

SALVATION

Secure in Christ



**Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith;
prove your own selves.
~2Corinthians 13.5~**

A Bible study dealing with the salvation and eternal security of the sinner

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Pastor: Gregory A. Kedrovsky

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“...freely ye have received, freely give.”
[Mathew 10.8]

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LESSON #1

SALVATION

Key Verse: Ephesians 2.8-9

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

MAN'S ORIGINAL CONDITION

1. Man was created in the image of God so that he could be in communion with Him.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. [Gen 1.27]

2. Man was also created with limits (He was given a prohibition within an abundant provision).

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. [Gen 2.16-17]

3. Man's original condition could be illustrated like this:



MAN'S CURRENT CONDITION

1. The Act: Man disobeyed God and sinned.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. [Gen 3.6]

2. The Result: Man is now separated from God (dead spiritually).

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. [Rom. 5.12]

A. The word “death” in the Bible never means “annihilation” (like “ceasing to exist”).

B. Death in the Bible always refers to a “separation”.

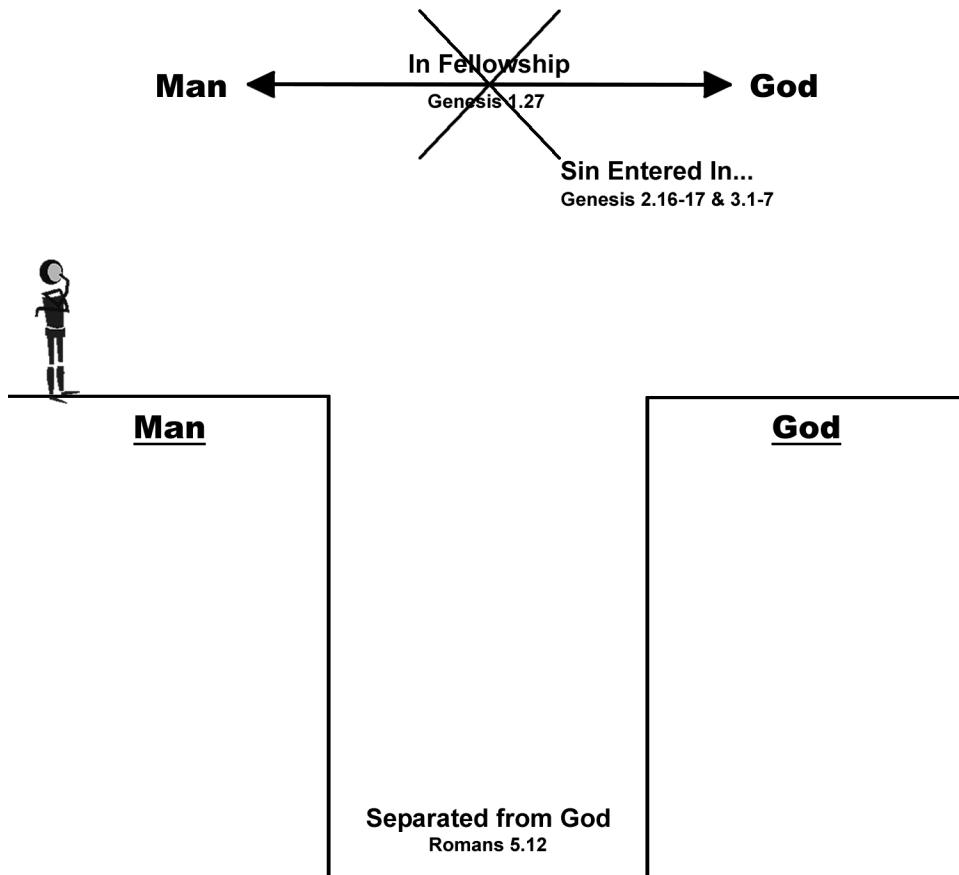
i. Physical death is the separation of the soul from the physical body.

ii. Spiritual death is the separation from spiritual life (the human spirit that is “dead” is separated from God, the source of all life). Romans 5.12 speaks of spiritual death.

C. Since all human beings are descendants of Adam and Eve, we inherited their spiritual death. For us today, this means that all of us are born spiritually dead because we are born “in sin”—we are born sinners.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins. [Eph. 2:1]

3. An Illustration:



MAN'S PERSONAL CONDITION

1. We all sin.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. [Rom 3:23]

A. It is very important that each individual understand that he has sinned and because of his sins, he has greatly and personally offended God, his Creator.

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. [Ps 51.4]

The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity. [Ps 5.5]

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. [Ps 7.11]

Read also: 1John 1.8, 10

B. The easiest way to see this truth and understand its implications for us as individuals is through the use of God's Moral Law.

- i. The Law is like a spiritual mirror that shows us our condition before God. In other words, by the Law we can see ourselves how God sees us.

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. [Jas 1.22-25]

- ii. The Law helps us to understand what sin is because sin is the transgression of the Law.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. [1Jn 3.4]

- iii. The Bible says that by the Law is the knowledge of sin. God's Law shows us exactly what God considers to be sin—it exposes all the filth that is in our lives.

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. [Rom 3.19-20]

Read also: Romans 7.7

- C. So, let's take out the mirror of the Law and see how we are doing: (Exod 20.1-17) The Ten Commandments are good summary of God's Moral Law that He has written on the heart of every person.

- i. The First Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

- a. God must be the “number one priority” in our lives always (every day, all day).

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind... [Luke 10.27]

- b. Our love for God must be so great that the love we have for others, in comparison, looks like hate.

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. [Luke 14.26]

- c. Who hasn't violated this commandment?

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. [Rom 3.10-12]

- d. This first commandment along with the second commandment are like two sides of the same coin. If God is not the priority in your life (the first commandment), then something else is (and that “something else” is an idol for you; the second commandment).

- ii. The Second Commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

- a. The Bible says that we are not to fashion a god with our hands or with our minds.

And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. [Rom 1.23]

- b. We are not to make a god in our own likeness (like some who “create” a god in their minds who does not care about the sin they so adore and protect).

In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes. [Jdg 21.25]

- c. If you have violated this commandment (which goes hand-in-hand with the the first one), the Bible says that you are an idolater. You do not worship the one true God, the Creator, but rather a god you have fashioned with your own mind. That is called idolatry; that is how God sees it.

iii. The Third Commandment: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.

- a. “In vain” refers to an improper or irreverent use of God's name. It can also mean “to no purpose” (using God's name with no real purpose behind it, as an idle or vain word).

[1] This means that if you have used God's name as a curse word (which is blasphemy), you have broken this commandment.

And the Israelitish woman's son blasphemed the name of the LORD, and cursed. And they brought him unto Moses...And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him... And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, and all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name of the LORD, shall be put to death. [Lev 24.11-16]

[2] Or, if you have simply used the name of God with no real intent or purpose (just as a “verbal placeholder”), then you have broken this commandment.

But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. [Mat 12.36]

- b. If you have used the Lord's name in vain, the Bible says you are a blasphemer.

iv. The Fourth Commandment: Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

- a. This commandment must be taken in its proper context to understand the moral implications behind it (i.e., the moral law in this civil and ceremonial commandment).
- b. This commandment was given as a civil (and, to a certain extent, a ceremonial) law to the nation of the Israel. The Bible is very clear that the keeping of the Sabbath Day (the seventh day of the week, Saturday) is specifically and only for the nation of Israel.
- c. Observe the biblical context of the Sabbath Day in the following the passage. Note how clearly God says that the Sabbath is only for the nation of Israel. It is not for anyone who is not a Jew (i.e., the Sabbath is not for the Gentiles, nor is it for the Church today).

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak thou also unto **the children of Israel**, saying, Verily my sabbaths **ye** shall keep: for it is a sign between me and **you** throughout **your** generations; that **ye** may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify **you**. **Ye** shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto **you**: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people. Six days may work be done; but in the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Wherefore **the children of Israel shall keep the sabbath**, to observe the sabbath throughout **their generations**, for a perpetual covenant. **It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever**: for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed. [Exod 31.12-17]

- d. The New Testament is equally clear in that Christians today (during the Church Age) are not obligated to observe any one day over another. That includes the Sabbath—the Sabbath is not for Christians.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. [Col 2.16-17]

Read also: Romans 14.4-6

- e. The moral aspect of this commandment is found in separating one day in seven to set aside what we want to do and focus on God and what He would have us to do.

[1] Do you set aside one day in seven to sanctify that day (set it apart for God and His use)? Or do you see all seven days of the week as yours to do with as you please.

[2] A father illustrated the morality of this commandment for his daughter by using seven large candy bars (the really big ones!). He took all seven, gave them to his daughter, and told her they were hers to do with as she pleased. She was wary and skeptical at first (that was a lot of candy!), but her father reassured her several times that they were hers and she could do with them as she wished. Her eyes were almost as wide as her smile! Then her father leaned over and ask her, “Do you think I could have one of your candy bars?”

- An immoral, selfish reaction would be to jerk the candy bars away, hide them, and say, “No! They are all mine!” And that would be a correct statement. They were hers because her father gave them to her and told her she could do with them as she pleased.
- This daughter, however, saw the generosity of her father giving her so much and out of the love she had for him and the abundance of good things he had given her, she said with that same wide-eyed smile, “Sure! Which one do you want?”

[3] God has given each of us seven days to enjoy the life He has given us (and every good thing we have and experience each day of the week is from God; Jam 1.17). All He asks is that we share one with Him.

[4] Are you a faithful, committed member of a local church? Do you attend that church weekly in order to worship God by growing in the knowledge of Him and in your submission to His will? Or does church interrupt your plans for the week?

- v. The Fifth Commandment: Honor thy father and thy mother.

- a. Children are to always value their parents in a way that is pleasing before God. Never should they talk back, be disrespectful, dishonoring, etc.

- b. This is something we see both in the Old and the New Testaments.

Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord [Col 3.20]

Read also: Deuteronomy 27.16; Ephesians 6.1-3

- vi. The Sixth Commandment: Thou shalt not kill.

- a. This commandment refers to murder, not to killing in general. In Matthew 19.18, Jesus gives us the proper understanding of the definition of *kill* in the sixth commandment when He cites this commandment and uses the word *murder*.

He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness. [Mat 19.18]

- b. Yet, this law goes beyond the physical act of murder because God sees even the most intimate thoughts of your heart. He says that hating someone is murder in your heart.
- Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. [1Jn 3.15]
- c. God desires truth in our hearts, not wickedness.
- Behold, thou desirest **truth in the inward parts**: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. [Ps 51.6]
- For **out of the heart** proceed evil thoughts, **murders**, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. [Mat 15.19]
- d. God desires good thoughts in our hearts and minds, not wicked thoughts.
- Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. [Php 4.8]
- And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. [Gen 6.5]
- e. If you have become angry with someone without cause (which is part of hating someone: you want to do them harm), even if it was for just a few seconds, you have violated this commandment and God says that you are a murder.
- vii. The Seventh Commandment: Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- a. Because God requires truth in the “inward parts” (Ps 51.6), Jesus said the following in His Sermon on the Mount.
- Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. [Mat 5.27-28]
- b. If you have looked at someone who is not your spouse with lust (sexual desire), even just one time, the Bible says you are an adulterer. That is how God sees you.
- Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. [Acts 8.22]
- viii. The Eighth Commandment: Thou shalt not steal.
- a. The value of what you have stolen is irrelevant because it is the act of taking something that does not belong to you that makes you a thief. It could be a pen, five minutes from work, your taxes, an mp3 music file off the Internet, or an answer off a test from another student at school.
- b. If you have stolen something (even something small just one time), you are a thief. That is how God sees you and that is how you see yourself in the “mirror of the Law.”
- ix. The Ninth Commandment: Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
- a. This includes lies, “white lies,” exaggerations, and half-truths (only giving part of the story in order to deceive someone else).
- The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? [Jer 17.9]
- Read also:** Psalm 116.11
- b. If you have lied (even if were only one time), you are a liar. That is how God sees you.

x. The Tenth Commandment: Thou shalt not covet.

- a. The opposite of coveting is being content. Who can say he has been content (with just food and clothing) always, every day of his life? No one can say that but Jesus Christ!

And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. [1Tim 6.8-9]

- b. If you have coveted something, you are guilty of violating this commandment.

D. We all sin.

- i. All men everywhere have broken God's Law that He wrote upon our hearts. We have violated the moral Law that is expressed in the Ten Commandments.
- ii. Our own conscience bears witness to us that this is true (our conscience condemns us when we do wrong).

For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel. [Rom 2.12-16]

- a. The word “conscience” means “with science.”
- b. The prefix *con-* means *with* and the word *science* means *knowledge*.
- c. Every time we sin—every time we violate God's moral Law that He wrote on our hearts—we do it “with science” (with knowledge). We know we have done wrong because our conscience condemns us!

E. Because of this, the Bible says that God is angry with the wicked every day; He is angry with those who work iniquity (who do wrong things knowing they are wrong). And this is why the Bible speaks of a coming day of judgment that will be a day of wrath.

God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day. [Ps 7.11]

But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds. [Rom 2.5-6]

Read also: Psalm 5.5; 2Thessalonians 1.7-9

2. Because of sin, man must die.

- A. For every infraction God's Law, He requires death. In other words, the “fine” for having broken the Law of God is the death penalty.

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. [Ezek 18.4]

- B. What we “earn” for sinning (violating and breaking the Law) is death.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. [Rom. 6.23]

3. After death, every man will be judged.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. [Heb 9.27]

A. How many times does someone have to break a law to be guilty? How many times does someone have to kill someone to be a murderer? The answer to both those questions is: Once. How many times does one have to break God's Law to be guilty and thus deserve the "fine" that must be paid because of that guilt? Once.

