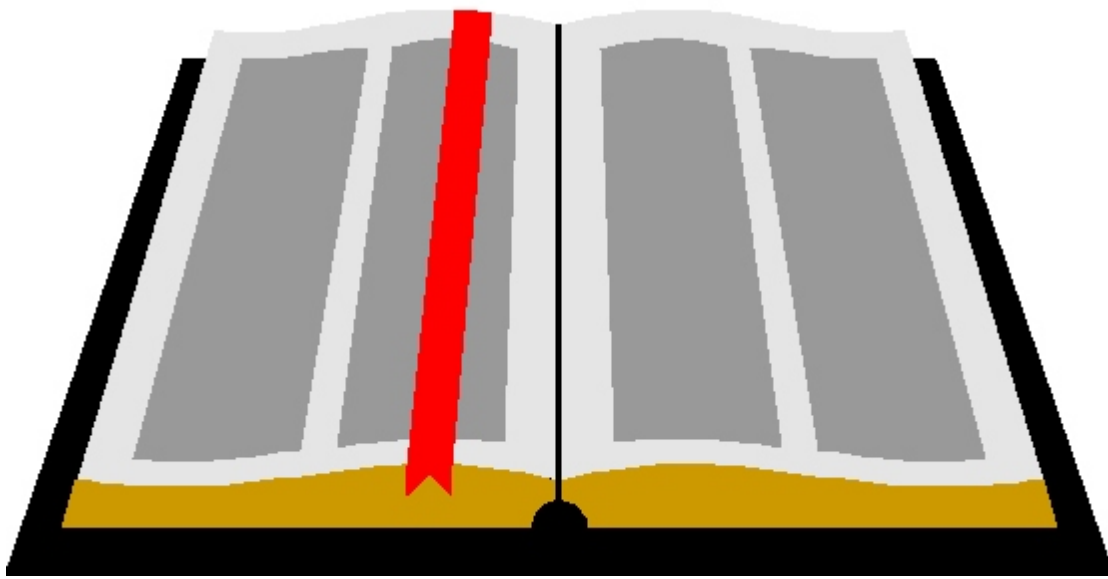


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# Sermons of Truth and Reason



## Volume IV: Complete Outlines

*Outlines That You Can Preach*

Gene Taylor

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# Paradoxes of the Cross of Christ

**Text: Philippians 2:1-13**

## **Introduction**

1. The cross on which Jesus died:
  - a. Has become a symbol of the Christian's hope. (Gal. 6:14)
  - b. Represents the whole mission and life of Christ—All His life and the totality of His earthly work pointed to the cross. (1 Tim. 1:15; Heb. 9:22)
2. The death of Jesus on the cross is a paradox.
  - a. Paradox: a statement that is seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense and yet is true; something (as a person, condition, or act) with seemingly contradictory qualities of phases.
  - b. Some paradoxes of Christ's cross.
    - 1) It was the greatest event in history while at the same time it was the worse event in history.
    - 2) It was the greatest act of love while being the greatest act of hate.
    - 3) It was both a display of light and a display of darkness.
3. That the death of Jesus upon the cross is paradoxical is not surprising because His entire life was a paradox.
  - a. Not much of His life made sense to men yet it makes the greatest of sense to those who are spiritually-minded. (1 Cor. 1:18)
  - b. Christ had everything to lose and nothing to gain (Phil. 2:5-8), yet man had all to gain and nothing more to lose because he had already lost his soul. (Rom. 5:8-9; 3:23; 6:23)
  - c. Though He stood to lose all, yet the great love of Jesus prompted Him to come to this earth.
4. This lesson will present some of the paradoxes of the life of Jesus Christ.

## **I. Paradoxes of the Life (Cross) of Jesus Christ**

- A. Jesus came into the world (1 Tim. 1:15; Matt. 20:28) that we may enter into heaven (John 14:1-3; 2 Cor. 5:11).
- B. Jesus was born in the flesh (John 1:14; 1 John 4:2-3) that we may be born of the Spirit (John 3:5; 1 Pet. 1:23).
- C. Jesus was born of woman (Gal. 4:4; Isa. 7:14) that we may be born of God (John 1:11-12; 1 John 5:4).
- D. Jesus became Son of Man (Phil. 2:5-8; Luke 19:10) that we may be sons of God (1 John 3:1; 2:29; Gal. 4:6).
- E. Jesus accepted poverty (2 Cor. 8:9; Luke 9:58) that we may be made rich (2 Cor. 8:9; Eph. 2:7).
- F. Jesus was rejected of men (John 1:11-12; Isa. 53:3) that we may be accepted of God (Eph. 3:6; Acts 10:34).
- G. Jesus became the man of sorrows (Isa. 53:3; Matt. 23:37) that we may rejoice and be glad (Phil. 4:4; 1 Pet. 4:13).

- H. Jesus was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:22-24) that we may be righteous of God (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 John 3:7).
- I. Jesus was put to death (Luke 24:46; Matt. 16:21) that we may be made alive (Col. 2:13; Eph. 2:1).
- J. Jesus was cursed on earth (Gal. 3:13; Isa. 53:7-8) that we may be blessed above (Gal. 3:14; Rev. 14:13).

### **Conclusion**

1. One of the most beautiful songs, both words and music, we sing is, “When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.”
  - a. If you note especially the last verse, think of how little the Lord requires of us for Him who gave His all for us.
  - b. Another paradox.
2. A realization of the greatness of Jesus and His sacrifice, should cause:
  - a. The one outside of Christ to fall before Him in humble obedience and submission.
  - b. The Christian to increase His love and service for the Lord and His cause.

# The Power of Example

## I. The Importance of Example

- A. We are creatures of imitation.
  - 1. The old adage, “Like father like son” is normally true.
  - 2. This explains why examples are important in life.
- B. The power of example is very great.
  - 1. It is one of the greatest powers known to man.
  - 2. It is a power that all possess, a force all must handle.
  - 3. The Bible recognizes the great power of example for both good and evil.
    - a. Good examples in Scripture.
      - 1) Godliness: Noah. (Gen. 6-7)
      - 2) Faith: Abraham. (Heb. 11:8-10)
      - 3) Patience: Job. (Job 1-2)
      - 4) Courage: Daniel. (Dan. 6)
      - 5) Endurance: Moses. (Heb. 11:23-27)
      - 6) Leadership: Joshua. (Jud. 24:31)
    - b. Bad examples in Scripture.
      - 1) The ten spies. (Num. 13-14) They influenced a whole nation by their lack of faith and courage.
      - 2) Korah. (Num. 16) Because of Korah’s evil influence, God destroyed Korah, Dathan, Abiram, their families, 250 men, and 14,700 others.
      - 3) The Pharisees in the time of Jesus. (Matt. 6:2-8; 23:1-3)
- C. Someone has said, “Precepts tell us our duty, examples show us that it is possible.”
  - 1. The Bible gives us many examples that illustrate the great principles of truth by which we are to live letting us know that we can live godly.
  - 2. One of the main reasons we possess the Old Testament is so that we can learn from the examples it contains. (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6)
  - 3. Jesus is set before us in the New Testament as the perfect example for us to follow. (1 Pet. 2:21-25)
- D. The apostle Paul understood the importance of example.
  - 1. He was aware of his own example. (1 Thes. 2:10-12; 1 Cor. 11:1)
  - 2. He commanded others to set a proper example. (Titus 2:7-8; 1 Tim. 4:12)

## II. Christians Are to Be Examples

- A. Christians are to be the “light of the world.” (Matt. 5:14-16) Could this teaching any plainer?
  - 1. Those who claim to be Christians are influencing people in one way or another.
  - 2. As Christians, we must realize the world is judging Christianity by us.
  - 3. Thomas Jefferson, in writing to John Adams, “I always judge a man’s religion by his life..., for it is from our lives and not our words, that our religion must be read.”

B. 1 Timothy 4:12 reveals those areas in which Christians are to be examples.

1. **Word.** Be careful what you say and how you say it.
2. **Manner of life.** Never forget that people are observing your life.
3. **Love.** For God, Christ and your fellow man.
4. **Spirit.** What kind of attitudes do you have? Are you an optimist or pessimist?
5. **Faith.** Is it weak or strong? Is it little or great?
6. **Purity.** Can people see in you a desire to remain unspotted from the world or do they see a longing to engage in worldly things?

# The Blessing of Forgiveness

**Text: Psalm 32:1-5**

## **Introduction**

1. The 32<sup>nd</sup> Psalm is one of seven written by David after his terrible sin with Bathsheba.
2. If there were ever a story that shows the folly of sin, it is that of David and Bathsheba. (2 Sam. 11, 12)
3. From the story of David and Bathsheba, we learn that sin:
  - a. Produces guilt. (Psa. 51:3)
  - b. Makes one feel unclean. (Psa. 51:2, 7)
  - c. Makes one feel crushed. (Psa. 51:8)
  - d. Separates one from God. (Isa. 59:1-2)
  - e. Brings punishment. David suffered:
    - 1) The loss of his child. (2 Sam. 12:5; 14-15)
    - 2) The loss of peace. (2 Sam. 12:10)
    - 3) The loss of his honor. (2 Sam. 12:11)
4. With sin so bad, certainly it is a great blessing to have it forgiven.
5. This lesson will look at the blessing of forgiveness of sins and how it is attained.

