. Adam was not deceived. He chose to disobey God. He, too, took the forbidden fruit and ate it.

When Adam disobeyed God, he sinned. When he sinned, he died. He did not die physically, but he died spiritually. Instead of having God in his heart, Adam now had sin in his heart. Sin and death came into the world through Adam's disobedience. Because Adam was the head of the human race, he brought sin and death to the whole human family. The Bible says, *"Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned."* (Romans 5:12).

Adam produced a race of sinners.

When Adam rebelled against God, he took sides with Satan. He came into Satan's kingdom of darkness. Because Adam was the head of the human family, he brought the whole human family into Satan's kingdom of darkness and under the power of sin.

Something else happened. There was a change in Adam's nature. He now had a sinful nature. Instead of loving God and wanting to do God's will, Adam now had a sinful nature. Since Adam was the head of the human family, he passed his sinful nature on to his children and the whole human race. The Bible says, *"For as through the one man's disobedience, the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One man [Jesus] the many will be made righteous."* (Romans 5:19).

Adam's family brought no pleasure to God.

As Adam's family increased, people became very wicked. They were doing all kinds of terrible things. The Bible says, *"The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."* (Genesis 6:5).

Every person born into this world is born into Adam's sinful family. Every person born into this world has a sinful nature. We want to go our own way and not God's way. The Bible says, *"All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."* (Isaiah 53:6).

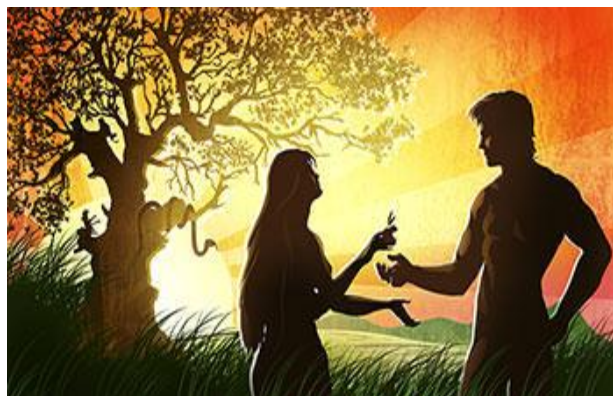
God had wanted a race of people who would honor and glorify Him, but God's first man, Adam, produced a race of sinners. Could a race of sinners glorify God and bring pleasure to His heart? No, it could not.

Christ is God's second Man.

The condition of the human race was hopeless. We were cut off from the life of God. We were in Satan's kingdom of darkness. We were sinners by nature.

But God loved us and sent His Son into the world to be our Savior that we might have a new life through Him. He is called "the second Man." The Bible says, *"The first man [Adam] is from the earth, earthy; the second Man is from heaven"* (1 Corinthians 15:47).

Who is God's "second Man"? He is *"the Lord from heaven."* He is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus, the Son of God, is God's second Man.



"For by one man's disobedience many were made sinners..."
Romans 5:19

GOD

"This is my beloved Son,
in Whom I am well pleased."



Lesson #9: A New Family (Cont'd)

God's second Man always pleased His Father.

God's first man, Adam, disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world. But Jesus Christ, God's second Man, always obeyed His Father. He never sinned, even once. He always did the things that pleased His Father. Jesus said, *"He [God the Father] who sent Me is with Me, He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him."* (John 8:29).

On two occasions, God the Father spoke from Heaven, saying, *"This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 17:5).

God's second Man is "Lord of all."

Jesus Christ came to put away our sins and to give us a new life. To do this, He took our place. All our sins were laid on Him. That is why the sinless Son of God died such a terrible death. Jesus died on the cross and was buried, but He rose again on the third day. After His resurrection, He appeared to His believers many times over a period of forty days. Then He returned to Heaven.

God now has His second Man, Jesus Christ, before Him as the One in whom He finds all His pleasure and delight. God is so pleased with His Son that He has placed Him in charge of everything. God has made His Son "Lord of all." This means that God has made Jesus Christ Lord over the entire universe. The Bible says, *"The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand"* (John 3:35).

Jesus Christ is the Head of God's new family.

God has not only made His Son Jesus to be "Lord of all," but He has also made Him be the Head of a new family called *"the children of God."* When we were born, we were born into Adam's sinful family. By physical birth, every person is in Adam's family. This family is under God's judgment. The Bible says, *"All souls are Mine... The soul who sins will die"* (Ezekiel 18:4).

How can we get out of Adam's sinful family and move into God's new family? There is only one way—we must be *"born again."* Jesus said, *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3).

Every person needs to be born again. Why? Because everyone has been born into Adam's sinful family, which is under the judgment of God. No matter who you are, if you want to go to Heaven, you must be born again. Jesus said, "You must be born again." How are we born again? By believing in God's Son and receiving Him as our Savior. The Bible says, *"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even those who believe in His name"* (John 1:12).

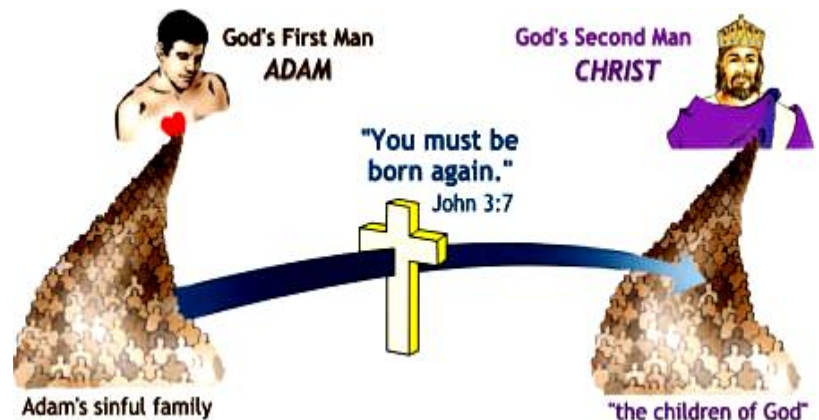
I have a new family.

The moment I took the Lord Jesus as my Savior, everything changed! All my sins were forgiven. I was born into the family of God. I am no longer in Satan's kingdom of darkness. Instead, I am in the kingdom of God's dear Son. The Holy Spirit has come to live in me.

I know God's love.

The death of God's Son, Jesus Christ, on the cross is the great, eternal proof of God's love for us. God showed His great love for us by giving His beloved Son to die in our place. The Bible says, *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

To those who would doubt His love, God points to His Son on the cross and says, *"I have loved you with an everlasting love. I proved My love for you by giving you the most precious possession I had. I gave My beloved Son to die in your place. When you look at the cross and see My Son suffering and dying for your sins, how can you doubt My love for you?"*



Lesson #9: A New Family (Cont'd)

God receives us with joy.

Jesus used parables to teach spiritual truths. A parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." In Luke, chapter 15, Jesus gave us the wonderful **parable of the prodigal son**. The prodigal son represents us, and the father represents God. In this parable, a certain man had two sons. The younger son wanted to leave home and do what he wanted to do. He asked his father to give him his part of the family wealth. We can imagine that the father begged his son to stay, but the son was determined to go his own way.



The father gave the son his portion of his wealth. The son took that which his father had given him and went into a far country. There he wasted his inheritance in sinful living.

When the son had spent all that he had, a great famine arose in the land. The son now found himself in a terrible condition. He was dirty and in rags. He was so hungry that he wanted to eat the husks that he was feeding to the hogs.

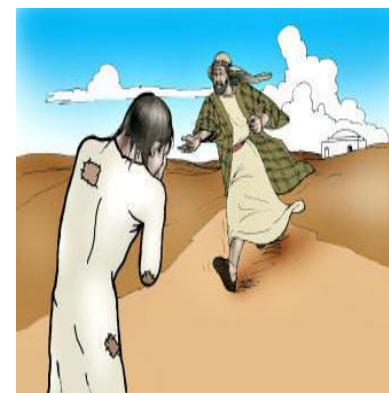


One day the son began to think about his father's house and all the good things there. He said, "How many hired servants of my fathers to have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and am no more worthy to be called your son: make me as one of your hired servants.'"

He got up and started back to his father. This is what the Bible calls "repentance." Repentance is a turn-around. When you see that you have been going the wrong way, and you turn around and go to God, that is repentance.

On his long way back, the son no doubt wondered how his father would receive him. Would he be angry with him? Would he tell him that he could not come back after what he had done?

How did the father receive him? Here are the words of Jesus: "When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." (Luke 15:20).



This is the only place in the Bible that pictures God as being in a hurry. He "runs" to meet the repenting sinner who comes to Him, trusting Christ as his Savior.

Perhaps you have never been saved. You know that you are a sinner. The devil says, "Don't think that someone like you will get anything from God." But Satan is a liar. What does God say? He says, "Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord "Though your sins as scarlet, they will be as white as snow..." (Isaiah 1:18).

Perhaps you trusted Christ as your Savior some time ago, but you turned away from Him and went your own way. You have been away from God for some time, but now you are sick of your life in "the far country." You want to come back to God, but you wonder how God will receive you. This parable shows you how God will receive you.

Don't wait any longer. Come to Him now. Come just as you are. You will discover that God is far more kind and gracious than you could ever have imagined. He will welcome you with rejoicing.



Lesson #10: A New Person in Christ

A New PERSON! in Christ



Dear Friend,

In our last lesson, we learned that God deals with the human race by two men—Adam and Christ. Adam is God's first man; Christ is God's second Man.

God's first man, Adam, disobeyed God and brought sin and death into the world. Because Adam was the head of the human race, that did affect the whole human race, and it affected you and me.

What did God see?

When God looked at me in my sinful condition, what did He see? He saw three things:

- God saw my many sins.
- God saw a sinner.
- God saw me in Satan's kingdom of darkness.

My condition seemed hopeless. I had done many wrong things; I was a wrong person, a sinner; and I was in the wrong place—Satan's kingdom of darkness.

In seeking to get right with God, we usually begin at the wrong end. We begin with ourselves and try to work our way to God, but this is the wrong way.

God is a Savior-God, and we begin the right way when we begin with God and what He has done for us in the Person of His Son. Let us see how God has delivered us from everything that stood between Himself and us.



My sins were laid on Christ



How did God deliver me from my sins?

God dealt with my sins by laying them on His Son on the cross. The Bible says that Christ "bore our sins in His own body" on the cross. The blood of Jesus Christ takes away all my sins. God does not overlook my sins, but He forgives them because He sees the blood of His Son which was shed for them.

