

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

The Bible and Salvation

#204

1. **Respect for the Word of God**
2. **Believe the Message—Its Importance**
3. **Repentance Towards God**
4. **Confession: of Whom and to Whom?**
5. **Baptism: A Biblical View**
6. **Walking in Light—Continued Forgiveness**

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Questions for DiscussionTrue or False

- ___ 1. Persistent and faithfulness are the same concept.
- ___ 2. Why is persistent such a challenge for the Christian?
- ___ 3. Doubts, discouragement, and the easy way are a real danger to the Christian.
- ___ 4. Edison and Abraham Lincoln both illustrate the idea of being persistent.
- ___ 5. Persistent is our way of saying "I want to succeed!"
- ___ 6. Neither Talent, Genius, nor Education can guarantee that we will succeed in life.
- ___ 7. Persistence can produce an amazing knowledge of God's Word.
- ___ 8. I will never surrender to discouragement or despair.
- ___ 9. Humans can do many things if they are will to pay the price.
- ___ 10. Jesus warns about those who look back.

*Lesson One****"Respect for the Word of God"***

All men everywhere desire to have a dependable book, standard, or an authoritative guide for their lives. Without such, we have no steadfast "anchor" for our soul! The Bible claims to be from God and to be that guide and has proven itself over and over again throughout hundreds of years!

Eph. 3:1-6 _____

2 Tim. 3:16-17 _____

Heb. 1:1-2 _____

You, as a young person or an adult, have to make the decision as to whether the Bible's claim is valid; and if so, begin in earnest to read and study it. It will be the book that God says He will use to judge us in the Last Day.

John 12:48 _____

Rev. 20:11-12 _____

The decision should be relatively easy to make, however, since there are only a few books that even come close to making the claims that the Bible does about being given by God. Once we make our decision, we need to show respect and reverence for this wonderful book that God has given to us.

Reverence (respect) for God and His Word!

A lack of godly fear can be very destructive—not only to our life here, but to our soul eternally! Adam and Eve fell into sin because of a lack of respect for God and what He had told them (Gen. 3:1-7). Nadab and Abihu were burned alive because they did not reverence God's word (Lev. 10:1-10). King Saul was rejected because he feared the people more than God (1 Sam. 15:24). Many people today fear human power and wrath more than they fear God. Many are led by lust, seeking pleasure, because of a low regard for God and His Message. They respect libertines and what they say more than God or His Commands.

What is Reverence?

It is a deep respect for God that is mingled with love and awe. It is great admiration for God inspired by firm faith in His power, wisdom and justice. Reverence is the key to our conversion—the one thing that helps us to be teachable and willing to hear and follow what God says (Lk. 10:38-42). Reverence is the foundation which can produce repentance, and motivate obedience to the Will of God. Faith in God is made possible not only by the "natural" revelation, but also the "super natural" revelation (the Bible) that has been revealed by God (Rom. 10:17). Understanding and wisdom begins with a fear (respect) of God (Prov. 1:7; 9:10). Reverence for God makes us open to what He tells us in His Word because we know our limitations and are in need of guidance (Matt. 5:3; 18:3-4). It will cause us to seek for God's approval, to be eager to hear His Word, and be willing to be corrected by what He says (2 Tim. 2:15; John 8:47). Reverence for God can build great faith, a noble character, and an upright life of godliness (Isa. 9:6; Acts 17:11-12).

How do men show disrespect for God and His Word?

Deut. 42 _____

Judges 17:6 _____

Prov. 3:5 _____

Jere. 10:23 _____

John 12:48 _____

Rom. 10:1-3 _____

Gal. 1:6-9 _____

2 John 9 _____

Rev. 22:18-10 _____

How can men show proper respect for God and His Word?

Matt. 5:6 _____

Matt. 7:21 _____

Acts 5:29 _____

THE BLESSINGS OF PERSISTENCE

Persistence has great rewards:

1. It will bring peace because we are faithfully living for God each day.
2. It will bring a sense of joy of achievement.
3. It will bring continual meaning and purpose for our lives.
4. It will produce an amazing knowledge of God's Word.
5. It will make us wiser from our experiences in the light of God's Word.
6. It will bring many opportunities to affect the lives of others for good.