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all. [Jam 2.10]

B. If you do not keep the whole Law all the time, you are condemned—you are under a curse, God's wrath.

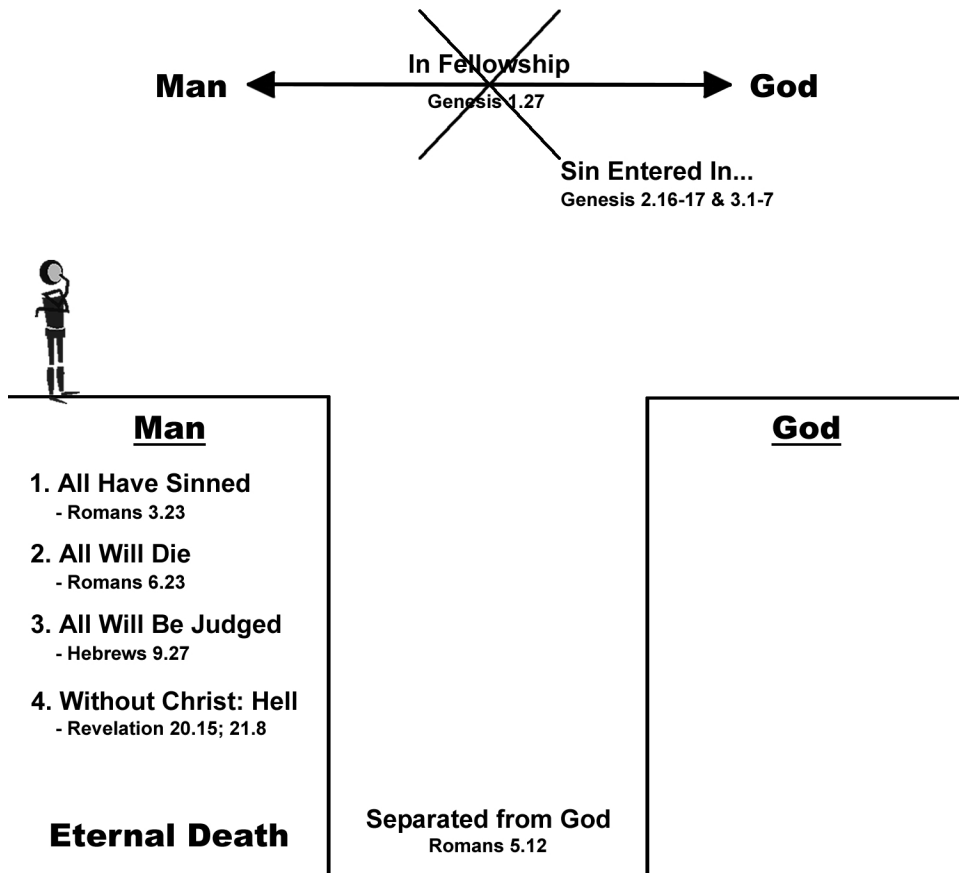
For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. [Gal 3.10]

4. Without Christ, there is only the horrendous expectation of "eternal death," a death the Bible calls the "second death." That second death is the eternal lake of fire.

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. [Rev 20.15]

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death. [Rev 21.8]

5. An illustration:



MAN'S PERSONAL DECISION

1. God has, however, graciously provided for the sinner.
 - A. We broke God's Law but Jesus Christ paid our fine.
 - B. Christ never sinned, not even once. He never broke God's Law. Therefore, He did not deserve to die. But He did die: He died on the cross for us as our Substitute to pay the price of our sins.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised **for our iniquities**: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him **the iniquity of us all**. [Isa 53.5-6]

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, **the just for the unjust**, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. [1Pet 3.18]

2. If you, or anyone else, wants to be saved, God says you must do two things: repent and believe!
 - A. Repent: First, you must flee from the wrath to come (God's day of judgment) by repenting.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. [Acts 17.30-31]

- i. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change in behavior. It is changing your mind about sin and self (accepting the fact that you are wicked and that you have done wicked things), and then changing your behavior (flee from sin! separate from it! stop it!).
- ii. Repentance is manifested many ways, one of which is confessing your sins to God. When you sin, you offend God. If you have truly repented, you'll go to Him and apologize.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. [Prov 28.13]
- iii. Without a desire turn from your sins (without repentance), there is no salvation, because God resists the proud (those who desire to continue in sin) and gives grace to the humble.

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. [Jas 4.6]

- B. Believe: Secondly, after turning *from* sin (repentance), you must turn *to* the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and place your faith and trust in Him and Him only to save you.

But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference. [Rom 3.21-22]

Read also: Romans 4.5

- i. Think about how you would place your faith and trust in a parachute if you had to jump from a burning plane. That is how you need to trust in Christ. One of these days you are going to have step through the door of death on this plane of life and if you don't have a parachute, you will fall to your death in the lake of fire.
- ii. You must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. [Rom 10.9-10]

Read also: Acts 16.30-31

3. Salvation is by the grace of God, through faith, and not by any good works that we could do.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. [Eph 2.8-9]

Read also: Galatians 2.16; Titus 3.5

A. If the sinner tries to pay his own “fine” with his own good works, he is only increasing the debt that he will have to pay in the lake of fire, because God is a Just Judge and He will not accept a bribe from anyone.

- i. That is exactly what our good works are, if they are offered to God as a payment for sin.
- ii. It would be like the convicted murderer telling the judge he will wash his car and cut his grass if the judge will let him go free. It's a bribe! And bribes are illegal. The criminal, by offering the judge his good works as payment to go free, is simply adding more and more to his own condemnation.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. [Rom 4.4-5]

B. The Bible says that our “good” works that we would offer to God for salvation are like filthy rags (the rags of a leper) before God.

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. [Isa 64.6]

4. Assurance of life.

A. Once we have repented (confessed our sins and turned from them) and believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, the Bible says that we have God's forgiveness of all our sins and we have eternal life (we have life for eternity).

- i. Pay attention to the verb tenses in the following passage.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and **shall not** come into condemnation; but **is passed** from death unto life. [John 5.24]

- ii. The Christian has (“hath”: right now, in this moment) eternal life and will never be brought under condemnation of hell because he has already passed from death to life.

B. We will never be dead again in our sins because Jesus paid our sin debt. He died so we do not have to. We have the forgiveness of all our sins (all of them: past, present, and future).

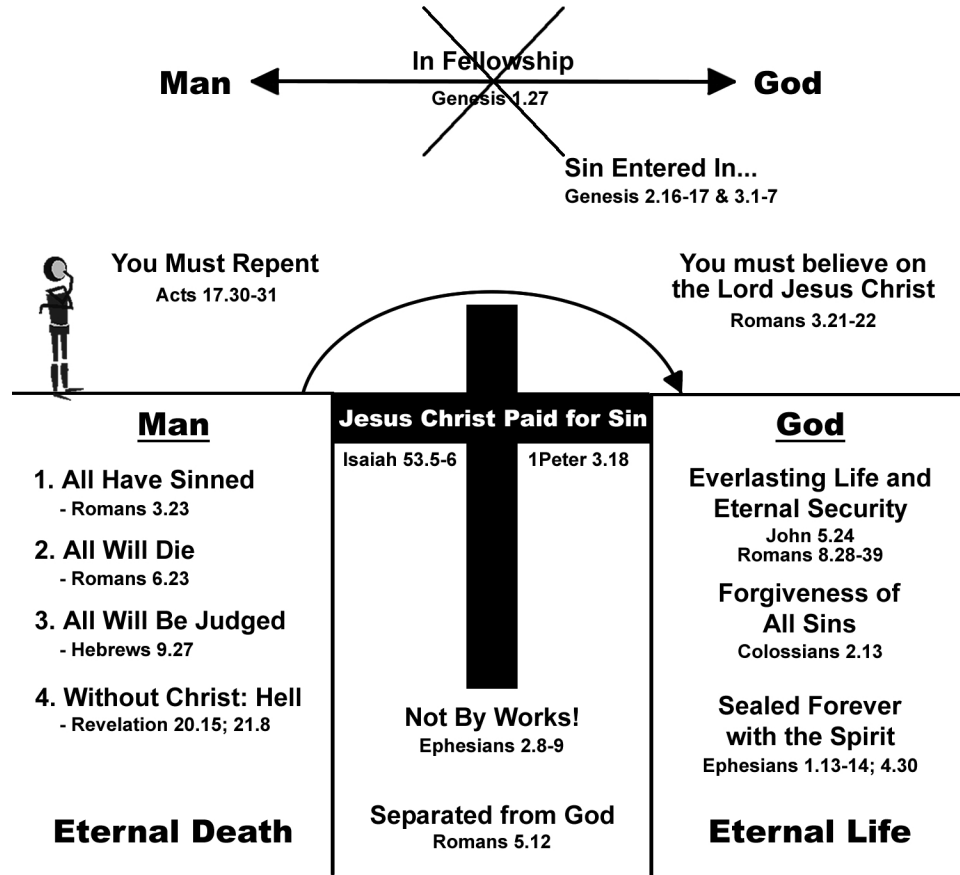
And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you **all** trespasses. [Col 2.13]

C. In Christ we have been restored to what Adam lost. We have been created in Christ Jesus to be in communion with our Creator, just like He made Adam. We have been born again, born of the Spirit, and now we are sons of God.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. [John 1.12]

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [2Cor 5.17]

5. An illustration:



*For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world,
and lose his own soul?*

~Mark 8.36~

Are you sure you are saved? If you were to die right now, are you sure you would go to heaven and not hell? Have you repented of your sins and turned to the Lord Jesus Christ to believe on Him for salvation and to follow Him as your Lord? Or are you still living for sin and self?

Mark Cahill, in his book *One Heartbeat Away*, says this to sinners:

The God of the Bible is in control for all of eternity. However, He does allow you to decide who or what you will worship. ...what is your decision going to be? ...to go to Hell, do nothing. To go to Heaven, turn to Jesus and "repent, confess, and get rid of your mess," as the old preacher used to say. The choice is yours. Everyone has to make a choice, one way or the other. "Sitting the fence" isn't really an option because Satan owns the fence. Not choosing is, by default, choosing Hell.

LESSON REVIEW

1. How did God create man in the beginning?

2. What was the limit (the prohibition) that God gave man in the beginning?

3. What did man do in regard to the prohibition?

4. What was the result of this decision of Adam and Eve?

5. According to the Bible, what is death? What is spiritual death, then?

6. It is very important that you as an individual understand that you have sinned. What does this truth imply with regard to your relationship with your Creator? What do 1John 1.8, 1John 1.10 and Psalm 51.4 say regarding this truth?

7. How does the Law of God help us to understand our own personal sins—our offenses before God?

8. What are the Ten Commandments? Explain a little about each and how they show us our sins:

A. The First Commandment: _____

B. The Second Commandment: _____

C. The Third Commandment: _____

D. The Fourth Commandment: _____

E. The Fifth Commandment: _____

F. The Sixth Commandment: _____

G. The Seventh Commandment: _____

H. The Eighth Commandment: _____

I. The Ninth Commandment: _____

J. The Tenth Commandment: _____

9. What does our conscience have to do with the Law of God? What does it do and what does it tell us?

10. What is the “fine” that has to be paid because we have broken God's Law?

11. How many times do you have to break the Law to be guilty? Is there a Bible verse that talks about this? Which one is it?

12. What is the provision that God has made for the sinner who breaks the Law? Briefly explain your answer.

13. What does one have to do to be saved—to receive God's forgiveness of sins and eternal life?

14. What do good works have to do with salvation? Briefly explain your response.

15. Why does the Christian have eternal security? Use the verses from the lesson to explain your answer.

LESSON #2

TRUE AND FALSE CONVERSIONS

Key Verse: 2Corinthians 13.5

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? [2Cor 13.5]

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'M REALLY SAVED OR NOT?

What's going to matter to you on the day you die? What's going to matter to you when you have to pass through the door of death and be taken into the presence of your Creator? What will matter to you is if you have Christ or not—if you are saved or not—because that will decide your eternal destiny. There is nothing more important than your salvation. Think about it... In one hundred years there is only one thing that is going to matter to any of us: If we are in heaven or if we are in hell.

Because of this, the person who says he believes in Jesus Christ ought to be sure of his conversion. Paul exhorted the Corinthian believers to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith or not.

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? [2Cor 13.5]

Paul knew that there were people in churches that had “believed in vain”—they had believed without actually converting to Christ (without getting saved).

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. [1Cor 15.2]

Christ also spoke of this sad reality of false conversions. He spoke of people who said they believed in Him, but who were not saved.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. [Mat 7.21-23]

The purpose of this lesson (and the next two lessons after this one) is to help you to “examine yourself” so that you may know if you are in the faith or not—if you really converted to the Lord or not when you believed on Him. What follows is an analysis of the parable of the sower and it will help us to better understand the topic of true and false conversions. This lesson, which is about false conversions, and the next one, which is about true conversions, are more extensive than the other lessons in this Bible study course. Take your time studying them. If you want to take a couple of weeks with each of these lessons regarding true and false conversions, that is perfectly fine. What you will learn from studying the following Bible passages is extremely important.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

The parable of the sower is spoken of in three of the four Gospels: Mathew, Mark and Luke. Before you begin reading through this lesson, it is important that you read the parable of the sower in its totality. All of the teaching in this lesson and the next one is based on this parable.

Please read the following passages before continuing with this lesson:

- Matthew 13.1-9 and the interpretation of the parable in Matthew 13.18-23.
- Mark 4.1-8 and the interpretation in Mark 4.14-20.
- Luke 8.4-15 (this passage includes both the parable and the interpretation).

The Definitions of the Elements of the Parable

1. The sower is the one who “sows the Word.”

Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow. [Mark 4.3]

The sower soweth the word. [Mark 4.14]

A. The sower is the preacher. He is the one that goes out in search of sinners to sow the seed of the gospel in their hearts

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. [Rom 10.13-17]

B. Every Christian has been charged by God to be a sower, because every Christian has the responsibility to evangelize the lost, speaking to them of their sin and the salvation found only in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible says that all those who have been reconciled to God (all those who are saved) have been given the word of reconciliation (the gospel message) to take to the lost.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. [2Cor 5.18-20]

2. The seed is the Word of God. We sow the seed by preaching and teaching the Bible; we sow the seed of the God's Word by talking with people about what the Bible says.

Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. [Luke 8.11]

3. The four types of soil are four different types of people that hear the Word of God.

A. The first type of soil: The seed of the Word can fall by the way side.

A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell **by the way side**; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. [Luke 8.5]

B. The second type of soil: The seed of the Word can fall onto stony ground (soil with many rocks or a thin layer of soil over a bed of rock).

And some fell **upon a rock**; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. [Luke 8.6]

C. The third type of soil: The seed of the Word can fall among thorns.

And some fell **among thorns**; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. [Luke 8.7]

D. The fourth type of soil: The seed of the Word can fall on “good ground.”

And other fell on **good ground**, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. [Luke 8.8]

E. The “ground” in these passages refers specifically to the heart of the person who hears the preaching of the Word of God. The “heart” refers to that innermost part of your being, the very source of your thoughts (Genesis 6.5 speaks of the “thoughts of the heart”).

And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away **the word that was sown in their hearts**. [Mark 4.15]

The Definitions of the Four Types of Soil in the Parable

Observe in what follows that that three of the four types of soil do not result in salvation. Either they do not bring about a conversion or, in some cases, they result in a false conversion.

1. The seed sown “by the wayside”: He who hears and forgets.

Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. [Luke 8.12]

A. It is a sad reality that many hear the gospel and forget it. The Bible refers to this as Satan (called “the wicked one” in Mathew 13.19 and “the devil” in Luke 8.12) takes away the Word that is sown in a person's heart.

B. Many that hear the gospel simply do not understand it.

When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. [Mat 13.19]

C. The god of this world (the devil) has blinded their understanding. The enemy wants to hinder the Word of God and he does so by taking away the seed that is planted in the hearts of men.