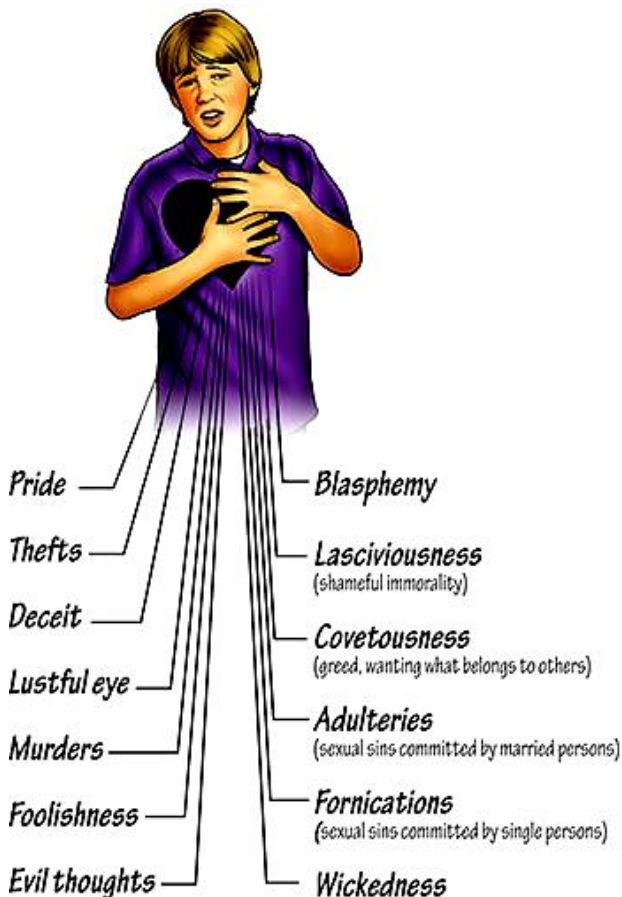
How did God deal with me, the sinner?

Because the Lord Jesus died for my sins, God has forgiven me of all my sins forever. The Bible says, "...the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses me from all sin" (1 John 1:7b).

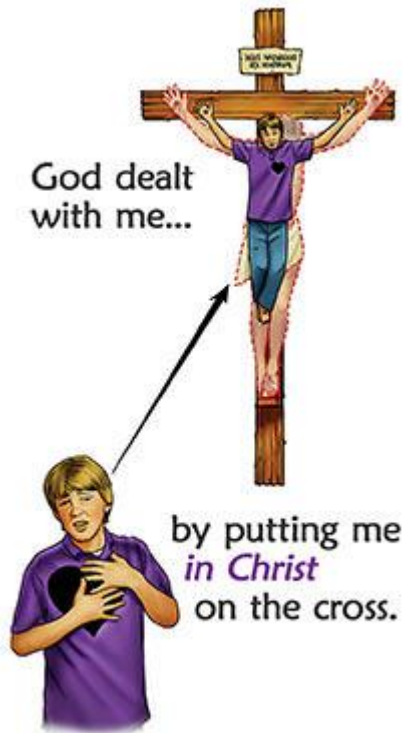
But I have a deeper problem: I am a sinner. I am the one who commits the sins, and the Bible says, "The soul who sins, will die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

Where do my sins come from? They come from my heart. They come from my sinful nature. All kinds of sins come from within—out of my heart. The Lord Jesus said, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23).

What good would it do if God forgave me of all my sins and left me here as a sinner in Satan's kingdom of darkness? God must deal with my deeper problem, what I am.



Lesson #10: A New Person in Christ (Cont'd)



How did God deal with me? God dealt with me by putting me in Christ on the cross. When Christ was crucified, I was crucified with Him. My old sinful self whom the Bible calls "the old man," was crucified with Christ. God's Word says, "Knowing this, that our old self [my old sinful self] was crucified with Him [Christ] so that our body of sin might be done away with so that we would no longer be slaves to sin." (Romans 6:6). You may be thinking, "But Christ was crucified 2,000 years ago. How could I be crucified with Christ?"

To help us to understand this, let us take a piece of paper and cut out a little man. Now take the little man and place him in a book. Where is the little man now? He is in the book, and he will stay in the book.

Suppose we put the book on the floor. Where is the little man now? He is in the book on the floor.

Suppose we place the book on the table. Where is the little man now? He is in the book on the table.

Suppose we wrap the book with the little man in it and send it to another city. Where is the little man now? He is in the book in the other city.

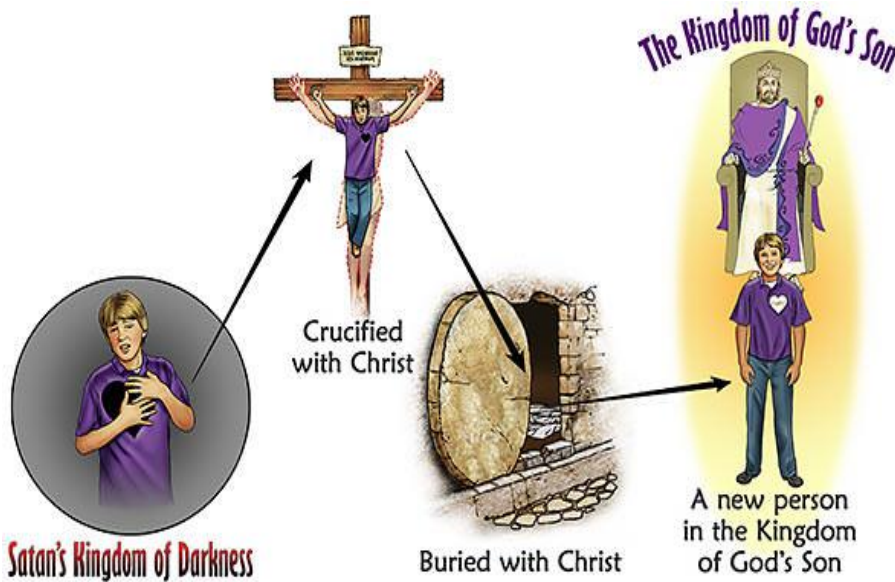
Suppose I take the book with the little man in it and hold it under water. What happens to the little man? He is still in the book, under the water. In this illustration the book represents Christ, and the little man represents me. Just as we put the little man in the book, so God put me *in Christ*. Once the little man was put in the book, whatever happened to the book also happened to the little man because he was in the book. The same is true of me also.



God put me *in Christ* on the cross and whatever happened to Him also happened to me because I was *in Christ*.

When Christ was crucified, I was crucified with Him. When He died, I died with Him. When He was buried, I was buried with Him. And when He rose again, I rose again with Him. Whatever happened to Him also happened to me.

In myself, I have not died, but these things are true of me *in Christ*. Remember the little man in the book. God put me in Christ on the cross. When He was crucified, I was crucified with Him. When He died, I died with Him. When Christ was buried, I was buried with Him. In God's sight that was the end of my old life. When Christ was raised from the dead, I was raised with Him as a new person. God created me as a new person *in Christ*! I still have the same body, but I am a new person inside. The Bible says, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature [a new person]: old things passed away; behold, new things have become." (2 Corinthians 5:17).



Lesson #10: A New Person in Christ (Cont'd)

I am a new person in a new place!

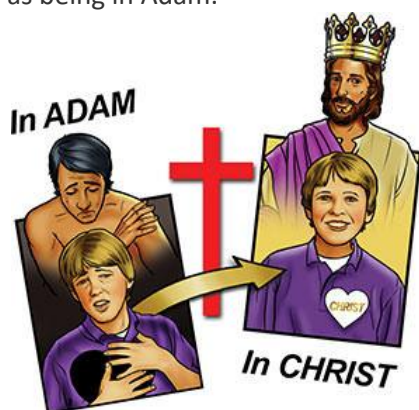
I am no longer in Satan's kingdom of darkness. I am a new person in a new place! I am now in the kingdom of God's dear Son. The Bible says, *"Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son"* (Colossians 1:12, 13)

Christ has delivered me from everything that was against me.

It was a happy day when I learned what Christ has done for me. He has removed everything that stood between God and me. What about my sins? My sins were laid on Jesus. He shed His precious blood for my sins. God has forgiven me of my sins for Jesus' sake. The Bible says, *"I am writing to you, little children because your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake."* (1 John 2:12). What about my old sinful life? My old life ended with my death with Christ. The apostle Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ."* (Galatians 2:20). I can say this too because Christ is my Savior. I am not the person I once was. I am a new person in Christ. What about Satan's kingdom of darkness? I am no longer in Satan's kingdom of darkness. God has transferred me out of Satan's kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of His dear Son.

God sees me in Christ.

When I was born, I was born into Adam's sinful family. God saw me as being in Adam. God sees every unsaved person as being in Adam.



When I trusted Christ as my Savior, God put me *in Christ* on the cross. I was crucified with Him. That was the end of my old life in Adam.

God created me as a new person in Christ. I am no longer in Adam; I am now *in Christ*. I am no longer identified with Adam; I am now identified with Christ. God no longer sees me in Adam. He now sees me *in Christ*. That is the way He will always see me—*in Christ*.

I am to "reckon" (count on the fact) that I am a new person in Christ. I can say "No" to the sins and habits of my old sinful self. The Bible says, *"Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Jesus Christ."* (Romans 6:11).

The prodigal son

In the story of the prodigal son, Jesus shows us how the Father receives us when we come to Him, trusting Jesus as our Savior. He forgives us fully and freely. He loves to forgive us!

When the prodigal son returned, his father saw him while he was yet a great distance away. He ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. It was not just a little kiss on the cheek. In the original language, the Bible says that the father *"covered him with his kisses."* At that moment the prodigal son knew two things.

First, he knew that he was fully and freely forgiven.

Second, he knew how his father felt toward him. He knew his father's heart attitude toward him. By his actions, his father was saying, *"I love you! I love you! I love you!"* This is a beautiful picture of how God receives me when I come to Him in repentance and faith. He *"covers me with His kisses."* I am fully and freely forgiven of all my sins. Every believer can say, *"God has forgiven all my sins because of Christ."* There is no question about it.

Not only am I forgiven, but I know how God feels toward me—He loves me with all His heart! God's forgiveness is the flowing out of His boundless love for me in Christ. It is God folding me to His heart, even as the father put his arms around the poor prodigal son and folded him to his heart. It is God saying to me, *"I love you! I love you! I love you! I am so happy that you came back to Me."*



Lesson #10: A New Person in Christ (Cont'd)

God so wants me to know His love and how He feels toward me that He gives me the Holy Spirit to dwell in me. The very first thing the Holy Spirit does is to fill my heart with God's love. The Bible says, *"...the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."* (Romans 5:5).

The secret of the parable

The surprising thing about the parable of the prodigal son is that we are not told the secret. The secret is the death of Christ on the cross.

How can God receive a sinner like me? How can He *"fold me to His heart and cover me with kisses"* when I am still in *"my dirt and rags"*? God receives me and accepts me for what Christ has done for me. The death of Christ on the cross was great enough and precious enough to God to put away all my sins forever. In the Old Testament, God told His people to offer animals, usually lambs, as sacrifices for their sins. Lambs were sacrificed every day, day after day, because they were imperfect sacrifices, and they could never take away sins. When Jesus came, John the Baptist, cried out, *"Behold the Lamb of God, which takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29).

Jesus is *"the Lamb of God"*—the sacrifice which God Himself provided for our sins. Because God's Son died for our sins, there need never be another sacrifice for sins. Some of God's children live their entire lives never being quite sure that all their sins are forgiven. But we can

know that we have been forgiven. The thing that gives me real peace

concerning my sins is to realize that **God is perfectly satisfied with the sacrifice which He has provided.**

What does God want me to do? He wants me to love and appreciate Jesus Christ—the One who died for me.

God's great salvation

God's great salvation is the mighty power of God doing for me what I could never do for myself. God has removed everything that was against me. He has taken me out of Adam's sinful family and put me in Christ's family.

All my sins are gone. My old life ended with my death with Christ. God has made me a new person **in Christ**. Best of all, I know God's heart-attitude toward me. I know how He feels about me—He loves me with His boundless love.

