

CHRISTIAN FOUNDATION

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1. Principles of Repentance

Gen 4:6-7 (NKJV)

6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

Job 42:5-6 (NKJV)

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent in dust and ashes."

KEY: Mat 9:13 (NKJV) But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Romans 13:12-14

The scripture shows us five factors which are of great importance in coming to a full grasp of, and an effective experience of, repentance in our daily walk with God. We need to understand each of them as a basic principle that underlies true repentance, they are:

1.1 The fear of God

1.2 The understanding of sin

1.3 The operation of faith

1.4 The renewing of the mind

1.5 The confession of the mouth

1.1. THE FEAR OF GOD

KEY: Pro 9:10 (NKJV) "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Hebrews 10:31 (NKJV) It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

It is necessary to see that the fear of the Lord is not the same fear which the enemy brings which is allied with terror and helplessness, and it intended to destroy. For many people, that kind of fear does exist and destroys any possibility of a meaningful and beautiful relationship with our father God.

1Jn 4:18 (NKJV) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love.

Which speaks of our relationship with God.

However, it is equally necessary to see that the fear of God is enjoyed throughout the scripture, both in old and new testaments. Also, that the strong word 'Phobos' (cf. phobia) is frequently used in this connection, (E.g. Ephesians 5:21; 6:5; Philippians 2:12 etc.). Essentially, it is the awesomeness of a Holy God and the fearsomeness of His wrath against

sin that must be remembered. (Cf. Niagara Falls - awesomely and majestically beautiful, but able to be terrifyingly destructive to those who ignore their power and reject the place of safety.)

A major problem we face in the church today and a major reason for the lack of spiritual growth in fellowships and in individuals (particularly in charismatics) is the rejection of this aspect of the truth of God.

Because of this, we do not see enough true repentance, which alone releases men from the power of sin. Many people today say "Oh, but my God is a God of love." Yes! He is also a God of Light.

And remember!

The love of God is infinite and reaches out to us wherever we are

But

The light of God is absolute and demands that we come back to where He is.

Exo 34:5-7 (NKJV)

5 Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

As God declared His name to Moses, so He declares His name to us.

He is unchanging and He is a consuming fire (Mal (NKJV) 3:5-6...For I am the LORD, I do not change;..., Hebrews 13:8 (NKJV) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever., Hebrews 12:29 (NKJV) For our God is a consuming fire.)

If my heart and mind and soul are towards Him, He forgives iniquity.

If my attitude is not right, He "by no means will clear the guilty."

God's provision for sacrifice for sin under the Old Testament (or covenant) bring home very forcibly some things we choose to ignore. In particular, here, God's attitude to those who sin presumptuously (with a high hand, arrogantly) is important.

Num 15:30-31 (NKJV)

30 'But the person who does anything presumptuously, whether he is native-born or a stranger, that one brings reproach on the LORD, and he shall be cut off from among his people.

31 Because he has despised the word of the LORD, and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be upon him.' "

It is foolish to ignore the fact that He is God, and I am but a created being who can only live by His dispensation of grace. I have no right to challenge the totality of His righteousness. He alone is God. (cf. Cain and Job).

1.2. THE UNDERSTANDING OF SIN

1.2.1. Sin is a Choice.

Sin is stepping over or going beyond the boundary of God's law (transgression). The act of sin takes us out of God's territory (righteousness) into the territory of Satan (unrighteousness) and is called a 'trespass'.

Both of these indicate a deliberate action, although there are times when we are not consciously aware that we are making a choice.

The Holy Spirit always warns us of sin, but we do not always heed, or even hear, his warning. (The fence of God's law has prickles on it.)

Even when we are not old enough to understand intellectually what sin is, it is still sin.

Joh 16:8 (NKJV) And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement:

1Ti 4:2 (NKJV) speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

Ephesians 4:18-19 (NKJV)

18 having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

19 who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

1.2.2. Sin Destroys.

KEY: Rom 6:23 (NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

In other words the reward legally due for sin is death. Sin destroys.

Eze 18:4 (NKJV) "Behold, all souls are Mine; The soul of the father As well as the soul of the son is Mine; The soul who sins shall die.

My sin destroys me. God loves us so much that He doesn't want our destruction

We can see sin as an offence against God, which it surely is, but unless we also see it as an agent that will destroy us, we do not have a full understanding of its awfulness. God hates sin because sin destroys. (Read the history of the children of Israel for a fuller understanding of this fact.)

SIN DESTROYS, therefore MY SIN DESTROYS ME

1.2.3. Sin Separates

Psa 66:18 (NKJV) If I regard iniquity in my heart, The Lord will not hear.

KEY: Isa 59:2 (NKJV) But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

1Jn 1:6 (NKJV) If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

One reason that God hates sin is that it destroys His fellowship with His creation (cf. Rev 4:11)

SIN IS THE ULTIMATE PROBLEM BECAUSE IT SEPARATES A MAN FROM HIS GOD.

1.2.4. Sin Dominates

Joh 8:34 (NKJV) Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever (habitually) commits sin is a slave of sin.

KEY: Rom 6:16 (NKJV) Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?

We become conditioned by sin when we accept its rule. Sin becomes our master. We become its slave. (cf Cain). Sin separates us from God so that it can reign in us.

We are chained and can't free ourselves.

Mat 12:25 (NKJV) But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

(Divide and rule principle).

Satan wants to separate us from GOD and uses sin.

GOD	LAW Boundary	Satan
Righteousness		Unrighteousness
—	Trespass	—>
<—	Repentance	—
Light		Darkness
Safety		Danger
Life		Death

Table 1

1.2.5. Sin is a state

TO DO: Inherited, born...

1.3. THE OPERATION OF FAITH

Job 42:5 (NKJV) "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You.

Because of the power of sin, we cannot just 'choose' to repent. We can have sorrow about our actions, but this is not repentance.

(Gk. metamelomai = to rue, regret. Unfortunately this word is also translated repent in the KJV. In NASB regret, remorse. NASB and KJV.

KEY: 2 Corinthians 7:8-10 (NKJV)

8 For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did **regret** it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while.

9 Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing.

10 For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Judas

Mat 27:3 (NKJV) Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was **remorseful** and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

But true repentance is an act of faith (**Faith is knowing the will of God and doing it**) and can only be brought about by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit. (Joh 16:8, Romans 2:3-6, Hebrews 11:6). Although the scripture does not use the words 'The Gift of Repentance' Acts 11:18 makes it clear that it is just that.

Act 11:18 KJV When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

Goodness of GOD → GOSPEL

('Granted' = same word as 'gave' in Ephesians 4:11)

Hebrews 3:15 (NKJV) while it is said: "TODAY, IF YOU WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS AS IN THE REBELLION.

cf. Romans 10:17 (NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Again compare Cain & Job.

1.4. THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

Why do we sin? We sin because we want to. Our problem is that our **old** nature loves sin. We do not sin because we want to be bad, or we want to do wrong, or we want to disobey God; we sin because we are attracted to something which is 'over the fence of God's law'. We choose deliberately to take that action, often avoiding the question of its sinfulness.

Sin attracts us! Jer 17:9 (NKJV) "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?"

Sin is doing what I choose instead of what God would choose. I listen to my old nature (the flesh nature) instead of my new nature (the divine nature).

In other words, we sin because we have a carnal (unregenerate, natural) mind about sin. The carnal mind is an ally of the Flesh.

KEY: Rom 8:5-9 (NKJV)

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

But the Holy Spirit wishes to renew' my mind so that it becomes an ally of my new nature, of the divine nature, and therefore of the Spirit Himself. I.e. He wants to renew my mind to think as God thinks.

Salvation of spirit, soul and body

Spirit	Soul/Mind	Body
Is saved	Is being saved	Will be saved
Past (finished)	Present (Progressive)	Future (heaven)

Table 2

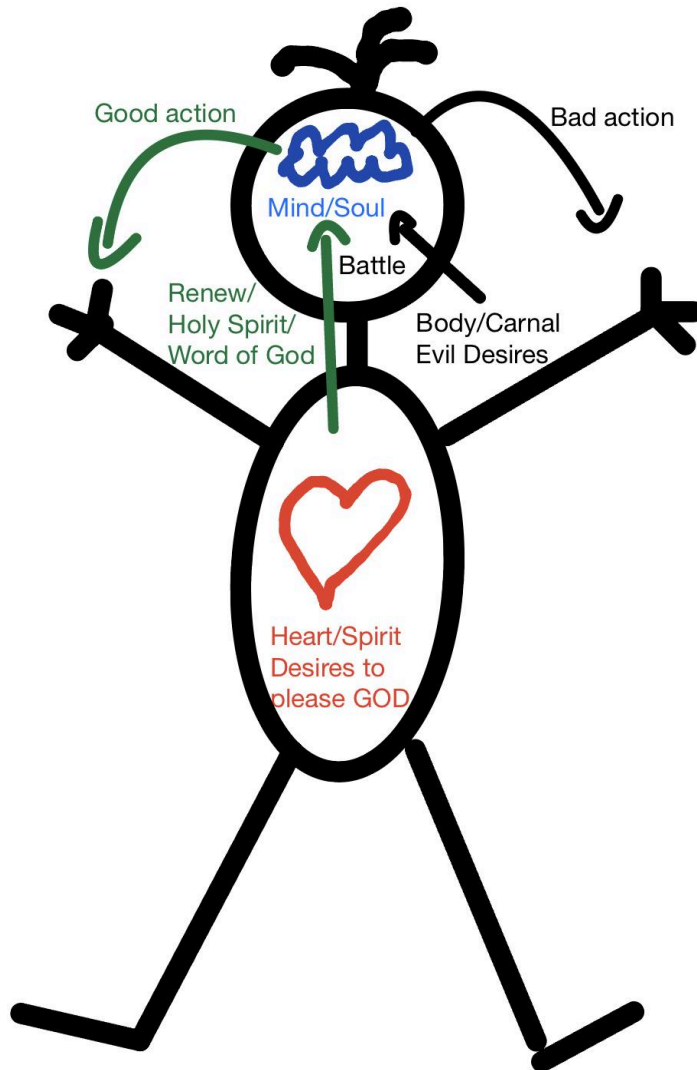


Figure 1.

Repentance (Gk. Metanoeo) comes from two Greek words, Meta = "after" (implying change) and noeo = to perceive, from Nous = mind.

Therefore, repentance is 'to have a different mind after' or 'to perceive differently after' the event.

It is to change from seeing sin our way to seeing it as God sees it.

It is to change from loving sin to hating it.

It is to change from seeing it as something attractive to seeing it as something which destroys and which is destroying us.

It is to have a different point of view, that only God can give us, and to want to escape and to flee from that sin.

This and this alone, is true repentance and is a part of "being transformed by the renewing of your mind"

It is the work of the Spirit which is made effective by the operation of faith.

(cf Cain & Job)

1.5. THE CONFESSION OF THE MOUTH

Jas 2:17-20 (NKJV)

17 Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that **faith without works is dead**?

Luk 6:45 (NKJV) A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

FAITH **has** (Walking the talk, demonstrating what we believe)
L L **legs** Figure 1

CONFESSION IS THE OUTWARD ACT FROM REPENTANCE IN THE HEART, and there is a principle in God that what is within must come out.

KEY: Rom 10:9 (NKJV) that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

1Jn 1:6-10 (NKJV)

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

Pro 28:13 (NKJV) He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.

Genuine repentance must bring forth confession, so much so that it is often confession that is referred to, where repentance is the real issue.

John's Baptism was a Baptism of Repentance. The baptism was the confession.

Mat 10:32 (NKJV) "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.

Confession is the inescapable consequence of repentance.

Under the old covenant, the act of confession revolved around bringing the sin offering or the trespass offering. Lev 6 shows us that if in obedience to God our hands are directed

by our hearts, our actions reflect our attitudes, our motions are dictated by our motives, **then restitution is also a prerequisite of confession.** It is required before the offering can be accepted. It comes between repentance and confession. It is relevant whenever my sin has in any way hurt another.

It is not so much that God demands it before He will hear us, it is just that it is inevitable if our heart is changed. If we do not make restitution, we cannot possibly be genuine, and God is unmoved because we are unrepentant.

1Jn 1:9 (NKJV) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (cf Cain & Job)

2. Brand New Person

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (memorise)

"When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a BRAND-NEW PERSON INSIDE. He is not the same anymore, A NEW LIFE HAS BEGUN' When you became a Christian you became a brand-new person. A wonderful miracle occurred - you received a new life The miracle of receiving new life is described in the Bible as regeneration.

2.1. REGENERATION

Tit 3:4-5 (NKJV)

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,
5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

2.1.1. REGENERATION MEANS A NEW BEGINNING

Regeneration means 'new beginning' or literally 'a becoming again. Isn't it wonderful that we can have a new beginning - a new start in life!

The Scripture says emphatically

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a **new creation**; old things have **passed away**; behold, all things have become **new**.