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. [2Cor 4.3-4]

D. The scribes and the Pharisees are good examples of this type of soil. Christ sowed the seed of the Word of God in their hearts, but they did not want to receive it and therefore the devil snatched the seed away.

2. The seed sown on the “stony ground”: He that hears and believes (for a time).

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. [Luke 8.13]

And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. [Mark 4.16-17]

A. This is the “false convert.” Because this is such an important issue, we are going to study in depth later on.

B. These people hear the Word and receive it with gladness. In other words, they hear the gospel and believe (they are “believers”), but only for a time. When the “sun” of trials (tribulation, temptation, difficulties, and persecution) show up, these “believers” depart from the faith, manifesting their false conversion (the plant that shot up so quickly, withers just as quickly under the heat of the sun!).

C. Paul talks about these false converts in his first letter to the Corinthians.

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. [1Cor 15.1-2]

- i. To simply believe (intellectual assent) is not enough to be saved. One must repent *and* believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. That is true *conversion*: turning *from* sin and self *to* the Lord Jesus Christ, to trust Him as Savior and follow Him as Lord.
- ii. If someone only believes (without repentance), he has believed in vain and when the Christian life becomes difficult (when the “sun of trials” comes out), this type of “believer” (the false convert) departs from the faith and goes back to his sin in the world.

D. These false converts are the ones that profess to know God, but with their acts they deny Him. The Bible calls them reprobates and says that time and trials will expose their false conversion.

Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. **They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him**, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. [Titus 1.15-16]

E. Paul knew that there were false converts even in the first century church, during the time of his ministry.

- i. Paul calls these professing believers “false brethren.” They said they were of the brethren (they professed to be Christians), but they were false. They weren't saved.

In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. [2Cor 11.26]

Read also: Galatians 2.4

- ii. Because of this, Paul exhorted the believers to examine themselves to see if they were in the faith. He wanted to make sure the brethren were truly saved and not false converts!

Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? [2Cor 13.5]

F. Demas is a good example of this type of soil (of this type of “believer”). His conversion was false and therefore, after a time, he departed from the faith and returned to the world he loved.

For Demas hath forsaken me, **having loved this present world**, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. [2Tim 4.10]

- i. The person who loves this world is an enemy of God.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is **enmity** with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the **enemy** of God. [Jas 4.4]

- ii. The enemy of God (the one who, like Demas, loves this world) needs the reconciliation with God that can only be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. The enemy of God does not have salvation and therefore needs to repent of his sins and place his faith in the Lord.

For if, when we were **enemies**, we were **reconciled** to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [Rom 5.10]

3. The seed “among thorns”: He that hears and departs.

And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. [Luke 8.14]

And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. [Mark 4.18-19]

A. This is a case of sowing the seed among thorns. The thorns are a picture of the following:

- i. The cares of this world.
- ii. The deceitfulness of riches.
- iii. The lust of other things.
- iv. The pleasures of life (which include the pleasures of sin; Heb 11.25).

B. This is another occasion of someone hearing the gospel but refusing to convert.

i. Many want to see the principle of 2Timothy 2.4 in this type of soil.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. [2Tim 2.4]

- a. In this part of the parable of the sower some see the Christian who has entangled himself with the affairs of this life (debts, a career, secular “success”, etc.).
 - b. When a saint does this, his life and his walk with Christ do not produce fruit. The cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, the pleasures of life “choke” the seed of the gospel and therefore it does not produce fruit.
 - c. Even though this may be a good personal application of the principle found in the parable of the sower, it is clearly not what the passage says.
- ii. In Mark 4.19, the Bible says that *the seed* that was sown among the thorns “becometh unfruitful.” The verse says that the seed is unfruitful—the word that was sown into the heart of the lost person was unfruitful. The seed of the gospel did not produce its fruit (it did not result in a conversion).
- a. The seed does not grow because the thorns choke it out. It is not that the seed grows and then bears no fruit. But rather the seed itself does not grow. It is not able to become a plant. There is no life, no “birth” from the seed.
 - b. This happens when the seed of the gospel is sown in a heart that is so caught up with the cares of this world or the covetousness of a “successful life” that, even though the person hears, he soon forgets.

C. The example of this type of soil is the rich young ruler of Luke 18 who wanted to inherit eternal life.

18 And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

20 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

23 And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich.

24 And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, he said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! [Luke 18.18-24]

- i. (Luke 18.18-22) He hears the Word. The Great Sower, Jesus, sows the seed in his heart.
- ii. (Luke 18.23-24) However, the riches of this world choked the seed so that it could not grow, and it (the seed) became unfruitful. It did not produce life (a plant). This rich young ruler left without salvation, still in his sins.
 - a. He is, therefore, a good example of someone that “hears and departs” because there are other things more appealing to him in this world (the thorns that choke the gospel).
 - b. This young ruler is like so many today that when they hear the gospel decide to give priority to the riches of this world, thinking that later in life they will get their heart right with God. Nevertheless, the seed is choked among all the cares of this world and never grows.

4. The seed in the “good ground”: He that hears, understands, and converts.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. [Luke 8.15]

And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. [Mark 4.8]

A. This person hears the message of the gospel and...

i. ...understands it,

But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and **understandeth** it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. [Mat 13.23]

ii. ...receives it,

And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and **receive** it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred. [Mark 4.20]

iii. ...keeps it,

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **keep** it, and bring forth fruit with patience. [Luke 8.15]

iv. ...and brings forth fruit with patience (like the old preacher said: “Time proves all things”).

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and **bring forth fruit with patience**. [Luke 8.15]

B. We must understand that the soil of the heart becomes “good” through the work of the sower preparing that soil. There is no one that has a “good heart” naturally (read Jeremiah 17.9 and Romans 3.9-12). Every wicked, sinful heart must be prepared with the plow of the Law of God.

- i. No farmer would go out and just throw seed on hard, packed soil. First, he would use a plow to break through the soil, turn it up, and soften it. Once the ground was thoroughly plowed, the farmer must go through the field to pick up and discard rocks that would hinder the growth of the seed
- ii. The Law of God in the mouth of the evangelist is like a plow in the hand of the sower (the Christian who wants to sow the seed of the Gospel and see a plentiful harvest of souls).

For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem, Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns. [Jer 4.3]

- a. When the Christian teaches the Law to a sinner (when he provides him with an understanding of what the moral Law of God says), he is, in effect, breaking up the hard soil of that sinner's unconverted heart.
 - b. The plow of God's Law is hard and sharp. It goes easily in the soil, breaks it up, lifts it, and turns it over softening it and preparing it to receive the good seed of the gospel.
- iii. This is the “lawful” use of the Law of God, the moral law of God that is expressed in the Ten Commandments. The Law is to be used in evangelism in order to give the sinner a knowledge of his sins before the Creator. The Law prepares the soil of the heart to receive the seed of the gospel of the grace of God.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. [1Tim 1.8-11]

- a. When the sinner hears the preaching of the Law, he understands that he has sinned and that he has sinned against his Creator (because he has violated the Law his Creator wrote on his heart).

Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for **by the law is the knowledge of sin.** [Rom 3.19-20]

- b. Once the sinner understands this, his sin “abounds” and he is ready to hear about the grace of God. He is ready to hear about what God did to free him from his guilt that he will have to face on the day of judgment and wrath that is to come.

Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. [Rom 5.20]

- c. In this way, the Law becomes a schoolmaster (a helper, an educator). It takes the sinner and escorts him to the cross—to Christ—to be justified by faith.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [Gal 3.24]

- d. The Law, then, like a plow, goes into the hard soil of the unbelieving heart and breaks it up, softening it, and bringing the “rocks of sin” to the surface. Once the Law has exposed those “rocks of sin,” the sinner can remove them from his “field” through repentance.

- iv. The soil of the heart, therefore, becomes “honest and good” through repentance.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an **honest and good heart,** having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. [Luke 8.15]

- a. If someone has knowledge of his sins by the Law (the Law defines what sin is: it is the transgression of the Law; 1John 3.4), he must “take them out of the soil of his heart” by repenting. He needs to change his mind about his sin and instead of keeping it in his life like a pet that gives him pleasure, he needs to get rid of it like a filthy rag! He needs to confess his sins to God and then turn from them.

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. [Prov 28.13]

- b. A good understanding of the Law of God creates a holy fear in the heart of man. For example, see the reaction of the Israelites after God gave them the moral Law of the Ten Commandments.

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die. And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and **that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.** [Exod 20.18-20]

- c. This is why the Law must be used lawfully, in evangelism. Only through the use of the Law (the exposing of sin) can the heart of the sinner be prepared to receive the seed of the gospel of the grace of God. An understanding of the Law creates a holy fear in the heart of man, and that is good! Without a true fear of God, the sinner will never repent and turn from his wickedness.

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil. [Prov 16.6]

- C. Before going on with the next lesson, observe two things in the context of the good soil of the sinner who hears the gospel and converts to the Lord.

- i. First, the convincing evidence of a true conversion to Christ (that someone has truly been saved, that he has truly received forgiveness and eternal life) is fruit.

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and **bring forth fruit** with patience. [Luke 8.15]

- ii. Second, another indication that someone truly has salvation is that he “keeps” the Word and brings forth fruit “with patience.” He does not depart from the faith like the false convert (like our example, Demas).

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, **keep** it, and bring forth fruit **with patience.** [Luke 8.15]

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. [1Cor 15.1-2]

NOTE: There are many false teachings in Christendom today and you should be aware of them. Some of those false teachings are:

1. The purpose of the parable of the sower is to show us that only one in four people will be converted when the gospel is preached.
2. All “believers” are saved.

From the biblical principles taught in this lesson, you can understand that these teachings are false and why.

1. The parable of the sower shows us key principles regarding evangelism. Christ did not teach this parable to encourage us because of the discouraging results we often experience in evangelism. He taught it to show us, first of all, that the soil of the unconverted heart must be prepared prior to sowing the seed of the gospel. To this end, God gave us the Law.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. [Gal 3.24]

Additionally, the parable of the sower shows us that there will always be false converts when the gospel is preached. Not everyone who says they are a Christian is truly a Christian.

2. Not all that believe are saved. Satan and his demons believe and they are not saved. Christ talked about those who will say, “Lord, Lord,” but who will not be saved. Paul also mentioned those who believe in vain—those who believe in Christ but who have never gained salvation (theirs is merely an intellectual assent).

Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. [Jas 2.19]

Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? [Mat 7.22]

By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. [1Cor 15.2]

The true convert is the sinner who repents of his sins and then believes on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. He that “believes in vain” is he that “only believes” (without repentance). We will study this topic in greater depth in the next two lessons.

Write down any questions you may have regarding this lesson.

LESSON REVIEW

1. What is the exhortation that Paul gives us in 2Corinthians 13.5?

2. What is the danger that Paul points out in 1Corinthians 15.2?

3. In the parable of the sower, who is the sower and what is the seed?

4. According to Mark 4.15 what does the “soil” refer to in the parable of the sower?

5. Briefly describe the seed that fell by the wayside:

A. It is a picture of the sinner who hears and... then what? _____

B. Who is the enemy that takes away the seed of the gospel from the heart of someone? _____

C. What else could you say about this type of soil? _____

D. Who are some good examples of this type of soil? _____

6. Briefly describe the seed that fell on the stony ground:

A. It is a picture of the sinner who hears and... then what? _____ (_____)

B. This type of soil is a picture of what type of conversion? _____

C. How does this type of person receives the gospel? _____

D. What is it that later shows us that this type of conversion is false? _____

E. What else could you say about this type of “believer”? _____

F. Who is a good example of this type of soil? _____

7. Briefly describe the seed that fell among thorns:

A. The thorns form a picture of:

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____

B. The rich young ruler of Luke 18 is an example of this type of soil. Briefly describe his conversation with Jesus.

8. Describe the seed that fell on good soil:

A. This is the person that heard the word of the gospel and...

- i. _____
- ii. _____
- iii. _____
- iv. _____

B. How is it that “the soil” of the heart can become “good”?

C. What is the evidence of a true conversion?

D. What is another indication (that is mentioned in this lesson) of someone who has truly converted to Christ (whom God has saved)?

9. Briefly explain the main purpose of this lesson:

LESSON #3

FIVE SIGNS OF A FALSE CONVERSION

Key Verse: 1Corinthians 15.1-2

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. [1Cor 15.1-2]

WHAT ARE SOME INDICATIONS OF A FALSE CONVERSION?

The parable of the sower teaches us many principles about salvation and what we can expect to see when that gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is preached. One of the most important things we can learn about from this parable is what is commonly referred to as a “false conversions” (people who believe they are saved—they had some sort of “conversion experience” or have “accepted Jesus as their Savior”—but in reality they have believed in vain; they did not truly convert to the Lord and are still lost).

How is it that we can know if a “believer” has really converted and been saved or not? How can we distinguish between a false conversion and a true conversion, even in our own lives? The parable of the sower will show us the key and, specifically, we will see that key clearly in the teaching about the seed that was sown in stony ground. Therefore, the purpose of this lesson is to teach you the five signs of a false conversion.

#1: With a false conversion there are immediate results

And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and **immediately it sprang up**, because it had no depth of earth. [Mark 4.5]

1. One sign of a false conversion is that it “immediately” springs up.
 - A. This happens when someone “makes a decision” without evaluating what he is doing.
 - B. Sometimes one must “plow with the Law” and sow the seed of the gospel in the heart of a person several times in order for that person to understand the message and realize his condition before the Creator. Very rarely does a person truly convert to Christ the first time he hears the gospel.
 - C. Also, when the person hears the gospel and finally understands it, there is often a period of time during which he will think about it and weigh things out. He gets frightened with the reality of his sin and the judgment that is to come, and so he wants to soberly consider what is required of him. This is good because salvation implies a radical change in his life and lifestyle, and therefore he should evaluate what he is doing in order to be very sure about the decision he is about to make.
 - D. Christ spoke about this when He taught about the cost of following Him as His disciple:

For which of you, intending to build a tower, **sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost**, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. [Luke 14.28-30]

2. Many times a false conversion (a conversion that “immediately” springs up) is due to the preaching of a false gospel. Today, it's often because of the preaching of the modern gospel of happiness.

A. Many want to offer Christ as life enhancement: “Accept Jesus into your heart and it will go well for you...you will be happy, blessed, and prosperous.”

B. Yet, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is not about happiness; it is about righteousness. In other words, we don't need happiness today. We need righteousness because in the day of judgment (also called the day of wrath), we will perish if we are not found righteous.

Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: **the soul that sinneth, it shall die.** [Ezek 18.4]

Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but **righteousness delivereth from death.** [Prov. 11.4]

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For **therein is the righteousness of God revealed** from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith. **For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.** [Rom 1.16-18]

Read also: Romans 6.23; Revelation 21.8

C. We can also know that the modern gospel of happiness (which is also called the “prosperity gospel”) is a false gospel because of the Lord's promise to those who want to live according to His will. The Lord's promise is not one of happiness; it is not about physical prosperity (healing and health), nor is it about material prosperity. The life promised to us in this world as followers of Jesus Christ is not a promise of a “glee filled” and “happy” life without problems. God promises the faithful that they will have to endure persecution, trials, tribulation, and temptation. We are the sons of God living in a world controlled by the devil, our Heavenly Father's enemy. What else should we expect?

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. [2Tim 3.12]

Read also: John 15.19-21

D. Many today have heard a false gospel that promises them everlasting happiness and their best life now. Since there is no need to evaluate an offer like this (who wouldn't want everlasting happiness, prosperity, and a better life?), people “convert” immediately. They believe a false gospel (a gospel that does not require repentance because it is not based on sin and justice, but rather on happiness) and therefore they are not saved. Their “conversion” is false.

3. Nevertheless, whether the false conversion is because of the preaching of a false gospel or because of the sinner misunderstanding the true gospel, there is often an immediate response. The conversion “immediately” springs up as soon as the gospel seed is sown (Mark 4.5).

A. The results with a false conversion are immediate. There is no period of evaluation during which the sinner soberly contemplates what the gospel implies (repentance and faith in Christ).

B. Obviously, a sinner can evaluate the “bad news” of hell and the “good news” of salvation in a matter of seconds. But, there is always an evaluation period because the change the Lord Jesus Christ requires us is radical (it is a “180 degree” turn that is called repentance).

#2: With a false conversion there is a lack of moisture (i.e., there is superficiality)

And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because **it lacked moisture.** [Luke 8.6]

1. Where does a plant find the moisture it needs to live and grow? It does not find it on the surface of the soil. Rather, it needs to set down deep roots to seek out water. The surface is usually dry.

2. With a false conversion there is no “moisture” because the seed of the gospel does not “take root.” It stays in the surface.
3. This means that superficiality in spiritual things is an indication that someone has had a false conversion and he is not saved. We must be very careful here not to confuse immaturity with superficiality. A new convert, of course, will be immature in his faith. But, the false convert is superficial, even after many years of being a “believer.”
4. This superficiality is manifested in a “dry” spirituality (without moisture). The false convert seems superficial or “dry” when he talks about God, Jesus Christ, the Church, or spiritual things.
5. This second sign of a false conversion is one side of a coin. The next, and third, sign is the other side of the coin because if the person is superficial (and therefore “dry”), he also has no depth.

#3: A false convert has no roots (there is no depth)

Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had **no deepness of earth**: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had **no root**, they withered away.
[Mat 13.5-6]

1. The seed that is sown in the stony ground springs up immediately (there are immediate results) because there is no depth in the soil—no deepness of earth.
 - A. The picture the Lord gives us here is one of a layer of soil on top of a rock. Therefore, all the growth happens quickly and upwards.
 - B. The plant is unable to take root due to the rocks under the surface of the soil.
2. In a false convert there is definite lack of deep character. There is neither depth in his walk nor in his spiritual talk. There is no root because there is no depth of soil, and therefore all the growth of this plant is “upwards”—it’s superficial.
3. How is this seen in real life? Frequently this is the “believer” who walks around with all kinds of “Jesus junk.”
 - A. For example...
 - i. On the back of his car he has a fish symbol with two or three stickers that say “My Boss is a Jewish carpenter” or “Jesus is my co-pilot.”
 - ii. His key chain has a nail bent into the shape of a cross. He has a necklace with a wooden cross the size of a small tree.
 - iii. He has 568 different t-shirts that have catchy sayings or drawings that represent what he thinks is Christianity.
 - iv. His vocabulary shows an incredible mastery of Christian lingo.
 - B. Obviously all of this is an attempt at humor and exaggeration in order to illustrate the point.
 - i. If a Christian wants to put a fish on his car or wear a shirt that has a Bible verse on it, he has all the freedom to do so. This does not mean that he is a “false convert.” These things are sometimes even a springboard to talk to someone else about the things of God.
 - ii. However, because a false convert doesn’t have any roots (no “downward” growth, no depth), all of his growth must be “up and out” in the “leaves and branches” (and because of this he doesn’t have fruit either). In other words, he often has all the “leaves and branches,” the externals, like the shirts, key chains, necklaces, etc., but he doesn’t have roots in Christ Jesus—he has no depth.

- iii. At the same time we also need to understand that a false convert is really a “wolf” on the inside. That’s why he has to “dress up” like a sheep. In other words, on the outside he has the appearance of a “sheep” (with all the external trappings of a modern Christian) but on the inside he is still an enemy of God (and also of God’s flock). He’s a wolf dressed in sheep’s clothing.
4. A false convert is superficial in his Christianity. And he makes up for what he is missing in depth by producing lots of “branches and leaves” (his outward appearance of a “sheep”).

#4: A false conversion results in immediate joy (gladness)

And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, **immediately** receive it with **gladness**. [Mark 4.16]

1. Of course we are going to have joy in the Lord because that is a manifestation of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5.22-23). However, the experience of a true conversion leaves us in some way sad, contrite, broken, and repentant.
 - A. *Contrite* means “to feel contrition”.
 - i. *Contrition* is a sincere and deep remorse that one feels for the wrong that he has done and for how wicked he is. It is a heavy and acute sadness that the person feels for having sinned and offended God—his holy, good, perfect, merciful and benevolent Creator.
 - ii. Because of this great remorse and sadness, contrition always produces a detesting and abhorrence of the sins that were committed—the sins that have greatly offended the Creator. Because the sinner as repented of his many sins, he may be very contrite.
 - B. Without a doubt, in Christ there is a profound relief of the great weight of sin and this produces a heart full of gratefulness towards God and a peace that surpasses all understanding.
 - C. Yet at the same time, the new convert (the true convert) has just passed through the “strait gate” of repentance and that will affect him profoundly.
2. The “strait gate” that leads to a salvation and eternal life is repentance.

Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. [Mat 7.13-14]

- A. In Mathew 7.13-14, Christ mentions two gates that are two ways to “enter in” and place oneself on a path (one of two paths). One of the paths leads to perdition and the other to eternal life.
 - i. Understand that those who do not go in through either of these gates are still condemned.
 - ii. One does not have to go through the wide gate to condemn himself. According to John 3.18 and 3.36, he is already condemned for having been born in sin. The wide gate only places one in a false path—a path that takes him to perdition.
- B. This means that the two gates of Mathew 7.13-14 represent the two types of conversion.
 - i. A false conversion is easy! The passage says that many are they who pass through the wide gate to place themselves “in the path of God” (so they believe). Since it is easy—since the door is wide—the sinner enters with much joy and happiness, without the slightest effort, discomfort, or pain. However, it is a path that will take him to perdition because there is no repentance. This is what many people call “easy believe-ism.”
 - ii. A true conversion is like passing through a narrow gate. It’s difficult and maybe even painful, but it places the sinner on the path of salvation and eternal life. This “strait” gate speaks of the repentance that takes us to the cross and salvation through faith in Christ.

C. Immediate Joy—without sadness, contrition, fear, or repentance—is an indication that the person entered in through the wide gate. It's easy to “believe in vain.”

- i. This wide gate, therefore, represents a false conversion because the person “believes” without repentance. He believes without confessing and turning from his sins (something that would be painful and very uncomfortable for him).
 - ii. This pain and sorrow, of course, does not refer to a public spectacle of crying, weeping, and wailing. But in a true conversion there will most certainly be sadness and contrition—an indication that the convert's heart is broken over his sins before his Creator—because Christ suffered tremendously for every one of his sins. How is it possible that the recognition of the sinfulness of his sins will not affect him? It has to! In addition, how is it that his heart could not be broken and contrite with the fear of judgment to come—the day of judgment that the Bible calls “the day of wrath”?
3. If there is immediate joy (without any pain, sadness, or contrition), it's a good indication that the conversion was likely false and that the sinner has believed in vain. Repentance is a result of contrition and brokenness of heart due to the fear of God and judgment for what he has done.

#5: The false convert believes for a time.

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which **for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.** [Luke 8.13]

1. First of all, it needs to be understood that the experience of a false conversion is a true “experience” because the person “believes” in the moment he hears the good news of Jesus Christ. However, like Paul says in 1Corinthians 15.2, he believed in vain—he believed without accomplishing anything (without obtaining salvation)—because there was no repentance.
2. Therefore, it's easy to know if a “believer” is a false convert or not. All you have to do is wait because “time proves all things.” The false convert (the one who has believed in vain) believes, but only for a time and then he walks away from the faith, refusing to walk with God according Scripture.
3. The “light of the sun” (trials, tribulations, difficulties) will reveal a person's conversion.

They **on the rock** are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in **time of temptation** fall away. [Luke 8.13]

Some fell upon **stony places**, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when **the sun was up**, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. ... But he that received the seed into **stony places**, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when **tribulation or persecution ariseth** because of the word, by and by he is offended. [Mat 13.5-6 with 13.20-21]

And some fell on **stony ground**, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: But when **the sun was up**, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. ... And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when **affliction or persecution ariseth** for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. [Mark 4.5-6 with 4.16-17]

A. Affliction, persecution, and tribulation provide opportunities to prove a Christian's conversion.

- i. If he has no root—if his conversion was false—he will dry up and die when the sun comes out. In other words, he will walk away from the faith and from the ways of God (like Demas; 2Tim 4.10) when the going gets tough.

- ii. If the gospel seed had taken root in the good soil of a good heart—if the sinner had a true conversion—the trials of the Christian life (like the light of the sun on a plant) would work to deepen the roots and make the plant grow and bring forth fruit.

B. Think about the picture of plants that God gives us in this parable.

- i. One sows the seed and a plant quickly sprouts up and grows in the same manner (fast!), but it does not have any depth to its roots because it's growing in a thin layer of soil on top of a rock (it was sown in stony ground).
- ii. If the same person sows seed in good soil where the plant that sprouts is able to set down deep roots and find moisture (water), it will thrive, grow, and bring forth much fruit.
- iii. With the seed sown in the stony ground, it may appear that it has brought forth a healthier plant than the seed sown in good ground. Why is that? Because there is immediate and visible growth “upward” (because of the rock underneath the thin layer of soil, the plant sprouted and grew quickly). But, with the seed sown in good soil, there may be no immediate and visible growth “upward” because the plant is first sending its roots deep into the soil to find moisture. It's easy to be fooled by a plant that sprouts and grows quickly, but we must always remember what the old preacher said: “Time proves all things!” Immediate, visible growth is not always a sign of a true conversion. Consistent perseverance in the faith is a much better indication of salvation.
- iv. What is it, then, that will reveal the true condition of a plant? The sun!
 - a. When the sun comes out, the plant that does not have roots will dry up and die.
 - b. However, the plant that is in the good soil (the plant that has set down deep roots to find moisture) will grow and flourish under the light of the sun. The light is exactly what it needs to grow! The light of the sun, instead of damaging the plant with good, deep roots, will work to help it flourish, grow, and produce fruit.
- v. This is exactly what will reveal the spiritual condition of new converts: Trials.
 - a. Trials, like the sun, will reveal a believer's true spiritual condition.
 - b. During difficulties, trials, tribulation, or persecution, the false convert stops growing and walks away from the faith to go back to the world and his sin. The “sun” revealed his lack of roots (his false conversion).
 - c. The true convert, however, has roots deep in Christ Jesus and is constantly receiving the “living water” that he needs to grow and flourish in times of trials and difficulties. Affliction, persecution, and tribulation (and that includes the temptation of sin) is the “light” that the true convert needs to grow in Christ, manifesting more and more of the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
- vi. The worst thing that can be done with a plant is to hide it from the light of the sun. If it's a good plant in good soil, it needs the light of the sun to grow and flourish. If it's not a good plant in good soil, the light of the sun will quickly reveal its true condition. And it is the same with the new convert!
- vii. The worst thing that we can do with someone who just converted to Christ is to shield him from trials, affliction, persecution, and tribulation. New converts need difficulties!
 - a. In the case of a false conversion, it is far better that the trial reveal that the “believer” is a false convert, because if we hide him from trials, we'll give him a false security (a false hope). In the day of judgment it will be too late for him to repent and turn to Christ for salvation from God's wrath. But if trials and difficulties reveal a false conversion, we can help that person to really convert to Christ (teaching him the Law, his guilt before God, and what Christ did to save him).

b. In the case of a true convert (a true Christian), we don't need to worry when he goes through a trial. Rather, we should let him suffer because the trial will force him to sink his roots even deeper in Christ and thus grow and flourish even more. God is good and He is very capable of keeping His children (and keeping him well) even amid a trial. The Lord knows that His new son needs to struggle a bit in order to grow in the faith.

Now unto him that is **able to keep you from falling**, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. [Jude 24]

C. Each plant needs the light of the sun to grow and every Christian needs the trials of affliction, persecution, tribulation, and temptation to grow. Suffering is necessary for spiritual growth!

And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: **knowing that tribulation worketh patience**; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. [Rom 5.3-5]

For **our light affliction**, which is but for a moment, **worketh for us** a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. [2Cor 4.17]

For they verily for a few days **chastened us** after their own pleasure; but he **for our profit**, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no **chastening** for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it **yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness** unto them which are exercised thereby. [Heb 12.10-11]

Not all “believers” are true Christians. Several times the Bible mentions “false brethren” among us (they claim to be brothers in Christ, born again into the same spiritual family, but they are false—they are false converts). In the parable of the sower, God teaches us at least five signs of a false conversion. These are five visible indications that the person who “believed” may not have actually “converted” to Christ. Their conversion is like the seed that was sown in the stony ground.

NOTE: There are many false teachings in Christendom today and you should be aware of them. Some of those false teachings are:

1. The believer must always be “happy”.
2. He that returns to the world and sin after his conversion is a “carnal Christian” that “accepted Jesus as his Savior, but not as his Lord.”
3. The new convert must be protected from afflictions, trials, and temptations.

From the biblical principles taught in this lesson, you can understand that these teachings are false and why.

1. The Christian has deep joy because he knows that God has forgiven him of all his sins and He has given him eternal life even though he deserves hell. However, the Christian life is sometimes hard and difficult. As Christians we need to understand the reality of the life we've been given. We are sons of God living in a world still controlled by Satan. We are not always going to be “happy” (an emotional state that comes and goes), even though we can always have joy in the midst of our trials. Think on the following passages and how they speak about the joy we can have even when we are going through difficult times, even when we are not “happy.”

Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution**. [2Tim 3.12]

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye **shall have tribulation**: but be of **good cheer**; I have overcome the world. [John 16.33]

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must **through much tribulation** enter into the kingdom of God. [Acts 14.22]

Read also: Luke 6.22, 26; Philippians 4.4

2. The “believer” who returns to the world and to his sin after his “conversion” is more than likely a false convert, not a “carnal Christian.” You cannot “accept” Jesus as your Savior but not as your Lord (as if He were some sort of “fire insurance” or “get out of hell free” card). If there is no repentance (turning from sin) there is no salvation. When someone repents, he stops living according to his own desires and decides to live according to the will of God. In other words, he submits to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. There are always going to be areas in our lives that need to be submitted to the Lordship of Christ; while we are still in our mortal bodies, He will never be the Lord over every detail of every area of our lives (we are all growing in sanctification, but never arrive at perfect holiness until the day of our rapture and resurrection). However, the “believer” who takes his conversion as a license to sin (because he has “fire insurance” or he thinks he has Jesus as his Savior now and then later he will submit to Him as Lord), is mistaken. And he is mistaken because he never converted; he never repented and turned from sin and self to the Lord Jesus Christ. You must repent to be saved and repentance implies submitting to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. [Php 2.9-11]

For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye **were** the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the **servants of righteousness**. I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so **now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness**. [Rom 6.14-19]

3. With regard to a new convert and difficulties, we should never try to shield him from the “light of the sun” (from trials). This is exactly what he needs to grow! We are to love him, feed him with the Word of God, and encourage him with our friendship and fellowship. But, we don't help him in any way by hiding him from the common, normal problems of the Christian life. He needs to suffer to grow in Christ! It's part of the discipleship (spiritual growth) process.

Write down any questions you may have regarding this lesson.

LESSON REVIEW

1. What are the five signs of a false conversion?

#1: _____

#2: _____

#3: _____

#4: _____

#5: _____

2. How is it that a false convert “immediately springs up”?

3. Why would a new convert “immediately spring up” today? Briefly explain your response.

4. How is it that there is a “lack of moisture” in a false convert?

5. Briefly explain the concept of the false convert not “taking root.”

6. Why is it that a false conversion results in immediate joy? Use the “two gates” illustration to develop your response.

7. According to the fifth sign of a false conversion, what is it that reveals a false conversion?

8. Still thinking on the fifth sign of a false conversion, use physical plants to explain the principle found in this sign.

9. According to the fifth sign of a false conversion, what is the worst thing we can do with someone who has just converted to Christ? Why is that?

10. Briefly explain the main purpose of this lesson.

LESSON #4

FIVE SIGNS OF A TRUE CONVERSION

Key Verse: Matthew 7.20

Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. [Mat 7.20]

WHAT IS THE CONVINCING EVIDENCE THAT I'M SAVED?

The five signs of a true conversion are five different types of fruit that the Bible says will be manifested in the life of a true Christian. The Lord Jesus Christ says that the convincing evidence of a true conversion is the fruit that is visible and evident in the life of the convert.

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. [Mat 7.15-20]

In verse 18 of this passage, Christ says that the corrupt tree is incapable of (the text says it “cannot”) bear good fruit, exactly like a good tree is incapable of (it “cannot”) bear bad fruit. If there is no good fruit on the tree (in the life of the new convert) it may be because the person has never truly converted from sin and self to the Lord Jesus Christ. And if he dies in this condition, he will go to hell (Mat 7.19-20).

Since the new convert has experienced a change of nature (he was born again and made an entirely new creature in Jesus Christ; John 1.12-13; 3.3-8; 2Cor 5.17), he will bear fruit. There will be some visible indication of his conversion and there will never cease to be visible indications of his conversion (because he will never depart from the ways of God—he will never stop bearing fruit). Obviously there are some trees that bear more fruit faster than other trees. But regardless of the size or quantity of the fruit in the life of the true convert, the fact remains that there will be some sort of fruit because he is a “new tree” (a good tree!).

Also, we must realize (if the metaphor of the tree holds true) that there are going to be “seasons” in the life of a believer when fruit may not be visible. A tree bears its fruit in its time, but it will never stop being a fruit tree and therefore it will never stop bearing fruit. The Christian will never cease from being “a tree that bears fruit” because God made him a new creature that bears fruit in his time. In other words, God is fully capable of keeping those who are His from falling from grace and bearing no fruit; all those that are God's will be presented before Him faultless (no one is lost; God keeps them all).

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. [Jude 24]

According to Jude 24, a true Christian will never walk away from the faith. He will, of course, struggle with sin every day of his life and sometimes he will lose the battle and fall into sin. But the truth remains that he fights against sin! The person who does not fight against sin, the person who just walks away from

the Lord to go back to the sin he loves in the world, is a false convert. According to Luke 8.13, the person who can just walk away from the faith is someone who has never truly converted to Christ even though he may have believed for some time.

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away. [Luke 8.13]

What are the signs (the visible indicators, the evidence one can see) of a true conversion to Christ? What is the fruit that we are to look for in the life of a person who professes faith in our Lord Jesus Christ? The purpose of this lesson is to answer these questions.

#1: Fruit worthy of repentance

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore **fruits meet for repentance**. [Mat 3.7-8]

1. When there is a true conversion, there is repentance.

A. Without repentance there is no life—there is no eternal life—because there is no salvation. If the sinner does not repent of his sins, he will perish. That's why the Bible says there is rejoicing in heaven when one sinner repents (that is one more who will not suffer in the lake of fire!).

When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted **repentance unto life**. [Acts 11.18]

The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should **perish**, but that all should come to **repentance**. [2Pet 3.9]

I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. [Luke 15.7]

B. The fact that repentance is necessary for salvation is seen in God's commandment to all men everywhere to repent. If the sinner does not want to submit to God's Lordship (the Lord Jesus Christ) by obeying the command to repent, he will perish.

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now **commandeth all men every where to repent**: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. [Acts 17.30-31]

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. [Php 2.9-11]

C. Repentance is a change of mind that results in a change of behavior.

But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward **he repented, and went** [*his change of mind resulted in a change of behavior*]. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. [Mat 21.28-30]

D. That means repentance involves confessing sins (a change of mind: agreeing with God that your sin is wicked, bad, and wrong) and then turning from them (changing your behavior).

He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso **confesseth** and **forsaketh** them shall have mercy. [Prov 28.13]

E. A true convert (a sinner who is genuinely saved) will have turned from his wickedness. In other words, part of the “visible” fruit that can be expected in the life of a new convert is his departure from iniquity.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. [2Tim 2.19]

Read also: Proverbs 16.6

2. This “repentance to salvation” (the repentance that leads to faith in Christ and, therefore, salvation) is manifested in several practical ways.

For godly sorrow worketh **repentance to salvation** not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what **carefulness** it wrought in you, yea, what **clearing** of yourselves, yea, what **indignation**, yea, what **fear**, yea, what **vehement desire**, yea, what **zeal**, yea, what **revenge!** In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. [2Cor 7.10-11]

A. There is a new carefulness: “...*what carefulness...*”

- i. This “care-fullness” refers to being full of care (watchful, vigilant, zealous) to make sure sin is dealt with and then avoided in the future. It refers to a zealous, earnest, eager, and diligent carefulness to get things right and to keep them that way.
- ii. The repentant sinner will diligently and eagerly be full of care to clean up his life. He will also be zealous and careful to remove things out of his life that might cause him to fall into sin again—things that might provide a provision for the flesh.

But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. [Rom. 13.14]

- a. If before his conversion he had problems with alcohol, he will be careful and diligent to avoid the places that he used to go to drink.
- b. If before he was a Christian he had problems with pornography and illicit sex, he will be diligent and careful to remove anything that might be a provision for the flesh. He may need to remove the internet from his house, or he might need to stop going out with friends who lead him into temptations in this area.
- iii. Whatever the sin (or sins) might be, repentance will produce zealous, earnest, eager, and diligent carefulness to get things right and to keep them that way.

B. There is a new confession: “...*what clearing of yourselves...*”

- i. The repentant sinner wants to be “clear”—he wants to clear up things he has done in the past that have wronged others.
- ii. The word *clearing* is actually a translation of the Greek word *apologia*. It refers to a *plea* or an *answer for self* (answer for what you have done). The repentant sinner will go to those he has wronged in order to answer for what he has done (in order to put in his “plea”). We call that “apologizing.”

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. [Mat 5.23-24]

- iii. The repentant sinner will go to those he has wronged; he will confess his sin (the wrong he has done to that person); and then he will ask the offended party to forgive him for what he has done. This “answer” for what he has done is not an excuse or an explanation; rather it is a confession of guilt and a plea (a petition) for forgiveness.

- iv. Genuine repentance produces a new confession—a confession to those the repentant sinner has offended. The true convert has a desire to get things right with those he has offended.

C. There is a new concern: “...*what indignation...*”

- i. The term *indignation* refers to a strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting, or wrong. It is akin to righteous anger.
- ii. True conversion (which begins with repentance) produces a vehement anger and hatred toward sin. A repentant sinner feels “righteous anger” or “righteous wrath” (indignation) toward what he has done that has so offended his Creator.

D. There is a new conviction: “...*what fear...*”

- i. Without the fear of God, men will not depart from evil—they will not repent.

By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD men depart from evil. [Prov. 16.6]

Read also: Exodus 20.20; Proverbs 14.27

- ii. If the sinner does not fear God, he will not repent. That means an absence of a righteous fear (a healthy fear) of God and of the consequences of sin (for having violated the Law of God) is an indication that the person did not repent.

- a. If a “believer” can continue to practice sin without fearing God and the consequences of his actions, he is likely not saved.

[1] His lack of fear of the Lord is an indication he has not repented (because without the fear of God, the sinner will not depart from his evil). And repentance is necessary for salvation.

[2] The person who understands the character of God (that He is holy, just, and good), the Law of God, his infractions of that Law, and the consequences his actions will bring, will fear God and the judgment to come. If he is humbled before God, he will depart from his sin that threatens to bring about the consequences he fears (judgment, death, condemnation, the wrath of God, and hell).

- b. It is because of this that Jeremiah can say that the fear of the Lord keeps us close to God. The fear of the Lord results in repentance (departing from evil) and the sinner who repents is the sinner who runs to God to receive mercy and forgiveness of sins.

And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. [Jer 32.40]

- c. Therefore, those that repent are the ones that serve God with fear and reverence, abhorring even the garments spotted by their flesh.

Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire. [Heb 12.28-29]

And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. [Jude 23]

- iii. If there is no fear of God, it is very possible there was no repentance, and without repentance there is no salvation.

E. There is a new compulsion: “...*what vehement desire...*”

- i. Genuine repentance produces a “vehement desire” that burns in the repentant sinner's heart. He has a deep desire to show himself clean in the issue that is at hand.

- ii. No one has to tell the repentant sinner (the true convert) what he needs to do in order to make things right with the people he offended with his sins. No one has to tell him he needs to go to God and confess and forsake his sins. Repentance produces in him a vehement desire to show himself clean in these things, both before men and before God Himself.

F. There is a new commitment: “...*what zeal...*”

- i. The zeal a repentant sinner has is his fervent, eager, enthusiastic, and intense desire to do that which please the Lord. Zeal is the exact opposite of apathy, and the sinner who has repented has turned from his apathy toward God and the things of God, and therefore he is “on fire” for the Lord!

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. [2Tim 2.4]

- ii. The true convert has a zeal for God and the things of God. In other words, he is the fanatic (the radical) that gives himself to the will of God completely.
- iii. Because of his repentance, the sinner has departed from the ways of wickedness and now zealously draws close to his Lord, seeking every day to please him in everything he does.
- iv. Repentance brings about a new commitment to the Lord because it rids the sinner of apathy and cultivates in him a holy zeal for God and the things of God.

G. There is a new conscience: “...*what revenge...*”

- i. Revenge is the action demanded by justice. It is the intentional striving to “balance the scales” after having sinned against God.
- ii. Repentance has a way of a awakening (quickenning, making alive) the conscience so that it acutely feels the sting of sin and the sense of justice (that each wrong must be made right; that the balances tipped to one side by sin must be brought back into balance by retribution for that sin).

And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. [2Cor 10.6]

- iii. The desire to seek “revenge” against sin and the old man is fruit of genuine repentance. For example, if someone was a thief before he was a Christian (a violation of the eight commandment: “Thou shalt not steal”), after his conversion he will feel the prick of his conscience (empowered by the Holy Spirit and inflamed by the Word of God) demanding “revenge” against those sinful acts. He will find a burning desire to return what he stole, ask for forgiveness, and make restitution for what he did.
- iv. We see this behavior (this “revenge”) in Zacchaeus when he repented.

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. [Luke 19.8-9]

- v. Repentance will lead one to desire to recuperate what the old man has taken away from him: his integrity, a good name, discipline, a good reputation and (above all) a right relationship with his Creator. That desire is a desire for “revenge” against the old man for all the wickedness and damage he has done.

- H. Above all else, a repentant sinner will seek to show himself clean from what he has done. Because he has repented (he has turned from sin and self), he will now make decisions to change his behavior and get things right with those he has offended, including God. This is part of the visible fruit that is convincing evidence that he truly repented and converted to the Lord.

3. When there is a true conversion, there is repentance because without repentance there is no salvation.
 - A. This repentance to salvation is manifested in many practical ways because it's a radical (180-degree) change of attitude that results in a radical (180-degree) change of behavior.
 - B. Therefore, if there is no fruit worthy of repentance (if there are no external and visible indications that the sinner has confessed his sins and turned from them), it is very possible that he did not repent. In other words, if his lifestyle is the same after his "conversion" as it was before, it may be that his conversion was false.
 - C. Many people ask the question, "Why don't Christians act like Christians?" Why don't those who say they are following Christ actually live like someone who follows Christ? The answer is simple: they aren't Christians. Repentance will produce radical, visible changes in the behavior and lifestyle of the sinner because he has turned from sin and self. That's a radical change! Therefore, if there is no visible change in behavior or lifestyle, there was likely no repentance.
 - D. True conversion always bears the fruit of repentance: a change in attitude that brings about a change in behavior.

#2: Fruit of good works

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, **being fruitful in every good work**, and increasing in the knowledge of God. [Col 1.10]

1. A true Christian seeks to be an example (to show a pattern) of good works.

In all things shewing thyself **a pattern of good works**: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity. [Titus 2.7]
2. The members of a church are to show zeal (a fervent desire) for good works. This enthusiasm for good works is fruit of a true conversion.

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, **zealous of good works**. [Titus 2.14]
3. The Christian, therefore, will strive to keep himself occupied in doing good works.
 - A. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, said this:

Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can.
 - B. Today there is much skepticism toward Christianity among the unconverted. The fruit of good works might go a long way to overcoming this obstacle in the minds of the lost. By doing good works we can silence the ignorance of foolish men and reestablish the credibility of the Church. Good works can build these "bridges of credibility" that can then be used to get the gospel to the lost.