What to do about our cares

Becoming a Christian does not mean that you will have an easy life. Christians, as well as unsaved people, have problems, burdens, and cares. God's Word tells us what to do about our cares.

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4).

This is a command from the Lord. We are to rejoice always. We are not commanded to rejoice in our circumstances but to rejoice in the Lord.

"Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near." (Philippians 4:5).

We have abundant cause for gladness at all times. Why? It's because of the presence of the Lord. He lives in us, so He is with us at all times.

"Be anxious for nothing [Don't be anxious about anything]; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God." (Philippians 4:6).

Cares come to us every day—little cares, middle-size cares, and big cares. We get anxious and distressed, and this robs us of our joy.

What am I to do with my cares? The Lord tells me to pass them on to Him.

"Cast all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).



Lesson #10: A New Person in Christ (Cont'd)

"In everything"—little things as well as big things, I am to go to God in prayer and let my requests be made known to Him. The great importance of prayer is that I bring God into my situation.

Does God promise that I will get everything I ask? No, He does not promise this, but He promises something better—"the peace of God." The Bible says, "*And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*" (Philippians 4:7).

When I am troubled about anything, the first question is: Have I been to the Lord about it? I am to go to Him "in everything." I am to put the matter into His hands and say, "Lord, please settle this in the way that pleases You." I show my love for God and my perfect confidence in His goodness when I lay my situation before Him and leave it up to Him to do what pleases Him. I do not tell Him what to do.

When I have prayed, has the situation changed? - Perhaps not. But a wonderful change has taken place in me. I have been to my Father about my cares and my needs, and I am changed. Before I talked with Him, I was worried and anxious, but not now. A wonderful change has taken place, not in my circumstances, but in me! I have "the peace of God" in my heart.

Lesson #11: Christ is My Righteousness



Dear Friend,

We were created to glorify God and to enjoy fellowship with Him. God's purpose in saving us is to bring us into a right relationship with Him and to make us suitable to Himself so that He can enjoy us and we can enjoy Him.



God is the great Ruler of the universe. He is all light and glory. He is perfect in purity and holiness, and He cannot be approached by sinful creatures.

The prophet Isaiah once had a vision in which he saw the great and holy God upon His throne. Immediately Isaiah fell on his face and cried out, "Woe is me, for I am ruined!" (Isaiah 6:5). What caused Isaiah to cry out, "Woe is me"? It was his sense of sinfulness. Isaiah knew that he was sinful. He knew that he did not have the righteousness that he needed to be in the presence of such a glorious and holy God.

To enjoy fellowship with God, I must not only be forgiven of all my sins, but I must have a righteousness that is acceptable to Him. Forgiveness is like taking a bath to get rid of dirt; righteousness is like putting on suitable clothes that I may be properly dressed. If I were going to appear before a great king, I would want to wear suitable clothes.

When I think about coming into the presence of the holy God to enjoy fellowship with Him, I recognize that I must be "clothed" in a special way. I must be clothed with a righteousness that is acceptable to God.

What kind of righteousness does God accept? The only kind of righteousness which God accepts is *perfect* righteousness. I cannot make myself perfectly righteous. God must provide this perfect righteousness for me.

How does God make me perfectly righteous in His sight?

God has done three wonderful things to make me perfectly righteous in His sight:

- 1) He has ended my old life,
- 2) He has given me a new life in Christ, and
- 3) He has given Christ to me as my righteousness.

To put it simply, God gets rid of all that I am and gives me Christ as my righteousness. Let us see how God does this.

Lesson #11: Christ is My Righteousness (Cont'd)

1. God has ended my old life.

There are two great facts which are true of every believer: Christ died **for** me, and I **"died" with** Christ. How do I know that Christ died for me? I know because God's Word says so. The Bible says, *"...Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

How do I know that I **"died"** with Christ? I know because God's Word says so. My old sinful **self**, which was the source of all my sins, was crucified with Christ. The Bible says, *"Knowing this, that our old self [our sinful self] was crucified with Him [Christ]..."* (Romans 6:6).

2. God has given me a new life.

I **"died"** with Christ. I was buried with Him. In God's sight that was the end of my old life. Now God says to me, *"I have created you as a new person in Christ."* The Bible says, *"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."* (Ephesians 2:10).

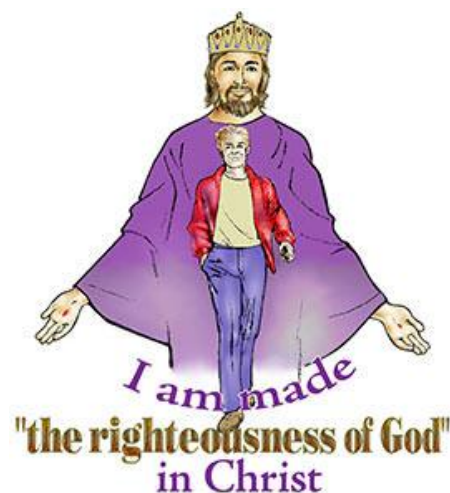
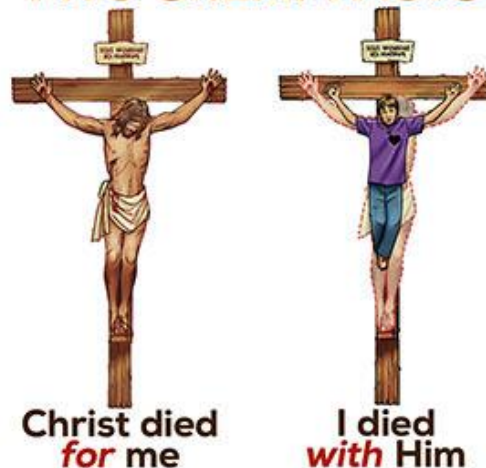
3. God has given Christ to me as my righteousness.

In myself, I am not righteous, but God has made me perfectly righteous in His sight. How did God do this? He put me in Christ. I am made *"the righteousness of God in Him."* The Bible says, *"God made Him [Christ] who knew no sin to be sin on behalf so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."* (2 Corinthians 5:21).

This verse says that I am *"made the righteousness of God in Him,"* that is, **in Christ**. Just as God looks at Christ and sees Him perfectly righteous, so He looks at me and sees me perfectly righteous **in Christ**.

If Gabriel, the mighty angel who stands in the very presence of God, were to appear before me in all his beauty and purity, my thought would likely be, *"He is righteous and holy, but I am not."* But this would be entirely wrong! God has given Christ to me as my righteousness. I am made *"the righteousness of God in Him."*

TWO GREAT FACTS



The prodigal son was made suitable to his father.

When the prodigal son returned to his father, he had no idea how well he would be received by his father. The father ran to meet him and *"covered him with his kisses."* At that moment the son knew how his father felt toward him. He knew that he was loved and accepted. But even though he knew that he was forgiven and accepted by his father, we may be sure that the prodigal was not completely happy. He was not happy because of his condition. He was still in his dirt and rags. The prodigal might

have said to his father, *"It is wonderful that you love me so much and that you can receive me as you do, but I do not enjoy it because I am not fit for you."*



Lesson #11: Christ is My Righteousness (Cont'd)

What did the father do? He told his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him." We may be sure that this new robe was not put over the prodigal son's dirt and rags. He was given a bath, and his old clothes were taken away. Then the servants put "the best robe" on him. It is called "the best robe" because there could be no better.



What is the son's situation now? He has been washed from his dirt; he has clean clothes, and he is wearing the best robe. He knows that he is now fit to be in his father's presence. He can now enjoy being with his father because his father has made him suitable to himself.

The son did not say, "I just don't feel that I can accept this robe because I am so unworthy." He honored his father by joyfully receiving what his father provided for him. The "best robe" not only made the son suitable to his father, but it made him conscious of his suitability.



Clothed with "the best robe"

"The best robe" is Christ.

This story has a deep, heavenly meaning. The Lord Jesus told us this story because He wants us to know what the Father has done to make us suitable to Himself. God has not only cleansed me from all my sins, but He has made me a new person in Christ. And He has provided a perfect righteousness for me by giving me His "best robe."

What is God's "best robe"? God's "best robe" is **Christ!** In fact, God has no other robe to make us suitable to Himself. No one can come to God except by Christ.

God has given Christ to me as my righteousness. Because Christ is my righteousness, I have perfect righteousness before God. God has made me suitable to Himself, and He wants me to be conscious of my suitability. It is the glorious, risen Christ Himself who is my righteousness before God. One of the names of the Lord Jesus in the Old Testament is "The Lord our righteousness." The Bible says of Christ, "And this is His name by which He will be called, The Lord Our Righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6b).

I am "accepted in the Beloved."

Through my death and resurrection with Christ, I am on "new ground" with God. I am no longer in Adam: I am now **in Christ**. I am accepted by God because I am **in Christ**. The Bible says, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed [presented as a gift] on us in the Beloved [Christ]" (Ephesians 1:6).

The righteousness and acceptance which I have **in Christ** are perfect and complete. I did not earn it. God gave it to me the moment I took Christ as my Savior. I cannot improve my acceptance with God, and I cannot lose my acceptance with God. I am always "accepted in the Beloved."

Does this mean that we will not sin anymore if we are Christians? No, it does not. In Paul's letter to the believers in Corinth, we find some things that seem hard to understand. Paul calls these believers "saints [holy ones]." In the same letter, Paul speaks of some terrible sins in their lives. Some were proud, some fought among themselves, and some were guilty of immoral acts.

What is the explanation of this? How could Paul say that they were "saints" while, at the same time, they were not living as believers should? To answer these questions, we must understand the difference between our "position" and our "walk."

What is my "position"?

My "position" is the way God sees me in Christ. Is my position perfect? Yes, it is. Is my position always perfect? Yes, it is. Why? Because it is the way, God sees me **in Christ**. Christ Himself is perfect, and God always sees me perfect **in Christ**.



My POSITION ...the way God sees me in Christ.

Lesson #11: Christ is My Righteousness (Cont'd)

What is my "walk"?

My "walk" is my conduct—the way I live, day by day. Is my walk perfect? No, it is not. Is it ever perfect? No, it is not. Why? Because it depends on me—what I say and do, and I am not perfect. It will help us if we remember that our position is the way God sees us *in Christ*, and our walk is the way we live here on the earth.

God accepts me according to my position.

God always accepts me according to my position *in Christ*, and not according to my walk—the way I live here on this earth. The Bible says, *"To the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved [Christ]"* (Ephesians 1:6).

My righteousness before God is Christ Himself. He is my "best robe," and God never takes back His "best robe." My failures do not affect Christ's perfection. Nothing can be added to His perfection, nor can anything be taken



from it. Regardless of how many times I may fail, Christ is always my righteousness before God, and He is always perfect.

Can I lose my "position"?

My "position" is the way God sees me *in Christ*. It is not based on what I am, but on what Christ is.

Can I lose my position in Christ? No, I can never lose my position. But I can lose the enjoyment of my position. If I continue to do things which are displeasing to God, I will lose my joy.

Losing my joy is like the warning light that comes on in a car. It means that there is a serious problem which needs to be corrected immediately. How do we correct our problem with God? We correct it by confessing our sin to Him and forsaking it.

God is a holy God. He wants His people to be holy in their everyday living. The Bible says, *"But like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior [daily living]"* (1 Peter 1:15).