Bible Knowledge Commentary: A person's habitual conduct, whether good or evil, reveals the condition of his heart. Eternal life is not rewarded for good living; that would contradict many other Scriptures which clearly state that salvation is not by works, but is all of God's grace to those who believe (e.g., Rom 6:23; Rom 10:9-10; Rom 11:6; Eph 2:8-9; Tit 3:5). A person's doing good shows that his heart is regenerate. Such a person, redeemed by God, has eternal life. Conversely a person who continually does evil and rejects the truth shows that he is unregenerate, and therefore will be an object of God's wrath.

Notice in this powerful verse; 'any man' includes you; 'are passed away' is past tense - it has happened; and 'all things' not just some things have become new.

Some of the new things that we have received are:

2.1.1.1. A New Life

Once we were "dead" now we are alive.

Ephesians 2:1 (NKJV) And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

Ephesians 2:5 (NKJV) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

2.1.1.2. A New Nature

Once we had the nature of Satan, now we have the nature of God.

Joh 8:44 (NKJV) You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

1Jn 3:10 (NKJV) In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is he who does not love his brother.

Joh 1:12 (NKJV) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

2Pe 1:4 (NKJV) by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2.1.1.3. A New Mind (or attitude)

A new heart !!!!!!!???????Once our spirit was separate from God. Our thoughts, purposes, affections and desires were set on earthly things, now our desire is for God and what he wants.

Our heart is new and our mind is renewed progressively. (See Figure 1)

Rom 8:7 (NKJV) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

Philippians 2:5 (NKJV) **Let** this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,

Colossians 3:2 (NKJV) **Set** your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

Set and let show that we have to cooperate with GOD. We have to decide to take up our cross....

2.1.1.4. A New Name

Once we were sinners now we are saints, once we were aliens now we are citizens.

Colossians 1:12 (NKJV) giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Rom 1:7 (NKJV) To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2 (NKJV) To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

Ephesians 2:12 (NKJV) that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Ephesians 2:19 (NKJV) Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

2.1.1.5. A New Relationship

Once we were children of the devil now we are children of God. God is our Father and Jesus is our brother!

Gal 3:26 (NKJV) For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

Rom 8:16-17 (NKJV)

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,
17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

Hebrews 2:11 (NKJV) For both He who **sanctifies** and those who are **being sanctified** are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

God is the source of our sanctification. We are the target of sanctification.

2.1.1.6. A New Power

Once we knew nothing but defeat (we were the slaves to sin) now through the power of the Holy Spirit we overcome the world, the flesh and the devil. NOTE we need to cooperate with GOD.

1Jn 3:9 (NKJV) Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

1Jn 5:4 (NKJV) For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

1Jn 5:18 (NKJV) We know that whoever is born of God does not sin; but he who has been born of God keeps himself, and the wicked one does not touch him.

We are justified = just as if we have never sinned.

2.1.1.7. A New Destiny

Ephesians 2:12 (NKJV) that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

1Pe 1:3 (NKJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

Once we were without hope doomed to eternal death, now we have a 'living hope' assured of eternal life.

2.1.2. REGENERATION IS NOT REFORMATION

We need to distinguish between reformation and regeneration, for one is the work of man and the other is the work of God.

- Reformation may be likened to a new suit for a man, but regeneration is a new man for the suit!
- Reformation and regeneration are as different as whitewashing (external and will fade) and washing white!
- Reformation alters a person's manner, but regeneration alters the man himself!
- Reformation is a change on the outside but regeneration is a change from within.
- Reformation affects the conduct without changing the character but regeneration affects the conduct by changing the character.
- Reformation is man reaching up to God but regeneration is God reaching down to man.
- Reformation is an attainment, which many people think will get them into the kingdom of God, but regeneration is the requirement for entering that kingdom.

The following chart outlines some of these differences.

	REFORMATION	REGENERATION
ORIGIN	Human Man reaching up to God.	Divine God reaching down to man.
FOCUS	Outside Changing conduct without changing character	Inside Changing conduct by changing character
BASIS	Attainment Man's works Produced by effort	Atonement Christ's work Received by faith
RESULT	Death (whatever we try in our own strength will not last)	Life (will last forever)

Many people try to earn their salvation through their own efforts and achievements - all such efforts and achievements are inadequate.

Some of the false hopes for salvation that people have are:

2.1.2.1. A Good Moral Life

Isa 64:6 (NKJV) But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away.

Luk 16:15 (NKJV) And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

For example: unforgiveness vs forgiveness.

Luk 18:9-14 (NKJV)

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Rom 3:10-23 (NKJV)

10 As it is written: "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NO, NOT ONE;

11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS; THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS AFTER GOD.

12 THEY HAVE ALL TURNED ASIDE; THEY HAVE TOGETHER BECOME UNPROFITABLE; THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD, NO, NOT ONE."

13 "THEIR THROAT IS AN OPEN TOMB; WITH THEIR TONGUES THEY HAVE PRACTICED DECEIT"; "THE POISON OF ASPS IS UNDER THEIR LIPS";

14 "WHOSE MOUTH IS FULL OF CURSING AND BITTERNESS."

15 "THEIR FEET ARE SWIFT TO SHED BLOOD;

16 DESTRUCTION AND MISERY ARE IN THEIR WAYS;

17 AND THE WAY OF PEACE THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN."

18 "THERE IS NO FEAR OF GOD BEFORE THEIR EYES."

19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference;

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Jas 2:10 (NKJV) For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.

The scriptures teach that our morality is not accepted by God as a means of salvation.

Morality is the evidence and fruit of regeneration, but not the root! One who is regenerated will live a good life because his nature is changed, but he cannot change his nature by living a good life!

Like a tree can't change the fruit it bears, but God can change the tree. Like changing us from a lemon tree (old) to a mango tree (new). Then we bear different fruit.

2.1.2.2. Church Membership

It is one thing to have your name written on a church register, and another to have it in the Lamb's Book of Life! Christina should identify themselves with a local church but this in itself will not save them.

Philippians 4:3 (NKJV) And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

2.1.2.3. Religious Ceremonies

It is possible to go through all the religious ceremonies and forms that a church or creed demand and still be unsaved. As one man humorously remarked, 'I was confirmed in my church, but I was a confirmed sinner!' and again 'I was on altar boy, but it didn't alter me!'

Rom 10:13 (NKJV) For "WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED."

2.1.2.4. Education

Education may refine and enlighten, but it cannot save.

1 Corinthians 1:20-21 (NKJV)

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

2.1.2.5. Baptism

Baptism in water does not save - It is to be an outward declaration of a salvation which has already been received. There is no inherent value in the water itself - It has no power to cleanse the evil heart.

The scripture is clear on this point

Tit 3:5 (NKJV) not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

Ephesians 2:8-9 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Rom 6:23 (NKJV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Joh 1:13 (NKJV) who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

In John 1:13 we see that our regeneration or new birth is entirely a work of God.

It is not of blood

It cannot be inherited. Regeneration is a personal necessity and a personal responsibility. As one man said 'God does not have any grand children!'

It is not of the will of the flesh

The new birth does not come through self effort or self-determination. There is nothing that we can do to achieve it. (reformation)

It is not of the will of man

No human influence or agency can produce regeneration. Many agencies exist for the reformation of man but as we have seen law keeping, good works, charitable activities, church associations, christening or baptism, culture or education cannot bring a dead soul to life! Only God can do this.

We may illustrate the futility of an outward reform without an inward renewal by taking a pig from the pig sty, washing it up, powdering it up, tying a pink bow on its tail, manicuring a poodle, It is still a pig!

Give it half a chance, and it will jump in the nearest puddle and wallow 'til its heart's content!

Many people have discovered (to their great distress) this futility in their own lives. They have tried so hard 'act like a Christian' and to 'be good to', but they have failed. The Bible says that they need to be regenerated and changed on the inside and then 'acting like a Christian' will cease to be an effort but simply the natural expression of who they are.

2.1.3 REGENERATION IS GODS WORK IN US

Regeneration is a permanent change worked by God as we cooperate with Him in that transformation. The result of this regeneration is good works.

The fact that our good works are to follow God's work of regeneration in our lives can be seen from the context of Titus 3:3-7.

Tit 3:3-7 (NKJV)

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.

4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared,

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

7 that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

In these verses, we are given a description of what we were; what God did; what we are now and what we are to do (and can do) now that we have been regenerated.

2.1.3.1. What We Were

Tit 3:3 We were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved.

2.1.3.2. What God Did

Tit 3:4-7(a) God loved us, saved us, washed, regenerated and renewed us, poured the Holy Spirit on us, justified us by His grace.

2.1.3.3. What We Are

Tit 3:7(b)

We are heirs of eternal life

2.1.3.4. What We Are To Do

Tit 3:8 (NKJV) This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable to men.

Because of what God has done and what we are now through regeneration, we are instructed to devote ourselves to good deeds. Note that God expects our conduct to change, but only after He has first changed our nature!

2.2. REBIRTH

John 3:1-21

The Bible declares that the Christian has been reborn! One of the key passages in the New Testament which teaches us about this new birth is found in John 3. It is the account of Jesus' conversation with a pharisee named Nicodemus. In this portion of scripture we discover:

- The necessity of the new birth.
- The nature of the new birth.
- The means of the new birth.

- The basis of the new birth.
- The reception of the new birth

2.2.1. THE NECESSITY OF THE NEW BIRTH

Nicodemus was a religious man, but Jesus insisted that he needed to be born again before he could see the kingdom of heaven!

John 3:1-7

Joh 3:3 (NKJV) Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

There are many religious people, who attend church every week, who sincerely try to please God, but have not been born again! They will never see the kingdom of heaven (let alone get to heaven) unless they are born again.

Jesus was most emphatic - everyone needs to be born again!

Joh 3:7 (NKJV) Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.'

One simple way of expressing the importance of the new birth is by the following poem - paradoxical maybe, but true nonetheless:

If you have been born once,
you die twice.
If you have been born twice,
you die once.

2.2.2. THE NATURE OF THE NEW BIRTH

Joh 3:4-6 (NKJV)

4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?"

5 Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

In answer to Nicodemus' question concerning the nature of this new birth Jesus explained that it was not a physical rebirth that he needed but a spiritual one.

Just as natural birth is the only way of entry into our human family, so spiritual birth is the only way of entry into God's family!

We have all been born physically, but we also need to be born spiritually! John 3:5-6

Note: Jesus compares natural birth with spiritual birth by saying in effect; our natural birth was of water (when the waters surrounding the baby in the mother's womb are released, the birth begins) but when we are born spiritually, we are ushered into life by the Spirit. 'Born of water' and 'born of flesh' refer to our natural birth. 'Born of Spirit' refers to our spiritual birth.

At our first birth, we received a physical life and a fallen human nature.

At our second birth we receive a spiritual life and become partakers of the Divine Nature!

2.2.3. THE MEANS OF THE NEW BIRTH

Joh 3:8 (NKJV) The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Jesus clearly taught that it is the Holy Spirit who performs the miracle of the new birth. He compares the activity of the Spirit with the activity of the wind. The Holy Spirit invisibly works in the hearts of those who are born again.

2.2.4. THE BASIS OF THE NEW BIRTH

Joh 3:9-12 (NKJV)

9 Nicodemus answered and said to Him, "How can these things be?"

10 Jesus answered and said to him, "Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things?

11 Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.

12 If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

Nicodemus, perplexed by Jesus' comments, asked 'How can these things be? Or 'How is this possible? What is the basis for this?'

Jesus challenged Nicodemus, a religious leader, for not understanding this simple spiritual truth. There are many like Nicodemus who fail to understand spiritual things. (The scriptures say that unless our minds are enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we cannot understand.)

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

Joh 3:13-14 (NKJV)

13 No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven.

14 And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up,

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that the basis for the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts is to be the finished work of Christ on the cross!

The new birth is only possible because Jesus has died on the cross for our sins (and risen again to live in those who open their hearts to Him!)

Jesus explains:

2.2.4.1. No One Has Ascended Into Heaven

Rom 3:23 (NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Isa 59:1-2 (NKJV)

1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear.

2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear.

By this He alludes to the clear teaching of the scriptures that all men are sinners cut off from God.

2.2.4.2. But He Who Descended From Heaven, Even the Son of Man

Joh 3:17 (NKJV) For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

1Ti 1:5 (NKJV) Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,

Jesus Himself came down from Heaven to save sinners. He took the initiative. He came to us!

2.2.4.3. As Moses Lifted Up the Serpent in the Wilderness, Even So Must the Son of Man be Lifted Up

Look up: Num 21:4-9, John 12:32-33, 1 Cor 15:3, Romans 4:25 and Hebrews 9:22

Here Jesus refers to His death upon the cross. Jesus death upon the cross was the only way that sinners could be saved, for it was on the cross that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins,

2.2.5. THE RECEPTION OF THE NEW BIRTH

2.2.5.1. The New Birth is Received by Believing in Jesus

Joh 3:15-16 (NKJV)

15 that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

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

We are born again, not by believing in a philosophy, an ethical code or creed but by believing in a person Jesus Christ.