## **I. The Blessing of Forgiveness of Sins**

- A. The word “blessing” in both the Hebrew and the Greek means “happiness.”
  1. This is not just a superficial joy but a deep, lasting joy that is not affected by the problems of life.
  2. It is illustrated by the “beatitudes” in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5)
- B. Why so much happiness? Because the sinner has been:
  1. Cleansed. (Acts 22:16; Eph. 5:26)
  2. Delivered. (Col. 1:13)
  3. Given a gift. (Eph. 2:8-9)
    - a. Its value is seen in its purchase price. (1 Pet. 1:18-19)
    - b. The soul is more valuable than all the wealth in the world. (Matt. 16:26)
  4. Adopted. (Rom. 8:14-16)
  5. Cured. (Luke 4:23)
  6. Reconciled. (2 Cor. 5:17-19)

## **II. How Sin Is Forgiven**

- A. Sin is not forgiven by:
  1. Denial. (1 John 1:8-10)
  2. Concealment. (Heb. 4:13)
  3. Forgetting it. (2 Pet. 3:8)
  4. Running away from it. (Psa. 139:7-12)
  5. Doing good deeds. (Acts 10)

B. Sin is forgiven:

1. By belief in and obedience to Jesus Christ and His gospel. (John 8:24; Rom. 1:16)
2. For the one who is outside of Christ by:
  - a. Hearing the gospel. (Rom. 10:17)
  - b. Believing in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. (John 8:24)
  - c. Repenting of one's sins. (Acts 17:30-31)
  - d. Confessing belief in Jesus. (Rom. 10:10)
  - e. Being baptized for the remission of sins. (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38)
3. For the Christian who has sinned by:
  - a. Repenting. (Acts 8:22)
  - b. Confessing one's sins. (Jas. 5:16; 1 John 1:9)
  - c. Prayer. (Acts 8:22, 24)

**Conclusion**

1. God has set before us happiness or unhappiness.
  - a. Happiness for those who have forgiveness of sins.
  - b. Unhappiness for those who do not have that forgiveness.
2. Which do you choose?



# A Changed Person

**Text: 2 Corinthians 5:17**

## **Introduction**

1. Many changes occur when a person becomes a Christian.
2. The one who is in Christ is a new creature, a changed person.
3. This lesson will consider some of those changes and how they are brought about.

## **I. A Carnal Person Becomes a Spiritual Person**

- A. Romans 8:6 (KJV). “To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.” (See 1 Cor. 3:1-3)
- B. This is a change of *mind* brought about by faith. (Rom. 10:17; 1 Cor. 2:9ff)
  1. Faith prompts one to have the mind of Christ. (Phil. 2:5)
  2. Faith which recognizes the superiority of God’s thoughts. (Isa. 55:8-9)
  3. Faith that leads to a willingness to be led by the Spirit. (Rom. 8:14)

## **II. A Person Who Loves the World Becomes One Who Loves God**

- A. One is to love God, not the world. (1 John 2:15-17; Matt. 22:37)
- B. This is a change of *affection* brought about by God’s love. (1 John 4:8, 10, 19)
- C. The love of God is demonstrated by obedience. (John 14:15)

## **III. A Person Who Follows Man’s Ways Becomes One Who Follows God’s Way**

- A. Consider Jeremiah 10:23; Proverbs 14:12; and Isaiah 55:8-9.
- B. One realizes he cannot direct his own way so he depends on the word of God for directions.
- C. This is a change of *will* brought about by repentance. (Acts 17:30; 2 Pet. 3:9)

## **IV. A Person Who Is a Friend of the World Becomes a Friend of Christ**

- A. One cannot be a friend of God and the world at the same time. (Jas. 4:4; Matt. 6:24; 12:30)
- B. This is a change of *allegiance* brought about by confessing Christ. (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

## **V. A Person Who Is a Child of the Devil Becomes a Child of God**

- A. It is obvious that one cannot be a child of God and a child of Satan at the same time. (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8)
- B. This is a change in *relationship* that takes place in baptism. (Gal. 3:26-27)

## **VI. A Citizen of the Power of Darkness Becomes a Citizen of the Kingdom of God’s Son**

- A. Consider John 12:46; Acts 26:15-18; and 1 Peter 2:9.
- B. This is a change of citizenship brought about by a translation.
- C. One is delivered from the power of darkness and translated, conveyed, into the kingdom of Christ.

**Conclusion**

1. A sinner becomes a saved person.
2. One who had been serving sin is now serving righteousness. (Rom. 6:17-18)
3. Where he had been on the broad way leading to destruction, he is now on the straitened way that leads to life. (Matt. 7:13-14)
4. Some questions:
  - a. Are you a changed person?
  - b. Are you a new creation in Christ?

# Can I Know That I Am Saved?

## Introduction

1. Every person with a sense of spiritual values is interested in the answer to the question which serves as the title to our lesson.
  - a. It is not unusual that this question should be asked, even among children of God.
  - b. One of the ways in which Satan operates to the discouragement and ultimate destruction of some of the offspring of God is to raise doubts and fears about the safety of their soul.
2. To properly answer this question, the correct standard must be used.
  - a. Any answer, for it to be correct, must be using the proper criteria.
  - b. In answering this question, people usually choose one of two standards—one's feelings or the word of God.
3. Which standard, feelings or God's word, is correct.

## I. Are Feelings Evidence of Salvation?

- A. Often when a person depends upon feelings to assure him that he is redeemed, when his feelings change, he begins to doubt his salvation.
- B. This is not the Biblical basis of the evidence of pardon.
  1. Because forgiveness of sins takes place in the mind of God not in our bodily feelings. (Heb. 10:15-17)
    - a. One might be led by his feelings to conclude he is a child of God.
    - b. In reality, God still remembered his iniquities.
  2. Feelings are based upon testimony which may or may not be correct.
    - a. Jacob believed misinformation about Joseph, that he had been devoured by an animal. (Gen. 37:34)
    - b. If one is misled by a false teacher, his feelings will react to his erroneous testimony.
      - 1) Based on the testimony of the false teacher, one may feel good but he is deceived.
      - 2) The one misled still retains his sins.
  3. Feelings as evidence of salvation use circular reasoning as their basis.
    - a. "How do you know you are saved?"
    - b. "By the way I feel."
    - c. "How do you feel?"
    - d. "I feel good."
    - e. "Why do you feel good?"
    - f. "Because I know I am saved."
  4. Feelings have never been a correct standard upon which to make any determination.
    - a. Jeremiah 10:23. One cannot depend on his feelings to direct his steps in life.
    - b. Jeremiah 17:9. One cannot depend on his own heart to lead him in the right way.
    - c. Proverbs 14:12. A way might seem right and yet it may be wrong and lead to death.
    - d. Proverbs 30:12. One may feel like he is pure but may be filthy in God's eyes.
    - e. Proverbs 28:26. It is foolish for a person to trust feelings for evidence of salvation.
    - f. Isaiah 55:8-9. Since God does not think like man, man's thinking and feelings are unreliable.

## II. Knowing One Is Saved by Using the Word of God: The Testimony of Two Witnesses

- A. From the testimony of two witnesses, one can ascertain whether or not he is a child of God, thus an heir to eternal salvation. (Rom. 8:16-17)
  1. God's Spirit and man's spirit testify together to the assurance that one is a child of God.
    - a. It is not a case of one witness—God's Spirit—testifying alone to man.
    - b. The evidence of pardon depends upon the agreement of both the spirit of man and the Spirit of God.
- B. The testimony of the Spirit.
  1. In what manner does God's Spirit testify?
    - a. It is not in dreams, visions or still, small voices.
    - b. 1 Timothy 4:1. "Now the Spirit expressly says..."
    - c. That which is to be understood from the Spirit's testimony comes from what the Spirit has plainly said.
      - 1) Thus, we must learn how the Spirit speaks.
      - 2) Pertinent passages in the gospel of John as to how the Spirit speaks: 15:26; 16:7-8, 13.
  2. The witness of the Spirit was first delivered on the Pentecost recorded in Acts 2.
    - a. On that day, sinners were convicted of sin, righteousness and judgment by the Spirit's testimony. (37)
    - b. The testimony of the Spirit was given through the word preached by the inspired apostles. (4, 14, 22, 29, 37)
    - c. This accurately fulfilled the promise of Jesus. (Matt. 10:20)
  3. The testimony of the Spirit was characteristic of the inspired writers of the Old Testament.
    - a. The Hebrew writer, 10:15-17, quoted from Jeremiah 31:31ff.
      - 1) He said that it was the testimony of the Holy Spirit.
      - 2) Therefore, the Holy Spirit testified through the writings of Jeremiah.
    - b. See 2 Peter 1:20-21.
  4. Through the writings of the inspired men of the New Testament the Holy Spirit bears witness which has to do with the assurance of one's salvation.
- C. The testimony of man.
  1. How does man's spirit offer testimony with God's Spirit?
  2. The spirit of man bears witness as to what an individual has, or has not, done.
  3. This is a matter of conscience known only to the person's own spirit. (1 Cor. 2:11)
- D. When God's Spirit testifies in the inspired writings as to what man must do in order to receive God's grace, and the spirit of the individual testifies that he has met those conditions of grace, the joint testimony of the two witnesses assures that person of his salvation.
  1. 1 John 2:3. We can know Christ only if we keep His commandments.
  2. 1 John 5:13. A person can know that he has eternal life by the things which are written in God's book, the Bible.