How to Please God

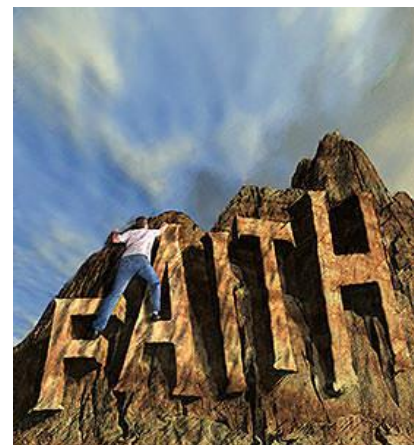
In His Word, God has told me how I could live a life that is pleasing to Him. I please God when I "walk by faith." Paul said, *"For we walk by faith, not by sight"* (2 Corinthians 5:7).

"Walking by faith" means that I am living by God's truth, counting on what I am in Christ. "Walking by sight" means that I am living by my feelings and circumstances. The battle for a Christian each day is, *"Am I going to live by my feelings and my circumstances or by God's truth?"*

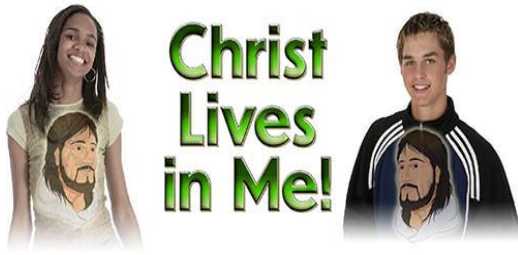
God wants me to live by His truth, knowing that I am *in Christ* and that Christ is my righteousness. Say to yourself over and over, "I am *in Christ*. Christ is my righteousness! He accepts me."

No truth in the Bible is more important for us as Christians than knowing that we are *in Christ* and that He is our righteousness. This is something God did for you when you took Christ as your Savior. If you are not sure of this, read this lesson over and over. Ask God to show you that you are indeed *in Christ* and that Christ Himself is your righteousness before God.

I am in Christ; Christ Himself is my righteousness! I am accepted in Him.



Lesson #12: Christ Lives in Me!



Dear Friend,

In Old Testament times, God gave men the Ten Commandments, He gave them prophets and teachers, and He gave them some godly kings. But in every situation, man failed to glorify God.

Now God has His Son, the Man Christ Jesus, at His right side. This Man glorified God in all that He did. Now God has glorified Him, and God is working through Christ to bless us. Everything in God's great salvation comes to us through the glorified Christ.

There are two aspects of this great salvation which can be expressed in two simple statements:

1) I am in Christ, and **2) Christ is in me.**

It is wonderful to know that God loves me with all His heart and that He has accepted me because I am in Christ. But my problem is this:

How can I live the Christian life here?

The answer is: In myself, I cannot live the Christian life. There is only one Person who can live the Christian life, and that is Christ Himself.

The Lord Jesus says to us, *"I know that you love Me and you want to please Me. I know, too, that you cannot live the Christian life, so I will come and live it in you."*

Becoming a Christian is not a matter of being religious or trying to behave like a Christian. Becoming a Christian is receiving a Person—the most wonderful Person in the universe. A Christian is a person in whom Christ lives.

Christ promised to come back to His disciples.

When Jesus told His disciples that He would be leaving them, they were very sorrowful. But Jesus said, *"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper that He may be with you forever. The Helper is the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it [world] doesn't see Him or knows Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you"* (John 14:16, 17).

The coming of the Holy Spirit would mean that Jesus was coming to live in them (disciples). Jesus said, *"I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."* Referring to the Day of Pentecost, Jesus said, *"In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you"* (John 14:20).

In the forty days after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples ten or more times. On many occasions, He appeared to them, talked with them, and then disappeared.

What was the Lord doing? He was getting His believers used to the fact that He was in another form. He was the same Jesus whom they knew and loved, but now He was the glorified Christ, with a glorious, new, spiritual body. Then Jesus went back to Heaven. Ten days later, on the Day of Pentecost, the disciples were in the upper room, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly the Holy Spirit came from the glorified Christ and filled the room where they were sitting. The disciples were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

The disciples knew two things had happened: They knew that Jesus Christ, the One whom they knew and loved, was glorified and exalted in Heaven, and they knew that Christ had come back to live in them by His Spirit. They were *in Christ*, and Christ was in them.



Lesson #12: Christ Lives in Me! (Cont'd)

Christ lives in us by His Spirit.

Christ told His disciples that it was really better for them that He goes away so that He could send the Holy Spirit to them. Why is this better? It is better because the coming of the Holy Spirit meant that the Lord Jesus Himself was coming back to dwell in them. It was not the earthly Christ coming to be with them, but the glorified Christ coming to live in them. When Jesus Christ came into this world as a man, He laid aside His glory and privileges as God. But when He went back to Heaven, He resumed all His privileges as God. He is now the glorified Man at the right hand of the Father, with all power in Heaven and the earth.

Jesus Christ is "the God-Man." As a glorified Man, He is in Heaven in a real body of flesh and bones seated at the right hand of God the Father. As God, He can be everywhere. In His earthly form, Christ could not be with all His believers at the same time. Now He can not only be *with* us, but He can live *in* us.

Christ lives in every believer. This means that every believer can have Christ all to himself! He is with me at all times as my ever-present, all-sufficient Friend. I can tell Him about all my problems and my burdens.

Why did Christ come to live in me?

There are a number of reasons why Christ came to live in His believers. Let us consider some of them.

Christ came to live in me so I could be the person God wants me to be. In myself, I can never live the Christian life, but Christ says, *"I will come and live it in you."*

Christ came to live in me to bring glory to Himself. Christ demonstrates His love and power to us. We are here to glorify Him and to demonstrate to others His ability to change lives.

Christ came to live in me to carry on His work here. When Satan stirred up wicked men to kill Christ, he (Satan) thought that he had put an end to Christ's work here on earth. But he was never more mistaken. God raised Christ up from the dead and exalted Him to the highest place in Heaven. Then Christ came back in the Spirit to live in the hearts of all those who believe in Him.

Now every believer is a person in whom Christ lives. Instead of having to deal with just one Christ on earth, Satan now has to deal with millions of believers in whom Christ lives.

God meets all our needs by giving us, Christ

If I were asked to make a list of all that I need to live a life pleasing to God here on earth, the list looks like this:

I need wisdom.	I need strength.
I need love.	I need patience.
I need peace.	I need satisfaction.
I need joy.	I need power.

My list would contain many more things. I do not even know all that I might need. But God knows all my needs, even those I don't think of.

How does God meet all my spiritual needs? He meets all my spiritual needs by giving Christ to me, to live in me. We get everything from God, but we get it in another Person. We get it **in Christ**. The Bible says, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"* (Ephesians 1:3).

We need to see that we have everything **in Christ**, seated at the right hand of God. In giving us Christ, God has given us everything we will ever need. The Bible says, *"For in Him all the fullness of the Deity [God] dwells in bodily form, and in Him, you have been made complete ..."* (Colossians 2:9, 10).



Lesson #12: Christ Lives in Me! (Cont'd)

Christ is my wisdom.

When I need wisdom, I should turn to Him. He exactly knows what I should do, and He lives in me. The Bible says, "*In whom [in Christ] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Colossians 2:3).

Christ is my strength.

David said, "*The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*" The One who lives in me is God. He has all power in Heaven and earth. The apostle Paul said, "*I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me*" (Philippians 4:13).

Christ is my love.

Love is a Person—Jesus Christ! Christ is the One who loves all people. He lives in me now, and He is my love. Christ's love is beyond anything that we could ever have. We have a description of what Christ's love is like in **1 Corinthians, chapter 13**. Read this chapter, putting the word "Christ" in every place where it says "charity" or "love."

Christ is my peace.

The Bible says, "*For He [Christ] is our peace.*" Before He left this world, Christ told His disciples, "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you: I do not give to you as the world gives to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.*" (John 14:27)

Christ is my joy.

The Bible says, "*Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I will say, rejoice.*" (Philippian 4:4). We may not always be able to rejoice in our circumstances, but we can always rejoice in the Lord—in Christ, who He is and what He has done for us.

Christ is my patience.

In myself, I don't have much patience with other people, but Christ has come to live in me, and He is my patience. The Bible says, "*Strengthened with all might according to His [Christ's] glorious power, for attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.*" (Colossians 1:11, 12).

Christ is my satisfaction.

Christ said, "*I am the living bread which came down from heaven...*" (John 6:51). Bread represents that which satisfies us and sustains us. Christ is our "living bread"—the One who perfectly satisfies and sustains us.



Christ is my power.

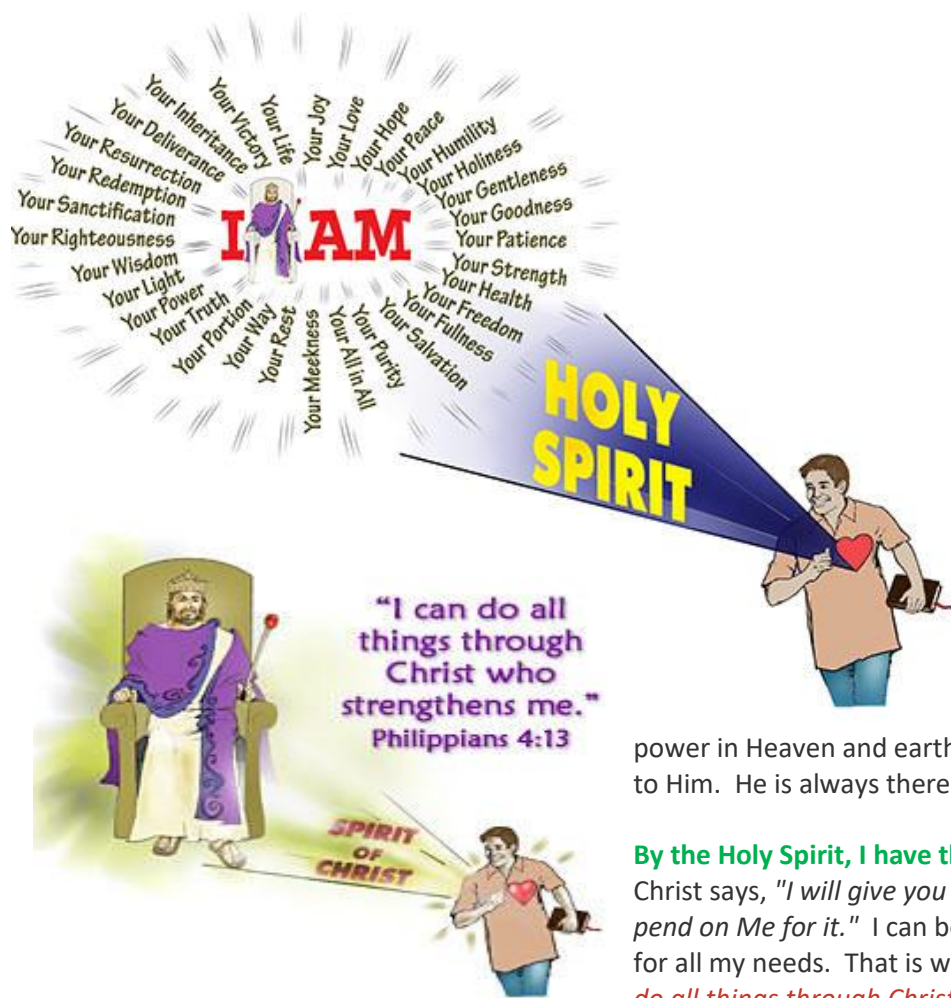
The Bible says that Christ is "*the power of God.*" Think of Christ at the right hand of God, with all the power of God. We are connected to that power by the Holy Spirit. We draw from Christ all the supply of power we need to take us through the sufferings and difficulties that we experience here.