Just imagine the outcome of a life devoted to the following code:

1. I will never give up so long as I know I am doing right.
2. I will believe all things will work out for me if I hang on to the end.
3. I will be courageous and undismayed in the face of odds.
4. I will not permit anyone to intimidate me or deter me from my goal.
5. I will fight to overcome all physical handicaps and setbacks.
6. I will try again and again and yet again to accomplish what is right.
7. I will learn from others who have successfully overcome adversity.
8. I will never surrender to discouragement or despair no matter what obstacles may confront me.

Concluding Thoughts

After a concert by a pianist, a woman said to her, "I'd give anything to play as you do." The pianist's answer was to the point: "No you wouldn't." The lady responded, "Yes, but I really would like to play as you do." The pianist's then said to her: "If you really do, then you will have to give time to practice hour after hour, day after day, year after year to succeed."

Humans can do many things in life if they are willing to pay the price—persistence! The Romans came to the shores & cliffs of Dover to conquer. They were repulsed. Then, later, they returned again. This time to stay. They landed—carried supplies to shore—set fire to their boats and with great resolution, they went into battle and won!

On the Road to heaven we must burn our bridges-. Jesus warns us about looking back and says that those who do are not worthy of Him. Have we made the resolve to be persistent as Christians? Are we constantly walking in the light—continuing steadfast?

To survive, persistence must be our watchword. No one can or will survive without it.

The Value of Persistence

The Value of Persistent is illustrated so *well in our world*. Edison's invention of the light bulb was over a long period of time and after hundreds of unsuccessful efforts. His observation was: *"Achievement is 2% inspiration and 98% perspiration."* He persisted until he succeeded.

Abraham Lincoln well illustrates such.

- a) 1831—He failed in business.
- b) 1832—He was defeated for Legislature.
- c) 1833—He again failed in business.
- d) 1834—He was elected to the Legislature.
- e) 1838—He was defeated for Speaker of the House.
- f) 1840—He was defeated for Elector.
- g) 1843—He was defeated for Congress.
- h) 1846—He was elected to Congress.
- i) 1848—He was defeated for Congress.
- j) 1855—He was defeated for Senate.
- k) 1856—He was defeated for Vice-President.
- l) 1858—He was defeated for Senate.

1860—He was elected to the Presidency of these United States. Like Abraham Lincoln, we succeed because we are persistent! And we also learn from every disappointment and difficulty of life as well.

Jas. 1:2-4 _____

Persistence is our way of proving we want to succeed! *"Success Is like a fickle lady who wants to be pursued!"* She questions our sincerity of purpose over and over. But if we prove ourselves—endure, persevere, and persist, we will have her. We are not called to be faithful for a day, a week, a month, or a year—but, for life!

Rev. 2:10 _____

Nothing will take the place of persistence. Talent will not—talented people have failed. Genius will not—people of genius have failed. Education will not—Educated people have failed.

Acts 17:11 _____

1 Thess. 2:13 _____

2 Thess. 2:13 _____

Jas. 1:21 _____

Jas. 1:22-25 _____

Ps. 119:11 _____

Deut. 12:32 _____

God is gracious and the Bible emphasizes His grace! But God is not all grace (Rom. 11:22). He expects all men to turn to Him and to be obedient to all that He says (Acts 17:30-31; Lk. 6:46). His Word is Law and it must be obeyed or suffer the consequences of such (Matt. 7:21). Reverence for God is clearly shown by our willingness to listen to His Word and not be hearers only (Jas. 1:21-25). Of all beings that we know about, surely we should listen to God. Our acceptance and response to what God says shows whether we respect Him and His Message.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is said about those who profess to know God, but do not obey Him? (1 John 1:5-7)

2. Is following the ways of men true obedience to God? (Prov. 14:12; Rom. 10:1-3)

3. What is indicated about a person that obeys God?

a) **Lk. 8:15** _____

b) **Jn. 14:23-24** _____

c) **Jn. 15:14** _____

d) **Col. 3:17** _____

4. What blessings come to the obedient?

- a) Matt. 7:21 _____
- b) Jn. 15:9-10 _____
- c) Rom. 6:17-18 _____
- d) Heb. 5:8-9 _____
- e) Heb. 12:9 _____
- f) 1 Pet. 1:22 _____
- g) 1 Jn. 2:17 _____
- h) 1 Jn. 3:24 _____