### Conclusion

1. Your feelings are not proof or evidence of salvation.
2. The testimony of the Spirit of God, in the word of God, and the testimony of your spirit, can provide you with ample evidence of the salvation of your soul.

# “Buy the Truth and Do Not Sell It”

**Text: Proverbs 23:23**

## **Introduction**

1. In this proverb is a principle which is as applicable today as it was when first spoken thousands of years ago.
2. Keil and Delitzsch, commenting on the text, “To buy the truth, i.e. to shun no expense, no privation, no effort, in order to attain to the possession of wisdom; and to sell it not, i.e. not to place it over against any earthly possession, worldly gain, sensual enjoyment.”
3. Although spoken before the gospel was first preached in its fulness, these words of wisdom present several fundamental concepts which can be found repeatedly in the New Testament.

## **I. Buying: Counting the Cost**

- A. Buying the truth may involve several things.
  1. Jesus clearly taught that there would be some expense involved in becoming a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.
  2. One may be called upon to:
    - a. Sacrifice “social prestige.”
    - b. Surrender things which are momentarily pleasurable in order to receive a more enduring kind of happiness and fulfillment.
    - c. Surrender financial security.
    - d. Cease to be involved in questionable practices which might be profitable to those who are not Christians.
    - e. Be estranged from family or close friends. (Luke 14:26; Matt. 10:34-39)
- B. One needs to count the cost that may be involved. (Luke 14:27-33)
  1. One who intends to wait until it will be easy for him to change and become a Christian, when he will not have to give up anything, or until there is nothing left to prevent him from so doing, will likely go to his grave still waiting.
  2. One needs to calculate the stakes involved and act accordingly.
- C. “One pearl of great price.”
  1. Consider Matthew 13:45-46.
  2. Whatever the cost of discovering the truth, it is not “worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. 8:18)

## **II. Not Selling**

- A. A sad fact about human nature.
  1. We have a tendency to lose our zeal, or our sense of perspective and value, as time progresses.
  2. Centuries of church history bear witness to the multitudes who, having once grasped the truth, did not hold it fast to the end.
  3. The Scriptures warn against this tendency. (Heb. 3:12; 6:11-12; Rev. 2:10)

B. Selling it out: apostasy.

1. Jesus taught that there would be many who having once heard the truth would have it “choked” out. (Luke 8:14-15)
2. In our time there are many example of those who have sold out the gospel and their spiritual inheritance.
  - a. Through discouragement.
  - b. For the praise of men.
  - c. Out of a love for the world.
  - d. Out of a love for the wisdom of the world.
  - e. Out of a love for the pleasures of the world.
  - f. Because of the hypocrisy and abuses of others.
3. It is better to never have known the truth than to buy it and then sell it out. (2 Pet. 2:20-22)

C. Selling it short

1. This occurs more often than common apostasy.
2. Because of its subtle nature it is more apt to affect faithful Christians.
3. In reality, it is selling short the power of the gospel to save those who believe it. (Rom. 1:16)
4. It is thinking that people cannot be saved without magnificent edifices, mass communication programs, social activities or entertainment, etc.

**Conclusion**

May we encourage others to “buy the truth,” paying whatever price may be necessary, and may we strengthen our own resolve to “not sell it” come what may.

# “By Nature Children of Wrath”

Text: Ephesians 2:3

## Introduction

1. In Ephesians 2:3, prior to their salvation by grace, the Ephesians had been “by nature children of wrath.”
2. This statement poses several fundamental questions.
  - a. Was the apostle Paul teaching that people are sinners by *natural generation*, that they were *born sinners*?
  - b. Did Paul mean that people’s *inherited constitution* was corrupt?
3. Much of the Protestant world has taken it for granted, because of tradition, that “by nature” means by *birth*, by natural inheritance.
  - a. The doctrine of total hereditary depravity, a cardinal point of Calvinism, underlies much of the religious teaching of our day.
  - b. Such is not taught anywhere in the word of God.
4. The true sense of this passage can be learned only by considering the setting in which it appears.
  - a. Unless one is reading the text with the bias of Calvinism, he will not find anything the Ephesians had inherited from Adam.
  - b. If one views the text properly, he will see the condition of the Ephesians before their conversion was attained *by their own actions*.

## I. A Summary of the Text and Its Context

- A. The state of the Ephesians before their conversion had been incurred by their own sins.
  1. They were “dead in your trespasses and sins.” (2:1)
    - a. Their status was not because of Adam’s sins but their own.
    - b. Sins, one’s own sins, separate one from God. (Isa. 59:1-2)
  2. They were dead in their own sins because of what they had *done*, their own conduct. They had:
    - a. “Walked” after the ways of the world and Satan. (2:2)
    - b. “Lived” in lust. (2:3)
    - c. Fulfilled “the desires of the flesh and of the mind.” (2:3)
- B. The very nature of the conduct of the Ephesians had been sinful.
  1. It was made so by their walking, living and indulging, or fulfilling, the lust of the flesh.
  2. “Nature” does not refer to their nature by birth but to the nature, character, of their deeds.
  3. Living in sinful ways had become their customary, habitual practice.
    - a. Notice: they had *become* this way.
    - b. Nothing indicates they had been born that way.
- C. A summary: You were, by the very nature of your actions, children of wrath.

## II. A Consideration of the Greek “*Phusis*” Which Is Translated “Nature”

- A. While it is true that “*phusis*” can and does at times denote an inherited nature but it does not always do so.

- B. **Phusis:** “c. A mode of feeling or acting which by long habit has become nature.” (Joseph Thayer, *Greek English Lexicon of the NT*)
1. This definition best fits the text.
  2. The “mode of feeling and acting” (walking after the ways of the world and Satan, living in lust, indulging the desires of the flesh) of the Ephesians had “by long habit” become “nature” to them.
- C. Thus, the Ephesians were subjects of God’s wrath.

### III. A Consideration of Other Scriptures

- A. From the Biblical explanations of sin, one can see that sin is not something one inherits by birth but rather is something one practices.
1. “Sin is transgression of the law.” (1 John 3:4)
  2. “All unrighteousness is sin.” (1 John 5:17) Unrighteousness is something a person does. (1 John 3:7-8)
  3. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” (Rom. 14:23) Faith is something one exercises.
- B. Jesus partook of the fleshly nature of man. (Heb. 2:14)
1. He was of Adam’s lineage. (Luke 3:38)
  2. He was certainly not “by nature” (birth) a child of wrath.

### Conclusion

1. A person is not corrupt and sinful due to an inheritance of guilt from Adam but through his own actions.
2. Consider Ezekiel 18:20.
  - a. This text exactly describes the situations of the Ephesians in the text.
  - b. It describes the situation of all who attain to an accountable status before God.



# Behavior at Services

## Introduction

1. True worship, extended in the proper manner and spirit, will greatly edify us and intensify our hope.
  - a. Worship that is “played at” is not only impotent but also tends to worsen our spirituality because of the awareness of our own hypocrisy.
  - b. To feign worship to God is a serious matter. (1 Cor. 11:30)
2. When saints assemble Jesus is with them in a special way. (Matt. 18:20) Therefore:
  - a. Whatever is done at worship services is done openly before Him.
  - b. Whatever hinders His people from worshiping Him affects Him. (Matt. 25:31-46) [What is done to them is done to Him.]
3. Historically, as a people, we have had behavior problems at services.
  - a. Noise before.
  - b. Distractions during: in and out of restrooms, clipping of fingernails, note-passing, talking, etc.
4. The heart of the problem.
  - a. A lack of love? For some, especially young people. Some are only present because their parents make them come.
  - b. A lack of desire? I think not. Most who are present desire to please God.
  - c. A lack of appreciation for the sanctity of worship.
    - 1) Consider the priests of the Old Law.
    - 2) The attitude of many is too casual.
    - 3) Some equate worship services with attending school, going to work, or even going to the doctor or dentist.
5. This lesson will try to help improve our attitudes toward worship services in order to get all to behave properly during them.

## I. What Misbehavior During Services Reveals

- A. A lack of respect for the speaker.
  1. The preacher or Bible class teacher deserves respect because of the word. (Heb. 12:25-26)
    - a. When people act improperly during preaching or in a Bible class, they have a disregard for both the messenger and the message.
    - b. How would you like to have the situation reversed?
  2. Many young, and old, view the speaker with the same attitude with which they view a secular teaching.
  3. “But it’s so boring!”
    - a. What are you doing to make it interesting?
    - b. Do not place all the blame for a boring class, for example, on the teacher.
    - c. Get involved: ask questions, participate. Boring classes are two way streets.
- B. A lack of respect for parents.
  1. Young people: your parents have often suffered to give you life, to care for you when you could not care for yourself, to clothe you, feed you and stand by you.
  2. How do you think it makes them feel to learn you had caused a disturbance during Bible classes or preaching?
  3. Consider Proverbs 15:5 and do not be a fool.

- C. A lack of respect for those sitting nearby.
  - 1. It is hard to teach and to listen when there are distractions and disruptions all around.
  - 2. Misbehaving young people: you do not own the world all to yourselves. Be considerate of others.
  - 3. Visitors may be watching and judging the Lord's church by your actions.
- D. A lack of maturity.
  - 1. All young people are anxious to grow up and become adults.
  - 2. When young people misbehave, they are behaving like little children.
- E. A lack of respect for God.
  - 1. Worship assemblies are to praise and honor God. (John 4:24)
  - 2. Such actions as talking, giggling, laughing, gazing about, punching each other, writing notes, boy and girl making over one another, etc., show little respect for God.
  - 3. A sobering thought: it could cause you to lose your soul.