2Ti 1:12 (NKJV) For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

2.2.5.2. To Believe in Jesus is to Receive Him

Joh 1:10-13 (NKJV)

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

He gave the right to become children of God. All they needed to do was to TRUST Him to save them (to believe on His name.) All those who BELIEVE this ore REBORN - not a physical birth resulting from human passion of plan - but from the will of God.

Many people fear that becoming a Christian means having to give up the things they enjoy. Nothing could be further from the truth! Really, becoming a Christian is not a matter of giving up anything but rather it's a matter of receiving someone - a wonderful person - Jesus Christ the Son of GOD! With Jesus comes everything that we ever wanted, eternal life! This eternal life is not just everlasting life, it is abundant life! (It includes love, joy, peace, adventure, hope, friendship, purpose, health, achievement etc.) Jesus fulfils our lives, He does not deprive us

He brings far more into our lives than we ever had before.

Of course, the Christian does not live the way he used to, nor does he do some of the things which he previously did. However, it is not that he has to give up these old things, but it's that he now wants to take up new and better things! You see, after we receive Jesus, our desires change | We are truly 'born again' and we receive a new nature We now discover new inclinations in our hearts. The things which we once enjoyed (contrary to God's desire for our lives) we now enjoy no longer. Our greatest joy comes in living the way that God wants us to.

Sometimes old habits remain for a while, but as we grow in the Lord, these too will lose their power over our lives.

These habits 'fall off' our lives like the leaves fall from trees in autumn. You may have noticed that sometimes several leaves cling to the branches of some trees and do not fall immediately. No-one would think of going around the tree and knocking the remaining leaves off with a rake! That would be silly and unnecessary. For in the spring, as the new buds appear with the surge of new life in the tree, the old leaves will be pushed off and fall to the ground by themselves!

Remember: it is the surge of new life in you that changes you!

2.2.5.3. Receiving Jesus is Receiving Life

1Pe 1:3 (NKJV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

1Pe 1:23 (NKJV) having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

In the verses quoted above, we have a comparison between natural and spiritual conception.

Our natural life is of perishable seed from our human father (perishable because our natural life will end.)

Our spiritual life is of imperishable seed from our Heavenly Father (imperishable because our spiritual life is eternal). This imperishable seed is none other than Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God!

Just as there is linked up within the tiny female egg all the potential of a unique person and this is only released when that egg receives the seed of life (male sperm) from the father; so locked up within the spirit of every person is the potential to become a unique son of God. This potential is only released by receiving the Seed of Life (Jesus Christ) from the Father.

When we receive Jesus (the imperishable seed) into our hearts, a miracle occurs! New life begins! A Divine Life is conceived within us!

Consider the human female egg which does not receive the male sperm. It remains for a while and then passes away - it never really lives! All that potential is never released! So it is with those who never receive Jesus Christ into their lives. They exist for a while on this earth, and then pass away - never become what God has intended for them to become. They fall short of the wonderful possibilities that there are for their lives. The Bible says that they perish!

1 John 5:11-13 (NKJV)

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

These verses teach very clearly that to receive Jesus Christ is to receive eternal life! Eternal life is in Jesus. If we have Jesus we have eternal life: if we do not have Jesus then of course we do not have eternal life!

2.3. RESURRECTION

The miracle that occurs when a person becomes a Christian is the miracle of resurrection!

The Christian has passed out of death into life!

Joh 5:21-24 (NKJV)

21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

22 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,

23 that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

1Jn 3:14 (NKJV) We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death.

Ephesians 2:5 (NKJV) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Rom 6:13 (NKJV) And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

Just. as a flat (dead) battery needs to be recharged on a generator so the Bible teaches that man (dead in sins) needs to be regenerated or resurrected (brought to life) by the Holy Spirit.

There is a wonderful passage of scripture found in Ephesians 2:1-22 which describes the change in a person's life when they become a Christian as a spiritual resurrection. In actual fact these verses may be divided into two parallel passages which, like a similar passage already discussed in Titus 5:3-7 tell us what we were; what God did; what we are and what we can do now that we have been spiritually resurrected!

2.3.1. What We Were

Ephesians 2:1-3 (NKJV)

- 1 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,
- 2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience,
- 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Ephesians 2:11-12 (NKJV)

- 11 Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—
- 12 that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

We were dead in trespass and sin; in bondage, flesh and the devil; under God's judgement - a child of wrath; separated from Christ; excluded; strangers with no hope; without God in the world.

2.3.2. What God Did

Ephesians 2:4-7 (NKJV)

- 4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),
6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,
7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 2:13-18 (NKJV)

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,

15 having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace,

16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

17 And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near.

18 For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.

God loved us: made us alive together with Christ: raised us up; seated us with Him: brought us near, by the blood of Christ; broke down barriers and established peace; gave us access to the Father through Jesus.

2.3.3. What We Are

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 2:19-22 (NKJV)

19 Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,

20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone,

21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord,

22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

We are saved through faith; His workmanship (masterpiece): no longer strangers and aliens; fellow citizens; saints; of God's household; part of God's holy temple (the church) filled with God.

2.3.4. What We Are To Do

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:1 (NKJV) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called,

Because of what God has done and what we are now through spiritual resurrection, we are instructed to walk in good works and in a manner worthy of our calling. Here again we see that God does expect our behaviour to change but only after He has given us the power within to change it!

2.4. RESURRECTION LIFE

Larry Richards gives, in his book 'Born to Grow', a graphic illustration of this wonderful work of God in our lives. Ref. Ephesians 2:1

'Recently, newspapers told of a home in which the mother had chained her three children to their beds in a dark room shortly after each was born, when found, the oldest was a teenager ... lying with the other, passive, naked, vacant-eyed in the bed that had become their world since birth. Cut off from all human contact, unable to talk, to develop, these individuals had existed - but had hardly lived.

The police who finally broke into their prison and brought them out into the world of men, did, in a very real way, give them life.

It is something like this when we become Christians. The Bible pictures men as imprisoned by sin in a state of living death. We are born into the world, but we're trapped within the confines of the material universe, cut off from contact not with other people, but with God. Yet it is just this, fellowship with God, that alone enables us to grow to our true potential as human beings! Created as we were in God's image, the human personality only truly lives when a relationship with God frees us to grow and become all that our Creator intends. Ref. Gen 1:26-27 No wonder Jesus said,

Joh 10:10 (NKJV) The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.

It was Jesus who broke into our prison to free us. And the Bible tells us that the act which secured our release was His death on the cross. Somehow in His death He took the full burden of every guilty thought and act of sin, and in exchange, gave us forgiveness ... and life. The new change is so dramatic in the new Christian that the Bible says he actually becomes a new creation!

2.4.1. We Are New Creatures

The following scriptures clearly state that the Christian is a new creation.

Ephesians 2:10 (NKJV) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Ephesians 4:24

2 Corinthians 5:17

Gal 6:15 (NKJV) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.

Ephesians 4:24 (NKJV) and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV) Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The dramatic inward change that takes place when someone becomes a Christian may be illustrated:

It's like the difference between:

- A Caterpillar and a Butterfly.
- A Child's Scooter and a Powerful Motorbike.
- A Rowing Boat and a Speed Boat.
- A Black and White T.V. and a Colour T.V.
- A Lifeless Glove and a Living Hand in a Glove.

2.4.1. We Are to Live in a New Way

Rom 6:14 (NKJV) For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

Now that we are new creatures, we are exhorted to 'walk in newness of life' - to live in a new way.

Becoming a new creature in Christ does not necessarily mean that our behaviour automatically changes. It is still possible for the Christian to sin! However, the glorious truth is that we don't have to!! It is now possible to live the way that God wants us to! We now have a new capacity and power within us - it is the life of Jesus Christ Himself!

We now have the potential and ability to live at a far higher level - but it is up to us to use that potential! It is up to us to yield ourselves to Jesus who now lives within us and to allow Him to express Himself through us.

Consider the illustrations given above.

Each illustration shows a transformation from a lower state to a higher state. How ridiculous for the butterfly, now with the capacity for flight, to remain earth bound like the caterpillar it used to be. Can you imagine riding a big motorbike the same way as you would a child's scooter? Or rowing a speed boat instead of using the powerful inbuilt motor?

Those who have at great expense bought colour T.V. sets do not turn the colour control down and view each show in black and white! Now that you are a Christian (at the infinite cost of Calvary) learn to step out of your drab, uninteresting black and white existence and into a new world where life is in full colour! Learn to live in, new way!

Do you realise that even though a glove is lifeless and powerless in itself. as soon as the hand comes into it, it becomes as strong as the hand! You are the glove, Christ is the hand. The glove, by yielding to the life within it can do what the hand can do. You, by yielding to the Life of Christ within you, can do what He can do! Everything that is possible for Jesus is now possible to you - as you yield to Him!

You are a new creature, walk in newness of life!

3. Understanding Faith

Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

9 not of works, lest anyone should boast.

10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

We have been saved by grace through faith for **good works**.

Grace is the source of our salvation and good works are the proof of our salvation but faith is the means by which we receive salvation!

To understand the nature of faith, we need to consider

3.1. FAITH AND REPENTANCE

Repentance may be defined as a change of mind or purpose regarding sin. It is a decision to turn from sin. As someone has put it - it is being sorry enough to quit!

Faith on the other hand is a trust in and a total commitment to God. It is the act of turning to God (repentance). We may say, it is believing enough to commit.

Repentance and faith are closely associated, as can be seen from the following scriptures..

Mark 1:15 (NKJV) and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Act 20:21 (NKJV) testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

1Th 1:9 (NKJV) For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

3.1.1. TRUE FAITH INCLUDES REPENTANCE

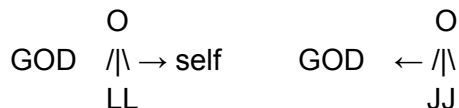
It is fundamental for us to understand that without true repentance, there cannot be true faith.

It is impossible to truly believe in God for salvation without also repenting from sin. Faith and repentance cannot exist without each other. They are two sides of the same coin! Consider the following illustrations.

Romans 2:4 (NKJV) Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?

3.1.1.1. 'Turning To' Includes 'Turning From'

We may illustrate that you can't have faith without repentance by the simple act of turning ourselves about face. Notice that as you turn towards something, you also turn away from the thing you previously faced. Similarly, the decision to turn away from sin. You can't turn to Jesus without turning from sin.



3.1.1.2. To 'Hang On' You Must 'Let Go'

Consider two men high in a circus tent swinging on the trapeze.

If the one who is to 'fly' across to the other side does not let go of his trapeze, he cannot truly hang on to his partner!

Just so, without true repentance (letting go of sin) there cannot be true faith (hanging on to Jesus).

This is the sad state of many ways, they are pulled both ways. They refuse to let go of the old life, but this prevents them from entering into the new! As one man has said; they have just enough religion to bug them, but not enough to bless them! The only way to be truly happy and to really believe in Jesus is to commit yourself totally to Him.

The 'flyer' must let go (with both hands!) and commit himself totally to his partner before he can truly hang on.

Just so, true repentance (letting go of sin) is always a part of true faith (hanging on to Jesus).

3.1.2. FAITH AND REPENTANCE INVOLVE DECISION

Both repentance and faith are essentially a decision of the will of man.

Repentance is not a mental acknowledgement of sin. Nor is it emotional remorse and sorrow for sin. These things may lead to repentance, but they are not repentance, True repentance is a decision to forsake sin!

Similarly, faith is not just mental assent to the existence of God. Nor is it simply an emotional desire for God. True faith is a total commitment of our whole lives to God.

There are many who acknowledge that they are sinners and that God exists - but they lack the true repentance and faith which will bring them salvation. For saving faith is more than having the mind informed about ourselves and God. This is not enough.

Jas 2:19-20 (NKJV)

19 You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!

20 But do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

Even the demons believe in the existence of God - but they are not saved!

Act 24:24-25 (NKJV)

24 And after some days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

25 Now as he reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and answered, "Go away for now; when I have a convenient time I will call for you."

Others feel real sorrow, deep conviction about their sin, and even a genuine desire for God - but they still fall short of true repentance and faith. For saving faith is more than having the emotions stirred.

True saving faith must be a response of the heart of man. It is essentially having the will commuted - it is a decision to turn from sin and to turn to God. As we have said - this is far more than a mental or emotional response.

The following illustrations may help to clarify these truths..

3.1.2.1. Flop On

You may have played with small children by standing them on a table and catching them as they 'flop' into your arms. This is a beautiful illustration of faith. The child 'believes in you' by committing himself to your arms.

In the same way, true faith in Jesus means to 'flop on Jesus' to forsake our own means of security and to trust everything to Him, to cast ourselves totally upon Him.

3.1.2.2. Jump In

The story is told of Blondin, the famous tight rope walker, who one day after performing great feats on a rope suspended over Niagara Falls, approached one of the spectators who had gathered to watch.

Blondin questioned him, "Do you believe that I could carry you across the falls in this wheelbarrow?"