5. What will happen to the disobedient?

- a) Matt. 25:46 _____
- b) Acts 3:23 _____
- c) 1 Cor. 6:9 _____
- d) 2 Thess. 1:8-9 _____
- e) Matt. 7:24-27 _____

6. Do I have a spirit of reverence for God and show it by my actions?

7. Am I manifesting a spirit of obedience by doing what God tells me to do?

Lesson Six

***"Walking in the Light—Continued
Forgiveness"***

The Christian life is a life of "continuing in the faith" or a life of persistence! Jesus told a parable of four kinds of soils that represent four kinds of hearts (Mk. 4:14-20). Look and see why the seed planted in the stony ground died? It had no root—thus, no continuance—no endurance quality! Jesus is indicating that this is the sad picture of many who become Christians, but do not endure. They come in with joy—survive for a while—and then fall away! They fail to understand one of the great lessons of life—endurance or persistence. A person can have good intentions and can even have high goals and desires to serve God. But, if they do not have persistence, faithfulness, stickability—they will be lost. Persistence is a must for successful Christian living.

- Heb. 3:14 _____
- 1 John 1:7 _____

Why Emphasize Persistence

If life was easy, persistence would pose no problem. But life has its challenges—problems—trials & tribulations.

- 2 Thess. 1:4 _____

In additions to life's normal tribulations the Christian has to face persecutions as well.

- 2 Tim. 3:12 _____

These things challenge and test our faith in God.

- 1) Will we give in to doubt?
- 2) Will we let discouragement cause us to fall away?
- 3) Will we let the lure of the easy way cause us to turn away from the straight & narrow way to life?

my pride or stubbornness and unwillingness to do what God commands of me to be saved. Are you one of these persons who needs to be baptized?

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. A person needs to be baptized correctly in order for it to be acceptable.
- ___ 2. There are people who teach that they must be baptized with the Holy Spirit in order to be saved.
- ___ 3. In Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost, he told the people that they had only to believe in order to be saved.
- ___ 4. Those who need to be baptized are those who know they are lost.
- ___ 5. Only about 300 people were baptized upon hearing Peter's sermon in Acts 2.
- ___ 6. People who have had water sprinkled over them have not really been baptized.
- ___ 7. There is no scripture that tells us how baptism is to be performed.
- ___ 8. Infants cannot be scripturally baptized because they cannot do the pre-requisites before baptism.
- ___ 9. Those who have been immersed in water but did not obey from the heart sincerely were not really baptized in God's eyes.
- ___ 10. No one should be pressured to be baptized.
- ___ 11. A person cannot be correctly baptized if it is being done for the wrong reason.
- ___ 12. The Bible has an actual case where sincere people had to be baptized again because they had not been correctly taught.

Lesson Two

"Believe the Message—Its Importance"

Who cares if a sinner is lost and goes into everlasting punishment? Do we care? Does a husband care if his wife is lost? Does a wife care if her husband is lost? Do parents care if their children are lost? Do children care if their parents are lost? Do we care if our friends are lost? The answer to all of these questions is shown by our actions toward them. If we really care, we will do something! We can know for sure that God cares, for He has made salvation possible for all men. God does not want anyone to be lost (2 Pet. 3:9).

Rom. 5:8 _____

Ezek. 33:11 _____

Micah 7:18 _____

Can you imagine this—God has gone to great lengths to make salvation possible for mankind. He went through great humility in becoming a man to let us know that He cares. He has left His Message that tells of this salvation and given orders to His followers to proclaim it world-wide—to all creation! And then, when it is proclaimed, mankind turns a deaf ear, or shows little or no interest, or he doesn't have time now—maybe later!

The Necessity of Believing the Message!

Man's part in being saved is to believe the Message! If we refuse to believe that Jesus was sent of God to redeem mankind, there is no other message from God!