## II. Some Suggested Remedies

- A. Parents. Begin training early.
  - 1. Do not just teach children to be quiet. Teach them to reverence and respect God.
  - 2. Sit near the front where there are fewer distractions. Sit as a family.
  - 3. Do not let your children routinely go to the restroom.
  - 4. Do not let your children play.
    - a. Toddlers need something for entertainment but children five, six years old and up can sit quietly and listen and participate.
    - b. You will be amazed at how soon they will learn the words of songs and what they might glean from the lesson.
  - 5. See they get proper rest the night before.
  - 6. Set a good example before them.
    - a. Show interest and attention—be involved.
    - b. Do not sleep.
    - c. Speak highly of worship periods.
  - 7. Pray for God's help.
- B. Young people. Realize where you are and who is there.
  - 1. You are in the temple of the living God. (1 Cor. 3:16) [The building is not that temple. The assembled Christians are.]
  - 2. The Father and Son are present.
- C. All. Follow the advice of 2 Corinthians 10:5.

## Conclusion

- 1. Worship is a blessed privilege that should be guarded with love, zeal, and a realization of its worth and value.
- 2. What can be done about those who misbehave at services?
  - a. Best and easiest: young people to decide on their own, to grow up and act like the responsible people they would be proud to be.
  - b. Such is best for all concerned and the perfect solution.

# Lessons from the Tower of Babel

**Text: Genesis 11:1-9**

## **Introduction**

1. The text is an account of the building of the tower of Babel and the consequences of that action.
  - a. The story is brief but it is important.
  - b. This story has been repeated thousands of times on different occasions in the lives of men and women throughout the ages.
2. The lessons to be learned from the building and destruction of the tower of Babel is a needed lesson today. (See Ecclesiastes 1:9 - “there is nothing new under the sun.”)
  - a. A comparison of the conditions prevalent at the time of the tower of Babel that contributed to its construction and the condition of the majority of mankind today are identical in many respects.
  - b. Just as the people involved in building Babel’s tower, 21<sup>st</sup> century man has problems with the exaltation of human wisdom, human power and human achievements.

## **I. The Story of Babel**

- A. The people, all being of one language, proposed to build a tower at Shinar in order to:
  1. Make a name for themselves.
  2. Avoid dispersion.
- B. God intervened.
  1. The actions of the people were contrary to His will. (Gen. 1:28; 8:17)
  2. He halted the project.
    - a. He dispersed the people.
    - b. He confounded the language of the people.

## **II. How This Story Is Repeated**

- A. By man’s utter selfishness.
  1. Notice the emphasis of what the people said in verse four of the text: “Come, let *us* build *ourselves* a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let *us* make a name for *ourselves*, lest *we* be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.”
  2. From the very beginning man has wanted to make a name for himself. (Gen. 3:5-6)
  3. Self is at the very heart of sin.
    - a. Man’s downfall: selfish desires and ambitions and self-righteousness.
    - b. Some examples from Scripture.
      - 1) Naaman. (2 Kings 5:11)
      - 2) Saul of Tarsus. (Acts 22:4; 23:1; 26:9-11)
      - 3) The Jews. (Rom. 10:1-3)
  4. That same selfishness prevails today.
    - a. Many deal with God and others in such a way that “us” or “I” or “me” becomes basic in their philosophy of life.

- b. This attitude is very different from the philosophy of Christ. (Matt. 20:28; John 13:12-17; Phil. 2:1-8)
  - 5. When people are minded to do things their own way regardless of what God has to say, they are building “towers of Babel” that bring division and ultimately destruction.
- B. By man’s erroneous efforts to reach heaven.
  - 1. The plan of the people was to build a tower to reach into the heavens.
  - 2. Man’s efforts to reach heaven which originate in his own thoughts, ways and schemes still fall far short of God’s perfect standard of holiness. (Isa. 55:8-9)
  - 3. How sad it is that many people have not learned this lesson for many still deny God’s way of salvation and devise their own methods for reaching heaven. (John 14:6; Mark 16:16; Luke 6:46)
  - 4. Some “towers” of today.
    - a. Denominationalism. (Matt. 15:13)
    - b. Man-made methods of salvation which include:
      - 1) Calvinism.
      - 2) Salvation by faith only.
      - 3) Meritorious works.
      - 4) Unauthorized schemes of brethren.

### **III. The End Results of “Tower Building”**

- A. While their plan may have seemed good to the builders of the tower of Babel, it:
  - 1. Was foolish from heaven’s point of view. (See 1 Cor. 1:20)
  - 2. Resulted in confusion, chaos and destruction.
- B. There will always be the same results with that which man devises and builds in the religious realm.

### **Conclusion**

- 1. As He did at Shinar, God will bring to naught the efforts of men.
- 2. God has already provided mankind a way to heaven, thus, any plan conceived and implemented by man will fail.

# All Things Are Yours

**Text: 1 Corinthians 3:21-23**

## **Introduction**

1. Do you ever sit and think about all the wonderful blessings you have as a Christian?
  - a. Do you stop to remember all the blessings and good things God has sent your way?
  - b. It does me a great deal of good but I do not do it often enough but I suppose I am not alone.
2. Most of us spend too many waking hours thinking about:
  - a. Problems we have, bills we must pay and the day-to-day frustrations.
  - b. What we lack instead of what we have.
  - c. Our own imperfections but even more—the imperfections of others.
3. It may be that much of the preaching we hear, and do, is responsible for such negative thinking.
  - a. It is natural for a preacher to direct his comments against those things which need to be improved.
  - b. If we are not careful, though, our total emphasis can become negative.
  - c. Such is regrettable. We should be thinking of the good that is about us—encouraging achievements of the past, great blessings of the present and great potential for the future.
4. It is a marvelous thing to be a Christian.
  - a. The text for our lesson jumps out at us with this fact.
  - b. The text is an optimistic passage that, when read, should send you on your way with a song in your heart.

## **I. Paul, Apollos, Cephas**

- A. Why would Paul say that he and these two other men were theirs?
  1. The Corinthians had begun to call themselves after man who had baptized them. (1:11-12)
    - a. To wear a man's name meant to belong to that man.
    - b. They did not belong to their teachers, they belong to Christ.
  2. Their teachers, preachers and leaders belonged to them.
    - a. We do not belong to preachers and elders—they belong to us.
    - b. The place of teachers, preachers and leaders is to serve and they have been provided for our spiritual well-being.
- B. We must not elevate men beyond their proper place.
  1. Abraham Lincoln: “Go along with any man who is in the right, stay with him as long as he is right, and leave him when he goes wrong.
  2. How grateful we should be, though, for godly elders, preachers and teachers. They are ours!

## **II. World, Life, Death**

- A. The world is ours.
  1. Sometimes it seems the world is passing us by without paying the slightest bit of attention to us.
  2. But to whom does the world belong? See Matthew 5:5.

## B. Life.

1. Who possesses the good life? Is it the worldly revelers?
2. Christians, of all people, are the only ones who know what life is about. (Eccl. 12:13; Acts 10:34-35; Eccl. 2:1-11)
3. Our present life, and its fullness, is a gift from God.

## C. Death.

1. In one way, death belongs to all. (Heb. 9:27)
2. It belongs to the Christian in the sense that he does not have to fear it. (1 Cor. 15:55; Psa. 23:4)
  - a. It is not an enemy but an ally, not a loss but a gain. (Phil. 1:21-23)
  - b. It is a way in which the faithful are blessed. (Rev. 14:13)

### III. Things Present, Things to Come

#### A. Things present.

1. Consider Luke 6:38.
2. The child of God is always in His tender care. (Matt. 6:25-34)

#### B. Things to come.

1. We have a splendid future if we center our lives on Christ.
2. The blessings to come are incredible. (Rom. 8:18-19; 1 Pet. 1:3-9)

### IV. You Are Christ's, and Christ Is God's

#### A. The future belongs to us only because we belong to Christ.

1. It is because we have embraced those truths which Christ came to teach that we can have such confidence in the future.
2. Take Jesus out of our lives and we have nothing to anticipate but despair.

#### B. The future belongs to Christ and His disciples because He is God's.

1. At the time that Jesus was on the earth, do you think the people of His day would have thought He would be remembered in the future?
2. The future belonged to Jesus because He belonged to God.
  - a. When we belong to Him, our future is as secure as His. (Rom. 8:17)
  - b. We must do what is necessary to belong to Him.

### Conclusion

1. When we belong to Christ, we have truly grasped what life is all about.
2. When you belong to Christ, "All things are yours."
3. Have you been counting your blessings?

# Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ

Text: 2 John 9

## Introduction

1. The text for this lesson mentions two possible classes of people:
  - a. Those who “do not have God.”
  - b. Those who have “both the Father and the Son.”
2. To “have God: is to be in the favor of God, one who has the blessings that God offers in His spiritual realm.
  - a. All spiritual blessings are in Christ. (Eph. 1:3)
  - b. To not have Christ is to be without hope. (Eph. 2:12-13)
3. We cannot escape being in one or the other of these two classes, therefore, we need to understand what is involved in:
  - a. Transgressing.
  - b. Abiding in the doctrine of Christ.