The man immediately responded, 'Oh yes I believe you could do that Blondin. You're the greatest!'

Blondin replied, "Jump in!" Professing faith but not truly possessing it, the man cried, 'Not on your life!'

You see, the man had seen Blondin perform on the rope, and he mentally acknowledged that Blondin could carry him across. He was emotionally stirred and excited about Blondin's ability, but when it came to committing his life into Blondin's hands, he backed away! He didn't really believe, for believing is committed believing, it is being prepared to jump in!

3.1.2.3. Wilt Thou?

Marriage is one of the illustrations the New Testament uses for describing the relationship between Christ and the believer.

Marriage involves total commitment of the mind, emotions and will.

Merely acknowledging in our minds that a person would be a suitable marriage partner does not make us married.

To be so emotionally stirred that every time we think of the other person we experience a 'tingling, gooey feeling' still does not make us married.

We must come to the point of a commitment of our will. As one person jokingly put it. The minister asked 'Wilt thou?' and I wilted! It is only after we have solemnly committed ourselves to each other and signed the necessary legal documents that we are truly married.

Mere intellectual assent to the facts and emotional feelings do not make a person a Christian, any more than they make a person married. A person becomes a Christian by totally committing himself to Jesus Christ.

The commitment that we make in marriage involves a turning away from the old life of independence (repenting of being a bachelor or a spinster) and committing ourselves to a lifelong relationship. This illustrates the two aspects of saving faith. When we believe in Jesus, we repent of our old life of independence (living our own way) and we commit ourselves to Jesus and to a lifelong relationship with Him.

3.2. FAITH AND FEELING

3.2.1. FAITH IS NOT FEELING

Many confuse faith and feeling. One of the most important lessons for us to learn is that they are different!! Faith in God is not necessarily feeling the presence of God! In actual fact, there are many times in the Christian life when we do not feel the presence of God! This however does not mean that He has left us, for He has promised never to do that.

Mat 28:20 (NKJV) teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

Hebrews 13:5 (NKJV) Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU."

To become a strong, stable believer in Christ, we need to learn to live by faith, not by feeling.

2 Corinthians 5:7 (NKJV) For we walk by faith, not by sight.

3.2.1.1. After The Honeymoon!

The honeymoon following marriage is a wonderful time. The excitement of this new relationship is precious. However, marriage is not all honeymoon! The young married couple need to return and to set up home, go to work and to face the responsibilities of married life. Sometimes this 'coming back to earth' takes the 'gleam' off their relationship, and they discover that true love and true faith are more than just emotions!

So it is with many new Christians. They have a wonderful experience when they first commit their lives to Jesus. However, after a short period of time, these emotions seem to die down. It is then that many question their new-found faith. However, they need to learn the difference between faith and feeling! Faith is not feeling - it is much deeper than that. Matthew 7:24-27.

3.2.2. FEELINGS FLUCTUATE

The ability to feel and experience emotions is a wonderful gift from God. We should enjoy our emotions and express them freely.

However, as Christians, we should never rely upon emotional feelings as an indication to God's presence or favour in our lives. If we depend upon our emotions as a gauge for our spiritual experience we will never be stable, We will be "up and down like yo yo's! For you see, feelings fluctuate. Often they cannot be depended upon to tell us the truth!

Consider the following illustrations.

3.2.2.1. Use a Thermometer

I remember that when I was at school, our science teacher gave us an experiment to illustrate that feelings are relative and cannot be absolutely relied upon.

He placed in front of us three beakers of water. One was full of hot water, another of luke warm water and the other of cold water. We were told to dip one hand in the hot water and one hand in the cold water, and then to quickly remove them and plunge them immediately into the luke warm water. We were then asked to describe what we felt! Well. One hand felt hot, the other felt cold - but they were both wrong!!

The teacher stressed that we should never say something was hot because it feels hot. Taking a thermometer and holding it up before us, he instructed us that we should always measure temperature with a thermometer the thermometer is always correct, our feelings are sometimes wrong!

We shall see later that for the Christian, the word of God is the standard gauge that we use to determine our relationship with God. The word of God is constant and absolute. Often our feelings agree with God's word, but sometimes they don't. In these cases what are we to believe, the word of God, or our feelings?

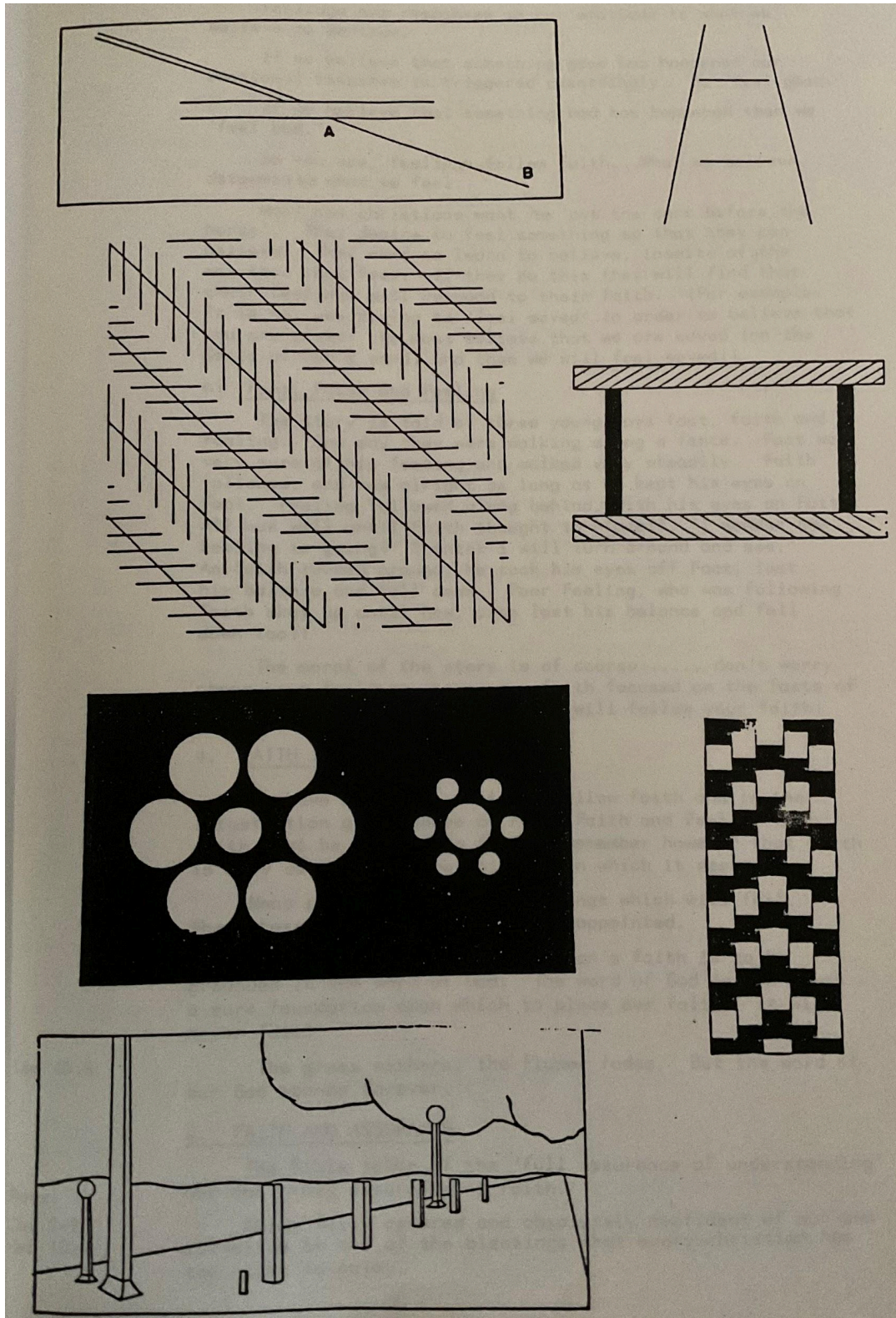
3.2.2.2. Fly by the Instruments

Someone, when learning to fly an aeroplane, was taught to fly by the instruments. He told me that in this part of his flight training program, the instructor actually blackened out the windscreen of the plane so that he could not fly by sight! My friend was told, "The instruments are more reliable than our natural senses. Fly by the instruments."

Christians need to learn a similar lesson. The word of God is more reliable than your senses. Believe the Word of God and live according to that - not by the way that you feel. For example, being hurt by someone gives us a choice to go by what we feel or by the Word of God.

3.2.2.3. But it Looks Straight!

Optical illusions also illustrate the point that sometimes our senses do not assess things as they really are! In the two-dimensional optical illusions given below, the only way to determine correctly the length or straightness of a particular line is not by trusting our eyesight but by taking a ruler and measuring it. The parallel again is obvious - the rule in spiritual things is the Word of God.



3.2.3. FEELINGS FOLLOW FAITH

Feelings are responses in our emotions to what we believe to be true.

If we believe that something good has happened, our emotional response is triggered accordingly. We "feel good".

If we believe that something bad has happened, then we "feel bad."

So you see, feelings follow faith. What we believe determines what we feel.

Many new Christians want to 'put the cart before the horse, They desire to feel something so that they can believe! They need to learn to believe, in spite of the way that they feel. If they do this, they will find that their feelings will respond to their faith. (For example: It is no use trying to 'feel saved' in order to believe that you are saved! We must believe that we are saved (on the basis of God's word) and then we will feel saved!)

3.2.3.1. Fact, Faith and Feeling

The story is told of three young boys' called Fact, Faith and Feeling. One day they were walking and balancing on a fence, Fact was very sure of his footing and walked very steadily. Faith followed, and was alright as long as he kept his eyes on Fact. Feeling followed along behind, with his eyes on Faith, All was well until Faith thought to himself, "I wonder how Feeling is going? I think I. will turn around and see. As Faith turned around, he took his eyes off Fact, lost his balance and fell down. Poor Feeling, who was following Faith okay up until now, also lost his balance and fell down too!

The moral of the story is of course:..... don't worry about your feelings; keep your faith focused on the facts of the word of God and your feelings will follow your faith. Doubt is asking how are my feeling going.

3.2.4. FAITH IN FACTS

We have seen that feelings follow faith and in the illustration given above of Fact, Faith and Feeling that faith must be focused on facts. Remember however that faith is only as valid as the object upon which it rests.

Many people have faith in things which will fail. When these fail, their faith is disappointed.

We have seen that the Christian's faith is to be grounded in the word of God. The word of God is the truth, a sure foundation upon which to place our faith - it will never fail!

Isa 40:8 (NKJV) The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever."

3.3. FAITH AND ASSURANCE

Colossians 2:2 (NKJV) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ,

Hebrews 10:22 (NKJV) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

The Bible talks of the "full assurance of understanding" and the "full assurance of faith."

Being fully assured and absolutely confident of our own salvation is one of the blessings that every Christian has the right to enjoy.

This assurance comes through understanding what God's word says and then believing what it says!

Many of God's people lack assurance in their hearts concerning their own salvation simply because they are ignorant. They are unaware of the nature and completeness of their own salvation! They need to become enlightened.

1 Corinthians 2:12 (NKJV) Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.

Jas 1:25 (NKJV) But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

It is through the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that we come to understand the full blessings of our salvation. Others may be aware of what the scriptures teach, but they fail to believe them. It is not just knowing but believing.

They put more faith in their own feelings or thoughts than in the Word of God! It is only through understanding the scriptures and by believing them to be true that we can experience "the full assurance of salvation".

The following scriptures understood and believed will bring assurance to our hearts.

3.3.1. Eternal Life is our Present Possession

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

Joh 3:36 (NKJV) He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Joh 5:24 (NKJV) "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Joh 6:47 (NKJV) Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life.

1 John 5:11-13 NKJV

11 And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

12 He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

The Amplified Bible translates the last part of the verse
Above, (John 5:13) "...that you may KNOW (WITH SETTLED AND ABSOLUTE KNOWLEDGE) that you (ALREADY) HAVE LIFE, YES, ETERNAL LIFE."

3.3.2 We Are Kept By God's Power

Psa 16:8 (NKJV) I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.

Psa 34:22 (NKJV) The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who trust in Him shall be condemned.

Psa 55:22 (NKJV) Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved.

Psa 121:5 (NKJV) The LORD is your keeper; The LORD is your shade at your right hand.

Pro 2:8 (NKJV) He guards the paths of justice, And preserves the way of His saints.

1Sa 2:9 (NKJV) He will guard the feet of His saints, But the wicked shall be silent in darkness. "For by strength no man shall prevail.

2Ti 1:12 (NKJV) For this reason I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day.

2Ti 4:18 (NKJV) And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!

Hebrews 12:1-2 NKJV

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

1Pe 1:5 (NKJV) who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Jud 1:24 (NKJV) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,

Joh 10:28-30 NKJV

28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand.

30 I and My Father are one."

The passage quoted immediately above is a beautiful one. I believe that when Jesus spoke these words he illustrated them by using His hands.