Jn. 8:24 _____

Heb. 11:6 _____

Jn. 3:16 _____

We either believe the message of hope or we disbelieve it! Those who believe it will act on it. Those who disbelieve will continue in their own ways of living—without hope! The Apostle Paul gave a list of things that are the natural outcome of unbelief:

If Christ is not the risen Son of God, then:

1. Those who preach such are dishonest;
2. Such preaching is vain, useless, and worthless;
3. Any belief of life after death is killed;
4. All mankind are still in their sins—no forgiveness;
5. Upon death, we perish—no longer exist;
6. We go back to the way of bitterness and despair. (1 Cor. 15:12-19)

The Outcome of Unbelief

Unbelievers cannot give an answer to such questions as:

1. Why are we here?
2. Why are we different from the animal world?
3. Does it matter that we are different?
4. What is the real meaning of existence?

Believers do have answers to these questions.

Ecc. 12:13 _____

1 Cor. 10:31 _____

Unbelief forces one to believe only in self. This results in man worshipping himself, rather than the two God of heaven.

Rom. 1:22-25 _____

Unbelief destroys all desirable hope of life after death. Reject the message of God and you have nothing left but deep despair and gloom.

Eph. 2:12 _____

1 Cor. 15:19 _____

Unbelief does away with a sure moral standard. The basis for a moral standard is gone! If there is no God to whom we must give an account, then there is no basis for a moral standard.

Rom. 1:26-32 _____

heart (Rom. 6:17-18). There must be sincere repentance (Rom. 6:1-2). And there must also be a willingness to openly confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God. (Rom. 10:9-10). Without these requirements, the person just got wet!

THOSE BAPTIZED FOR WRONG REASON

If a person is taught that he is saved when he believes (accepts the Lord) and is later sprinkled or immersed to get into some denomination—he is being baptized not in order to be saved but to be a part of that particular group. Thus, his situation is:

- a) He is not baptized because he knows he is lost and needs to be saved.
- b) He is baptized because he thinks he is already saved.

Nowhere is this taught in Scripture! But in every Scripture where baptism and salvation (or it's equivalent occurs), salvation always comes after baptism—*not before!* There are no exceptions!

An actual case to illustrate.

Acts 19:1-7

- a) They had been taught about Christ.
- b) They had even been immersed (baptized).
- c) They thought they were right with God.
- d) But, they needed further teaching—to correct a misunderstanding.
- e) They needed to be immersed again—this time correctly.

Even though one may have been immersed—it needs to be preceded by correct teaching; preceded by true repentance; preceded by a realization that he is lost; preceded by a realization that upon belief, repentance, and baptism—he can be saved! This is clearly what the Bible teaches!

Concluding Thoughts

Who needs to be baptized (immersed)?

- a) Those who realize they are lost and want to be saved.
- b) Those who have been sprinkled with water & not immersed.
- c) Those who are capable of believing, repenting, and obeying from the heart what God commands in baptism.
- d) Those who have been mis-taught about salvation by faith only—and that baptism has no part in their salvation.
- e) Those who have been immersed with wrong understanding about purpose of baptism.

Eternal punishment is too horrible to have to suffer because we wouldn't listen to what God's Word teaches. Heaven is too wonderful to miss simply because of

THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN SPRINKLED WITH WATER

Many religious groups sprinkle water over children in infancy and then have them accepted into their churches at age 12 or 13. Most churches call this baptism, while others call it a Christening or dedication. Questions that should be answered:

- Is this what the Bible teaches?
- Is this truly baptism?
- Is this acceptable to God?
- Should a person take a chance with their salvation on this?
- Since a large % of the religious world practices this—are they correct?

We believe the answer should be "NO" to all of these questions! Does it matter to you what the Bible teaches in regards to this? In the first place, Sprinkling is not Baptism. The Greek word means to immerse, submerge, to put under. God is commanding people to be immersed to be saved.

Rom. 6:3-5 _____

There is another Greek word for sprinkling (Rantizo). To obey God—one must be immersed—buried with Christ! Also, there are things that precede baptism that are necessary. Baptism is invalid without these.

Realization that I am lost!