## I. What It Means to Transgress

- A. To transgress is from the Greek word “to progress.”
  1. Its meaning is that whoever becomes progressive and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God.
  2. The ASV renders the phrase “goeth onward.”
- B. People often boast of being progressive.
  1. Progress in religion is good only when it is in the direction of Christ and not away from Him. (Phil. 3:13-14)
  2. In some matters it is far more preferable to be nonprogressive, particularly in not going beyond what the Lord has said.
- C. A summary.
  1. When one progresses beyond what Christ and His apostles have taught, they do not have God.
  2. One must abide within the limits of Christ’s teaching.

## II. What Constitutes the Doctrine of Christ?

- A. The doctrine of Christ is those precepts, commandments and ordinances that Jesus and those whom He inspired taught. (John 16:13; 1 Cor. 14:37)
  1. The gospel of Christ is the doctrine of Christ. (Rom. 6:17-18; 1:16)
  2. The apostles’ doctrine is the doctrine of Christ. (Acts 2:42; Matt. 18:18; 16:18-19)
- B. To abide in the doctrine of Christ simply means to stay within the bounds of the revealed teaching of Christ.
  1. It is hard for some to understand why it would be wrong to go ahead but we are commanded not to go beyond. (Rev. 22:18-19)

2. It is only when we stay within the bounds of Christ's doctrine that we show respect for:
  - a. The authority of Christ. (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17)
  - b. Christ's divine pattern. (Heb. 8:5)
  - c. The silence of the Scriptures. (Deut. 29:29)
  - d. "Walking by faith" as our guiding principle. (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17)

### **III. Proper Respect for Abiding in the Doctrine of Christ Answers Many Problem Areas**

- A. It explains why we are not to obey the Old Law or the Ten Commandments today. We cannot abide in the doctrine of Christ and follow something Christ did not authorize. (Matt. 5:17; Col. 2:14-17)
- B. It explains why membership in the Lord's church is not for a select—or elect—few but for "whosoever will." (Heb. 2:9; Rev. 22:17)
- C. It provides the answer to why faith, repentance, confession and baptism are preached as conditions of salvation. (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:37; 1 Pet. 3:21)
- D. It accounts for the fact that the Lord's Supper is to be observed weekly. (Acts 2:42; 20:7)
- E. It also explains the absence of many things—those things Christ did not authorize.
  1. Ritual and formality. (2 Cor. 11:3)
  2. Mechanical instruments of music in worship. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
  3. Special observance of religious days. (Gal. 4:10-11; Col. 2:16)
  4. Worldly schemes to raise revenue for the church. (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

### **Conclusion**

1. We must realize the power and weight of 2 John 9 and the principle it states.
2. Since we must "have God" to go to heaven, abiding in the doctrine of Christ is essential to having God.
3. We must never forget that fact.



# For Greatness: Be Clothed with Humility

**Text: 1 Peter 5:5-6**

## **Introduction**

1. Every person, at one time or another, aspires to be great in some way.
2. Greatness among the people of God is not wrong but one can be wrong in the attitude he has toward it and the way he seeks to attain it.
3. Examples of those who wrongly aspired to greatness.
  - a. James and John. (Matt. 20:20-24)
  - b. Diotrophes. (3 John 9-10)
  - c. That which is common to both of these examples: pride.
4. Examples of those who properly aspired to greatness.
  - a. John the Baptist. (Luke 1:15; Matt. 11:11; cf. Matt. 3:13-14; John 1:26-27; 3:25-30)
  - b. Jesus. (Phil. 2:5-9; cf. John 6:38)
  - c. That which is common to both of these examples: humility.
5. The way to greatness is humility. (1 Pet. 5:5-6; Matt. 20:25-28)
6. Humility is a genuine lowliness of mind that will manifest itself in the following ways.

## **I. A Disposition to Learn Whatever God Teaches**

- A. Many are unwilling to give up their opinions for the word of God.
  1. Many, having been taught false doctrines, allow their pride to prevent them from giving them up like some in Jesus' day. (Matt. 13:13-15)
  2. In the church, some are so wrapped up in their own opinions they become a constant source of strife. (Jas. 1:18-21)
- B. Those who are humble seek the word of God in all things. (Matt. 5:6; 1 Pet. 2:2)

## **II. A Willingness to Do Whatever God Commands**

- A. The humble do not walk in the futility (vanity) of their own mind. (Eph. 4:17)
- B. Some are too proud to yield to the demands of God.
  1. They manifest the attitude of Pharaoh. (Ex. 5:2)
  2. They, too, are like some in Jesus' day. (John 12:42)
  3. To obey the Lord's commands is beneath the dignity of many.
- C. The humble take the Lord at His word and do what He commands.
  1. No command is regarded as too small, no service too lowly. (John 11:2-17)
  2. They have the attitude of:
    - a. Samuel. "Speak, for your servant hears." (1 Sam. 3:9-10)
    - b. Cornelius. They are willing "to hear all things that are commanded of God." (Acts 10:33)

## **III. Modesty Which Is Not Aware of Its Own Importance**

- A. The negative example of Diotrophes. (3 John 9-11)
  1. Unity. Everybody agreeing with me.
  2. Cooperation. Everybody working with me—carrying out my own plans.

3. Visitation. Everybody coming to see me.
  4. A fine eldership. The one I can control.
  5. Sympathy. Everybody suffering with me.
  6. A sinner. The one for whom I have a personal dislike.
  7. A righteous person. The one I like.
  8. A meek person. The one who yields to me.
  9. A contentious person. The person who takes issue with me.
  10. Brotherly love. Everybody petting me and my ego.
  11. A wise person. The one who listens to nobody but me.
  12. Wonderful music. Everybody singing my praise.
- B. The humble are not “puffed up” by their knowledge. (1 Cor. 8:1-2)
1. “Any knowledge devoid of love is an empty pretense. Knowledge of Christ begins with a knowledge that love of God is the greatest commandment and love of one’s neighbor is the second commandment. Without love, there is no knowledge; with love is true knowledge. The one without love not only lacks the superior knowledge which he thinks that he has, he does not even know what is necessary for him to know; instead of being superior, he is deficient.” (Mike Willis, *A Commentary on Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 265)
  2. Like the Roman centurion who was aware of his own unworthiness (Matt. 8:8), they have a “lowliness of mind” which causes them to “esteem others better than themselves.” (Phil. 2:3)
  3. They do not think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. (Rom. 12:3; Gal. 6:3)
- C. Humility is akin to love.
1. Those who are genuinely humble are those who more fully manifest the principles of love in their dealings with others. (1 Cor. 13:4-7)
  2. Such must not be a “false humility.” (Col. 2:18)
    - a. False humility is that which is “of one’s own mere will, with the speciousness of humility.”
    - b. Some, under the pretense of humility, indulge their pride.
    - c. Such is of no value but rather will cause one to lose his soul.

### **Conclusion**

1. Pride is a great danger for it causes one to desire and seek positions of honor and it leads to worldliness and destruction.
2. At all times, we must “be clothed with humility” because God “resists the proud.”
3. If we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, we will be exalted in due time.

# The Beautiful Woman

**Text: 1 Peter 3:1-6**

## **Introduction**

1. While beauty has always been prized, the world seems to admire beauty as never before.
  - a. Hollywood pays more than ever for beautiful actresses.
  - b. The public pays more to see those whom they consider beautiful.
2. There never were so many “beauty contests” as there are now.
  - a. These seek to find the world’s most beautiful woman.
  - b. Many females pattern their looks after the participants in such contests in an effort to be beautiful themselves.
3. Who is the world’s most beautiful woman?
  - a. She is not a movie star, she does not live in Hollywood, and she has never been in a beauty contest.
  - b. She may be living on your street and as a person unnoticed.
  - c. We can learn who she is by reading the Bible for in it we see who is the most beautiful in the sight of the Lord.
  - d. We read of her in our text: 1 Peter 3:1-6.
4. By studying 1 Peter 3:1-6, we can learn the marks and qualities of the most beautiful woman in the world.

## **I. Beauty Marks of the Beautiful Woman**

- A. She is a Christian. Peter is writing to Christians and includes her. (1:1-2)
- B. She is godly. Peter speaks of her as like “the holy women.” (3:5)
- C. She is in subjection to her husband. She believes that women get their greatest happiness in submitting entirely to the will of God.
- D. She is chaste in her behavior.
  1. No “modern,” worldly woman will lead her husband or anyone else to Christ.
  2. An earnest woman who is a Christian, will control her behavior so that she will be a proper influence on others.
- E. Her adornment is not outward but spiritual.
  1. She is not obsessed with carnal attractiveness. (3:3)
  2. She has “the incorruptible ornament of a gentle (meek) and quiet spirit.” (3:4b)
  3. This inward beauty is for the Lord, who knows the heart (1 Sam. 16:7), to see and He tells us that it is “very precious” in His sight. (3:4c)
- G. She is meek and humble—gentle and quiet.
  1. She is not as the daughters of Zion were in Isaiah’s days. (Isa. 3:16-26)
  2. She is a woman whose spirit is not only meek, but is “quiet.”
    - a. She is not a nag, complainer.
    - b. She is not a woman “preacher.”