For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. [1Pet 2.15]
4. Good works are fruit of a true conversion to Christ. And that means if someone does not want to help others, if he only thinks about himself, he might not be a Christian.

#3: Good fruit of the lips

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the **fruit of our lips** giving thanks to his name. [Heb 13.15]

1. The lips of a Christian should confess the name of the Lord because from Him comes everything good that he has and everything good that he has experienced in life.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. [Jas 1.17]

2. Therefore, the true Christian seeks to always give thanks to God in everything.

Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Eph 5.20]

Read also: Psalm 34.1; 1Thessalonians 5.18

3. Christ said that from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. [Mat 12.34]

- A. We should pay close attention to what professing Christians say because the Lord Himself said we could know what is in his heart by listening to what comes out of his mouth.
- B. If he is a new creature in Christ, his words and speech will be different than those of a lost person. However, if what comes out of his mouth is the same trash that spews forth from the mouths of lost people, it just may be that his conversation was false.
- C. Remember the saying of the wise old country preacher: If it barks like a dog, it's probably a dog. If it quacks like a duck, it's probably a duck. If it talks like a worldly lost person, then it's probably a worldly lost person.

#4: Fruit of the Spirit

But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. [Gal 5.22-23]

1. This fruit—this set of character qualities—will in some form or fashion manifest itself in the life a true Christian. The fruit may be small! But, it will be there.
2. However, if someone continues to manifest the works of the flesh and nothing of the fruit of the Spirit, it could be an indication that he did not truly convert to Christ. He may still be without salvation and therefore without hope. He needs to repent and place his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to save him.

Now the **works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. [Gal 5.19-21]

#5: Fruit of righteousness

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with **the fruits of righteousness**, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. [Php 1.9-11]

1. God's desire and will for every true believer is that he be filled with the “fruits of righteousness” which are by Jesus Christ.
 - A. The word “righteousness” in this context means “that which is righteous; that which is right.”

- B. Because the Christian is a new creature, he will have a deep desire to do that which is righteous (that which is right) and to stop doing that which is unrighteous (that which is wrong).
- C. The true believer has a hunger and thirst for righteousness. He departs from iniquity, because he has repented of his sins, and he draws closer and closer every day to the Lord, his Saviour.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity. [2Tim 2.19]

2. This point can sometimes cause confusion because in our daily experience we struggle with sin and all too often we fall into sin. Even the true believer might struggle with the fact that his flesh still “enjoys” the sin he struggles with. Paul’s testimony in Romans 7 helps a lot in clarifying this issue.

- A. In the first place, the true Christian delights in the Law of the Lord—in the moral Law that is expressed in the Ten Commandments. This means that he delights in righteousness; he likes doing what is right and avoiding what is wrong.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. [Rom 7.22]

- B. However, at the same time, it's obvious that the saint continues to sin and he may even (in a sense) “enjoy” it for a season (it may “feel good” when he's doing it).

15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

16 If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.

17 Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. [Rom 7.15-20]

- i. (v17) First and foremost, understand that it is not the new man in Christ who sins and likes it. It is the old man, the flesh.
- ii. (v18) What a Christian truly wants in his new man is to do right, to live in righteousness. In other words, he wants an upright and righteous life that conforms to God's moral Law.
- iii. (v19) Because of this, the Christian’s daily testimony is that of a battle between the inner man who wants to walk according to the Law of God, and his outward man (the flesh) who wants to sin.
- iv. (v20) If this is the testimony of your life, understand that it is not “you” that does it, but sin that still dwells in your members. So, don't throw in the towel! Don't quit fighting against sin! You do not have to doubt your salvation simply because you fall into sin. It's actually the fact that you fight and struggle against sin that is a testimony to your true conversion. Lost people don't struggle with sin. They love it! They seek after it! They drink it down like water. It's the Christian who struggles with it and fights against it.

- C. We need to understand that the fruit of righteousness is oftentimes manifested more in the fight between the new man (who says, “I delight in the Law of God and want to walk according to that Law”) and the old man (who continues to say, “I like sin and I want to sin”).

3. We should also understand that a Christian “falls” into sin, but a false convert goes back to his sin, “practices” it, and enjoys it.

But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. [2Pet 2.22]

- A. A false convert is like the dog that goes back to his vomit to eat it or the sow that returns to her wallowing in the mud.
- i. The dog returns to its vomit to eat it because it tastes good to him. He likes it and it pleases him. That is how God made dogs (that's their nature).
 - ii. In the same way, you can wash a pig but by nature it will seek out a good mud hole to wallow in. Pigs do not sweat (that's how God made them), therefore to cool off they wallow in the mud.
 - iii. Nothing else is expected from a dog or a pig. Why? Because that is how they are; it's just their nature.
- B. The lost sinner sins because that's his nature. It's what he likes and what gives him pleasure.
- i. Just like the dog's vomit tastes good to the dog, so sin "tastes good" to the unconverted sinner.
 - ii. And just like the wet, cool mud feels good to the pig, so wallowing in sin feels good to the unconverted sinner. That's just his nature; that's how he is.
- C. However, when the sinner turns to the Lord in repentance and faith, the Bible says that God radically changes him. He gives him a new nature, a divine nature. It's such a radical change that the Bible refers to this event as being "born again." The sinner becomes a new creature!

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the **sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. [John 1.12-13]

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be **partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. [2Pet 1.3-4]

Therefore if any man be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, **all things are become new**. [2Cor 5.17]

Read also: John 3.3-6; 1John 3.2-3

- i. To the new man, returning to his sin disgusts him, just as it would disgust any human being to return to his own vomit and eat it. The saved sinner is now no longer a "dog" to return to his vomit (sin) and eat it (enjoy sin). In other words, when the true Christian realizes that he has fallen into sin, he sees himself as if he were eating his own vomit and it disgusts him.
- ii. The sinner that is able to go back to his sin and enjoy it is the sinner who has not been born again. He does not have Christ and is not a "new man" with a new, godly nature. Even though a true Christian is able to fall into sin, he is not able to practice sin, just like a human being is unable to enjoy eating his own vomit.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. [1Jn 3.8-9]

Read also: 1John 5.18

- D. The true Christian sins, yes. But he also fights against sin because he is hungry and thirsty for righteousness.
- i. He does not practice sin (sin is not a lifestyle for him) because he wants to depart from iniquity and draw closer to his Lord.

- ii. Obviously, he falls in the fight and finds himself in sin, but when he realizes what he is doing, he abhors it, he repents, and he flees to the Savior and His Word for cleansing.
- iii. Job is a good example of a “saved sinner” who realizes that he has been living in sin: (read Job 42.1-6) He quickly departs from his wickedness.

Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. [Ps 51.2-5]

Read also: Romans 7.21-25; 1John 1.9

E. If there is no fruit of righteousness in your life, if there is no hunger and thirst for doing right and a desire to stop doing wrong, it may be that your conversion was false. In other words, if someone can easily sin and enjoy it (for example: fornicate, commit adultery, lie, steal), he has not been born again. He is still lost in his sins and needs to repent and place his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

4. This fruit of righteousness is also manifested in a hunger and thirst for the Word of God.

A. When a baby is born, no one has to teach him to desire and drink milk. He is born hungry and he has the innate knowledge of how to nurse and feed himself. It is the same way with the new convert because he has been “born again” spiritually. He will be hungry and thirsty for the Word of God.

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. [1Pet 2.2]

Read also: Job 23.12; Jeremiah 15.16

B. If a “believer” does not have a desire to be spiritually fed from the Word of God, it is a good indication that his conversion was false. He has not been born again and he is still in his sins.

C. To the Christian, the Word of God is an invaluable treasure. The person who despises the Scripture and does not love it is the person who does not know God.

The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver. [Ps 119.72]

How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! [Ps 119.103]

Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever: for they are the rejoicing of my heart. [Ps 119.111]

I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil. [Ps 119.162]

i. Because the true Christian values and loves the Word of God, he will develop the discipline and habit of reading the Bible every day. He will search the Scriptures to see what the Lord wants from him and how the Lord wants him to live. When the Word of God says that he needs do something, he does it. When it says he should stop doing something, he stops doing it.

ii. No one has to be constantly telling the true believer to read the Bible and do what it says. It is a joy for him to be a “doer of the Word.” He desires that and he seeks after it naturally (by his nature—his new nature) just like a baby naturally seeks after milk.

5. The true Christian is hungry and thirsty for righteousness. Therefore, if there is no “fruit of righteousness” in the life of someone that professes faith in Christ Jesus, it may just be that his conversion was false.

NOTE: There are many false teachings in Christendom today and you should be aware of them. Some of those false teachings are:

1. After believing in Christ one can continue in sin and enjoy it because he has “eternal security” and “liberty in Christ.”
2. The believer that walks away from the ways of God to return to the world and his sin, is a “carnal Christian” that has Jesus Christ as his “Savior,” but not as his “Lord.”

From the biblical principles taught in this lesson, you can understand that these teachings are false and why.

1. The person who uses “eternal security” and “liberty in Christ” as a license to sin is a person who has not converted to Christ. The true Christian delights in the Law of God and is hungry and thirsty for righteousness. He does not return to his sin as dog would return to eating his vomit. Rather, the true convert fights against sin and strives to live in righteousness.

But God be thanked, that **ye were the servants of sin**, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, **ye became the servants of righteousness**. [Rom 6.17-18]

Read also: Romans 7.22; 2Timothy 2.19

2. The believer who walks away from the ways of God to return to the world and his sin is like Demas in 2Timothy 4.10 (or like the dog that returns to his vomit in 2Peter 2.22). He is someone who “loves this world” and the Bible says that kind of person is an enemy of God.
 - James 4.4 assures us that “whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”
 - And Paul says in Romans 5.10 that the enemy of God needs reconciliation (in other words, he needs to repent and place his faith in Christ to be saved).
 - The “Christian” who believes for a time and then walks away from the faith to return to the world and his sin is a false convert not a “carnal Christian.”

They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which **for a while believe**, and in time of temptation **fall away**. [Luke 8.13]

Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, **unless ye have believed in vain**. [1Cor 15.1-2]

Write down any questions you may have regarding this lesson.

LESSON REVIEW

1. According to Jesus Christ, what is the convincing evidence of a true conversion? Briefly explain your answer.

2. What are the five signs of a true conversion?

#1: _____

#2: _____

#3: _____

#4: _____

#5: _____

3. According to Proverbs 28.13, repentance consists of two things. What are they?

A. _____

B. _____

4. Repentance to salvation is manifested in seven different practical ways. What are they?

#1: _____

#2: _____

#3: _____

#4: _____

#5: _____

#6: _____

#7: _____

5. What did John Wesley say about good works in the life of a Christian?

6. What can our good works accomplish for us today amidst the skepticism of the lost?

7. What did Jesus say in Mathew 12.34 that helps us to evaluate someone's conversion?

8. What are the nine manifestations of the fruit of the Spirit?

#1: _____

#2: _____

#3: _____

#4: _____

#5: _____

#6: _____

#7: _____

#8: _____

#9: _____

9. According to 2Timothy 2.19, how is the fruit of righteousness in the life of true Christian manifested?

10. Sometimes the convincing evidence that someone has been born again is the battle that he experiments between “the new man” (who wants to follow the righteous Law of God) and “the old man” (who wants to sin). Which chapter of Romans talks about this?

11. Explain the concept of the dog and its vomit in 2Peter 2.22 and how it relates to discerning if someone has truly converted to Christ or not.

12. The fruit of righteousness is also manifested in a hunger and thirst for the _____ of God.

13. Briefly explain the purpose of this lesson.

LESSON #5

ETERNAL SECURITY

Key Verse: 1John 5.13

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. [1Jn 5.13]

NOW THAT I'M SAVED, CAN I EVER LOSE MY SALVATION?

Once an individual has resolved the issue of his salvation as the Bible declares it—he has repented of his sins (which means he has confessed them to God and turned from them; Prov 28.13; 2Tim 2.19) and has placed his faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ alone to save him (Rom 3.21-22)—it is important that he understands how his conversion and salvation has affected his life.

There are only two spiritual families on this earth: the family of God and the family of Satan. We are born into in the family of Satan through the physical birth.

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. [John 8.44]

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so **death passed upon all men**, for that all have sinned, [Rom 5.12]

And you hath he quickened, who were **dead in trespasses and sins**; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, **according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience**: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were **by nature the children of wrath**, even as others. [Eph 2.1-3]

We are born into the family of God through the spiritual birth which takes place when we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become **the sons of God**, even to them that believe on his name: Which were **born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**. [John 1.12-13]

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit. [John 3.3-6]

The purpose of this lesson is to teach you about what the Bible says regarding the state of the new believer in the family of God and the eternal security the new believer has now that he is a Christian.

The testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ is clear regarding this issue.

1. Jesus Christ promised this: "...and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6.37). God will, under no circumstance, throw you out of His family.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, **hath** everlasting life, and **shall not** come into condemnation; but **is** passed from death unto life. [John 5.24]

2. No man can make you lose your salvation, because God, your Father, is greater then any man and no man can take you out of His hand.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. [John 10.27-29]

3. And, in a more strict and doctrinal sense, you are His hand! Christians (members of the Church) are members of the Body of Christ. Christ would no more cast you out of His family than He would mutilate His body by cutting off His own hand. You are part of Christ and Christ is part of you!

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. [1Cor 12.27]

And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. [Eph 1.22-23]

Salvation does not depend on your works, but on the grace of God.

1. Salvation is by grace through faith, and not by works. It is the gift of God. No man can lose his salvation, because no man earned his salvation in the first place.

For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: **Not of works**, lest any man should boast. [Eph 2.8-9]

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost [Titus 3.5]

But to him that **worketh not**, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. [Rom 4.5]

2. And God has promised that what He started (by grace through faith; a gift, not by our works but by His doing), He will finish. He started it and He will finish it.

Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. [Php 1.6]

3. Galatians 3.10 and James 2.10 tell us that if we had to do something to earn or keep our salvation, we could easily lose it (all it would take would be one small sin!).

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in **all things** which are written in the book of the law to do them. [Gal 3.10]

For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in **one point**, he is guilty of all. [Jas 2.10]

4. We need to understand that it is Jesus Christ who keeps us saved and not we ourselves.

For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day. [2Tim 1.12]

5. Galatians 2.21 clearly says that if by the things we do, we come to be justified, then the death of Jesus Christ was in vain.

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. [Gal 2.21]

Therefore, there is absolutely nothing a Christian can do that will separate him from salvation.

1. Romans 8.29-30 says that all those who are justified (all those who are saved) will be glorified in the end. No one is lost along he way! All those whom God justified will be glorified (all of them!).