- A willingness to believe the gospel.
- A decision to turn from Sin to God—called repentance.
- Willingly obeying the Lord in baptism.

It is obvious that an infant cannot do these things. A person must be old enough to realize and do these things to make baptism valid!

THOSE WHO WERE BAPTIZED UNDER PRESSURE.

There are some situations in which a potential mate would say to the one that they want to marry: *"You have to be baptized before I will marry you."* He or she is baptized, but without proper convictions. There could also be the situation where a wife or husband would put pressure on their mate. They are baptized to take away the pressure. But, they did not really obey God...but only to please their mate. There have also been situations where Grandparents or Parents push a child too soon to be baptized. A child should not be pressured or pushed into being baptized. Again we emphasize that there are pre-requisites that must be met before baptism is valid. It must be his or her decision. It must be from the

But we are convinced that God exists! We believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God! And, we do believe that God has given us a Message of Hope in Christ Jesus.

The Kind of Faith we must Have!

The Bible's strong emphasis on believing certainly indicates its great importance. It must be stress so that man can be right with God. But it is a grave mistake to think that man is saved by "faith alone!" The very opposite is taught and it will be obvious as we go through these lessons. Please note how many things are involved in our justification in the following verses:

- Rom. 5:1 _____
- Rom. 5:2 _____
- Rom. 5:9 _____
- Rom. 5:17-18 _____
- Rom. 5:19 _____

All are obviously involved, all are essential, and all mesh together to provide redemption for fallen man. It should be obvious that justification by "faith alone" is an impossibility. To advocate such a doctrine is to eliminate God's grace, Christ's blood, Christ's righteousness, and Christ's obedience. Man's salvation involves both God's Work and Man's Work in order to be completed.

James, in his letter to Christians, takes a little different approach to this question of faith. He draws a contrast between a "dead" faith and an "obedient" faith. Read James 2:17-26 and answer the following questions:

- 2:17—What made it a dead faith? _____
- 2:18—How does one show that he has faith? _____
- 2:19—Who besides humans believer there is One God? _____
- 2:20—Who does James call foolish? _____
- 2:21—By what was Abraham justified? _____
- 2:22—What did "Abraham's works do for his faith? _____
- 2:23—What Scripture did James quote that told how Abraham was justified before God? _____
- 2:24—What does James say does not justify us? _____
- 2:25—How was Rahab justified? _____
- 2:26—What is a dead faith compared unto? _____

Concluding Thoughts

It would seem quite obvious that it is not only important that we believe God's message, but that we act on it—we put our faith into action! A dead faith cannot save anyone—but an obedient faith can bring us into a saved state and a relationship with the God of Heaven. Is man saved by faith? YES! But not by "faith alone!"

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. A person must now believe in Jesus in order to have eternal life.
- ___ 2. Salvation by "faith alone" is a very desirable doctrine to believe, but such teaching is incorrect.
- ___ 3. If we are justified by the blood of Christ, then we cannot also be justified by faith.
- ___ 4. Justification of man must involve God and Man.
- ___ 5. Man's part in his justification is by "faith alone."
- ___ 6. The issue is not whether man is saved by faith, but by "faith alone."
- ___ 7. The Bible recognizes different kinds or levels of faith.
- ___ 8. James makes it clear that man is not justified by faith alone.
- ___ 9. James uses 3 different persons to show that man is justified by an obedient, working faith.
- ___ 10. Repentance and baptism are activities of faith that makes our faith acceptable to God.
- ___ 11. A faith that is "alive" is a "growing" faith.
- ___ 12. It is not enough to say: "I believe!"

Lesson Five

"Baptism: A Biblical View"

Because of a lot of mis-teaching of the Bible on many subjects, many people are confused over what they should believe and practice. Baptism is one of those subjects that needs to be clarified from Scripture. Many have undergone some form of what is called Baptism, but have sincere questions as to its validity in God's sight. Some people want to make their salvation sure and want to know just what the Bible teaches on this subject. The purpose of this lesson is to point to 4 different situations in which people need to be baptized and to clearly see what action is required in order to be baptized as God commands. We also want to see why these people need to be baptized as God commands.