H. A summary.

1. What an earnest, spiritual, attractive woman is described here.
2. She is a “royal daughter,” “all glorious within.” (Psa. 45:13)
3. She is a true wife and a godly Christian.
4. She has a remarkable, pervading influence for good.

## II. Her Beautiful Sisters: Holy Women

- A. Jochebed, mother of Moses. In her maternal love is combined with faith in God.
- B. Mary, mother of Jesus. She submitted herself to God’s will. (Luke 2:30)
- C. Phoebe. (Rom. 16:1-2)
- D. Priscilla, wife of Aquila.
  1. You never see this husband and wife mentioned separately in the New Testament.
  2. The apostle Paul speaks of them as “my fellow-workers.” (Rom. 16:3-4)
  3. It is no wonder that, more than once, we read of a church meeting in their house.
- E. Lois, grandmother of Timothy, and Eunice, his mother. (2 Tim. 1:5)

## Conclusion

1. There have been many such women made so by the teachings of God.
2. Who is the world’s most beautiful woman? She is the godly woman who is living her life by the word of God.

# “As Bondservants of Christ”

**Text: Ephesians 6:5-6**

## **Introduction**

1. The text encourages Christians to work for men as if they were working for the Lord.
2. In making that application, in reality, we learn how we are to be pleasing servants in the Lord’s sight.
3. This lesson will analyze this text and see how it defines our role as “bondservants of Christ.”

## **I. The Bondservant of Christ Is Active—“Doing”**

### **A. Idleness and inactivity are condemned.**

1. The one talent man. (Matt. 25:24-30)
2. The five foolish virgins. (Matt. 25:1-13)
3. Christians are not to be “hearers only” but “doers” of the will of God. (Jas. 1:22-25)
4. “Faith apart from works is dead.” (Jas. 2:16)

### **B. “Doing” is encouraged.**

1. Christians are to be “always abounding” in the work of the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58)
2. “Doing” is a demonstration of faith. (Jas. 2:18)
3. Doing good works is that for which the Christian is created. (Eph. 2:10)

## **II. The Bondservant of Christ Is Active in Doing the Will of God**

### **A. Much religious activity is not “doing God’s will.”**

1. This is seen in denominationalism.
2. It is demonstrated in unauthorized “doings” in churches of Christ. (We must distinguish between things men call “good works” and those things which are authorized by the will of God.)
3. No religious activity honors God if it is not authorized by God. (Lev. 10:1)

### **B. Note the New Testament emphasis on this God-directed “doing.”**

1. Heaven awaits those who do the will of the Father. (Matt. 7:21)
2. Wise men are those who hear and do. (Matt. 7:24-27)
3. To abound in the work of the Lord is never in vain. (1 Cor. 15:58)
4. Christians are to be “doers of the word.” (Jas. 1:22)

## **III. The Bondservant of Christ Does the Will of God From the Heart**

### **A. Doing right things is wrong when done with wrong attitudes.**

1. When done to be seen of men. (Matt. 6:1-2, 5, 16)
2. As in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts 5:1-11)
3. As in worship with inattentiveness. (John 4:24)
4. As in giving “grudgingly or of necessity.” (2 Cor. 9:7)
5. It is not enough to just have the truth and go through the motions of doing it, one must do that which is right “from the heart.”

B. The significance of serving “from the heart.”

1. “Heart” is from a Greek word which is often rendered “life” or “soul.”
2. It suggests the whole soul of man and all the faculties of it—serving whole-heartedly and without reservations of any sort.
3. It is the basis of all acceptable service: “...whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.”
4. When such a heart does not characterize our service to the Lord, we serve in vain.

**Conclusion**

1. By applying the definition of the text, are you a “bondservant of Christ?”
2. If not, you need to begin “doing the will of God from the heart.”

# Preparing for Death

## Introduction

1. While our society openly discusses sex, crime, immorality and violence, it does not usually speak of death openly or frankly.
  - a. Most people do not want to think of death, let alone discuss it.
  - b. Even in the Victorian era, it was discussed more openly than now.
    - “The taboos the Victorians placed on sex have been transferred to death in our culture. We simply, in our modern morality of sensual, materialistic, pleasure-mad existence, deny its existence, unless we see it in living color in our living room or local theater.” (R. Miller, quoted in “Death,” *The Pekin Bulletin*, November 16, 1975)
2. There is a time coming when it will weigh heavily on your mind for it is universal and inevitable. (Heb. 9:27)
  - a. Ben Franklin: “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”
  - b. Mark Twain: “Death, the only immortal who treats us all alike, whose pity and whose peace and refuge are for all—the soiled and the pure, the rich and the poor, the loved and the unloved.”
3. This lesson will:
  - a. Look at the way people normally deal with the reality of death.
  - b. Present some attitudes people have toward death.
  - c. See how we can be prepared to face death by looking to the comfort received from the Lord.

## I. Attitudes Toward the Reality of Death

- A. The emotions you feel about death are usually the same you have toward life.
  1. Some face it with dread, fear, resentment and hate.
  2. Others face it with contentment, anticipation, and even joy as a welcome to another life.
- B. In her book, *On Death and Dying*, Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, psychiatrist, listed five emotional stages of death.
  1. Shock and denial. “No! Not me!”
    - a. Denial is one way to ward off an overwhelming situation and give oneself time to develop other defenses.
    - b. Denial pushes away shock but reality must be accepted.
  2. Resentment, anger and rage. “Why me!”
    - a. An emotional reality sets in.
    - b. Sometimes it shakes a person to the very foundation of their being and even their faith.
  3. A bargaining period: a promise to do something for a longer lease on life. “Yes, but...”
    - a. “If You give me one more year to live, I’ll go to worship every Sunday.” “I’ll be a good Christian from now on.”
    - b. Bargaining is like a temporary truce.
  4. Realistic depression. “Yes, me.”
    - a. To be depressed when you face your own death is normal behavior.
    - b. To grieve is to realize the enormity of what is happening.

5. Acceptance. “Yes, me, and I am ready!”
  - a. It does not imply resignation which is giving up.
  - b. It is a peaceful stage when the person feels he or she has done what he can and the end is near.
  - c. One has fully come to terms with reality.

## II. Some Wrong Attitudes to Be Avoided (From *The Bible on the Life Hereafter*, Wm. Hendricksen)

- A. That of the Christian Scientist.
  1. His teaching: “Matter, sin, sickness and death have no reality.”
  2. Death cannot be destroyed by denying its existence. (Example of the ostrich.)
  3. Death laughs at Christian Science.
- B. That of the escapist.
  1. Millions fear death so they avoid all mention of it.
    - a. Louis XV forbade his servants to mention the word “death.”
    - b. The Chinese are afraid that by mentioning the word “death” they are inviting it.
    - c. Our society avoids thinking and speaking of it as much as possible.
  2. This attitude cannot be a true solution to the problem because it can never give peace to the soul.
- C. That of the fatalist or stoic.
  1. This person tries to make himself and others believe he is not afraid.
    - a. Since death is natural, why not face it boldly?
    - b. “When I die I rot. What of it?”
  2. This is no solution for it is but “whistling in the dark” for one acts bravely but it is only an act.
- D. That of the blatant infidel.
  1. This person curses and defies death.
  2. Even at the point of death he bitterly fights and denounces it.
- E. That of the out and out pessimist.
  1. He is utterly tired of life and finally puts himself to death.
  2. Suicide is no solution.
- F. That of the sentimentalist.
  1. This person gushes over death-bed scenes, grows very sentimental and is convulsed with sobs when he reads of a death.
  2. He perversely enjoys death.
- G. That of the religious fanatic with a “martyr-complex.”
  1. This is not to be confused with a real martyr such as Stephen.
  2. This person actually seeks to be put to death though he does not put himself to death.
  3. His belief is that, perhaps, by offering himself to be put to death for the faith he can earn a martyr’s crown.

## III. Preparing for Death

- A. Since death is unavoidable as our only exit from this world, we must prepare for it.
  1. Death is not the end but rather the beginning of eternity. (John 5:28-29)
  2. Few people make any preparation for eternity. (Matt. 7:14)



- B. It is God's wish for mankind to be delivered from any fear of death.
  - 1. Jesus died and was raised as the Christian's assurance. (1 Cor. 15:20)
  - 2. The Christian can face death without fear. (Psa. 23:4; Luke 23:46; Acts 7:59)
- C. Heaven has done all it possibly can do for us, we must now prepare. To prepare one must:
  - 1. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6:33), living a life of self-denial to the glory of God. (Luke 6:26, 33)
  - 2. Live in Christ. For to die in Christ, one must live in Him.
    - a. Those who die in Him are blessed. (Rev. 14:13)
    - b. One must abide in Him (John 15:7) and His word (John 8:32), and His doctrine (2 John 9).
    - c. To be found in Him, one must be baptized into Him. (Gal. 3:26-27)
  - 3. In all things, let Christ have preeminence. (Col. 1:18)
    - a. One must live a life in humble submission to His will, the gospel. (Rom. 1:16)
    - b. One must do His will. (Matt. 7:21)

### **Conclusion**

- 1. The rewards of a life live properly in preparation for death are many. They include:
  - a. Receiving a hundred-fold in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, and in the age to come, eternal life. (Mark 10:30)
  - b. Being carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom. (Luke 16:22)
  - c. Going to Paradise. (Luke 23:43)
  - d. Going to a house with many mansions. (John 14:2)
  - e. Being with Christ, at home with the Lord. (Phil. 1:23; 2 Cor. 5:8)
  - f. Gaining (Phil. 1:21) an eternal inheritance (1 Pet. 1:4) as a joint-heir with Christ (Rom. 8:17), reigning with Him eternally (Rev. 22:5).
- 2. The concluding question is obvious: "Are you prepared to die?"

