"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." (2 Timothy 2:15)

SOTERIOLOGY
THE STUDY OF SALVATION

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:11)

BE SURE TO LOOK TO THE LORD TO OPEN THESE TRUTHS OF HIS TO YOU...

(The following is based on Mark Cambron’s, ‘Bible Doctrines’.)

INTRODUCTION

It is always absolutely necessary to go beyond our opinion about eternal matters, about the things of God. But few doctrines affect us as much as getting salvation right.

“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? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.” (Matthew 7:22-23)

As in all doctrines that the Lord has revealed through the Word of God, we will see that on this mammoth subject of salvation that the Lord – as always – is clear and definite as to what He requires for us to be saved, or born again. And this makes sense as we are discussing our eternal future. Uncertainty here will prevent the kind of peace of mind, and joy that the Lord speaks about in His Word.

“And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:7)

“And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.” (1 John 1:4)

As always when studying God’s Word, take time with it asking the Lord to guide you into His Truth on the matter.
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1. REPENTANCE

1.1. Stated

Repentance Required While The Messianic Kingdom Was Still Being Offered

For hundreds of years Israel were waiting for the promised Messiah to come and setup His Kingdom, and then rule over Israel forever. i.e. The Son of David, Christ, ruling as King of Israel. The prophecy regarding the Messiah, Christ, ruling and reigning in Israel...

“Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD [Jehovah] OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

Unlike the ignorant Gentile nations, Israel knew lots about the Lord and the Jews generally knew that they needed to repent of their terrible attitude towards the Lord. And so the message preached to them was for them to ‘repent’ / ‘repent of their refusing to submit their whole lives to Him’. The Messianic kingdom is what John the Baptist and Christ were initially offering to Israel, when they called for Israel to repent...

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1, 2)

“Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4: 17)

See also Mark 6:12; Luke 24:47.

Repentance Required After The Messianic Kingdom Was Rejected By Israel

When Christ did not receive the repentance that was required for Israel to receive their promised kingdom; He turned towards preparing His disciples, and any who would believe, for Him going to the Cross and dying for the sins of mankind.

The repentance then require for salvation through His shed blood, for Israel and Gentiles, is very clearly taught by Paul...

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21)

Making clear that the Lord would not accept any weak ‘belief’ or ‘faith’ in Christ’s shed blood; that He required a definite change in mind / attitude towards Himself, as well as wholehearted faith toward (in) the Lord Jesus Christ. See also...

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 37 And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts 8:35-37)

In order for the eunuch to be baptized he first needed to receive Christ, THEN he qualified to be baptized. Phillip told the eunuch that he needed to believe in Christ with all his heart. Weak, casual belief would not save him! And so, in Romans 9 we are taught...
But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, ... But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 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.” (Romans 10:6, 8-10)

The required ‘belief’, ‘faith’ in Christ is strong, it is with the heart – the whole heart! - not just with the head! Mental acknowledgement of Christ dying for our sin is not sufficient!

See also Acts 2:38; 11:18; 26:20; 2 Peter 3:9.

1.2. Explanation

1.2.1. It Is Not Reformation

Repentance is wholly an inward act of the mind. To many people it means to turn away from their sins, but if that were so, this would be reformation. Repentance is not doing something, as an act, for no man is saved because he gives up something. That would be working for salvation!

“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.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

A person can turn away from their sins and still not be a Christian.

1.2.2. It Is Not Contrition

By this we mean that repentance is not agony of the soul for sin. Many folk in jail are sorry. Are they sorry for their crime? Not necessarily! Many are only sorry because they were caught! We believe, however, that in a genuine case of repentance, the sinner will be sorry for his sin. Just being sorry for sin though is not the required repentance for salvation, but it can lead to the required repentance.

“Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10)

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

1.2.3. It Is Not Penance

Penance is an expression of sorrow (by some act) that is done to pay for sin; it is something like a punishment.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works [DOING SOMETHING GOOD], lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Repentance is not doing good in order to make up for committing sin.