THOSE WHO ARE LOST NEED TO BE BAPTIZED.

Unfortunately, most religious groups teach that a person is saved by "faith alone." They advocate that the moment they accept the Lord in their heart as Savior they are saved! Some advocate that you have to pray through to be saved. Others, that you must have a religious experience that lets you know you are saved (Called Baptism of Holy Spirit by some). But all emphasize—a person is saved without baptism. But, I would like to suggest—the Bible teaches the very opposite of this.

Acts 2:36-37 _____

Acts 2:38-40 _____

These Jewish people were convicted of their sinfulness. They saw their need of being forgiven for such a terrible deed. *"What shall we do?"*—to be forgiven or saved? The whole point of their question showed a realization of their unsaved, lost condition. They were told to Repent and be Baptized *"For remission of sins"*—forgiveness—saved from punishment of sins. They were exhorted to *"saved themselves—be saved.* How? By repenting and being baptized! LOST PEOPLE need to be baptized to be saved! (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21). The Lord tells us that Baptism is for lost people who want to be saved.

3,000 people were baptized that day in order to have the remission of sins. However, it is important to realize that they had to believe the message first and make a decision to turn from their disobedience to God.

To Take Notes if needed

Lesson Three

"Repentance Towards God"

Thus far, we have seen the importance of respecting God and His Word! Without this reverence, we would not believe the message from God. And if we do not believe the message, we certainly would not repent! This is the next succeeding thing that man must do to be right with God—repentance! The need for repentance is clearly emphasized in the Scriptures.

Lk. 13:3 _____

Acts 17:30 _____

2 Pet. 3:9 _____

What is Repentance?

It is first and foremost a recognition that I have been disobedient to the Law of God—"I have sinned!" (Lk. 15:21; Rom. 3:23). It is also a realization that that kind of life leads to eternal death (Rom. 6:23). But to also realize I need to have a true sorry for my rebellious acts (2 Cor. 7:8-10). I need God's forgiveness and cleansing of my sins (Rom. 4:7-8). And I need to live an obedient life in Christ (Matt. 7:21). I must die to the way of sin (disobedience) and become a servant of righteousness (Rom. 6:1-2, 17-18). Repentance is a change of mind or heart that leads to a changed way of living that is acceptable to God. Repentance is what helps to bring about a conversion (Acts 3:19) or a new birth (Jn. 3:5) or a new life (Rom. 6:4).

John was sent to preach "repentance" to the Israelite nation as one that is preparing the people for the coming of the "Messiah!" When some of the "self-righteous" Pharisees and Sadducees came out to listen to his message, he faced them with their "sham" religiousness and warned them that repentance must bear fruit to show its reality (Matt. 3:8-9). It is not enough to say "I have sinned," but there must be a change that takes place in their lives to show that they recognize their sinfulness (1 Cor. 6:9-11). If they continue living in their sinful acts or relationships, there has been no repentance—and thus, no forgiveness or cleansing!

Repentance is a process of turning from sin or disobedience and turning to God and being obedient to His Law or requirements. It is to become a servant of righteousness (obedience to God's Law) in order to be cleansed.

What Repentance is Not!

Repentance is not being sorry that I got caught in my evil deeds. This kind of condition does not bring about the change that is needed in order to have the forgiveness of God! But "Godly Sorrow" will bring about the changes that God is calling for from those who want to be right with Him.

2 Cor. 7:10 _____

Repentance is not praying and asking for God's forgiveness! A person may pray like "Saul of Tarsus" did, but forgiveness does not come through prayer, but through true repentance. A person can pray day and night for as long as they can do it, but without repentance their prayer is worthless.

Acts 9:11 _____

Acts 22:16 _____

Repentance is not making some small change in my life, but ignoring the glaring sins that are there. Conversion or a New Birth is not just a small change, but a radical change in my outlook and actions. Jesus becomes the Lord of my life (Rom. 10:9)—I listen to Him and do all of His bidding. I put off the old way of life that was wrong (Eph. 4:22-23) and put into practice the new way of life that is according to true righteousness and holiness (Eph. 4:24). True repentance brings forth the kind of fruit that pleases God.