Everything is in Christ.

Everything I need in the Christian life is **in Christ**. The question is: How do I get these things down here?

The answer is: I get them by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is "*the Spirit of Christ.*" The very same Spirit that is in Christ Himself is in me!

Lesson #12: Christ Lives in Me! (Cont'd)



Everything I need is in Christ, and Christ is living in me by His Spirit. Christ is the Source, the Joy and the Strength of my new life. I live by faith in Him. The apostle Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me."* (Galatians 2:20).

In myself I am weak, and I am living in a sinful world where there are many things against me. But I have two great things which are for me:

In my spirit, I am united to Christ where He is. Where is He? He is at the right hand of God, and He has all

power in Heaven and earth. When I need help, I have only to look to Him. He is always there to help me.

By the Holy Spirit, I have the power of Christ here where I am.

Christ says, *"I will give you everything you need, but you must depend on Me for it."* I can be an overcomer by depending on Christ for all my needs. That is what the apostle Paul did. He said, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me"* (Philippians 4:13).

How do I apply these wonderful truths in my life?

There are three simple steps that will transform your life: **Know** the truth, **claim** the truth, and **live** the truth. Let us consider these.

★ Know the Truth.

Jesus said, *"You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free"* (John 8:32).

The truth is that the Man Jesus Christ has been exalted to the throne of the universe, and He lives in me by His Spirit. I have in Him everything I need to live for Him here. The Bible says, *"For in Him (Christ) all the fullness Deity (God) dwells in bodily form, and in Him, you have been made complete."* (Colossians 2:9, 10)

★ Claim the Truth.

Jesus Christ, my Savior, is now glorified and exalted at the right hand of God. He is not only my great Savior, but He is my Friend, the Source, the Joy, and the Strength of my new life.

I must not only know the truth, but I must claim it for myself by making it personal. It is not just, *"Christ lives in the hearts of His believers,"* but *"Christ lives in Me!"* It is not just *"Christ loves His believers,"* but *"Christ loves Me!"* The apostle Paul made it personal. He said, *"The Son of God loved Me and gave Himself for Me."*

Lesson #12: Christ Lives in Me! (Cont'd)

Christ living in me means that I have the privilege of living moment-by-moment in a warm, personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He is my Friend, and He is seated at the right hand of God. I am not concerned about what others may think of me. Christ loves me, and I love Him. Knowing Him is better than anything that this world has to offer.

★ Live the Truth.

This simply means that I depend on Christ in me. He is God. He is the One who created the universe. Christ in me is sufficient for anything!

Satan says, "You won't make it. You can't live the Christian life!" **I say**, "Lord Jesus, You are God, and You live in me. You are sufficient for anything that happens to me today. I am trusting You to live Your life through me."

One of the great secrets of a life of victory is spending time alone with the Lord each day, in the study of His Word and prayer. This is called a "Quiet Time." It is also called "waiting on the Lord." The Bible says, "*Indeed, none of those who wait for You [Christ] will be ashamed...*" (Psalm 25:3)

Christ lives in me. All the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him. He is sufficient for anything that I may face.

Quiet Time with God

Three things are necessary to establish a Quiet Time,—a definite **place**, a definite **time**, and a definite **plan**.

1. Find a place where you can be alone with the Lord. You need a place with good light and a table where you can lay your books and write notes.

2. Decide on a definite time. For most people, the best time is the first thing in the morning. Great musicians always tune their instruments before a concert—not after it. It is much better for us to meet with the Lord the first thing in the morning and let Him tune our hearts with Him than to come to Him at the end of the day with a long list of failures to confess.

The importance of spending the first hour of each day with the Lord cannot be overemphasized. The Bible says of the Lord Jesus, "*And in the early morning while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.*" (Mark 1:35). If the sinless Lord Jesus found it necessary to spend time alone with His Father each day, how much more should we!

3. Have a definite plan. Begin your Quiet Time with a short prayer to the Lord asking Him to speak to your heart through His Word. Then open the Bible and begin reading. Don't hurry; take time to think about what you are reading. Talk to God about what you are reading. Often a particular verse will be especially meaningful to you. Write it on a card and memorize it.

"How much time should I spend?"

This is up to you. Spend a minimum of half-hour; an hour is much better. There are 24 hours in each day, and every serious-minded Christian should be able to set aside one-half of one of these hours for God. Spend the first part of your time reading the Bible; then turn to the Lord in prayer. Confess your sins to Him. Praise Him for all that He is to you. Thank Him for His blessings. Pray for those whom He brings to your mind. Ask for His guidance throughout the day. Tell Him that you love Him.

Stick to it!

Once you have established your place, time, and plan, STICK TO IT! If you allow everything that comes along to disrupt your Quiet Time, soon you will have no Quiet Time. We must put first things first. Jesus said, "*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things [what to eat, drink, wear, etc.] will be added to you*" (Matthew 6:33).

Every Christian is called to serve God. Are you willing to prepare yourself to serve Him? If so, begin now having a daily Quiet Time with Him. If you choose the morning time, get a good alarm clock and use it. Decide when you need to get up and then get up! This is one practical way in which you can show the Lord how much you love Him.

Do you want to know the key to success for a Christian? It is simply this: Put God first. God says, "*...for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.*" (1 Samuel 2:30).



Lesson #12: Christ Lives in Me! (Cont'd)

Warning: Be prepared for all kinds of opposition to your establishing a Quiet Time. Satan knows what a daily Quiet Time does in bringing power into the life of a child of God, and he will do all he can to prevent your establishing this habit in your life.

Lesson #13: I am a Son (Child) of God

Dear Friend,

A tiny baby is not a very important person in himself; everything depends on the family into which he is born.

The first son born into the family of a great king is called *"the crown prince."* He becomes at once the heir of all the riches and glory of the king himself. As a tiny baby, he has no idea of all the wealth and position that belong to him. Nevertheless, it all belongs to him, and one day he will inherit all that the king has.

So it is with the believer. The moment he trusted Christ as his Savior, he was born into the family of God. As a tiny baby in Christ, he has no idea of all the wealth and position that belong to him. Nevertheless, it all belongs to him, and one day he will inherit it. Believers are sons and daughters of the living God, and God's Word says, *"So then let no one boast in men. For all things belong to you."* (1 Corinthians 3:21).

God's great salvation

We are not saved by what we do for God but by what God has done for us in the Person of His Son. Let us see the wonderful things He has done for us.

1. All my sins are forgiven.

The One who took all our sins upon Himself is now seated at the right hand of God. Since this is true, where are my sins? They are gone—gone forever.

2. I am a new person in a new kingdom.

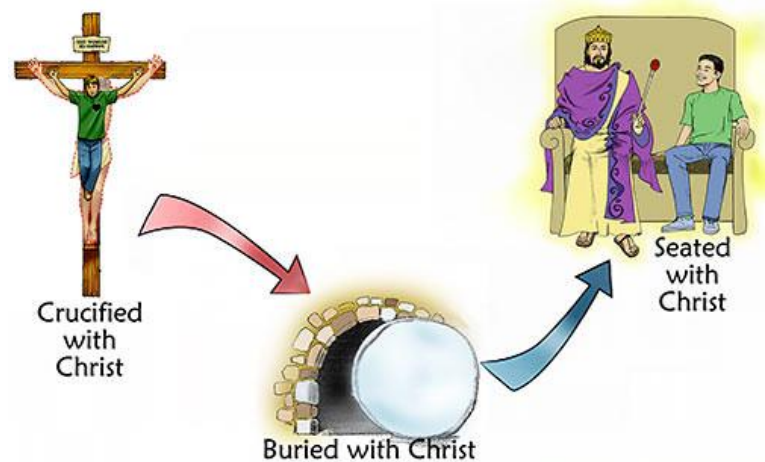
Not only has Christ removed my sins, but He has removed *"the old me"*—the one who did the sinning. My old life ended with my death with Christ. I was buried with Him, and I rose with Him as a new person in a new kingdom—*"the kingdom of God's dear Son."*

3. I am seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Once God put me in Christ, everything that happened to Him also happened to me because I am *in Christ*. When He died, I died with Him, when He was buried, I was buried with Him, and when He rose from the grave, I rose with Him as a new person *in Christ*.

But that is not all. When Christ ascended back into Heaven, I ascended into Heaven with Him. When He was seated at the right hand of God, I was seated with Him. This is my new spiritual position. This is the way God sees me.

Why does God do all these wonderful things for us? He does them because He loves us! The Bible says, *"But because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive together with Christ even when we were dead in our transgressions (sins) (by grace you have been saved); and has raised us up together with Him, and seated us together with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus"* (Ephesians 2:4-6).



Lesson #13: I am a Son (Child) of God - Cont'd

4. I am perfectly righteous in God's sight.

The prodigal son did not earn *"the best robe,"* nor did he pay for it. That robe was given to him by his father.

God gives me perfect righteousness the moment I take Christ as my Savior. I can never lose this righteousness because it is not a *"thing"*—it is a Person! God gives me Christ as my perfect righteousness, and I can never be separated from Him.

5. Christ lives in me.

Because I am in Christ, I am accepted by God in Heaven. Because Christ lives in me, I have the power to live for Christ here on earth. It is a wonderful day when you can say, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me."*

The gift of sonship

God's great purpose is that we shall be holy and without blame before Him as His sons and daughters. God is doing this, not just for our happiness, but for His own pleasure and satisfaction.

It would be a great honor to be with God as His servant. We might be satisfied and happy to be God's servants forever, but this would not satisfy God's great heart of love for us. He wants us before Him as His sons and daughters! The Bible says, *"When the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, so that He might redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption [position] as sons"* (Galatians 4:4, 5).

The prodigal son

We have seen how the father of the prodigal provided *"the best robe"* for his son. This made the son conscious of the fact that he was now suitable to his father and fit to be in his presence.

But the father provided two more things for his son—the ring and sandals. He said to his servants, *"Put a ring on his finger and shoes [sandals] on his feet."* Let us see what these mean.

"The ring."

The ring in the Bible signifies honor and authority. When a king gave his ring to someone, he was saying, *"I am honoring you by allowing you to represent me."*

God has chosen us to be Christ's representatives in this world. Think of the great honor that God has bestowed on us—being chosen by God to represent Christ here! The Bible says, *"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ..."* (2 Corinthians 5:20).

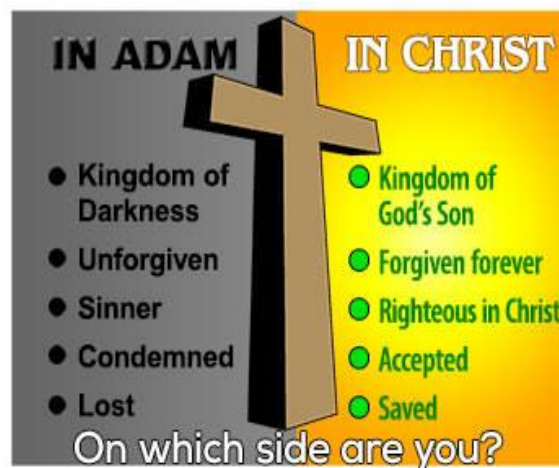
"The sandals."