1.2.4. It IS a Change of Mind

The literal meaning of repentance is ‘after-thought’ or ‘reconsideration.’ By ‘change of mind’ we do not mean a ‘change of opinion’; a ‘change of mind’ is the substitution of a new mind for the old. It is new in character. True repentance is a change of mind which will lead to a change of action, but let us be warned that it is possible to have a change of action without a change of mind. A good example of repentance is found in...
“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.” (Matthew 21:28, 29)

Before anyone can be saved there must be repentance. There must be a change of mind about many things: God, Jesus Christ, sin and self, beginning with repentance towards God. Repentance in other areas follow BECAUSE of repentance towards God...

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

This was the apostle Paul’s Gospel outline, the truths he preached to the lost.

Making it a little stronger, repentance means not only a change of mind; it is the taking of one’s stand against himself and the placing of himself on the side of God; agreeing with God’s Word that he is a sinner. Thus, repentance is self-judgment...

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;” (Romans 3:23)

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”. (Romans 6:23)

1.3. Manifestation

Repentance will manifest, or show, itself through the change of the whole person. A new mind will produce a new person...

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

- Change in the Intellect.
- Change of Feeling.
- Change of Will.
- Change of Action.

1.4. Condition

1.4.1. Through The Goodness Of God

“Despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Romans 2:4)

See also 2 Peter 3:9.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”. (2 Peter 3:9)

1.4.2. Through The Gospel Of God

“Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. . . . Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:37, 38, 41)
Peter preached repentance in his Gospel message, and even added baptism which was God’s will for them once they were saved.

1.4.3. Through Scriptural Teaching

“*The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth*” (2 Timothy 2:24, 25)

The lost person will only know Biblical repentance when they have been taught something of Who the Lord is (this is an important point today as many believe in another god — not believing the Trinity of Who God is.), and what He has provided them through Christ, and what He is trying to save them from. And only as they respond to these truths, as the Holy Spirit opens their hearts and minds; and therefore as they themselves respond to Him will they be led to be repentant towards God. True biblical repentance for salvation is not the sinner’s response to the preacher, but to the inner working of the Holy Spirit as the Gospel (how to be saved or born again) is being preached / shared.

1.5. Definition

Repentance is the work of God, when a person who is not born again responds to the work of the Holy Spirit, which results in a change of mind in respect to man’s thinking, attitude, towards God. It is neither sorrow nor penance, though penitent sorrow may lead to a change of mind, repentance towards God. Repentance is ALWAYS an element of saving faith!

“*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (Acts 20:21)

Our right thinking, attitude, towards the Lord is far more important to the Lord than our right thinking, attitude, toward sin; though our repenting of sin will certainly follow right thinking, right attitude towards the Lord.
2. FAITH

2.1. Stated

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth [HAS FAITH IN CHRIST]; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek”. (Romans 1:16)

“We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:28)

See also Acts 26:18; Romans 4:5; Ephesians 2:8.

2.2. Explanation

A good general definition of faith is: confidence in others; reliance upon testimony. True biblical faith is composed of the following:

2.2.1. Knowledge

One must be informed before he can have faith. This is true in the things of man, as it is in Christ. It is impossible to have saving faith in Christ without the Word of God (the bible) We must properly know just what the Lord is offering us through Christ.

“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17)

To increase one’s faith, one has only to read more of the Word of God, or be taught what it teaches about how to be born again / saved. And in our hearts and minds to RESPOND (be obedient) to the inner working of the Holy Spirit, Who is opening our understanding of the Gospel (how to be saved or born again), as we are exposed to the Gospel teaching in the Word of God. Exposed to the bible teaching of why we must be saved, and how we must be saved.