Jn. 15:4-5 _____

Repentance illustrated

Jesus told about a certain man who had two sons (Matt. 21:28-32). The first son was told by his father to go work in his vineyard. The son said "*I will not!*" But later on he regretted it (repented) and went. The father said to the second son to go work in his vineyard. The 2nd son said "*I go, sir!*" But he did not go. Jesus asked his audience "*Which of the two did the will of his father?*" The answer was obvious—the one who changed his mind and went! Without repentance there can be no forgiveness! Repentance is not only a change in one's mind or heart, but also a change in one's way of living. It is turning from disobedience to obedience—from sinfulness to righteousness—from pleasing of self or the world to pleasing the God who is willing to forgive us and acceptance us as His child.

Concluding Thoughts

To become a Christian, have our past sins forgiven, and to be in fellowship with God, we must be willing to openly confess Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God and the Lord of our lives. Those unwilling to do so exclude themselves from being a follower of Jesus.

To be forgiven of sins as a Christian we must be willing to confess them in order to be forgiven—both with God and our fellowman. Those unwilling to confess such do not have fellowship with either God or man.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. To give men the wrong answer as to how to be saved can be eternally fatal.
- ___ 2. God has made salvation possible, but man must be willing to accept this forgiveness on God's terms.
- ___ 3. The confession a sinner is to make is "I believe that God, for Jesus' sake, has forgiven my sins."
- ___ 4. False teachers teach a "perverted" gospel, rather than the true Gospel.
- ___ 5. Confession of Jesus is not necessary in order for a person to be saved.
- ___ 6. To love the praise of men can cause a person not to willingly confess Jesus as the Christ.
- ___ 7. Gnosticism was a doctrine that taught that God did not come down in the flesh to live as a man.
- ___ 8. A confession of Jesus as the Son of God is not the same as a person confessing their sins to God.
- ___ 9. Only a Christian has the right to ask God for forgiveness of sins.
- ___ 10. A person makes God out to be a liar if he professes that he has not sinned.
- ___ 11. John the baptizer told people they had to confess their sins in order to receive forgiveness.
- ___ 12. To be forgiven of sin as a Christian, the person must be willing to openly confess his wrong.

Kinds of Confessions

1. A confession of Jesus, as the Christ and that He is Lord. This confession is required to be done openly before others unto our salvation. (Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32). If we do not confess Him or we want to be a secret disciple, we cannot be saved and Jesus will openly deny us before the Father. Peter made this confession during the public ministry of Jesus (Matt. 16:16-17). But he also made that same confession openly before a large crowd of Jewish people on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:36). Also, during the public ministry of Jesus, there were some rulers that "believed in Him" but were not willing to confess Him. Why? Two reasons are given: (1) They were afraid that they would be cast out of the synagogue; and (2) They loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. (Jn. 12:42). The religious leaders had already agreed that they would throw people out of the synagogue if they confessed Jesus as being the "Christ." (Jn. 9:22). It is also important that we realize that confession without obedience to Christ is worthless (Matt. 7:21-23; 1 Jn. 1:6; 2:4). This confession must be a conviction of the heart and they are giving their allegiance to Christ (Phil. 2:11).

2. A confession that Jesus came in the flesh. There were some false teachers trying to teach what was later called "Gnosticism." They said that God could not come in the flesh because flesh was evil. God could have nothing to do with evil. Therefore Jesus was not a human like we are! The problem is that they have assumed something that must be proved. And the Bible plainly states that God became flesh and dwelt among us. (Jn. 1:1-2, 14; Isa. 9:6; Matt. 1:23). Those unwilling to confess that God came down in human flesh and dwelt among us are classified as unbelievers and false teachers.

3. A confessing of our sins. As a Christian, I have access to the throne of God through Christ to ask for forgiveness of sins. If some Christians say that they have no sin, they deceive themselves and the truth is not in them (1 Jn. 1:8). He also adds, that such people who deny that they have not sinned make God a liar and His word is not in them (1 Jn. 1:10). If we want forgiveness as a Christian, we must be willing to confess those sins so that our fellow-man or God can forgive us (1 Jn. 1:9; Jas. 5:16; Matt. 18:15-17). Until our confession of sin is sincere and repentance shown, there can be no true forgiveness nor restoring of fellowship. John the baptizer came preaching a message of repentance, confession of sins, and baptism so the people could be ready for the coming kingdom (Matt. 3:1-6). At that time, the people were not required to confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God....only to confess their sinfulness before God.