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and **whom he justified, them he also glorified.** [Rom 8.29-30]

2. Read Romans 8.38-39 in your Bible and think about what it says: “*For I am persuaded, that neither...*”

- A. “*death*” — you can't lose it when you die.
- B. “*nor life*” — you can't lose it while you live.
- C. “*nor angels*” — they can't take it away.
- D. “*nor principalities*” — the government can't take it away.
- E. “*nor powers*” — Satan can't take it away.
- F. “*nor things present*” — nothing that can happen now can take it away.
- G. “*nor things to come*” — nothing in the future can happen that may lead you to lose it.
- H. “*nor height*” — nothing above you.
- I. “*nor depth*” — nothing beneath you.
- J. “*NOR ANY OTHER CREATURE, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

Your salvation is secure because of your new relationship with God.

1. Your relationship with God is like that of a father to his son. It is a relationship that was created by birth. Look at John 1.12-13 again. It contains God's promise regarding our eternal life.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. [John 1.12-13]

2. Think about the picture that God is drawing of your family in John 1.12-13.

- A. Think about a son and his physical birth into a family. He is born into a family and he has one father and one mother only.
- B. He will be the son of his father forever on this earth because he was born of his seed. He could leave the country. He could have a fight with his father and hate him for the rest of his life. He may not even know who his natural father is (if, for example, he was put up for adoption at birth). He could even change his name and never see his father again for the rest of his life. Does any of that change the fact that his father is his father and he is his son? No.

3. The same thing is true of you and your Heavenly Father. You may die, but you can never change the fact that you were born—you were born of God, born into the family of God. Your spiritual birth is just as “permanent” as your physical (and even more so because it is eternal and not tied to

life on this earth alone!). Think about it: Who can be “un-born”? It's impossible. Even God himself cannot change the fact that you were born into His family.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be **born again**, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is **born of the Spirit** is spirit. [John 3.3-6]

4. In addition to all that, the Bible says that in the very moment you received Christ you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of God.

A. This seal is the earnest (the down payment or guarantee of fulfillment) of our inheritance.

B. We are sealed until the day of the redemption of the purchased possession (until the rapture of the Church when we will receive our inheritance, our resurrected and glorified bodies; Rom 8.23; Php 3.20-21). We cannot lose our salvation because we cannot lose the Spirit; He dwells in us and will dwell in us until our rapture and resurrection.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. [Eph 1.13-14]

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. [Eph 4.30]

Eternal security, however, does not give you a “license to sin.”

1. This biblical doctrine of eternal security has become very controversial these days.

A. Many Christians take it as a license to sin. You will hear them and say things like this: “Since I can't lose my salvation, I'm going to enjoy sin. I might lose a bit of my inheritance later on at the Judgment Seat of Christ, but I'll be saved and that's most important.”

B. With attitudes like that it's no wonder many pastors and leaders in churches oppose the biblical doctrine of eternal security.

C. The truth of the matter is that if a “believer” can willingly practice sin (stealing, lying, fornicating, committing adultery, drunkenness, taking drugs, hating his brothers in Christ, coveting, etc.) and enjoy it, he should examine himself to see if he is really in the faith or not.

D. If someone can take eternal security and turn it into a license to sin, he has not understood what the Bible says about true and false conversions.

2. The doctrine of the eternal security of the Christian must be understood in the context of what the Bible teaches about true and false conversions.

A. If someone does not understand what the Bible says about false conversions, he runs the risk of making decisions to “trade his reward of inheritance” for the temporal pleasure of sin.

i. In other words, if one does not understand false conversions, he can easily fall into the trap of seeing eternal security as a license to sin.

ii. This type of “confidence” in a believer is based on a faulty interpretation of Scripture and a skewed understanding of eternal security. What is most tragic with people like this is that they will more than likely lose their eternal souls because they were never saved in the first place.

- B. We must understand that the hypocrite does not have salvation.
- i. The “believer” that acts differently in church than he does outside the church is what we call a hypocrite.
 - a. This is church goer that goes to church on Sundays all “pure and sanctified,” but during the rest of the week blasphemes (taking the name of the Lord in vain), lies, steals, commits adultery, uses pornography, gets drunk, etc.
 - b. He sins; he practices sin, and he enjoys his sin.
 - ii. The dictionary defines a hypocrite as one that practices hypocrisy. He pretends; he is the pretender.
 - a. To pretend is to speak and act so as to make it appear that something is the case when in fact it is not.
 - b. The “Christian hypocrite” is the person who says he is a Christian and acts like a Christian to some extent when around other Christians. But, he does so to make it appear that he is a Christian when in fact he is not.
 - iii. The hypocrite, therefore, is not saved. He pretends to be saved, but he is not. With his words and actions, he tries to make it appear that he is saved, but he is not.
 - iv. Judas was a hypocrite. Look at what the Bible says about him.
 - a. (Mat 10.1-4) Judas formed part of the 12 disciples of Christ.
 - b. (Mat 10.5-8) He did miracles: he healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, and cast out demons.
 - c. (Mat 26.21-25; John 13.21-26) He was so “righteous” that when Jesus Christ pointed to him as the traitor, none of the disciples believed it. They thought that it was one of them, not Judas.
 - d. (John 13.27-29) When Judas went out the night he betrayed Jesus, all of the other disciples thought he went out to give money to the poor.
 - e. Judas had a good appearance of a follower of Christ, so good that all of the other disciples of the Lord could not understand that he was the Antichrist, the one who would sell the Messiah for 30 pieces of silver.
 - f. (John 6.70) However, in spite of him pretending, Judas the hypocrite was a devil.
 - g. (Acts 1.25) And when he died, Judas went to hell.
- C. This means the person often referred to as a “carnal Christian” (the professing believer who lives in sin, practices sin, and enjoys it) is more than likely not saved. He's a hypocrite, a pretender.

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. [1Jn 5.18]

Read also: 1John 3.8-9

- D. This also means that the person who has “accepted Jesus as his Savior” (a phrase completely foreign to the Bible), but who does not want to submit to Jesus Christ as Lord, does not have salvation either. His unwillingness to submit to the Lord is a clear indication that he has never repented of his sin. He has never turned *from* serving sin and self *to* serving the Lord! This is the testimony of a false convert who has believed in vain because he believed without repenting of (turning from) his sins.

E. Remember the previous lessons on true and false conversions.

- i. (2Pet 2.22) The person who believes for a time but then returns to the world and to his sin is like the dog that returns to his vomit. The dog likes his vomit because that is the nature of the dog. The lost person likes sin and enjoys it because that is the nature of the lost.
- ii. However, when someone truly converts to Christ, he receives a new nature. He receives God's divine nature because the Holy Spirit of God comes to dwell in him. He becomes a "new man" who has been "born again" in Jesus Christ. He is no longer a "dog" that is able to enjoy the "vomit of sin." He is now a new creature with new desires.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. [2Cor 5.17]

Read also: Romans 7.22; 2Timothy 2.19

- iii. Demas is a picture of this type of "believer" that returns to the world and to his sin (to practice and enjoy it).

For Demas hath forsaken me, **having loved this present world**, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. [2Tim 4.10]

- a. When the "believer" returns to the world and sin, he simply reveals the fact that he is still an enemy of God. His friendship of the world is enmity with God.

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that **the friendship of the world is enmity with God?** whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God. [Jas 4.4]

- b. The enemy of God needs salvation. He needs to repent of his sins, place his faith in Christ Jesus, and be born again.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, **when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. [Rom 5.8-10]

- iv. All Christians struggle with sin and some times we lose the battle. However, the true Christian finds no lasting pleasure in sin. He might be entertained while sinning, but to the son of God, finding himself in sin is as disgusting as finding himself eating his own vomit (to continue with the illustration in 2Peter 2.22, the dog that returns to his vomit). He can't enjoy sin like the unconverted. Rather, he abhors himself because he continues in sin and waits for the day when he will have a new body that cannot sin.

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? [Rom 7.24]

3. Eternal Security, then, is not a "license to sin." Eternal security is simply the result of a true conversion.

- A. The person who uses the biblical doctrine of eternal security as an excuse to continue practicing sin is a false convert who has not repented—he has not turned from sin and self—and therefore he is not saved. Listen to the words of the famous Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) when he admonished the young preachers studying in his school of ministry.

If the professed convert distinctly and deliberately declares that he knows the Lord's will but does not mean to attend to it, you are not to pamper his presumption, but it is your duty to assure him that he is not saved. Do not suppose that the Gospel is magnified or God glorified by going to the worldlings and telling them that they may be saved at this moment by simply accepting Christ as their Savior, while they are wedded to their idols, and their hearts are still in love with sin. If I do so I tell them a lie, pervert the Gospel, insult Christ, and turn the grace of God into lasciviousness. [C.H. Spurgeon]

It is interesting to notice that the apostles preached the lordship of Christ. The word *Saviour* only occurs twice in the Acts of the Apostles (5:31; 13:23). On the other hand, it is amazing to observe that the title *Lord* is mentioned ninety-two times; *Lord Jesus* thirteen times; and *the Lord Jesus Christ* six times in the same book. The gospel is “Believe on the **Lord** Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” (Acts 16:31). [C.H. Spurgeon]

- B. However, when a person repents and turns from his sins, and places his faith in Christ Jesus, he receives the Holy Spirit and is born again. He becomes a son of God by birth and will never cease to be a son because God has already promised that he will never remove His Spirit from the Christian.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory. [Eph 1.13-14]

Basic Questions

1. How can I know for sure that I am saved?
 - A. Believe what God says in the New Testament, and do what He says you need to do to be saved.
 - B. For example: 1John 5.11-13.
2. What happens if I don't feel saved?
 - A. In the first place, you should examine yourself to see if you are in the faith (if you are saved) or not.
 - i. A conscience that condemns you may be an indication that you have not repented of your sins and are therefore still in need of salvation.
 - ii. Review the principles about salvation that you learned in the first lesson of this course and be sure that you have repented of your sins (that you have confessed them to God and have turned from them) and have placed your faith and trust only and completely in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation.
 - B. Secondly, understand that your salvation is not based on your feelings. It is based on the objective statements and promises of the Word of God.
 - i. Spend time (much time and frequently) in the Bible and in prayer, meditating in the passages and the principles that have to do with salvation.
 - ii. Ultimately, only the Spirit of God can give you the certainty that you are saved.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. [Rom 8.16]
 - iii. The Spirit will give you this certainty of salvation through the Word of God because His primary ministry among Christians today is to teach us truth, and God's Word is that truth.

Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, **he will guide you into all truth:** for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. [John 16.13]

Sanctify them through thy truth: **thy word is truth.** [John 17.17]

Which things also we speak, not in **the words** which man's wisdom teacheth, but **which the Holy Ghost teacheth**; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. [1Cor 2.13; the Spirit teaches us “words”—the words of God in Scripture]

3. What about those verses in the Bible that talk about losing your salvation?

A. It is obvious that there are passages in the Bible that teach that someone can lose his salvation.

i. For example, Moises talked about God blotting the name of some out of “the book of life.”

And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book. [Exod 32.31-33]

ii. David pleaded with God to not remove his Holy Spirit from him.

Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. [Ps 51.11]

B. These verses (and the issue of losing salvation) deals with what is commonly called “dispensations” (or “rightly dividing” the Word of Truth, Scripture). There are certain things that are written about other people in other times when God offered them salvation in a way that was slightly different than it is with us today.

i. This is a topic of study that is beyond the scope of this short course on salvation in our dispensation. However, for now, just understand that no one in the Bible was born again by the Spirit of God until Acts chapter 2 when the Holy Spirit came to dwell in believers and seal them. Those who enjoyed salvation before Acts 2 and the coming of the Spirit did not have the permanent presence of the Holy Spirit like we do in Christ Jesus (Eph 1.13-14).

ii. It is because of this that David feared losing the Holy Spirit in Psalm 51. He knew that he did not have the Spirit of God permanently in him.

iii. Since no one prior to Acts 2 was born again, no one had the eternal security of their salvation. Therefore, their salvation was not certain and sure like ours.

iv. For now just remember that we must understand everything the Bible says in its proper context and not take doctrine that corresponds to other people in other times and apply it to ourselves today. We are not living under the Old Testament but under the New Testament. The way God addresses sin and offers salvation has changed because of the death and resurrection of the Lord Christ Jesus. Also, the coming of the Holy Spirit as a “seal” and guarantee of salvation is something completely new in our dispensation.

NOTE: There are many false teachings in Christendom today and you should be aware of them. Some of those false teachings are:

1. You must do good works to keep your salvation.
2. If we sin after being born again, we can lose our salvation.
3. God punishes his children according to His whim and pleasure.

From the biblical principles taught in this lesson, you can understand that these teachings are false and why.

Write down any questions you may have regarding this lesson.

LESSON REVIEW

1. What is the promise in John 6.37 that can give us assurance of our salvation?

2. From John 10.27-29, you can understand that no man can cause you to lose your salvation. Why is that?

3. We can't do anything ourselves that could lead us to lose our salvation. What can we learn from the following verses that would support this?

A. Ephesians 2.8-9

B. 2Timothy 1.12

C. Galatians 2.21

4. Can there be anything that could ever separate us from the love of God? _____

5. Romans 8.38-39 shows us that we have received the love of God "which is in _____."

6. Which passage in the Scripture promises you eternal life? _____

7. What does Ephesians 1.13-14 and 4.30 teach you about the security of your salvation?

8. Why is it that the doctrina of eternal security is so controversial these days?

9. What is a “hypocrite”? Is a “Christian hypocrite” really saved? Why or why not?

10. Is it likely that a “carnal Christian” (a professing believer who practices sin and enjoys it) is saved? Why or why not?

11. Briefly explain the main purpose of this lesson.

LESSON #6

LIBERTY IN CHRIST

Key Verse: Galatians 5.13

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. [Gal 5.13]

NOW THAT ALL MY SINS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AM I FREE TO DO WHAT I WANT?

The New Testament is very clear when it states that, since we are now saved, we live under the grace of God. Sadly, though, many people take this truth, and the grace of God, and use it as an excuse to sin. They believe that since salvation is by grace, not by works, they are free to do whatever they want.

The purpose of this lesson is to help you understand exactly what liberty in Christ means and how that liberty should affect your decisions in life as a Christian.

Your liberty in Christ is freedom to do the will of God; it is not a license to sin.

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. [John 8.36]

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. [Rom 8.2]

1. You are free from the “law of Moises,” but not from all laws that exist.
 - A. The law that God gave to Moises and the Israelites can be divided in three general categories (although there is some overlap between the three): the ceremonial law, the civil law, and the moral law.
 - B. The ceremonial law is based on the rites and rituals of the religious system God gave to Israel.
 - i. For example, we don't follow the system of priests like the Jews did under the law of Moises. Today all those who are saved are “priests” in the sense that in Christ we all have direct access to the presence of God. We don't need a mediator; we don't need a human priest to interceded for us because we are all “priests” with direct access to God.