# Being Happy as a Christian

## Introduction

1. “The story has often been told about the little girl who was reprimanded by her grandfather for whistling as she ran through the house one Sunday morning. He told her it wasn’t nice for little girls nor for Christians to whistle on Sunday. Feeling rather sad and dejected, almost as though she had been spanked, she left the house and walked down the lane to the pasture and climbed up on the gate. As she sat there thinking an old mule came up and put his head up to her. She patted him and said, “You’re a nice mule.” She then rubbed his ears and said, “You sure do have long ears.” Then she stroked his nose and said, “And you sure do have a long face. You must be a good Christian like Grandpa.”
2. It is said to see so many unhappy, anxious Christians.
3. Many Christians are like Martha, “worried and troubled” about carnal things. (Luke 10:38-42)
4. Such Christians are as the thorny ground in the parable of the sower. (Luke 8:14)
  - a. It received the seed but it was choked out after it grew for only a short while.
  - b. These received the word, obey, but then die spiritually because the “cares, riches and pleasures of this life” choke the word from them.
5. The true Christian can enjoy a supreme happiness regardless of his plight in this world.
6. This lesson will discuss some of the factors that contribute to a Christian’s happiness, some of those things upon which his happiness rests.

## I. Hope

- A. Hope is the first reason for a Christian to be happy—he knows this life is not all there is to his existence.
  1. Like Abraham. (Heb. 11:10)
  2. Like others of great faith. (Heb. 11:13-16)
- B. The most glorious part of a Christian is his faith. (Heb. 11:1)
  1. Even though he has not seen it, he hopes for a better life and the evidence of that hope is his faith.
  2. A man without hope is pathetic and a hope that will not transcend this life is despicable.
  3. The Christian believes in Jesus and His power and hopes for an eternal home with Him.

## II. Contentment

- A. The Christian may not be satisfied with every aspect of his life.
  1. As a farmer he may try to produce a greater yield.
  2. As a business he may try to increase his business.
- B. Contentment does not mean that one is necessarily resigned to the status quo.
  1. In Christ he has learned how to be content regardless of whatever state he is in, prosperity or want. (Phil. 4:11-12) His contentment guards against apostasy in times of:
    - a. Abundance due to the root of all evil—the love of money. (1 Tim. 6:10)
    - b. Hardship when one would naturally tend to worry about carnal things in life.
  2. Godliness with contentment is great gain. (1 Tim. 6:6)
  3. Where one’s treasure is that is where his heart will be. (Matt. 6:19-21)
- C. The Christian can be content because he knows His Lord will never leave nor forsake him. (Heb. 13:5)

### **III. Peace**

- A. This is the peace of God which passes all understanding. (Phil. 4:7)
  - 1. This can only be experienced or observed in the life of the faithful child of God.
  - 2. The faithless are troubled and restless because they cannot depend upon God.
- B. Through prayer the Christian can pour out before God his praise and thanksgiving, give his troubles to Him and through supplication make his needs known to Him. (Phil. 4:6)
  - 1. He is assured that his cares are in more capable hands than his own.
  - 2. His tensions are eased.
  - 3. Many pour out the major calamities in their lives to God but never realize the perfect peace of God which comes when He is permitted to take all of one's troubles, even the minor ones, which can rob one of happiness.
- C. One may find the solution to his problems in God's word.
  - 1. His increased dependence upon God will cause him to look into God's word where he can read of Jesus, the source of strength. (Phil. 4:13)
  - 2. While looking to Jesus, his mind is strengthened. (Phil. 2:5)

### **IV. Dedication**

- A. One who is dedicated to his job is happy with it. The vocation of the Christian is to be living the life of a Christian. (Eph. 4:1)
- B. Dedication to God and to living every day of one's life in His service brings about supreme happiness, even in this life.

### **Conclusion**

- 1. If you are not happy perhaps you are not dedicated to the Lord.
- 2. Many who think themselves to be Christians but do not have contentment or peace possibly should be resolved to seek the kingdom of God first (Matt. 6:33) and to correct whatever is wrong in their lives.
  - a. This can be done by complete subjection to Christ and His word.
  - b. True happiness will follow.

# The Prayer of Jesus for His Disciples

Text: John 17

## Introduction

1. In John 13, while in the upper room with His disciples, Jesus reveals that it is Judas who would betray Him.
2. After Judas left, Jesus gave the apostles a discourse in which He sought to comfort, console, and give assurance and instruction to prepare them for the ordeal through which He, and they, must pass.
3. Upon completion of that discourse, Jesus offered the prayer for His disciples which is recorded in John 17.
  - a. There are many things in this prayer which, if studied, would be of great profit.
  - b. In this lesson we will notice a few of the things for which Jesus prayed and consider our relation to them.

## I. He Prayed That His Disciples Might Be Kept (John 17:11)

- A. Jesus prayed that His would be kept by and within the name, or authority, of God.
- B. Christians have an obligation to keep themselves within the authority of God and Christ. (John 15:4-5; Col. 3:17; Matt. 28:18; Eph. 1:22-23)
  1. To do anything “in the name of” is to do it by that one’s authority.
  2. We must refrain from doing anything in religion that is not authorized by Jesus Christ.
- C. According to the prayer of Jesus, we cannot be *kept* unless we are careful to abide in His authority.

## II. He Prayed That His Disciples Might Be Joyful (John 17:13)

- A. Entirely too many people think of Jesus only in terms of sorrow. (Isa. 53:3)
  1. He had joy and He desired that His disciples be full of the same kind of joy He had. (John 15:9-11)
- B. His joy was not based on external conditions or circumstances.
  - In the shadow of the cross. (John 16:33)
- C. True disciples have that joy.
  1. It is a part of the fruit of the Spirit. (Gal. 5:22)
  2. The Christian is to “rejoice always.” (Phil. 4:4)

## III. He Prayed That His Disciples Might Be Sanctified (John 17:17)

- A. Sanctify.
  1. To sanctify means to separate, set apart, consecrate ourselves to God.
  2. Included in sanctification is to follow a course of life befitting those who are set apart from the world. (1 Thes. 4:3-4, 7)
  3. Sanctification is not negative. (2 Tim. 2:21)
- B. We must see to it that Christ is sanctified in our heart as Lord and ruler of our life. (1 Pet. 3:15)
- C. Jesus’ prayer reveals the agent by which we can and must be sanctified—the “word.”

**IV. He Prayed That All Who Believe on Him Might Be One, Even as He and the Father Are One (John 17:20-21)**

- A. The only way that those who profess to following Christ can be one is for all to accept and follow the revealed will of God. (1 Cor. 1:10; Phil. 2:5) When this is done:
  - 1. Harmony results.
  - 2. There is no division.
- B. We must strive for unity. (Eph. 4:1-3)
  - 1. Only then can there be true peace—that which is based on the word of God.
  - 2. We cannot sacrifice truth for unity.

**Conclusion**

- 1. Our prayer should be as that of the Lord. May we be:
  - a. Kept in the name of God.
  - b. Filled with joy.
  - c. Sanctified for the Lord and His service.
  - d. One with that oneness based on God's word.
- 2. Let us not hinder the prayer of Christ.

# A Christian's Responsibility to Local Church Members

## Introduction

1. Scripture indicates that the Christian is to be a part of a local congregation.
  - a. The example of Paul. (Acts 9:26-28)
  - b. He has responsibilities to that local church he does not have to other congregations and he should be careful and faithful to fulfill those obligations.
2. Since the church is pictured as “the house of God” (1 Tim. 3:15), the Christian must:
  - a. Love the other children in God's family. (1 Pet. 2:17)
  - b. Seek always to do his brethren good.
    - 1) To do them no evil.
    - 2) To walk uprightly before them.
    - 3) To share with them and help them as brothers and sisters.
3. This lesson will show what the New Testament states as the responsibilities we have to one another because of our family relationship in the spiritual family of God.

## I. As Seen in Romans

- A. 12:10. Be devoted to one another, give preference to one another.
- B. 12:16. Be of the same mind toward one another.
- C. 13:8. Love one another.
- D. 14:13. Not judge one another.
- E. 14:19. Pursue the things that make for the building up of one another.
- F. 15:5. Be of the same mind with one another.
- G. 15:7. Accept one another.
- H. 15:14. Admonish one another.

## II. As Seen in 1 Corinthians, Galatians and Ephesians

- A. 1 Corinthians 12:25. Care for one another.
- B. Galatians 5:13. Serve one another.
- C. Galatians 6:2. Bear one another's burdens.
- D. Ephesians 4:1-2. Show forbearance to one another.
- E. Ephesians 4:32. Be kind to one another.
- F. Ephesians 5:18-19.
  1. Speak to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
  2. Be subject one to another.

## III. As Seen in Colossians and 1 Thessalonians

- A. Colossians 3:9. Do not lie to one another.
- B. Colossians 3:12-13.
  1. Bear with one another.
  2. Forgive each other.

- C. Colossians 3:16. Teach and admonish one another.
- D. 1 Thessalonians 3:12. Increase and abound in love for one another.
- E. 1 Thessalonians 4:18. Comfort one another.