A forgiving God!

It is amazing that God would condescend to reason with sinners and help us to come to repentance. What makes it so amazing is the fact that He is willing to reason with stubborn, stiff-necked people like us. He reasons with people who are determined to go their own way. He continually calls out to people who richly deserve punishment and is patiently waiting for us to "come to our senses" and return to Him.

But there is something even more amazing than the above! He was willing to send His Son to earth and live among us to call us to repentance. He stands at the door of our heart and asks us to open to Him; but we have turned Him down time and again (Rev. 3:20). And God patiently waits for us to come to Him today in penitence and willing obedience.

But God's patience can come to an end! When the Jewish Nation rejected His Son, He gave them about 40 more years to come to repentance. But since it did not come, God allowed the Romans to come and destroy the Nation (Matt. 23:34-39). The day of punishment will come for those who will not repent. God is not pampering us, but patiently reasoning with us to turn from our sinful ways (Prov. 29:1).

God has promised: ***"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."*** (Isa. 1:18) We have sinned against God without cause. We did what we did out of our own selfish desire. God could have dealt justly with us, but He didn't. He has shown a willingness to forgive those who will repent. We have much to be thankful for!

But it is also amazing that God will forgive us on such simple terms! On the Day of Pentecost, Peter preached the first sermon to the Jewish people. He accused them of crucifying the Son of God. Could any of us do any worse than they? Yet, God was willing to forgive those who believed, repented and were obedient to His Will (Acts 2:37-38). How could God justly do such a thing? It was made possible because Jesus paid the debt for us! He paid it all! His blood has washed my sinful soul and it has become as white as snow!

Concluding Thoughts

God's mercy is amazing, wonderful, and inexhaustible. He has not said "no" to sinful man's coming back to Him so marred by sin. Instead, we are over-awed at his great and wonderful heart of love for us. **Are you enjoying the salvation that God so graciously offers to all?**

Questions for Discussion

1. Do you think that Jesus' statement to the people, "Repent or Perish," was too strong?
2. How would you define repentance?
3. How does repentance bring about conversion?
4. Does repentance have to have fruit before it is true repentance?
5. What is so important about obedience to God's Law?
6. What is not true repentance?
7. How did Jesus illustrate repentance?
8. What is so amazing about God's willingness to forgive?
9. Are God's terms for forgiveness simple?

*Lesson Four****"Confession: of Whom and to Whom"***

Man's salvation is a most important subject. To exaggerate its importance would not be possible. And to give a wrong answer can be eternally fatal. It ought and must be the greatest concern of our life. Salvation for man is a two-fold process!

1. God had to make it possible to justly save man.

- a) This deals with His grace, Love, Mercy, Longsuffering, etc.
- b) But primarily with the death of Jesus on the cross to make it possible.

2. But man also has a part to play in his own salvation.

- a) He must be willing to hear the Message of Salvation and believe it.
- b) This faith must motivate him to come to repentance.
- c) Then, he is ready to openly make a confession of his faith in Christ.

Unfortunately, men have confused the issue and given various and erroneous answers to the question: *"What must I do to be saved?"* Men either give the wrong answers or only part of the correct answer. Inspiration warns men of this danger (Gal. 1:6-9, etc.) The only solution to the confusion is to turn to the Word of God and be willing to hear all that is taught about man's part in his own salvation. God's Word must be the final and absolute answer!

The Necessity of Confession

During Jesus' public ministry among the Jewish people, He made it very clear concerning our confession of Him.

Matt. 10:32-33 _____

Rom. 10:10 _____

We must not be ashamed to confess Jesus before men. He is to be confessed as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37), and that He is the Lord of my life from here on (Rom. 10:10). It is confessing openly our discipleship to Jesus. Because we are willing to confess Him openly, He is willing to redeem us through His blood. This confession is made with our mouth, but from our hearts!