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. [1Tim 2.5]

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. [Heb 4.16]
 - ii. The most common example in the New Testament (especially in the writings of Paul) of our liberty from the ceremonial law, is circumcision. Under the law of Moises, the Jews had to keep this ceremonial law, but in Christ we are free from that law (we have liberty in Christ).

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love. [Gal 5.6]
 - iii. Under the New Testament, we have only two “ceremonial rituals” that God commands that we observe. We call them ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper.
 - iv. We can say, then, that even though we are free from the ceremonial law of Moises, we are not free of all ceremonial laws because God commands us to observe the two ordinances of

baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have liberty in Christ, but we are not free to do as we please. We have been given specific commandments from God, even in the area of ceremonies (ordinances) in the local church.

C. The civil law has to do with the precepts and commandments concerning the relationships and transactions of people in their society.

- i. We are free from the civil law of the Jews. Today we don't follow the law of Moises in things regarding our society. In this sense, we have "liberty in Christ" from the Jewish civil law.
- ii. However, we are not free of the all civil laws because God commands us to submit ourselves to the civil authorities in the country where we live.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. [Rom 13.1-5]

Read also: 1Peter 2.13-17

D. The moral law is basically a manifestation of the character of God and it is expressed very succinctly in the Ten Commandments.

- i. Even though the moral law forms part of the law of Moises (the law that God gave to Israel through Moises), it is not only for the Jews.
- ii. In Scripture, the Ten Commandments are frequently referred to as the "Law of God." In other words, the Ten Commandments form an expression and a manifestation of the character of God. They are a summary and review of the entire Law of Moses that is, in and of itself, a detailed expression of the character of God. The Ten Commandments, therefore, are laws that express God's character, His holiness, His benevolence, and His righteousness.
- iii. The moral law is "universal and eternal" because it is an expression of the unchanging and eternal character of God. It is a law written on the heart of every man. And because God has written His moral law on the hearts of men, we can understand that His will is for all men everywhere to live according to this norm of righteousness and morality.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. [Rom 2.14-15]

iv. Romans 13 shows without doubt that we are not free from the Law of God. We are not free from God's moral law as expressed in the morality of the Ten Commandments.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. [Rom 13.8-10]

v. The Apostle Paul says that the true Christian delights in the moral Law of God.

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. [Rom 7.22]

- vi. John Wesley (1703-1791) probably understood the relationship of the Christian to the moral law of God (the moral law expressed in the Ten Commandments) better than anyone else. Read what he said about Christians and the Law (even though the following quote is a bit extensive, it is well worth reading because it explains this topic clearly):

The Third use of the law is, to keep us alive. It is the grand means whereby the blessed Spirit prepares the believer for larger communications of the life of God.

I am afraid this great and important truth is little understood, not only by the world, but even by many whom God hath taken out of the world, who are real children of God by faith. Many of these lay it down as an unquestioned truth, that when we come to Christ, we have done with the law; and that, in this sense, "Christ is the end of the law to every one that believeth." "The end of the law:" so he is, "for righteousness," for justification, "to every one that believeth." Herein the law is at an end. It justifies none, but only brings them to Christ.

But when it has brought us to him it has yet a farther office, namely, to keep us with him. For it is continually exciting all believers, the more they see of its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, to exhort one another so much the more, --

*Closer and closer let us cleave
To his beloved Embrace;
Expect his fullness to receive,
And grace to answer grace.*

How clearly does this agree with the experience of every true believer! While he cries out, "O what love have I unto thy law! All the day long is my study in it;" he sees daily, in that divine mirror, more and more of his own sinfulness. He sees more and more clearly, that he is still a sinner in all things, -- that neither his heart nor his ways are right before God; and that every moment sends him to Christ.

To explain this by a single instance: The law says, "Thou shalt not kill;" and hereby, (as our Lord teaches,) forbids not only outward acts (1Jn 3.15), but every unkind word or thought (Mat 5.21). Now, the more I look into this perfect law, the more I feel how far I come short of it; and the more I feel this, the more I feel my need of his blood to atone for all my sin, and of his Spirit to purify my heart, and make me "perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

Therefore I cannot spare the law one moment, no more than I can spare Christ; seeing I now want it as much to keep me to Christ, as I ever wanted it to bring me to him. Otherwise, this "evil heart of unbelief" would immediately "depart from the living God." Indeed each is continually sending me to the other, -- the law to Christ, and Christ to the law. On the one hand, the height and depth of the law constrain me to fly to the love of God in Christ; on the other, the love of God in Christ endears the law to me "above gold or precious stones;" seeing I know every part of it is a gracious promise which my Lord will fulfill in its season.

O stand fast in this liberty; in comparison of which, all the rest is not even worthy to be named! Stand fast in loving God with all thy heart, and serving him with all thy strength! This is perfect freedom; thus to keep his law, and to walk in all his commandments blameless.

"Be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." I do not mean of Jewish bondage; nor yet of bondage to the fear of hell: These, I trust, are far from thee. But beware of being entangled again with the yoke of sin, of any inward or outward transgression of the law. Abhor sin far more than death or hell; abhor sin itself, far more than the punishment of it. Beware of the bondage of pride, of desire, of anger; of every evil temper, or word, or work. "Look unto Jesus;" and in order thereto, look more and more into the perfect law, "the law of liberty;" and "continue therein;" so shalt thou daily "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [Taken from Sermon 34 by John Wesley: *The Original, Nature, Property, and Use of the Law*]

2. Your liberty in Christ, according to the Bible, means that you are “free” to do what is right; you are not free to do whatever you want.

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For **sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.** Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made **free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.** [Rom 6.12-18]

- A. You have not been given liberty in Christ so that you can feed your sinful flesh and fulfill your sinful and selfish desires. Your liberty is given to you so that you might keep the Law of God. You have liberty from sin so that you might obey God.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. [Gal 5.13]

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for **he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.** [Rom 13.8-10]

- B. Your liberty in Christ is given to you so that you might serve God.

As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. [1Pet 2.16]

3. You are free to make your own decisions.

- A. Bad decisions bring consequences. But that will never result in the loss of your salvation. If you are a true Christian, you are secure for eternity in Christ Jesus because He has saved you. You repented of your sin and placed your faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ, and He saved you from His wrath. You will not go to hell.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. [Gal 2.16]

Read also: Ephesians 2.8-9

- B. But, because bad decision will bring consequences, you should always strive to make good decisions out of a pure heart after having exercised faith, trust, and confidence in the Word of God. And because this point is so important, it will be developed in greater detail next.

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. [Acts 24.16]

Read also: Romans 14.22

Your liberty will have consequences for your own life.

1. Choosing to sin results in some very real consequences.

A. You will not bear fruit.

I am the true vine... Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away... He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for **without me ye can do nothing**... Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. [John 15.1-8]

B. God will discipline you like a father would discipline his son.

And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. [Heb 12.5-6]

Read also: Revelation 3.19

C. God will allow you to reap what you have sown.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. [Gal 6.7-8]

Read also: Job 4.8; Proverbs 1.31

2. Choosing to obey God will also bring consequences.

A. You will reap holiness.

But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. [Rom 6.22]

B. You will reap glory.

Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. [Rom 8.12-18]

C. You will reap the fruits of righteousness.

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. [Php 1.9-11]

D. You will reap what you have sown.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. [Gal 6.7-8]

Read also: Proverbs 11.18; Ephesians 6.7-8

3. God will obtain glory from your life one way or another, either as an instrument of honor (showing forth the good fruit of a holy lifestyle) or as an instrument of dishonor (showing His Word to be true by allowing you to reap the consequences of your decisions to live in sin). The decision about what kind of vessel to be in God's hands is yours to make. God has given you that liberty in Christ.

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. [2Tim 2.20-21]

Your liberty will have consequences for those around you.

1. Your life will be a testimony, good or bad, whether you want it to or not.

For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. [Rom 14.7]

2. God calls you to avoid things that might cause weak Christians to stumble in their faith.

But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend. [1Cor 8.9-13]

Read also: Romans 14.13-15

3. The Bible says you should avoid things that seem evil, bad, or wrong, even though they may not necessarily be evil, bad, or wrong.

Abstain from all appearance of evil. [1Thes 5.22]

But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, **let it not be once named among you**, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. [Eph 5.3-4]

Read also: Romans 14.16

4. You should always strive to have a good testimony before the saved and the lost.

For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. [Rom 14.18]

Read also: 2Corinthians 8.21; 1Peter 3.16

- A. Your testimony before other Christians:

As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith. [Gal 6.10]

Read also: Acts 16.1-2

- B. Your testimony before lost sinners:

Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. [Col 4.5]

Read also: 1Timothy 3.7

- C. The purpose in this is to influence them (both the saved and the lost) for their good and God's glory in Jesus Christ. Your testimony should influence the lost toward salvation and the saved toward greater sanctification—your testimony should be influential in evangelizing the lost and edifying the saved.

For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain

them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you. [1Cor 9.19-23]

Read also: Acts 11.22-26 (the testimony of the church at Antioch)

Your liberty has biblical limits.

1. There are many things in life that are “black and white.” They are obviously right or wrong (permitted or prohibited). The instruction of the Lord is clear in these areas, and the following examples show how easy it is to know the biblical limits of certain behaviors.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ **depart from iniquity.** [2Tim 2.19]

We know that whosoever is born of God **sinneth not**; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. [1Jn 5.18]

- A. Sex outside of marriage is sin and the Christian will not practice it. This includes pornography, which is adultery of the heart and mind. You do not have “liberty in Christ” to fornicate!

Thou shalt not commit adultery. [Exod 20.14]

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. [Mat 5.27-28]

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. [1Cor 6.18]

For ye know what **commandments** we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should **abstain from fornication.** [1Thes 4.2-3]

Read also: 1Corinthians 10.8; Ephesians 5.3

- B. Getting drunk (or doing drugs, which is the same thing: intoxicating the body for a feeling of being “high”) is sin and therefore the Christian will not practice it. You do not have “liberty in Christ” to drink in excess or use illegal drugs!

And **be not drunk** with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit. [Eph 5.18]

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; **not in rioting and drunkenness**, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. [Rom 13.13]

- C. Gluttony (eating in excess) is a sin and the Christian does not have “liberty in Christ” to practice it.

And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; **he is a glutton**, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear. [Deut 21.20-21]

For the drunkard and the **glutton** shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags. [Prov 23.21]

For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, **whose God is their belly**, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. [Php 3.18-19]

D. To be a sluggard is a sin. A sluggard is a person who is habitually inactive or lazy. The Bible portrays the sluggard as a vain fool who has the habit of not working but rather wastes time or use his time pointlessly.

And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to **work** with your own hands, **as we commanded you**. [1Thes 4.11]

For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not **work**, neither should he eat. [2Thes 3.10]

See then that ye **walk circumspectly**, not as fools, but as wise, **redeeming the time**, because the days are evil. [Eph 5.15-16]

Read also: Proverbs 6.6-11

E. There are several other things that the New Testament says are sin. These are, therefore, things which the Christian has no “liberty” to practice.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. [1Cor 6.9-11]

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. [Gal 5.19-21]

F. If a “believer” can practice sin, he should examine himself to see if he is in the faith—to see if he is saved or not. The person who practices sin is not repentant, and without repentance there is no salvation. Remember, God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17.30-31).

2. However, even though there is much in the Christian life that is “black and white” (clearly right or wrong), there are also “gray areas” because of our lack of knowledge and understanding of Scripture. This means there are some things in life that a Christian may or may not allow into his life depending on his own personal convictions. In these “gray areas,” it's important to ask yourself some questions before exercising your “liberty” to do them.

A. Have I been (or will I be) brought under the power and control of something that should not be controlling my life?

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. [1Cor 6.12]

B. Does this activity or behavior edify me or others?

All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. [1Cor 10.23]

C. Could I ask God for His blessing on this with a clear conscience?

And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. [Col 3.17]

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. [Acts 24.16]

D. If the Lord were to return right now, would I feel ashamed if He found me doing this?

Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [1Cor 1.8]

Read also: 1Thessalonians 5.23

E. Would this cause my brother in Christ to stumble?

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. [Rom 14.13-15]

We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. [Rom 15.1-2]

F. Would this give lost people a reason to reject the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior?

Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. **Give none offence**, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: Even as I please all men in all things, **not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.** [1Cor 10.31-33]

G. Does my conscience condemn me for doing this thing?

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men. [Acts 24.16]

Read also: 1Timothy 1.5; 1Peter 3.16; Hebrews 13.18

H. Is there something good or right in this thing that I am going to allow in my life?

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. [Php 4.8]

And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. [Rom 14.23]

Basic Question

How can I find a balance between my liberties and the needs of other people? Only in the power of the Holy Spirit as you walk with Him as He leads you by the Word of God.

Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. [2Cor 3.16-17]

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. [2Tim 3.16-17]

Read also: Ephesians 4.22-24; 2Peter 1.5-8

NOTE: There are many false teachings in Christendom today and you should be aware of them. Some of those false teachings are:

1. Your "liberty in Christ" means you can do whatever you want because you can't lose your salvation.
2. There is a "list of rules" that the Christian must obey in order to please God.
3. You have the liberty to do what you want without thinking about how your "liberty" will affect others because what you do doesn't really affect anyone else.

From the biblical principles taught in this lesson, you can understand that these teachings are false and why.

Write down any questions you may have regarding this lesson.

LESSON REVIEW

1. As a Christian, are you free to do what you want? Briefly explain your answer.

2. Describe your “liberty from the law of Moises.”

A. The Ceremonial Law

B. The Civil Law

C. The Moral Law

3. According to Romans 6.12-18, are you free to sin because you are not “under the law”? Explain your answer.

4. The Word of God establishes some limits on our liberty. Explain these limits as you understand them as given to you in the following verses:

A. Galatians 5.13 and Romans 13.8-10

B. 1Peter 2.16

5. When you choose to sin, what are the consequences of that decision?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

6. When you choose to obey God, what are the consequences of that decision?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

7. What are the consequences that are mentioned in the lesson that have to do with your liberty and those that surround you?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

8. You need to have a good testimony before saved people and before the lost. Why?

9. Write down a list of things that the Bible clearly says are sin and that the Christian will avoid.

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

G. _____

H. _____

I. _____

J. _____

K. _____

L. _____

M. _____

N. _____

O. _____

P. _____

Q. _____

R. _____

S. _____

T. _____

U. _____

V. _____

W. _____

10. Write down eight questions that you can consider in order to determine the boundaries of your personal liberty.

A. _____

B. _____

- C. _____

- D. _____

- E. _____

- F. _____

- G. _____

- H. _____

11. What is the role that the Holy Spirit plays regarding your personal liberty?

12. Briefly explain the main purpose of this lesson