I imagine that when Jesus spoke the words of verse 28 "I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish, and none shall snatch them out of My hand," He held out His left hand, cupped and steady, with His eyes intently fixed upon it. Those listening could picture themselves secure in His hand.

Then, stretching out His right hand as the other, Jesus turns His gaze to it and speaks. of His Father's hand. 'My Father, who has given them to Me is greater than all; and no-one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand.

As the people watch, they listen to the teaching of His lips and follow the movements of His hands. They see the believer secure in one hand the hand representing the hand of Jesus. Then they see the believer secure in the other hand, the hand representing the Father's. They watch and wonder; how can I be in two hands at once?

Imagine yourself, cupped in the hand of Jesus and covered by the hand of the Father! You are safe and secure in His hands!!

There are many other scriptures which, when believed, bring positive assurance to the believer's heart. When you find them yourself, as you read the scriptures, underline them and commit them to memory. Remember; assurance comes by faith and faith by the word of God!

Rom 10:17 (NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Make the following poem your motto.

God said it
I believe it
That settles it!
No doubt about it!

3.4. FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

If we have real faith in Jesus Christ then our lives will show it for faith always expresses itself in obedience. The Bible talks of the "obedience of faith" and in some passages even uses the word obey as a synonym for faith.

Joh 3:36 (NKJV) He who **believes** in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not **believe** the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 3:36 NLT And anyone who **believes** in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't **obey** the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

John 3:36 NIV Whoever **believes** in the Son has eternal life, but whoever **rejects** the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

In this verse, we see that to 'believe in the Son is exactly the same as "to obey the Son'.

Hebrews 4:2 (NKJV) For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

Hebrews 4:6 (NKJV) Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience,

Hebrews 4:11 (NKJV) Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

Here again we see the connection: to believe is to obey! To disbelieve is to disobey:

James 2:18 (NKJV) But someone will say, "You have faith, and I have works." Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.

James 2:26 (NKJV) For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

Works are the proof of faith. If there is no corresponding action to the profession of faith, then there is no faith! Remember: We have been saved by grace through faith for good works.

When we really believe something, it is reflected in what we do. Also, Jesus asked us to believe and if we do, we obey Him.

John 14:1 (NKJV) "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

John 6:28-29 (NKJV)

28 Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?"

29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Believing in Jesus is our first on ongoing work besides all the other good works.

Salvation is a gift of God's grace, received by faith, expressed by good works! If we are truly saved, if we truly believe, we will desire with all our hearts, to obey the Lord Jesus Christ in everything.

4. Water Baptism

4.1. WHAT IS WATER BAPTISM

4.1.1. WATER BAPTISM IS A DECLARATION OF FAITH

4.1.1.1. Baptism is a Public Act declaring a Personal Faith.

The New Testament teaches that the first way a new believer is to acknowledge his new found faith in Christ is to be publicly baptised in water. The examples we have in the New Testament show water baptism as no secret thing, but a bold, open, testimony to others.

This public acknowledgement encourages and strengthens our faith to follow Jesus.

4.1.1.2. Baptism is a Sign of what has already happened to us through our Faith in Jesus.

It is important to understand that water baptism does not save us. We are saved by faith. Baptism is simply the outward declaration of that faith.

Ephesians 2:8 NKJV For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,

1Jn 1:7 NKJV But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

Hebrews 9:14 NKJV how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

1Pe 3:21 NKJV There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

Baptism in water does not cleanse us from sin. It is the blood of Jesus which cleanses us from all sin. In Hebrews 9:14 we are told that 'the blood of Christ cleanses our conscience' in 1 Peter 3:21 we are told that baptism is an and "appeal to God for a clear conscience. This means that in baptism, we are saying to God that we believe our conscience has been cleansed by the blood of Jesus.

The water itself has no power to change us or cleanse us. The verse in 1 Peter 3:21 tells us that baptism is 'not the removal of dirt from the flesh.

4.1.2. WATER BAPTISM AND SEPARATION FROM SIN

4.1.2.1. Baptism in water shows our discarding of the old life and our Dedication to the new life.

Those who really want to follow Jesus and leave the past behind them are to obey Jesus' command to be baptised.

New Testament water baptism corresponds in meaning to the Old Testament sign of circumcision.

Just as circumcision was an outward sign that a man had been separated to God, so water baptism is an outward sign of our separation from the old life and ways to God.

It is particularly important for those who have been involved in occultic practices to renounce and reject these, and to separate themselves completely from them. The Bible clearly teaches that occultic experiences are of Satan and are to be renounced totally.

Lev 20:6 NKJV 'And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.

Lev 20:27 NKJV 'A man or a woman who is a medium, or who has familiar spirits, shall surely be put to death; they shall stone them with stones. Their blood shall be upon them.' "

1 Samuel 28:6-21

1Ch 10:13 NKJV So Saul died for his unfaithfulness which he had committed against the LORD, because he did not keep the word of the LORD, and also because he consulted a medium for guidance.

Isa 8:19 NKJV And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?

Isa 44:25 NKJV Who frustrates the signs of the babblers, And drives diviners mad; Who turns wise men backward, And makes their knowledge foolishness;

Jeremiah 29:8-9

Eze 21:21 NKJV For the king of Babylon stands at the parting of the road, at the fork of the two roads, to use divination: he shakes the arrows, he consults the images, he looks at the liver.

Micah 3:6-7

Act 16:16-18 NKJV

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation."

18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour.

Rev 21:8 NKJV

8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Deu 18:10-12 NKJV

10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer,

11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead.

12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the LORD, and because of these abominations the LORD your God drives them out from before you.

Some occultic practices include: Astrology, Horoscopes, Fortune Telling, Tarot Cards, Palm reading, Divining with Mental suggestion, rod or pendulum, Mirror mantic or crystal gazing, Hypnosis, Seances and Ouija Boards, Spiritism, Magic, Fetishes, Amulet telekinesis, Astral travel, Levitation, Hallucinogenic drugs, Eastern religions, Heavy acid rock, etc. etc.

Ephesians 4:27 NKJV nor give place to the devil.

The Bible teaches that we are to give no place to the Devil. Those who have been involved in occultic practices, no matter how innocently, have given place in their lives to Satanic bondage or influence. (Depression, oppression, fears, night-mares, sexual pressures etc. often have their cause in occultic involvement). Christians, separated unto God, should have nothing to do with the occult.

In Acts 19:11-20 we have a dramatic account of many turning from occultic practices to the Lord. From these verses, we learn that those who have been involved in occultic practices need to..

4.1.2.1.1. Believe in Jesus (verse 18).

The first thing we need to do is to surrender our lives to Jesus Christ - to receive Him as our Lord and Saviour. When we do this we are 'translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son'. Satan's authority over us is broken.

4.1. 2.1.2. Confess and disclose their practices (verse 18).

Occultic involvement needs to be confessed as sin - a detestable thing to God. When we confess our sin we receive the cleansing of the 'blood of Jesus'.

4.1.2.1.3. Renounce and reject that involvement and destroy all association with it (verse 19).

Occultic books, charms etc. need to be destroyed.

Jas 4:7 NKJV Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

The Bible teaches in James 8,7 that we are first to submit to God and then resist the Devil, and he will flee from us!

1Pe 5:8 NKJV Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.

1 Peter 5:8 tells us to be sober of spirit and to be on the alert for our adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But we are to resist him firm in our faith.

We resist Satan...

- By 1st submitting to God.
- In the Name of Jesus Christ.
- On the basis of the shed blood of Jesus.

4.1.2.2. Baptism in Water Illustrated in the Old Testament

Let's consider two examples which the New Testament cites from the Old Testament to illustrate the connection between Water Baptism and Separation.

1 Corinthians 10:1-2 NKJV

1 Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,

2 all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,

Exo 12:7 NKJV And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it.

Exo 12:12 NKJV 'For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD.

When we read the account of Israel's deliverance from Egypt in the book of Exodus we see that the Israelites were saved from the judgement of God through the blood of the lamb on their doors. However, their 'baptism into Moses' meant full and final separation from Egypt for Pharaoh, the Egyptian chariots and horsemen were all destroyed under the waters of the Red Sea.

Exo 14:22 NKJV So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

Exo 14:28 NKJV Then the waters returned and covered the chariots, the horsemen, and all the army of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them. Not so much as one of them remained.

The crossing of the Red Sea is a beautiful picture of Baptism in Water, (by immersion). The level of the water was far above their heads, and the Bible says that 'Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land and the waters were like a wall to them on their right hand and on their left'. When the Israelites came up out of the sea, the Bible says that the 'waters returned and covered the chariots and horsemen, even Pharaoh's entire army'. They were completely separated from the past.

1Pe 3:18-22 NKJV

18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

19 by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison,

20 who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water.

21 There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

22 who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him.

Just as it was the Ark and not the flood water which saved Noah and his family, so too, it is Christ (the ark is a type of Christ) and not the waters of Baptism which saves the Christian. However, the flood waters did separate Noah and his family from the sinful world. After 'passing through the waters' they came out into a fresh new world the past behind them.

Baptism in water does not save us, but through Baptism we declare our separation from the past and the fact that now through faith we have begun a brand new life!

4.1.3. WATER BAPTISM - A PICTURE OF CHRIST'S DEATH FOR US

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NKJV

3 For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

4 and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

Rom 6:4 NKJV Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

1Pe 3:8 NKJV Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

When a believer is baptised in water he is acting out a vivid picture of Christ's death, burial and resurrection! He is saying, 'I believe that Jesus died for me. He was my substitute. He died in my place - to pay the penalty for all my sins; He was buried in the tomb; and on the third day He rose again triumphant!'

It is a wonderful fact, that because Jesus has paid the penalty of death for all our sins, we who believe enjoy the total forgiveness of God. The Bible words Pardon, Remission, Cleansing, Forgiveness, we are 'loosed' from all our sins; all mean the same thing we shall never have to pay for them, for Jesus cancelled them all on the cross!

4.1.4. WATER BAPTISM - SYMBOL OF OUR DEATH WITH CHRIST (IDENTIFICATION)

This is a liberating truth!

To be identified is to 'become one with' and as a consequence 'to be treated the same' .

Jesus identified with us.

To say that Jesus identified with us means that He become one with us. Jesus identified with our humanity by becoming a man and on the cross identified with our sin.

2 Corinthians 5:21 NKJV For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Isa 53:4 NKJV Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted.

Gal 3:13 NKJV Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"),

Because Jesus identified with our sin on the cross, He was treated as we should have been - He died in our place. On the cross our sin, our sickness and our curse came upon Him.

Through Faith, we are Identified with Jesus.

When we believe in Jesus, we are identified with Him. God sees us as legally identified with Christ (at one with Him).

This means that all that Jesus did is attributed to us. As far as God is concerned, when Jesus died we died, when Jesus was buried, we were buried, when Jesus rose we rose and when Jesus ascended we ascended!

It is as though we ourselves had died for our own sins, had been buried and raised again and right now are seated on the Father's Throne!

If you are a believer, then you have a new standing before God! As far as God is concerned; what Christ did, you did where Christ is you are!

4.1.4.1. When Christ Died; You Died

2 Corinthians 5:14 NKJV For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

Gal 2:20 NKJV I have been crucified with Christ; 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 for me.

What is exciting about this is that the Bible says when Christ died, He died to sin, and He died to law. It follows that if I died with Christ, I too died to sin and to the law. This means that the power of sin and the curse and condemnation of the law has been broken in my life for sin and law have no power over a dead man!

When Christ Died to Sin; You Died to Sin

Rom 6:2 NKJV Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?

Rom 6:6-7 NKJV

6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.

Rom 6:10 NKJV For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

Because we have died to sin, we are free from its bondage.

When Christ Died to Law; You Died to Law

Rom 7:4-6 NKJV

4 Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God.

5 For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.

6 But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Gal 2:19 NKJV For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

Because we have died to the law, we are free from its curse and condemnation.

Even if we do sin now that we are Christians, the law has no power to condemn us for On the cross Christ came under the condemnation of the law, we have died with Christ.

and because we are one with Christ, we too were condemned on the cross. The law can't condemn us twice! We have met all its claims, exhausted all its penalties, satisfied all its demands - it no longer has any power over us!

Rom 8:1-5 NKJV

- 1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.
- 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.
- 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,
- 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.
- 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Because we have died to the law, we are now free from condemnation.

4.1.4.2. When Christ was Buried; You were Buried

Romans 6:3-4 NKJV

- 3 Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?
- 4 Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12 NKJV buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

Baptism in Water is a symbol of this burial with Christ.

4.1.4.3. When Christ Rose; You Rose

Romans 6:5 NKJV For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection,

If we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

Because we have risen with Christ we now enjoy His victory. The Resurrection of Jesus is proof of His great victory over Death and Satan. Death has been conquered!

Romans 6:9 NKJV knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him.

The victory of Jesus over death is your victory! When Jesus conquered death; you conquered death because you were one with Him!

We who believe, are now free from spiritual death, and there is coming a day when we shall be free from physical death! Satan has been defeated! 1 Corinthians 15:20-26, 50-57.