What is the meaning of "the sandals"? The sandals speak of son-ship. Servants did not wear sandals in the house; they were barefooted. Only sons wore sandals in the house. What was the father saying to his son? He was saying, *"You are to be with me, not as a servant, but as my son. I want you always to remember that you are my son and that I delight in you."*

The robe, the ring, and the sandals made the son conscious that his father loved him and delighted in him. If you had asked him, *"What kind of terms are you on with your father since you came back?"* He would have said, *"I am on the very best of terms with my father. My father delights in me, and I delight in him. I never knew that he loved me so much."*

The father of the prodigal delighted in his son. He did all these wonderful things, not just for his son's happiness, but for his own pleasure and satisfaction.

What is God saying to us here? He is saying, *"You are to be with Me as My son. I want you to remember always that you are My son, that I love you, and I delight in you."*



Lesson #13: I am a Son (Child) of God - Cont'd

God has reconciled us to Himself.

To be "reconciled to God" means that we have been made entirely suitable to God. Through the work of Christ, God has made us fit to be in His presence.

Why is God so gracious to us? Why does He give us "the best robe" and "the ring" and "the sandals"? He does it because of Christ. The Bible says that "while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son" (Romans 5:10).

Dear friend, have you realized that, because you are in Christ, you have been reconciled to God? God has made you suitable to Himself. Do you know that God delights in you now as His son?

It takes us a long time to get hold of the fact that God is doing all these wonderful things for us, not just for our happiness, but for His own pleasure. It is God's pleasure to have us before Him as His sons. Nothing would satisfy God's great heart of love but that we should have the place of sons before Him. The Bible says, "How great love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called the children of God..." (1 John 3:1).

Do you know what it is to be a son of God? It is to be the object of God's love and delight. I may feel, "I am just a poor, weak person. I don't feel like I am a son or daughter of God."

Yes, I may feel that way at times, but feelings are not facts. What is the fact about my place before God? The fact is that I am a child of God, the object of God's love and delight. The Bible says, "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He [Christ] appears, we will be like Him because we will see Him as He is." (1 John 3:2).

We are the sons (children) of God—now! We do not know what glory will be ours exactly in the world to come, but the Bible says, "Beloved, NOW we are the sons of God." What I am in the presence of God is my true spiritual position and dignity. When I lose sight of this, I am grieving the Holy Spirit.

God gives us the Spirit of Christ so we can live like His sons (children).

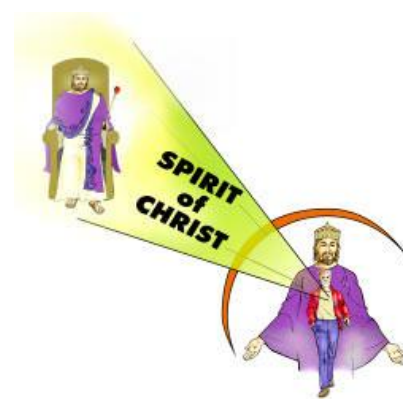
If a great king were to give me the title of nobility and give me a large estate to go with my title, what would it profit me if I did not have the finances needed to keep up the large estate?

God is saying to me, "I have made you My son, and I am determined that you shall have the power to live like a son of God. I am giving you the Spirit of My Son to live in you so that you can be set free from the sins and habits that would drag you down." The Bible says, "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death." (Romans 8:2).

We are here to represent Christ.

As children of God, we are to represent the Lord Jesus Christ here on earth where He is rejected. Our main business on the earth is to show the beauties of the heavenly Christ. The Bible says, "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." (1 Peter 2:9).

Think of the honor and dignity of being a child of God! If we realize who we are, we would never want to do anything mean, or little, or unworthy of God. The Bible says, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach [without rebuke], in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." (Philippians 2:14, 15)



Lesson #13: I am a Son (Child) of God - Cont'd

In everything we do, we have an opportunity to glorify God. The Bible says, *"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

How should we live?

This world is not our home; we are just passing through. At any moment, the Lord Jesus could come in great power and glory to take us to be with Him. Right now we are to faithfully represent the Lord Jesus here on earth until the day comes when He takes us to be with Him in Heaven forever. The Bible tells how we are to live while we are waiting for the return of the Lord Jesus. God's Word says, *"For the grace of God appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desire and to live sensibly, righteously, and godly, in the present age, looking for the blessed hope, and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus."* (Titus 2:11-13).

The grace of God not only *"brings salvation,"* but it also teaches us how we are to live in this world.

We are to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts."

The world, with its pride, wealth, lusts, and glittering attractions, has a powerful hold on unsaved people, but the believer turns his back on all this. Worldly attractions lose their power over the man who is continually looking for his Savior to come and take him in a moment to the glories of Heaven.

"The world is the golden cage in which Satan transports his victims to the lake of fire." (C.A. Coates)

We are to live "soberly."

To live "soberly" means to live humbly and thoughtfully. Pride is at the root of many problems in this world. God hates pride. Peter said, *"You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace the humble."* (1 Peter 5:5).

We are to live righteously.

To live "righteously" means being right with God and being right with other people. The unsaved people of the world do not read the Bible; they *"read"* us Christians. They do not think much of a Christian who does not pay his debts or try to make things right for any wrong he has done.

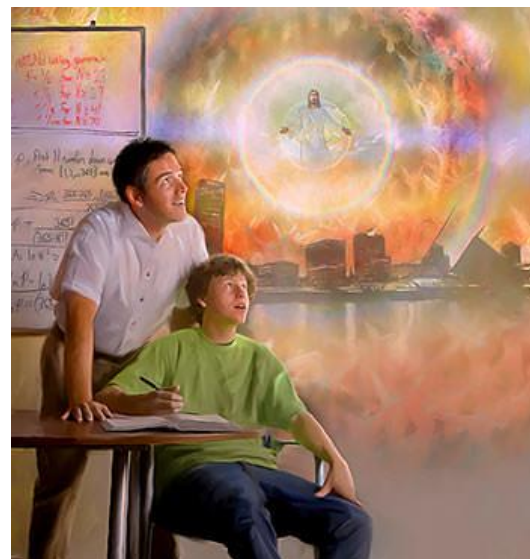
We are the only Bible the careless world will read; we are the sinner's gospel; we are the scoffer's creed.

We are the Lord's last message given in word and deed: What if the type is crooked? What if the print is blurred?

We are to live looking for the return of Christ.

The Lord Jesus is coming for His believers, and He is coming soon! When will He come? No one knows the exact time when Christ will return, but we are to be ready at all times for His coming. The Bible says, *"Therefore be on the alert, for you do not know which day your Lord is coming."* (Matthew 24:42).

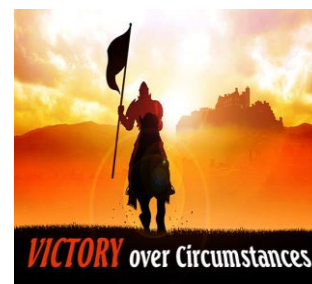
God has made me His Son and given me the Spirit of His Son so that I can live like His Son (Child).



Lesson #14: Victory over Circumstances

Dear Friend,

As God's children, our past has been taken care of, and we have a glorious future. We are on the way to our heavenly home. But what about the present? Is it possible for us to have victory over our circumstances in this life? Yes, it is. The apostle Paul said, *"Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ..."* (2 Corinthians 2:14).



Lesson #14: Victory over Circumstances (Cont'd)

What we must know:

The way in which we meet the trials of life depends on the way we inwardly see and believe things to be. If we see things from a purely human point of view, we will be discouraged and defeated. Victory comes from seeing them from God's point of view. There are some things we must know to see things from God's point of view.

We must know what to expect in this life.

Trouble is a part of this life. The Bible says, "*Man is born unto trouble.*" (Job 5:7). Sometimes Christians expect God to keep them from problems and hardship and suffering, but God has not promised to do this. Christians experience trials, troubles, and suffering just as well as unsaved people.

There is false teaching circulating in the world which says, "*Become a follower of Jesus Christ, and all your troubles will be over.*" Sometimes God's people are told, "*God will keep you from sickness and make you successful if you just believe the right things and claim them.*" But God does not promise this anywhere in the Bible. Jesus said, "*... In the world, you have tribulation [trouble], but take courage; I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33).

Christians should not be surprised when trials and suffering come. We are part of a fallen race that is under the judgment of God. We live in a world that has rejected God's Son and thus rejected God. The Bible says that we must "*through many tribulations [trouble] we must enter the kingdom of God.*" (Acts 14:22)

Often we suffer and are in difficult circumstances because of our own self-will and disobedience. God is "*chastening*" us; He is correcting us in love. "*For those whom the Lord loves He chastens [disciplines]...*" (Hebrews 12:6)

We need to see the hand of God. Feel the love of God when He is chastening us. When God is correcting us in love, the very best thing we can do is to agree with God and tell Him that He is right in chastening us. This is what David did when he was being chastened by God. He said, "*I know, O Lord, that Your judgments [laws] are righteous, and that in faithfulness You have afflicted me.*" (Psalm 119:75)

We must know that God loves us and desires what is best for us.

The Bible says that God loves us as He loves His own Son. The great proof of this is that He gave His Son to die for us. There can be no greater love than this. The Bible says, "*He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*" (Romans 8:32)

Because He loves us as He does, God always wants what is best for us. He always seeks our highest good, even when we would gladly settle for less. God is thinking of our eternal rewards, not just things in this life.

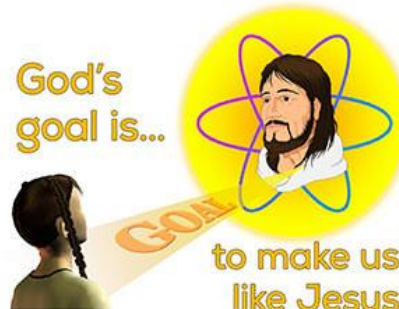
We must know God's goal for us at this present time.

God's goal for us is not to make us happy and successful in this life. His goal for us is to make us like Jesus. The Bible says, "*For those whom He [God] foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son so that He [Son] would be the firstborn among many brethren;*" (Romans 8:29).

How does God "make us to the image of His Son"? He does it through difficult circumstances and the discipline of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way. This involves trials, troubles, and suffering. Therefore we must expect these things since they are a necessary part of God's dealings with us to make us like Christ.



Trouble is a part of this life.



Lesson #14: Victory over Circumstances (Cont'd)

Steps to victory:

To enjoy our Christian life and to enter into all that God has for us, there are some definite steps that we must take:

Step 1: Believe that God is sovereign.

When we say that God is sovereign, we mean that God rules over everything in this world and the universe. He has all power in Heaven and earth. There is nothing that can hinder or prevent God from doing what He purposes to do.

The Bible says, *"...He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. No one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"* (Daniel 4:35).

God is the Creator of the universe. He has the right, the wisdom and the power to do whatever pleases Him. The Bible says, *"Our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases"* (Psalm 115:3).