2.2.2. Belief

The second element of faith is belief. Everyone knows what belief means, that is, ‘to accept IT (the ‘statement’ made) as the truth’. People can know that there is a Saviour by the name of Jesus, and ‘believe’ that He can save. Yet, this is not saving faith, it is not the way that the word ‘belief / believe’ is used in the Bible teaching of how we must be saved. For example: To have faith in a chair, one must know that it exists, and believe that it can hold him up. Still this belief is not Bible faith in the chair, until the third element is involved, and that is:

2.2.3. Trust

Trust is essential to faith in anything. It is most essential in saving faith. It is one thing to know that Christ died, and believe it; it is quite another thing to trust Him, the dying and resurrected Saviour, for salvation. Let us take the chair again for example: One can know that a chair exists, and believe that it can hold him up, but faith in that chair is not exercised until he sits in it; do you completely trust Christ for your salvation?

2.2.4. Recumbency

This means to wholly rely upon Christ. When one lies upon the bed, he fully relaxes upon it and rests. When we put our trust in Christ, we must rely upon Him and rest in complete confidence in Him. The Lord by the Holy Spirit, working within the lost, will bring about this needed belief, faith and trust needed for salvation, IF their hearts and minds are responsive to the Holy Spirit’s
inner workings. And so, when one is repentant towards God they will have the necessary **belief**, **faith** and **trust** to be saved or born again. When we are ‘repentant towards God’, then both our hearts and minds will be fully convinced of our need for Christ. And we will have heart and mind belief in Him.

“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.” (Romans 10:9)

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**” (Acts 20:21)

### 2.3. Getting Saved Or Born Again

#### 2.3.1. We MUST Take The Lord, And Our Eternal Soul’s Need, Supremely Serious!

The Lord Jesus gave the following important revelation regarding our approach to being saved ...

“Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, 24 **Strive to enter in at the strait gate:** for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” (Luke 13:23-24)

When asked the direct question of whether there are “few that be saved”, the Lord replied that we have to “strive” to be saved, to become a child of God. The Lord used the analogy of a gate that is narrow to pass through, “strait” (old English for ‘narrow’) He therefore urges us “strive” to enter, because many will “seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” “Strive” in the sense of really putting our minds to making absolutely certain that we achieve the reality of actually being saved, or becoming a child of God. Many, the Lord says, will only “seek”. The Lord has got their attention that they need to be saved, but He has not got their full attention so that they make sure that their response to the Lord, to get them saved IS accepted by Him. Of most, one would not think that their eternal souls are at stake by their careless response to the Lord regarding their eternal souls!

The Lord is saying that we need to do much better than the majority of seekers, who miss the Lord’s requirements for them to be saved. We must “strive”, or put our heart and soul into addressing our salvation! Nothing less is appropriate! It is our eternal souls’ salvation that we are to “strive” to secure!

The Lord is not saying that we are to earn our salvation by our efforts, but that when we truly believe that our souls are eternal, and that our souls are lost, **THEN WE WILL** give securing salvation our full attention. The Lord is saying that the average level of interest given by “many” shows a lack of faith in their hearts and minds. And for that reason “shall not be able” to enter “in at the strait [NARROW] gate.” They will not be saved by their inadequate, half-hearted faith!

None need be fearful if they take the Lord seriously. We will be looking into this major doctrine of God’s Word in appropriate detail. So that we may correctly understand how a soul is born again. Both for our own souls need, and the need of those that the Lord leads us to share / preach the Gospel to for the salvation of their souls.

“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. 14 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? 15 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! 16 **But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? 17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:13-17)
And then again in Matthew 7, the Lord gives a similar warning …

“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: 14 Because STRAIT is the gate, and NARROW is the way, WHICH LEADETH UNTO LIFE, and FEW there be that find it.” (Matthew 7:13-14)

In Matthew 7 the Lord is describing the two spiritual ‘roads’ that people take in their lives in this world.

1. The ‘road’ (“gate” and “way”) to “life” (eternal life) is “narrow” because only few find it. Like a path through a field will be narrow if only used by a few people.