Hebrews 2:14-15 NKJV

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

When Jesus conquered Satan and stripped him of his authority in the mind of God, it was as though you had done it. You are Satan's master. The resurrection is proof of Satan's defeat and our victory over Satan and all his demons.

4.1.4.4. When Christ Ascended; You Ascended

Ephesians 2:5-6 NKJV

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Christ is now seated at the right hand of the Father. In this position He has been given all authority. Ephesians 1:20-22, Philippians 2:9.

The marvellous implications of these truths are of course that we are now seated with Christ in this position of authority!

We are seated at the right hand of God the Father. In Christ, we have been given authority - the authority of Christ. This authority is ours.

John 16:26 NKJV In that day you will ask in My name, and I do not say to you that I shall pray the Father for you;

We have the right to use the Name of Jesus. All the power and authority of Jesus stands behind that name.

4.2. WHO SHOULD BE WATER BAPTISED?

4.2.1. Believers' Baptism - not Infant Baptism

The Bible teaches that faith is the prerequisite for baptism. Only those who believe in Jesus and have been 'born again' be baptised. This is why we call it believers' baptism.

This of course rules out the practice of infant baptism, as babies are not old enough to believe! Those being baptised must be old enough to make their own personal decision for Christ.

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find any reference to infant baptism. The practice of infant baptism began in the third century in North Africa.

There are four references in the New Testament to household baptisms. Some people have inferred from these that babies were baptised. However, this inference is unjustified and unsupported by the scriptures. The Bible doesn't say that there were babies in these households. In several of the references, it is very clear that the household was made up of adults who understood what they were doing. It is impossible to defend the custom of infant baptism by assuming what the Bible doesn't specifically say.

4.2.2. Dedication of Children.

The Bible does teach that children are to be dedicated to the Lord, but not baptised. When the children are dedicated to the Lord, it is really an act of faith on the part of the parents, not the children. We believe that the Lord will bless them and keep them until they are old enough to make their own decision for Jesus.

Mark 10:16 NKJV And He took them up in His arms, laid His hands on them, and blessed them.

4.2.3. Scriptural Support for Believers' Baptism

Mark 16:15-16 NKJV

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.

16 He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

Notice that this verse teaches that condemnation is based on disbelieving only, not on failing to be baptised.

Also notice the order of events. We are to believe, then be baptised.

In all the examples of the New Testament we discover that those who were baptised, FIRST 'repented', 'believed', or 'received the word' and then they were baptised.

Acts 2:37-41 NKJV

37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Then Peter said to them, "**Repent**, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."

41 Then those who gladly **received his word** were **baptized**; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

Acts 8:5-8 NKJV

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and **preached Christ** to them.

6 And the multitudes with one accord **heeded** the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

Acts 8:12 NKJV But **when they believed** Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women **were baptized**.

Acts 8:14-17 NKJV

14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had **received the word of God**, they sent Peter and John to them,

15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had **only been baptized** in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Acts 8:35-39 NKJV

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, **preached Jesus to him**.

36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

37 Then Philip said, "**If you believe with all your heart**, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

39 Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

Acts 9:1-18 is the story of the Apostle Paul's conversion. On the road to Damascus he met Jesus. He was saved. Three days later he was baptised. We know he was a Christian because Ananias, the one who baptised Paul greeted him as a Christian 'brother'.

Acts 10:47-48 NKJV

47 "**Can anyone forbid water**, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

48 And he **commanded** them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

Acts 11:17 NKJV

17 If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?"

Acts 19:1-7 NKJV

- 1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples
- 2 he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."
- 3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism."
- 4 Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."
- 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 6 And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.
- 7 Now the men were about twelve in all.

These twelve men were disciples of John the Baptist. They had already been baptised into John's baptism. However, they needed to trust in Jesus to believe in Him, that is in Jesus (v4) and be baptised again.

It is quite possible that you have been 'baptised' (sprinkled) as a child. From the scriptures we have listed above, it is obvious that sprinkling children is not true baptism.

If you believe, you need to be baptised. You need to experience believers baptism even if you have been sprinkled as a child (or even 'immersed' as a baby as is the practice in the Greek Orthodox Church), - you need to be baptised the Bible way. First believe, then be baptised.

4.3. HOW SHOULD WE WATER BAPTISE?

Some people say baptism is by sprinkling water on the candidate. Others say baptism is by pouring water over the candidate. Still others teach that we should completely immerse the candidate. What is the Bible way? We believe that the Bible way is by complete immersion for the following reasons...

4.3.1. The Greek word for Baptism

The Greek word for 'Baptism' is 'Baptizo', which means 'dip'; 'to plunge under'. This word comes from the root word 'Bapto' which means 'to immerse'

The word "Bapto" was used by the Greeks to signify, for example, the dyeing of a garment. Another example of the use of the word was the drawing of water by dipping one vessel into another.

It is significant that the Greek Orthodox Church (even though they baptise infants) baptise by immersion. They understand their own language.

4.3.2. The Bible Examples

It is obvious in the Biblical examples we have recorded that water baptism was by immersion.

Matthew 3:5-6 NKJV

5 Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him
6 and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins.

John 3:22-23 NKJV

22 After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized.

23 Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because **there was much water there**. And they came and were baptized.

Mark 1:9-11 NKJV

9 It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

10 And immediately, **coming up from the water**, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove.

11 Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Acts 8:38-39 NKJV

38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch **went down into the water**, and he baptized him.

39 Now when they **came up out of the water**, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing.

4.3.3. The Symbolism of Immersion

He have already, seen that Baptism in water symbolises our death and burial with Christ. How can 'sprinkling' or 'pouring' represent burial? When we bury a dead body, we don't just sprinkle a handful of dirt.

We dig a grave and cover the body completely. When you are baptised in water by immersion the water becomes like a 'grave' to you. Going down into the water represents your burial into death with Christ.

When you come up out of the water it is a symbol of your resurrection and ascension with Him.

4.4. WHERE SHOULD I BE WATER BAPTISED?

It is not really important where you get baptised. What is important is that you are.

Since water baptism is by complete immersion, you may be baptised anywhere, where there is enough water, (In the sea, river, pool, fountain, tank, font, bath, etc.).

4.5. WHY SHOULD I BE WATER BAPTISED?

4.5.1. Jesus Commanded it.

Matthew 28:19-20 NKJV

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 teaching them to **observe all things that I have commanded you**; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

4.5.2. The Apostles Commanded it.

Acts 2:38 NKJV Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you **be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:48 NKJV And **he commanded them to be baptized** in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.

They obeyed Jesus by baptising those who believe.

4.5.3. To Follow the Example of Jesus.

Matthew 3:13-17 NKJV

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "**Permit it to be so now**, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

4.5.5. To Follow the Example of the Early Christians.

John 4:1-2 NKJV

1 Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John

2 (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples),

Acts 2:41 NKJV Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

We read in the New Testament of baptised believers in Samaria, Damascus, Cappodocia, Asia, Bithynio, Collossae, Caesarea, Philippi, Ephesus, Pontus, Galatia, and Rome.

4.6. WHO SHOULD WATER BAPTISE A BELIEVER?

In the New Testament, baptism was administered by any fellow believer - usually a minister.

Note: It is important to know that we are not baptised into a particular church or organisation. Jesus said that we are to be baptised into the name of 'the Father, Son and Holy Ghost'.

4.7. WHAT CAN HAPPEN AFTER WE ARE WATER BAPTISED?

The Bible teaches that we should receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost.

Acts 2:38-39 NKJV

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is accompanied with the sign of speaking in tongues.

This is a wonderful blessing. The purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to equip the Christian - to endue him with power to serve God.

Sometimes believers receive the gift of the Holy Ghost at the time of conversion. This happened in the case of Cornelius and his household. However, even though they were baptised in the Holy Spirit, Peter still commanded them to be baptised in water.

Every believer should expect to receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, either at Baptism or soon afterwards. V39

People can also receive visions or words from God.

Matthew 3:16-17 NKJV

16 When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

17 And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

4.8. WHEN SHOULD WE BE WATER BAPTISED?

It is obvious that in the New Testament, the new Christians were baptised immediately or as soon as possible after they believed. On the day of Pentecost, those who received the word were baptised 'that day'.

The Samaritan believers were baptised 'when they believed. Immediately after hearing Philip expound the scripture, the Eunuch was baptised- at the first sight of water.

The Apostle Paul was baptised by the first Christian he met!

Cornelius was baptised the same day as he was saved and baptised in the Holy Spirit.

In the story of the conversion of the Jailer and his household, we are told that 'that very hour of the night (about midnight!). Immediately he was baptised, he and all the household!'. (Note, it is obvious in this account that the members of the Jailer's household were old enough to hear the word of the Lord, verse 32.)

The Disciples at Ephesus were baptised 'when they heard' that they needed to be.

Many Christians are robbed of the blessing of baptism in water because they delay. Baptism in water brings great joy.

Acts 22:16 NKJV

16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'

5. Baptism in the Holy Spirit

5.1. INTRODUCTION

There are 3 baptisms mentioned in the New Testament. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between

- Baptism into Christ
- Baptism in water
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The word 'Baptism' simply means to "immerse."

5.1.1. BAPTISM INTO CHRIST

Galatians 3:27-28 NKJV

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:17 NKJV Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13 NKJV

12 For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.

13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

Baptism into Christ is our salvation experience. When we become Christians we are baptised into Christ. The moment we are placed in Christ, we become a new creature. It is the Holy Spirit who baptises us into Christ. Regeneration has happened.

Baptism into Christ may be illustrated by what takes place when a civilian enlists to become a soldier. He joins the army. His civilian employment is terminated, and he accepts a radical change in his whole way of life.

5.1.2. BAPTISM IN WATER

Baptism in water is an outward declaration of our faith in Jesus. It is an act of obedience to the command of Christ and it follows our salvation. It is man who baptises the believer in water.

Acts 8:38 NKJV So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

Baptism in water can be compared to the enlisted soldier putting on his uniform. To the man who has dedicated himself to becoming a soldier, the putting on of the uniform is a joyful and exhilarating moment. It does something for his morale, his bearing, his 'esprit de corps'. All

this, and more, water baptism should be to the newly enlisted soldier of Christ. Of course, it is enlisting, not putting on the uniform, that makes a man a soldier. Just so it is faith in Christ, not baptism, that makes a man a Christian. Nevertheless, baptism is a significant step of obedience and of identification with Christ. It is an outward declaration of our faith in Jesus.

5.1.3. BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is an empowering experience. It is a second encounter with God (the first is conversion) in which the Christian receives the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit into his life. It is Christ who baptises us in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit is the equipping of the Christian soldier with God's power for service. This experience is just as essential to the Christian as the equipping of a natural soldier. Whoever heard of a soldier without weapons?

BAPTISM	BAPTISER	PURPOSE	ILLUSTRATION
Into Christ	Holy Spirit	Salvation	Enlist in Army
In Water	Man (usually a preacher of the Gospel)	Declaration of Faith	Put on Uniform
In the Holy Spirit	Christ	To Empower for Service	Equip for Action

5.2. AN EXPERIENCE AFTER SALVATION

The personal experience of salvation is described in the Bible as being...

- Born anew - John 3:3
- Born of the Spirit - John 3:8
- Converted - Matthew 18:3
- Saved - John 10:9

The experience of receiving the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is described in the Bible as..

- Being baptised with the Holy Spirit - Matthew 3:11, Acts 1:5
- Being filled with the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:4
- Receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38
- God giving the Holy Spirit - Acts 5:32, 8:18
- Receiving the Holy Spirit - Acts 8:15, 10:47
- The Holy Spirit falling on the believer - Acts 8:16, 10:14, 11:15
- The Holy Spirit coming on the believer - Acts 10:44, 19:6
- The Holy Spirit being poured upon the believers - Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17-18, 10:45
- Being clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit - Luke 24:49

The Bible clearly teaches that these are two separate experiences. Consider the following..

5.2.1. JESUS' EXPERIENCE AND TEACHING

5.2.1.1. Jesus was born of the Spirit and also baptised in the Spirit.

Matthew 1:18 NKJV Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 10:38 NKJV how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Matthew 3:16 NKJV When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him.

Jesus was 'born of the spirit' from His mother's womb because He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. We can equate this with us being born again. Thirty years later, before He entered His public ministry, Jesus was baptised in water by John the Baptist and was 'anointed with the Holy Spirit and power.' John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting upon Him. We can equate that with our water baptism and our baptism in the Holy Spirit.

5.2.1.2. Jesus taught that salvation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit were two different experiences.

John 4:14 NKJV but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

This fountain speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit when we are born again.

John 7:37-39 NKJV

37 On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.

38 He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

39 But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus teaches that salvation is like a well of water springing up to eternal life. However, in John 7:37-39 we read that Jesus speaks of rivers of living water flowing from our innermost being. From verse 39 we find that Jesus in this instance was referring to the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

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5.2.1.3. Jesus tells His disciples that the Holy Spirit who is with them shall be in them.