God causes all things to serve Him and accomplish His purposes. David said, *"...for all things are Your servants."* (Psalm 119:91b).

David realized this great truth: All things are God's servants and must, therefore, do His will. Even the fierce and cruel things of nature—storms, earthquakes, famines—serve God and fulfill His purposes. This is true, not only of the things of nature, but also of men, kings, and nations. All are under God's control. The Bible says, *"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."* (Proverbs 21:1).

Even Satan and those who serve him are used by God to accomplish His will. It was Satan who stirred up wicked men to crucify God's Son, yet Satan and his wicked followers were used by God as His "servants" to do His perfect will for the salvation of men. The Bible says, *"The kings of the earth took their stands, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and His Christ ... and the people of Israel were gathered together, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur."* (Acts 4:26-28).

Everything that happens in the universe is under God's watchful eye and His careful supervision. Does God know about our circumstances? Yes, He does. Jesus said that even the hairs of our head are numbered.

Step 2: Believe that God's way is perfect.

There are many mysteries in life that we cannot explain. Christians suffer the same tragedies and sorrows as other people. In times of great distress, we need to hear God saying, *"Cease striving [Be still] and know that I am God..."* (Psalm 46:10a).

God's will comes to us in two forms—His **direct** will and His **permissive** will. God's direct will is what He wills to happen. God's permissive will is what He permits to happen. Absolutely nothing can come to a child of God apart from God's will—either His direct will or His permissive will.

Many things are hard for us to understand because we are seeing things from our earthly viewpoint and not from God's viewpoint. But God makes no mistakes. No matter how things may look in this world, all of God's acts are perfect. His way cannot be improved. The Bible says, *"As for God, His way is blameless [perfect]..."* (Psalm 18:30a).



Lesson #14: Victory over Circumstances (Cont'd)

The story is told of a man who made a clock and showed it to his friend who had never before seen one. The maker of the clock opened the back of it and asked the man what he thought of its maker.

The man saw some larger wheels, and other smaller ones, some going one way and others another way, some wheels slow and other wheels fast. Seeing this seeming confusion, he answered, "I think the man who made that is crazy."



Then the maker took his friend to the front side of the clock and asked what he now thought of its maker. The man looked at the two hands of the clock moving smoothly and regularly, each one in its appointed circle, and both of them telling perfectly the time of day, and replied, "I think the man who made that is the wisest person who ever lived."

This story helps us understand a great truth concerning life. We are here on earth, and we see only the "earthly side" of God's work, and thus we fail to see His perfect design and plan. The "wheels" are going every which way, and they sometimes seem to have no purpose or design. But, one day, we will see the "heavenly side" of God's actions. We will see His perfect design and plan for our life, and we will say, "Lord, I praise You and thank You. Your way is indeed perfect."

Step 3: Believe that God is good.

When trials and difficulties come to us, Satan likes to put wrong thoughts into our mind. He may suggest something like this: "Either God is not good or He doesn't love you. How could a good God let this happen to you?"

If we accept Satan's wrong thoughts, they will lead us to self-pity and depression. The truth is that God loves us and He is good, no matter what our circumstances are. The Bible says, "Praise the Lord! Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; for His lovingkindness is everlasting." (Psalm 106:1).

Step 4: Surrender your will to God.

There is something within us which decides everything and controls everything. What is it? It is our will.

What does it mean to surrender our will to God? It means to will what God wills, in all things and at all times. This allows God to work out His perfect plan in our life. A great saint said, "Our wills are ours to make them Yours."

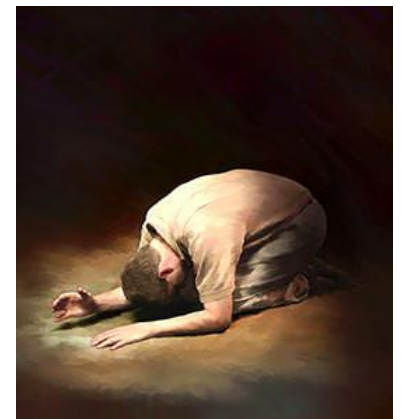
Step 5: Believe that all things work together for good to those who love God.

Nothing that comes into the life of a child of God is accidental. All that comes to us is either ordered by God or permitted by Him. If we truly love God, all things that come to us work together for our eternal good. The Bible says, "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28).

We may not see how all things are working together for our good, but we can know it because God says so.



A MYSTERY TO MAN



Lesson #14: Victory over Circumstances (Cont'd)

The reason why all things work together for good to those who love God is that God is sovereign. All things are His servants, and He causes them to work together for good to His children who love Him.

Take Joseph, for example. He was next to the youngest of Jacob's twelve sons. He was a godly young man and especially loved by his father. But his older brothers were jealous of him, and they hated him. They sold him into slavery in Egypt and told their father that no doubt a wild animal had killed him.

While he was a slave in Egypt, Joseph suffered terribly. He was falsely accused by his master's wife and spent two years in chains in prison for something he did not do.

Had God forgotten Joseph? No, not at all. In time Joseph was honored by Pharaoh and put in charge of everything in Egypt. Later, when a great famine came, Joseph was in the position to save his brothers and their families from dying of starvation. He brought them to Egypt and cared for them.

Whatever God permits to come to me will be for my good by the time it reaches me. Few things could be worse than what Joseph's brothers did. Hating him and selling him into slavery were terrible sins. They meant evil to him, but God permitted it, and by the time it reached Joseph, it was God's will for him.

Though Joseph could not see it then, it turned out to be the greatest blessing in his whole life. In time Joseph saw God's hand in the whole matter. He freely forgave his brothers and said to them, *"You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."* (Genesis 50:20).

The Christian's secret of a joyful life:

When Jesus lived here as a Man, He endured hardship, trials, and suffering; yet He was the most joyful person who ever lived. What was His secret? It was twofold: He trusted His Father, and He thankfully accepted His circumstances as His Father's will for Him. I, too, can know joy and rest by doing these two things:

1. Trusting my Father

Trusting God means looking beyond my circumstances and seeing God. Nothing happens apart from Him. He is supreme. There are no second causes in the life of a child of God.

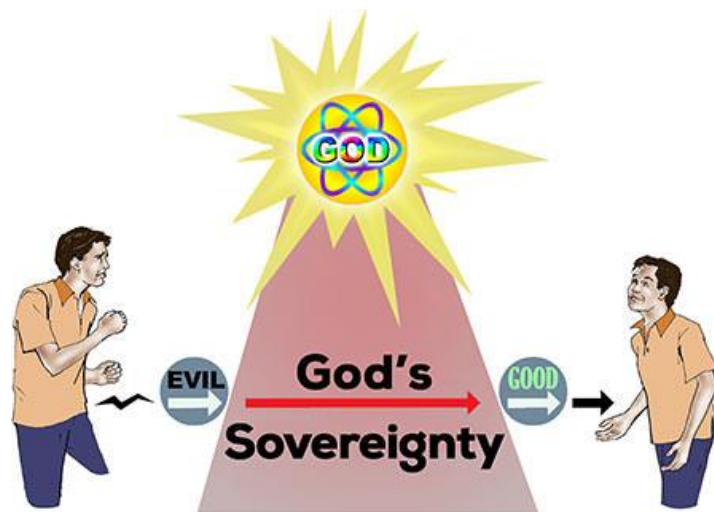
I deal directly with God, and not with my work, people or things. Everything comes to me from my Father. I believe His Word—God is working all things together for good to those who love Him.



The testimony of Jesus in the gospels is that He had a heavenly Father who was always with Him. On one occasion Jesus and His disciples were in a small boat when a violent storm came up. The disciples feared for their lives, but Jesus was peacefully sleeping in the boat. He had a Father in Heaven, and He trusted His Father. I, too, have a Father in Heaven and I can trust Him in the *"storms of life."*

2. Thankfully accepting my circumstances as my Father's will for me

The Lord Jesus was doubted by John the Baptist; He was rejected by His people; He was blasphemed by the religious leaders. But He did not fret nor become angry. He said, *"I thank You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth."*



Lesson #14: Victory over Circumstances (Cont'd)

How was our Lord able to thank the Father in such difficult circumstances? He saw all these circumstances as His Father's will for Him. He said, *"Yes, Father, for this way was well-pleasing in Your sight."* (Matthew 11:26).

Even when facing death on the cross, the Lord Jesus did not look at the evil men who hated Him and plotted to kill Him. He did not even look at Satan who was behind it all. Instead, He said, *"The cup which My Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?"* (John 18:11b).

If I want to know joy and rest, I must not murmur and complain, but say to my Father, *"Father, I thank You, for all that You have permitted to come to me is Your will, and Your will is good."*

The secret of joyful life is seeking God in all our Circumstances.

A Quiet Time—in the Book of John

"If you would be much like Christ, you must be much with Christ."

A Quiet Time is a time set aside to be alone with Christ and learn from Him. Develop the habit of meeting with Him every day! 1) You will need your Bible, a pen, and paper. 2) Before you read each day's Scripture portion, thank the Lord that He has promised to be with you at all times. Ask Him to teach you. 3) Read the Scripture portion at least three times. 4) Observations: What does it say? What does it mean? What does this passage teach me about Christ my Lord? 5) Ask, *"How can I apply this to my life?"* 6) Pray, using the **ACTS** outline:

A= Adore and worship God. **C**= Confess sin. **T**= Thank the Lord for all He is and all He has done for you. **S**= Supplication. Ask the Father in Jesus' name for your needs. (See John 16:24)

Sample:

John 1:1-9

Observations: Jesus Christ is *"the Word"*—the One who expresses God. He was *"with God,"* and He is God. He made everything.

How can I apply this truth to my life? I need to realize that Jesus Christ is God. He is greater than anything that may come my way today.

(Here's the "John" Scripture Reading Schedule in PDF format which you can print out for easy reference.)

Scripture Reading Schedule

John 1:1-9

1:10-13

1:14-18

1:19-28

1:29-34

1:35-42

1:43-51

John 2:1-11

2:12-25

John 3:1-15

3:16-21

3:22-30

3:31-36

John 4:1-26

4:27-42

4:43-54

John 5:1-15

5:16-30

5:31-47

John 6:1-14

6:15-21

6:22-29

6:30-35

6:36-40

6:41-59

6:60-71

John 7:1-13

7:14-24

7:25-36

7:37-53

John 8:1-11

8:12-20

8:21-30

8:31-41

8:42-47

8:48-59

John 9:1-12

9:13-23

9:24-34

9:35-41

John 10:1-10

10:11-21

10:22-30

10:31-42

John 11:1-16

11:17-29

11:30-37

11:38-44

11:45-57

John 12:1-11

12:12-19

12:20-36

12:37-41

12:42-50

John 13:1-17

13:18-30

13:31-38

John 14:1-14

14:15-31

John 15:1-17

15:18-27

John 16:1-16

16:17-24

16:25-33

John 17:1-19

17:20-26

John 18:1-18

18:19-27

18:28-40

John 19:1-16

19:17-27

19:28-42

John 20:1-18

20:19-31

John 21:1-14

21:15-25

Lesson #15: How to Enjoy God!

Dear Friend,

We need to see the greatness of God's love and the greatness of His purpose for us. His purpose is to have us before Him as sons in the place where He is. Jesus called Heaven "My Father's house." That is where God wants us. He wants us with Him as His sons in "the Father's house."