#### **IV. As Seen in Hebrews and James**

- A. Hebrews 3:13. Encourage one another.
- B. Hebrews 10:23-25. Stimulate one another to love and good works.
- C. James 4:11. Do not speak against one another.
- D. James 5:9. Do not complain against one another.
- E. James 5:16.
  - 1. Confess your sins to one another.
  - 2. Pray for one another.

#### **V. As Seen in 1 Peter**

- A. 1:22. Love one another.
- B. 4:9. Be hospitable to one another.
- C. 5:5. Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.

#### **VI. As Seen in the Epistles of John**

- A. 1 John 3:11. Love one another.
- B. 1 John 3:23. Love one another.
- C. 1 John 4:7. Love one another.
- D. 1 John 4:11. Love one another.
- E. 1 John 4:12. Love one another.
- F. 2 John 5. Love one another.

#### **Conclusion**

Let us make it our goal to draw together warmly in the cause of Christ by getting to know one another better, tolerating the differences of opinion among us and making a special effort to put aside any pride, jealousy, egos, etc., that might get in our way in forming close relationships.

# Hate As the Bible Presents It

## Introduction

1. We live in a society that misunderstands and misapplies “hate.”
  - a. We are told we should never hate anyone or anything.
  - b. Certain crimes have been designated “hate crimes.”
  - c. A popular bumper sticker the past few years is “Hate is not a family value.” It is distributed by those who believe homosexuality should be accepted as an alternative lifestyle to label any who oppose them as bigots, homophobes and people who hate other people.
2. We must understand “hate.”
  - a. We cannot love as we should without hating.
  - b. We must hate the right things in the right way.
3. According to W.E. Vine’s *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, hate is used in three ways.
  - a. Malicious and unjustifiable feelings toward others, whether towards the innocent or by mutual animosity.
    - 1) This is condemned. (1 John 2:9-11)
    - 2) 1 John 3:15. “He who hates his brother is called a murderer; for the sin lies in the inward disposition, of which the act is only the outward expression.” (Vine)
  - b. A feeling of aversion from what is evil or towards error.
  - c. Relative preference of one thing over another.

## I. God Hates (In the Last Two Senses)

- A. Though “God is love” (1 John 4:8), God hates. It is not contradictory to His loving character.
- B. Dislike of, antagonism toward evil.
  1. Idolatry. (Jer. 44:2-5) We must hate it too. (Col. 3:5; 1 Cor. 10:14)
  2. Seven things. (Prov. 6:16-19)
- C. God “hated Esau,” in that He preferred Jacob. (Rom. 9:13; Mal. 1:2-5)

## II. We Should Hate Error and Evil (Be Antagonistic Toward Them)

- A. We must hate every false way. (Psa. 119:104)
  1. Contrast what is said in this verse to: “Through your precepts I get understanding, therefore, I believe that one way is as good as another.”
  2. What we believe makes a difference. (2 Thes. 2:10-12)
  3. The church at Ephesus was commended for “hating.” (Rev. 2:6)
  4. Those who are not against error are not really for truth. To stand for nothing results in falling for anything.
- B. We must hate evil. (Psa. 97:10)
  1. Sin is against God. (Psa. 51:4) We need to recognize the seriousness of that fact. (Gen. 39:9)
  2. Sin is degrading.
    - a. Note the prodigal son in Luke 15.
    - b. Many others have been brought to a pitiful condition because they do not hate evil. (Prov. 13:15)
  3. Why do people not hate evil? Because they do not love God. (Psa. 97:10)



### **III. Relative Preference of One Thing Over Another**

- A. A person cannot serve two masters. (Matt. 6:24)
- B. One must hate his family. (Luke 14:25-26)
  - 1. One must love his family “less than” he loves Christ. (Matt. 10:37)
  - 2. If it is a choice between pleasing God and pleasing family, we should “hate” our family, i.e., we should prefer God’s will over theirs.
- C. One must hate his own life. (Luke 14:25-26)
  - 1. One must prefer pleasing God over living. (John 12:25)
  - 2. If it is a choice between life and serving God, we should “hate” life.
  - 3. The implications of this are great.
    - a. What do you prefer? What do you put first?
    - b. When one puts God second, he hates God.

### **Conclusion**

- 1. We should not hate the person who is in error or sin but should hate the error and sin.
- 2. We should love God and the truth, and should hate, be antagonistic toward, error and evil.
- 3. We should hate, put in second place, all people and our own lives.

# The Possibility of Apostasy

**Text: Psalm 73:1-3**

## **Introduction**

1. Many denominations teach that it is impossible for a child of God to fall from grace and be lost.
  - a. This is the doctrine of “eternal security: or “once save, always saved.”
  - b. This idea is a major tenet of Calvinism.
2. That a child of God can fall from grace, or apostatize, is a certain fact. Consider:
  - a. The teaching of the text.
  - b. The example of Israel. (1 Cor. 10:1-12)

## **I. The Reality of the Danger of Apostasy**

### **A. Biblical examples of it.**

1. Under the old covenant.
  - a. The Israelites who fell away, even 23,000 in one day. (1 Cor. 10:1-12)
  - b. Judas. (Acts 1:25)
2. Under the new covenant.
  - a. Ananias and Sapphira, members of the Jerusalem church, were stricken dead in the very act of lying. (Acts 5:1-11)
  - b. Demas, one of Paul’s fellow-workers, went back into the world. (2 Tim. 4:10)
  - c. Ephesians. (Rev. 2:1-5)
  - d. Simon the sorcerer who lived in the city of Samaria. He was lost, then saved, then lost, then saved again. (Acts 8:4-24)
    - 1) Verses 9-11 give the picture of one who is spiritually lost, a sinner who had never received remission of sins.
    - 2) Something wonderful happened to Simon. He believed and was baptized, thus he was saved. (vv. 12-13) How do we know he was saved?
      - aa) He heard the gospel preached by Philip, he believed and was baptized. (13)
      - bb) When people believe and are baptized, they are saved. (Mark 16:15-16)
      - cc) Simon believed and was baptized, thus, he was saved.
    - 3) After one obeys the gospel and becomes a Christian, he must continue to live according to God’s word otherwise he forfeits his salvation. (1 Cor. 15:1-2)
      - aa) Simon did not continue to live faithfully as a disciple of Christ and did not hold fast to the word. (vv. 18-23)
      - bb) Simon forfeited his salvation because of his wickedness and evil heart, thus he was doomed to perish. (v. 20)
    - 4) Although many say it is impossible for a saved person to so sin as to be lost, that is exactly what Simon did.

## B. Warnings against it.

1. If I were to warn you about a monster that did not exist, you would think that I was foolish but if one cannot be lost when once saved then we must say that God, Christ and the Holy Spirit are foolish because of their repeated warnings against something that will never happen or does not exist.
2. The warning of Jesus. (Matt. 26:41)
3. “Brethren” are warned not to depart from God. (Heb. 3:12)
4. The one who thinks he stands is to take heed lest he fall. (1 Cor. 10:12)
5. The warnings of the apostle Peter. (2 Pet. 1:10; 2:20-21)

## II. Results of Apostasy

- A. God will spit the apostate out of His mouth. (Rev. 3:16)
- B. Such a one is blotted out of the book of life. (Ex. 32:33; Rev. 22:18-19)
- C. Such a one is gathered out of the kingdom. (Matt. 13:41)
- D. It makes one fit only to be trodden under the feet of men. (Matt. 5:13)
- E. It renders one unfit for the kingdom. (Luke 9:62)
- F. It makes one a pig and a dog—a state worse than the first. (2 Pet. 2:20-21)
- G. Everybody loses.
  1. The local church loses a member.
  2. God loses a worker. (2 Cor. 6:1)
  3. The brethren lose a brother or sister. (2 Tim. 4:10)
  4. The community loses a Christian’s influence. (Matt. 13:33)
  5. The backslider, apostate, loses his soul. (John 15:1-6)

## III. The Causes and Cures of Apostasy

### A. Causes.

1. Doubts.
  - a. The psalmist envied the world and doubted. (Text)
  - b. Doubt is a product of a weak faith.
2. Evil associates.
  - a. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. (1 Cor. 5:6)
  - b. Evil companionships corrupt good morals. (1 Cor. 15:33)
3. Love of the world, as with Demas. (2 Tim. 4:10)
  - a. Friendship with the world makes one an enemy of God. (Jas. 4:4)
  - b. Christians are not to love the world. (1 John 2:15-17)
4. A failure to go forward. (Phil. 3:13-14)
  - a. The example of riding a bicycle.
  - b. The story of the little boy who fell out of bed and then told his mother, “I guess I went to sleep too near where I got in.”
5. The cares of the world. (Matt. 13:22)
6. Discouragement due to illness, domestic problems, financial problems or by hypocritical, insensitive, and/or uncaring brethren.

B. Cures.

1. Take heed. (1 Cor. 10:12)
2. Watch and pray. (Matt. 26:41)
3. Meet the requirements for growth. (1 Pet. 2:2)
4. Add the “Christian graces” to your faith. (2 Pet. 1:5-10)

**Conclusion**

1. “Once saved, always saved” may sound pleasant but it is not true.
2. Being a Christian takes continual application of and attention to the will of God in your life.
3. Since God wants to save you and He has done His part to make it possible, why not do your part?

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