John 14:16-17 NKJV

16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 16:7-11 (NKJV)

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

8 And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9 of sin, because they do not believe in Me;

10 of righteousness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more;

11 of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Before we were the Holy Spirit convicted us. He was drawing us to Jesus.

John 20:22-23 (NKJV)

22 And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

23 If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Jesus breathed on His disciples and to receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Nowadays when we believe and are born again the Holy Spirit dwells in us.

5.2.2.THE RECORD OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

As we study the book of Acts we find that it is very clear that salvation and the Baptism in the Holy Spirit are two distinct experiences.

5.2.2.1. The Disciples

Acts 1:4-5 NKJV

4 And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me;

5 for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Acts 1:8 NKJV But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Luke 24:49 NKJV Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

They were commanded by Jesus to wait at: Jerusalem for the promise of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:1-4 NKJV

- 1 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.
- 3 Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.
- 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

On the day of Pentecost, 120 believers were gathered in the upper room and were baptised in the Holy Spirit.(Note: they were already believers.)

5.2.2.2. The Samaritans

Acts 8:14-17 NKJV

- 14 Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them,
- 15 who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit.
- 16 For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- 17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

The Samaritans had received the word (verse 14) (i.e. they were born again 1 Peter 1:23) and were baptised in water (verse 16) however, they needed to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. (verse 15-17).

5.2.2.3. The Apostle Paul

Acts 9:3-5 NKJV

- 3 As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven.
- 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?"
- 5 And he said, "Who are You, Lord?" Then the Lord said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads."

Acts 9:17 (NKJV) And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

Paul was saved on the road to Damascus (verse 3-4). However, he was filled with the Holy Spirit at Damascus three days later (verse 17). (Note: that Ananias calls him 'brother Saul'.)

5.3. THE INITIAL SIGN

The Book of Acts records five separate occasions when the Holy Spirit was received.

5.3.1. TONGUES SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED

On three of these occasions, speaking in tongues is specifically mentioned as the sign accompanying the experience.

5.3.1.1. The 120 Disciples at Pentecost

Acts 2:4 NKJV

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 2:14 NKJV

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words.

Note that this 'speaking in tongues' was not so the astonished Jews from different nations could hear the Gospel. Peter preached to them in the language they all understood for Greek

and Arabic the 'tongues were the common languages of that day. However, the 'tongues' were a miraculous sign that the Disciples were baptised in the Holy Spirit.

5.3.1.2. The House of Cornelius

Acts 10:44-46 NKJV

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,

The Jewish believers were 'amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon the Gentiles. They were convinced of this fact. 'For (or because) they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God.'

5.3.1.3. The Ephesians

Acts 19:6 NKJV And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they **spoke with tongues and prophesied**.

Twenty years or more after the out-pouring of the Holy Spirit upon the 120 disciples, Paul laid his hands upon the disciples at Ephesus.

Note the fact that they spoke with tongues is recorded first, before they prophesied.

Prophecy is not the initial sign of the baptism with the Holy Spirit. However, believers today

can, and some do, prophecy soon after they have received the Holy Spirit and speak in tongues.

5.3.2. TONGUES IMPLIED

The two other occasions when the Holy Spirit was received in the Book of Acts were

5.3.2.1. The Apostle Paul

1 Corinthians 14:18 NKJV I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

Paul received the Holy Spirit when Ananias laid hands on him and prayed and while tongues are not mentioned at that point we know that he spoke in tongues by his own testimony.

5.3.2.2. The New Christians at Samaria

Acts 8:17-19 NKJV

17 Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money,

19 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

Even though the Bible does not record that they spoke in tongues, there is evidence in the passage to suggest that they did. Simon the magician saw something which made him want to purchase from the apostles the ability to transmit the Holy Spirit. He saw some outward sign. What was it? Most Biblical authorities agree that what Simon saw must have been speaking in tongues.

Thus on each occasion, when people were baptised in the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues is specifically mentioned or strongly inferred as the initial sign of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus promised:

Mark 16:17 (NKJV) And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

5.4. DEFINING TONGUES

Speaking in tongues is a supernatural manifestation of the Holy Spirit, whereby the believer speaks forth in a language he has never learned.

5.4.1. It is Speaking to God

1 Corinthians 14:2 NKJV For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

5.4.2. It is a Prayer Language of the Spirit

1 Corinthians 14:14 NKJV For if I pray in a tongue, **my spirit prays**, but my understanding is unfruitful.

5.4.3. It is Inspired by the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:4 NKJV And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, **as the Spirit gave them utterance**.

Romans 8:26 NKJV Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

5.4.4. It is Not Linguistic Ability (not understood by the speaker)

1 Corinthians 14:14 NKJV For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my **understanding is unfruitful**.

Many people misunderstand what takes place when they hear someone praying or speaking in tongues. They are apprehensive over what might happen to them if they 'let themselves go like that.' They assume the person is completely passive and that the Holy Spirit is doing it all.

This is wrong.

The person who is speaking in tongues is not controlled by the Holy Spirit, rather he yields himself to the Holy Spirit for the Holy Spirit will never force Himself on a person, but must be welcomed and invited. The person who speaks in tongues is actively participating in the experience. It is you who do the speaking; it is the Holy Spirit who gives the utterance. Someone has said 'You make the sound, God makes the sense' I or again, Without the Holy Spirit you can't, but without you the Holy Spirit won't. In Acts 2:4 we read ... they ... began to speak as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance (words to say).

5.5. REASONS FOR TONGUES

5.5.1. DR. HENRY NESS' LIST OF REASONS

Dr. Henry Ness in his booklet 'The Baptism With the Holy Spirit' lists many Bible reasons for speaking in tongues. Some of these are.

5.5.1.1. Speaking in tongues is the unique spiritual gift identified with the Church of Jesus Christ.

Prior to the day of Pentecost, all other gifts, miracles, and spiritual manifestations had been in evidence during Old Testament times. On the Day of Pentecost, this new phenomenon came into evidence and became uniquely identified with the church. (Ref. Acts 2:4, 1 Corinthians 12-14)

5.5.1.2. Speaking in tongues was ordained by God for the Church.

1 Corinthians 12:28 NKJV And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:21 NKJV In the law it is written: "WITH MEN OF OTHER TONGUES AND OTHER LIPS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE; AND YET, FOR ALL THAT, THEY WILL NOT HEAR ME," says the Lord.

5.5.1.3. Speaking in tongues is a specific fulfilment of prophecy.

Isaiah 28:11 NKJV For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people,

Joel 2:28 NKJV "And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions.

Acts 2:16-18 NKJV

16 But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17 'AND IT SHALL COME TO PASS IN THE LAST DAYS, SAYS GOD, THAT I WILL POUR OUT OF MY SPIRIT ON ALL FLESH; YOUR SONS AND YOUR DAUGHTERS SHALL PROPHECY, YOUR YOUNG MEN SHALL SEE VISIONS, YOUR OLD MEN SHALL DREAM DREAMS.

18 AND ON MY MENSERVANTS AND ON MY MAIDSERVANTS I WILL POUR OUT MY SPIRIT IN THOSE DAYS; AND THEY SHALL PROPHECY.

1 Corinthians 14:21 NKJV In the law it is written: "WITH MEN OF OTHER TONGUES AND OTHER LIPS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE; AND YET, FOR ALL THAT, THEY WILL NOT HEAR ME," says the Lord.

5.5.1.4. Speaking in tongues is a sign of the believer.

Mark 16:17 NKJV And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

5.5.1.5. Speaking in tongues is a sign to the unbeliever.

1 Corinthians 14:22 NKJV Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

5.5.1.6. Speaking in tongues is proof of the resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ.

John 16:7 NKJV Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

Acts 2:22 NKJV "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—

Acts 2:25 NKJV For David says concerning Him: 'I FORESAW THE LORD ALWAYS BEFORE MY FACE, FOR HE IS AT MY RIGHT HAND, THAT I MAY NOT BE SHAKEN.

Acts 2:32-33 NKJV

32 This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses.

33 Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear.

5.5.1.7. Speaking in tongues is an evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit

Acts 2:4 NKJV And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Acts 10:45-46 NKJV

45 And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered,

Acts 19:6 NKJV And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

5.5.1.8. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for self edification

1 Corinthians 14:4 NKJV He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

5.5.1.9. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for spiritual edification for the church.

1 Corinthians 14:5 NKJV I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

5.5.1.10. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for communication with God in private worship.

1 Corinthians 14:2 NKJV For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.

5.5.1.11. Speaking in tongues is a means by which the Holy Spirit intercedes through us in prayer.

1 Corinthians 14:14 NKJV For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

Romans 8:26 NKJV Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

5.5.1.12. Speaking in tongues is a spiritual gift for 'singing in the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:15 NKJV What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

Ephesians 5:18-19 NKJV

18 And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,
19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

5.5.1.13. The Apostle Paul was thankful to God for the privilege of speaking in tongues.

1 Corinthians 14:18 NKJV I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

5.5.1.14. The Apostle Paul desired that all would speak in tongues

1 Corinthians 14:5 NKJV I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

5.5.1.15. Speaking in tongues is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 12:10 NKJV to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

5.5.1.16. The Apostle Paul ordered that speaking in tongues should not be forbidden.

1 Corinthians 14:39 NKJV Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

5.5.1.17. Isaiah prophetically refers to speaking in tongues as rest.

1 Corinthians 14:21 NKJV In the law it is written: "WITH MEN OF OTHER TONGUES AND OTHER LIPS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE; AND YET, FOR ALL THAT, THEY WILL NOT HEAR ME," says the Lord.

Isaiah 28:11-12 NKJV

11 For with stammering lips and another tongue He will speak to this people,
12 To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," And, "This is the refreshing"; Yet they would not hear.

5.5.1.18. Isaiah prophetically refers to speaking in tongues as a refreshing.

1 Corinthians 14:21 NKJV In the law it is written: "WITH MEN OF OTHER TONGUES AND OTHER LIPS I WILL SPEAK TO THIS PEOPLE; AND YET, FOR ALL THAT, THEY WILL NOT HEAR ME," says the Lord.

Isaiah 28:12 NKJV To whom He said, "This is the rest with which You may cause the weary to rest," And, "This is the refreshing"; Yet they would not hear.

5.5.1.19. Speaking in tongues follows as a confirmation of the Word of God when it is preached.

Mark 16:17 NKJV And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

Mark 16:20 NKJV And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.

6. Spiritual Growth



A Christian has come into a new relationship with God and others (Christians and non-Christians) through the cross of Jesus.

It is helpful to think of the two beams of the cross as representing our relationship with GOD and with MAN.

Our Relationship with GOD is represented by the vertical beam.

This relationship needs to be grounded in the WORD of GOD and reaches up in PRAYER; PRAISE and WORSHIP (sitting at the feet of Jesus, waiting on the Lord, quiet time,...). Notice that this is the largest beam. Our relationship with God is the most important one that we have. It is through

the WORD of GOD, PRAYER; PRAISE and WORSHIP that we grow strong in our relationship with God. (God speaks to us through the Word and the Holy Spirit; we speak to God through Prayer; Praise and Worship.)

Our Relationship with MAN is represented by the horizontal beam.

We are to reach out to Christians and non-Christians. We FELLOWSHIP with our brothers and sisters and WITNESS the love and power of God to the world around us. Notice that the horizontal beam rests on the vertical one this is how it must be. Our relationship with Man must be supported by our relationship with God. Our relationship with God is the strength and stay of our lives. It is because of this relationship that we can relate to others. Because God loves me, I can love others; Because God has forgiven me, I can forgive others etc. (1 John 5:19; Eph 4:32, Math 6:12).

We may consider our Vertical relationship with God as the INPUT and our Horizontal relationship with Man as the OUTPUT.

It is important that we have our PRIORITIES right. (INPUT before OUTPUT.) We know from home economics that the INPUT must exceed the OUTPUT.