"The Father's house" is our home for eternity.

Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and died on the cross, not just to save us from hell, but to bring us to God. The Bible says, *"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;"* (1 Peter 3:18).

We see this in the account of the Lord's crucifixion. Two thieves were crucified with Him. One of these thieves believed in Jesus. He said, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* Jesus turned to that man and said, *"Today you shall be with Me in paradise."* Jesus not only saved this man, but He took him with Him to *"the Father's house"* in Heaven.

This man went from the lowest, deepest, darkest place of misery and suffering into the brightest, holiest, most blessed place of everlasting happiness and joy with Christ. This is the salvation which Christ has obtained for every believer by His death.

"The Father's house" is our home now.

From God's Word we know that, when Christian dies he goes immediately to be with Christ (See Philippians 1:21-23). But we may not know this wonderful truth: By Christ's death, we are entitled to live in *"the Father's house"* now! The Bible says, *"...who [Christ] died for us, so that, whether we are awake [alive] or asleep [die], we will live together with Him."* (1 Thessalonians 5:10).

Christ died for us, that, whether we live or die, we should *"live together with Him."* How this touches our heart!

Where is the Lord Jesus living now? He is living in *"the Father's house."* The Lord Jesus is saying to us, *"There is a place in the Father's house which is yours. It belongs to you. I purchased it for you with My own blood. It is the Father's will that you live together with Me in the Father's house, not just when you die, but right now!"*

What is "the Father's house" for me now? It is living together with Jesus in the presence of the Father, enjoying His love. Someday I will be in Heaven, but I have the right and the ability to enjoy *"the Father's house"* now!

The "upstairs" and the "downstairs."

A Christian is a person who lives in two worlds. In his body, he lives in this world, but in his spirit, he is united to Christ in Heaven. The Bible says that he has died with Christ, been raised with Christ, and seated with Christ in heavenly places.

There is an "upstairs" and a "downstairs" in the Christian life. The **"upstairs"** is the Father's house where I have all spiritual blessings. The **"downstairs"** is here on earth, where I am living now. What do I have here? I have the Holy Spirit, the fellowship of God's people, and God's earthly mercies. I also have many trials and troubles.

What does the Lord Jesus want me to do? He wants me to live **"upstairs"** with Him in my spirit so that I may serve Him down here. We should be like the believer who had his residence and his business in the same building. He put this sign on his door:



"upstairs"

"downstairs"

Lesson #15: How to Enjoy God! (Cont'd)

Do we love the Lord Jesus enough to turn our back on the sinful pleasures of this world that we might live "**upstairs**" with Him? The story is told of a shoe repairman who truly lived "*upstairs*" with the Lord. His wife said of him, "*He lives in Heaven and only comes down here to mend shoes!*"

How do I enjoy "the Father's house" now?

The Holy Spirit is the One who "*takes me by the hand*" and leads me "*upstairs*" to the joys of the "*Father's house*." He has come down from Heaven to bring me to the enjoyment of everything Christ has accomplished for me. He is here to glorify Christ and make Him real to me.

As I spend time alone with the Lord in the study of His Word, the Holy Spirit magnifies Christ and makes Him everything to me. My part is to believe. The Bible says, "*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*" (Romans 15:13).

The Father is delighted when we enjoy His house now.

It is a wonderful day for us when we see God's side of salvation. God makes us His sons and daughters and brings us into His house, not just for our joy and happiness, but for the satisfaction of His own great heart of love. I can never be completely happy unless I am where the Father wants me to be, and He wants me to be with Him in His house.

The story of the prodigal son shows us what great salvation we have in Christ. God has given us the place of sons, and the son's place is in the Father's house! We belong there! God wants us to enjoy His house, His presence, and His feast.

When we come to the end of the story of the prodigal son, what do we find? We find the prodigal, received and accepted as a son, made suitable to his father in every way, sitting at his father's table, enjoying his father. The Bible says, "*They began to make merry.*"

This is a picture of our spiritual portion and place as sons of God! God is doing all this to satisfy His great heart of love for us. It is His delight to have us in His presence, enjoying Him and all that He has provided for us. I have not satisfied my Father's heart until I am in His house, enjoying Him.

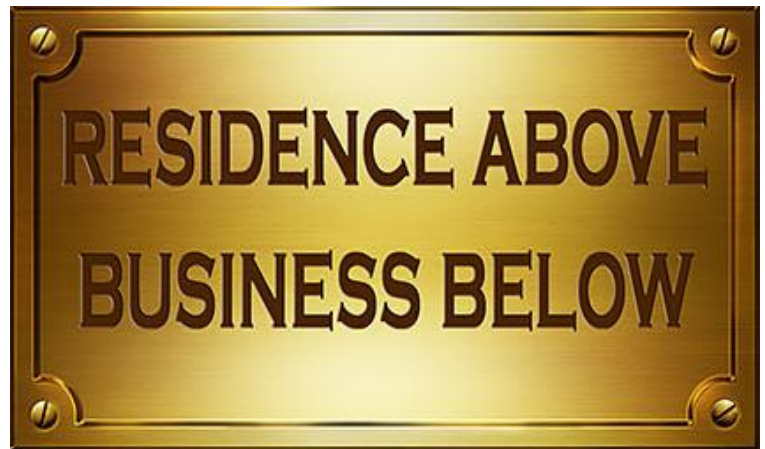
Steps to enjoying God

There are some practical things you can do to help you enjoy God.

- **Think rightly about yourself.**

God is pleased when we take up our true spiritual position as having died with Christ and being raised as a new person in Christ, having ascended with Him, and being seated with Him at the right hand of God. This is foolishness to the unsaved, worldly man, but it is God's truth to His spirit-taught children.

The prodigal's father was pleased when his son accepted the best robe, the ring, and the sandals. He was pleased when his son sat at his table and enjoyed all that his love had provided for him. God is likewise pleased when we enjoy all that He has provided for us.



"The Father's house" is our spiritual portion now!

Lesson #15: How to Enjoy God! (Cont'd)

- **Settle all controversies with God.**

Is there something in your life which God keeps bringing before you? It may be a wrong relationship or some point where you are saying **"No"** to God. If you have no rest or joy, you must be holding on to something that God wants you to give up. You might as well face the fact that you will not enjoy God or make any progress in your Christian life until you say **"Yes"** to God in this matter. Why not do so right now?

If you are not honestly willing to do what God is telling you to do, at least you can say to Him, *"Lord, I am not willing to do this, but I am willing for You to make me willing."* If you are sincere, God will begin working to change your heart.

- **Deal with sin and guilt.**

We cannot enjoy God if we are holding on to some sin in our life. God loves us, but He hates sin in the life of a child of His. Whatever that sin is, that wretched thing that is so displeasing to God, give it up! If you do not, it will rob you of your joy. If you have sinned against God, confess that sin to Him and count on Him to do what He says He will do. God's Word says, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* (1 John 1:9).

To enjoy God, you must not only be right with God, but you must be right with other people. The apostle Paul said, *"[Paul] also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before me."* (Acts 24:16)

If you have wronged someone, go to that person and make things right. Do not make excuses or say, *"I know I was wrong, but you were wrong too."* Confess your part fully. Say something like this, *"God has shown me that I was wrong in _____ (name the sin). Will you forgive me for this?"* If they say *"Yes,"* you might ask, *"Do I need to say any more about this?"* Deal with the matter thoroughly. Bring it to a close.

If you have stolen something or caused someone to suffer loss, you should try to pay them for it. Make things right, and then go on. Don't *"whip yourself"* by going over and over your failures.

- **Forgive others.**

An unforgiving spirit is a grievous sin in God's sight, especially in the life of a Christian. (See *Matthew 18:21-35*) God has in love forgiven us, and He sometimes gives us the privilege of forgiving others as He has forgiven us.

- **Declare your faith at the start of each day.**

One of the happiest Christians I have ever known gave me his secret. He said that he began each day by saying to the Lord words to this effect: *"Lord Jesus, You died for me, and in Your death, I died. I died to sin, to Satan, and to the world. I was buried with You, and I rose again with You as a new person in Christ. I ascended with You, and I am seated with You in heavenly places. You sent Your Holy Spirit to live in me, and the life that is in me today is Your resurrection life. By Your grace, I purpose to live a life, dead to sin, and alive to You."* **I begin each day** with the confidence that Christ lives in me and that He is sufficient for anything that happens to me today.

- **Faithfully attend and support a Christ-honoring church.**

It is God's will that believers regularly assemble with other believers for the preaching and teaching of the Word, fellowship, and prayer. Nothing can take the place of this. The Bible says, *"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some ..."* (Hebrews 10:23-25)

Do not be ashamed of Christ. Confess your faith in Him by your words and by your actions. If you have not confessed Him by water baptism, do so at once.

- **Obey the Lord.**

Determine that you will obey the Lord, whatever the cost. Begin now! Do the next thing you know you should do. Believers are obeyers. The Lord Jesus manifests Himself to those who love and obey Him. The Bible says, *"He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me, and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and disclose Myself to him."* (John 14:21.)



Lesson #15: How to Enjoy God! (Cont'd)

- **Set your affections on things above.**

If we want to have joy, we must know where to look for it. For us, real joy cannot be found in this world. Our joy is where our Savior is—on the other side of death. Our life, our joy, our future and our riches are all in Christ glorified and exalted at the right hand of God. The Bible says, *"Though you have not seen Him [Jesus], you love Him; and even though you do not see Him now, you believe in Him, and you are filled with inexpressible and glorious joy."* (1 Peter 1:8).

The new life which God gives us is resurrection life. If we want to enjoy this life, we must set our love and our affections on the things of Christ. The Bible says, *"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth"* (Colossians 3:1, 2).

- **Love Christ supremely.**

Jesus Christ is the center and glory of Heaven. Every creature in Heaven loves, adores, and praises Christ. One of the proofs that we have been born into the family of God is that we love and appreciate Christ.

God wants to make Christ everything to us. When our spiritual eyes are opened to see the greatness of Christ, and we begin to love Him with all our heart, we bring pleasure to God's heart. Jesus said, *"The Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and have believed that I came forth from the Father."* (John 16:27).

If we love Christ, it will be proved by our wanting to know everything that is possible for us to know about Him. Believers do not love Christ very much if they neglect their Bibles, if they do not spend time alone with Christ in the study of His Word and prayer, or if they neglect meeting together with the Lord's people. These things are the tests of our love for Christ.

- **Set aside time for God each day.**

A daily Quiet Time with God is not something that you can take or leave. It is essential if you want to enjoy God and have your life count for Him. An honored servant of God wrote: *"A life of victory hinges on three things: an initial act, a fixed purpose, and a daily habit."*

"The initial act is that of surrender to the Lord Jesus as Master. *The fixed purpose* is that of doing that which will please Him, and only that, at every turn, in every matter, regardless of the consequences. *The daily habit* is that of spending a Quiet Time in prayer, alone with the Lord over His Word.

Begin to enjoy God and His love now! God loves you and accepts you because you belong to Christ. There is nothing you can do to make God love you more than He loves you right now. He loves you as He loves His own Son. God wants me to Enjoy Him and His love now. Am I enjoying God as much as I might? Jesus said to His Father, *"I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me."* (John 17:23.)