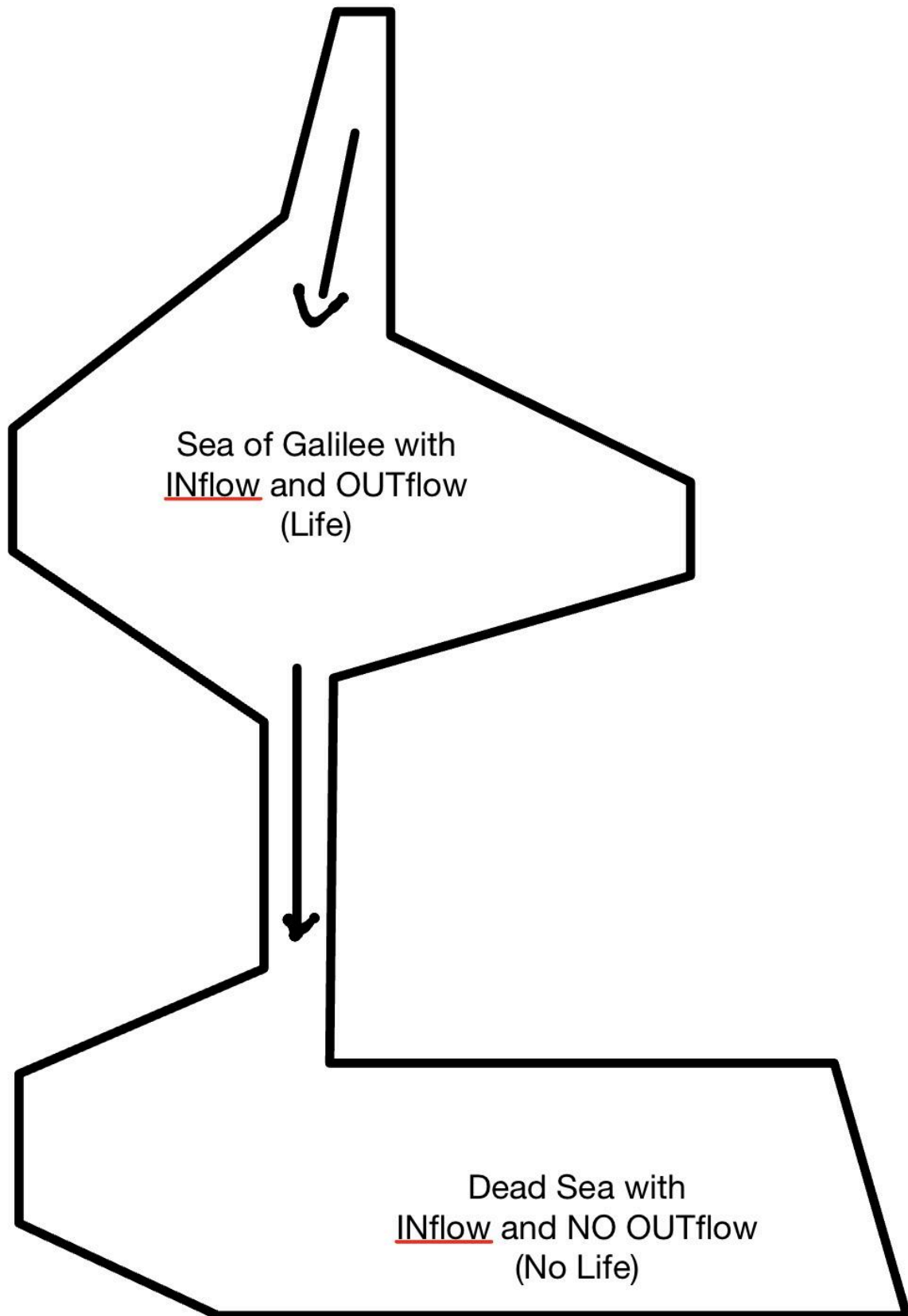
IF THE OUTPUT EXCEEDS THE INPUT THE UPKEEP WILL BE YOUR
DOWNFALL!

Our fellowship with God is more important than our fellowship with men;

It is very essential that we have BOTH. (INPUT and OUTPUT).

Our fellowship with God is the source of our strength and life.

We must continually feed our relationship with God, however this relationship must also overflow into meaningful relationships with people. In the land of Palestine there are two seas: the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. These two seas are wonderful illustrations of this truth. The Sea of Galilee supports life in abundance; the Dead Sea is too salty to support any life at all. Both are fed by the River Jordan, however the important difference is that the Sea of Galilee has both an INflow and an OUTflow; the Dead Sea has only an INflow with NO OUTflow. See Diagram:



NOTE:

- If we have an INflow with no OUTflow we will stagnate.
- If we have an INflow and an OUTflow but the OUTflow exceeds the INflow we will dry up.
- If we have an INflow and an OUTflow and the INflow exceeds the OUTflow we will grow up.

6.1.THE WORD OF GOD

Our relationship with God must be based on the WORD OF GOD.

Jesus said.

Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV)

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

When we come to know Jesus, the Bible "opens up to us" in a new way. It becomes a PERSONAL letter to us. To the natural person, the Bible is a closed book. It is impossible to understand with the natural mind. It needs to be illumined by the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 14:26 (NKJV) 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 things that I said to you.

You may have tried to read the Bible before you became Christian and found it dull and uninteresting. Now that you are a Christian the Bible will be 'alive' and wonderfully relevant to your life.

If you picked up a letter that was not addressed to you, and didn't know who wrote it, it would not mean much to you. However, we all enjoy reading letters addressed to us from our friends.

Consider the Bible as God's love letter to you and treat it as such. Read it eagerly; carry it with you; treasure it - even sleep with it under your pillow.

We rejoice over love letters because they are the words of the one we love. When we read them, we think of the one we love. Treat your Bible in the same way - it is the word of the one you love.

The Bible is GOD'S LOVE LETTER TO YOU. It would be good for you to write in the front of your Bible 'To Dear _____ ' (and write your own name) and at the end of the Bible 'Love from God.

Nothing will be more important to you than the Word of God. No other book, magazine, newspaper, activity, recreation, friend or loved one, will ever have the right to demand so much, or the power to contribute so much in your life as the Scriptures. BUILD YOUR LIFE ON THE BIBLE.

Neglect the Bible and you neglect your own soul. Read it and obey it, and you will enhance your own life while blessing countless others.

Winkie Pratney says in his book 'Doorways to Discipleship', "There is no way to follow Jesus without also knowing and loving the Book He gave us. It is no accident that both Jesus and the Bible are called 'the Word of God'. Both speak with power and authority. Both are fully true and trustworthy... We do not love Jesus more than we really love His Word. We do not obey Jesus more than we obey His Word. We do not know God any more than we want to know His Word!"

The Bible is a unique book. The books of other religions express man's search for God; the Bible expresses God's communication to man.

The name 'Bible' comes from the Greek word 'Biblia' which means books. As its name implies, the Bible is actually a collection of books (66 in all) written over a time span of at least one thousand years by 40 human authors who were inspired by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,

Jesus said.....

Matthew 4:4 (NKJV) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE BY BREAD ALONE, BUT BY EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS FROM THE MOUTH OF GOD.' "

Paul said.

Colossians 3:16 (NKJV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Ezekiel 3:1-4 (NKJV)

1 Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."

2 So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll.

3 And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you." So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

4 Then He said to me: "Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them.

The Prophet Ezekiel was told by God that before he could share God's Word he needed to eat it! (it needed to become a part of him).

Job places his value on the Word of God...

Job 23:12 (NKJV)

12 I have not departed from the commandment of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth More than my necessary food.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 (NKJV) For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

Notice that this verse says IF we believe, receive, accept the Word of God it will work IN us.

What does the Word of God do for those who receive it?

6.1.1. We are SAVED by the WORD of GOD.

1 Peter 1:23-25 (NKJV)

23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,

24 because "ALL FLESH IS AS GRASS, AND ALL THE GLORY OF MAN AS THE FLOWER OF THE GRASS. THE GRASS WITHERS, AND ITS FLOWER FALLS AWAY, 25 BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you.

6.1.2. We GROW by the WORD of GOD

1 Peter 2:2 (NKJV) as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,

6.1.3. We are CHANGED by the WORD of GOD

2 Corinthians 3:18 (NKJV) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

James 1:21 (NKJV) Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls (*minds*).

The Word of God changes us by renewing our minds. It renews our attitudes about the world, people and ourselves. Psychologists tell us that we all have a SELF IMAGE (a

personal view of ourselves). Experiments have shown it to be true that we cannot act consistently contrary to our own self image. The Bible says.

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV) For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you, But his heart is not with you.

When we read the Word of God, and believe it our behavior has to change.

We all need our minds FLUSHED from wrong, negative, worldly attitudes and reprogrammed with the positive word of TRUTH. Some people object that Christianity brainwashes people. In a sense that's true. But if you have dirty brains they need to be washed. Who better to wash our brains than the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God?

6.1.4. We are CLEANSED by the WORD of GOD

Ephesians 5:26 (NKJV) that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,

John 15:3 (NKJV) You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

John 17:17 (NKJV) Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

6.1.5. We are KEPT by the WORD of GOD

Psalms 119:9-11 (NKJV)

9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Someone has said, "This Book will keep you from sin; or sin will keep you from this Book."

6.1.6. We DEFEAT the DEVIL by the WORD of GOD

Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Revelation 12:11 (NKJV) And they overcame him (*Satan*) by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

Jesus spoke the Word of God to the Devil when he came to tempt Him. (see Matt 4).

6.1.7. We BUILD FAITH by the WORD of GOD

Romans 10:17 (NKJV) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Faith in God is simply faith in His Word. The more we know His Word the stronger our faith in Him becomes.

6.1.8. HEALING comes through the WORD of GOD

Psalms 107:20 (NKJV) He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.

Proverbs 4:20-23 (NKJV)

20 My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings.

21 Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart;

22 For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their flesh.

23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

6.1.9. PROSPERITY comes through the WORD of GOD

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV) This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

Prosperity here doesn't mean money as such but success in what we do.

Psalms 1:2-3 (NKJV)

2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree Planted by the rivers of water, That brings forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also shall not wither; And whatever he does shall prosper.

Acts 20:32 (NKJV) "So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

6.1.10. JOY comes through the WORD of GOD

Jeremiah 15:16 (NKJV) Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.

6.2. WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE WORD OF GOD

As we saw, the bible provides our daily spiritual food and helps us to grow in the Lord. Let's have a look at some things we should do to have our daily bread.

6.2.1. READING the Word

The Bible is a set of books. We are to read them through. Before reading His Word we should pray and ask the Lord to speak to us and show us things.

There are many bible reading plans available. One can read through the bible in one year, two years, etc..

For the Missional Communities we send out a weekly bible reading plan. When flowing the non-optional scriptures one can read through the bible in 3 years. With the optional scriptures Some parts of the bible are read through more than once per year.

We usually use a section from that plan when we gather together to study it.

6.2.2. STUDYING it eagerly

Acts 17:11 (NKJV) These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

When you study the Word and even when you listen to sermons WRITE DOWN what God shows you. Keep a note book.

6.2.3. MEMORIZE it

Commit to memory key verses and even complete passages of the Scripture. This will help us in our walk and battles we face.

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.

Proverbs 7:1-3 (NKJV)

1 My son, keep my words, And treasure my commands within you.

2 Keep my commands and live, And my law as the apple of your eye.

3 Bind them on your fingers; Write them on the tablet of your heart.

Deuteronomy 11:18 (NKJV) "Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

6.2.4. MEDITATE on it

Psalms 1:2 (NKJV) But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night.

Joshua 1:8 (NKJV) This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

The Hebrew word translated meditate actually means 'to MUTTER'. We need to mutter to ourselves the Word of God! As a cow chews her cud we need to turn the Word over and over in our minds. Often we will find that meditation is punctuated by prayer, or changes into prayer almost unconsciously. THINK YET OVER, PRAY IT IN.

6.2.5. PRAY it

When God gives us verses in the bible we then can use them to pray. We can also remind the Lord of the things He has promised us in the bible.

2 Samuel 7:25 (NKJV) "Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning Your servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said.

Acts 4:23-31 is a good example of this where the church, praying in unity, use scripture in their prayer.

6.2.6. SPEAK it out

The Bible word CONFESS means to 'say the same thing as. It is important that we Speak the Word of God.

Mark 11:23 (NKJV) For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says.

Hebrews 13:5-6 (NKJV)

5 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU."

6 So we may boldly say: "THE LORD IS MY HELPER; I WILL NOT FEAR. WHAT CAN MAN DO TO ME?"

The Word of God becomes the sword of the spirit when it is IN OUR MOUTH.

Ephesians 6:17 (NKJV) And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Also see Rev 1:16; Rom 10:8-10; 2 Cor 4:13; Prov 6:2.

6.2.7. OBEY it

Larry Richards says in his book 'Born to Grow'. "Scripture always connects God's revelation and our response of obedience. Sometimes the word. 'obedience' brings up a rather grim picture. We visualize a sullen child or a slave, forced to do something against his will by a bitter and angry adult. The very idea of 'command' conveys overtones of force and coercion, and an intense desire to be free.

But the Bible maintains a very different tone. It's the tone of a Person who speaks out strongly, but is always in love. It's the tone of a Person who knows what's best, and who wants to warn us away from anything that might harm us. So in the Old Testament, God reminds His people through Moses, 'The Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.

Deuteronomy 6:24 (NKJV) And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.

God's commands were given that we might live - and live abundantly. For that Word to enrich our lives and to 'preserve us alive' we have to respond with obedience to the words He speaks.

James 1:22 (NKJV) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Matthew 7:24-27 (NKJV)

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Make a firm decision for prompt, happy, unquestioning obedience to every instruction you find applying to you.

In the Old Testament, there is the beautiful story of Jehoiachim, King of Judah, who had been exiled in Babylon. One day his royal captor freed him, just as you and I have been freed. Then we read, 'And every day of his life he dined regularly at the King's table? (2 kings 25:29)

We have seen that the Word of God is our food. It is our privilege to "dine at the King's table." Let us not neglect this wonderful privilege.