2. The ‘road’ (“way”) to “destruction” (hell or lake of fire) is “broad” (wide) because many people are traveling on it. Again, like a path through a field that, in this case, will be broad because lots of people use it. The Lord is telling us plainly that most will not go to Heaven. And so it is very, very dangerous to follow religious people blindly! We MUST ask the Lord to guide us in our spiritual lives so that we do actually become a child of God in our faith efforts!

It is surely for this reason that the Lord did not accepted the type of faith of the “great multitudes” that flocked to Him …

The Great Multitudes That Crowded To Hear And See The Lord Jesus

“The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow; …” (Matthew 13:1-3)

“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. 12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. 13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” At this typical gathering of great crowds to see the Lord Jesus, we have the Lord’s warming of Luke 13, and Matthew 7 illustrated. There were on the one hand the “great multitudes” whose hearts – by the Lord’s divine insight – were “waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes THEY have closed”. i.e. At some point in their personal responses to the Lord they resisted Him and His will, and therefore failed to get saved. And on the other, the Lord’s disciples to whom He said, “it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”, and “blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.” The Lord here giving the reason why He responded to His disciples favourably, and why He had called them to be His disciples (apart from Judas)” (Matthew 13:10-16)

Unlike the great multitudes gathered there, seemingly so responsive to the Lord, the Lord’s disciples had responded to Him with all of hearts and minds! They didn’t just “seek” the kingdom of God, they ‘strive’ for it. For them being saved and gaining the Kingdom of God, and living in obedience to God, were life’s priorities!

Where the great multitudes, while probably very religious, had resisted the Lord at some point in their lives. Being mostly Jews of Israel they would have been brought up in the Jewish faith. The problem being that Israel at that time in their history, were only practicing the Jewish faith outwardly, their hearts and minds not yielded to God as He required of them. The Lord requires
not only outward obedience, but an obedient response of the whole person. And the multitudes were spiritually typical of their times, and in heart and mind were resistant to the Lord. Unknown to them the Lord Jesus, being God the Son, knew their hearts and minds. And He didn’t commit to them, because He knew that it was pointless explaining spiritual truths to people who were resisting Him.

**Summing Up So Far**

At this stage in your personal response to the Lord, where are you? Does the Lord see you “seeking” or “striving” to enter the narrow gate to the Kingdom of God? Are you responding to the Lord Himself, as He through the Holy Spirit woos you to Himself? Your soul is eternal, and so is Heaven and hell. And in order to gain the desired destination of Heaven and the family of God, and to definitely avoid the equally eternal damnation of hell, **WE HAVE TO MAKE UP OUR MINDS to deal with this matter as it is, our Life’s greatest challenge!**

### 2.3.2. Repentance Toward God, And Faith Toward The Lord Jesus Christ

The Apostle Paul outlined his Gospel presentation showing that he preached both parts of the Gospel presentation. In it He tells us Who the object of our repentance must be towards – Almighty God Himself! So that when we allow ourselves to be led to believe in the Lord Jesus, we MUST be yielded to God in our hearts and minds as well, or we will not be saved! (Acts 20:21, John 16:7-8 KJV)

> “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

And so when the apostles of the young church preached the Gospel, they preached that their hearers must repent! Their hearers the apostles knew HAD TO change their hearts and minds towards God in order to be saved. (See Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 11:18; 2 Peter 3:9 KJV) And this makes sense by what we have read of the hearts and minds of the great multitudes that gathered around the Lord Jesus. They had responded to the Lord only to a point - and then they resisted Him – and their hearts and minds after that where closed as far as being yielded and obedient to Him as He required. Here, at this occasion in Matthew 7, the Lord drove home to His disciples the need of the lost to be repentant towards God.

And it was not only the multitudes of those days, but the multitudes, or the majority of people – religious people included – of today who have the same dilemma! They are not willing, or not able, to move beyond ‘seeking the Lord’, to where they will “strive” for Him with all of their hearts and minds!

We will take the Apostle’s outline as ours, and fill in the details for each of these major points from other passages that expand on these truths …

### i. “Repentance Toward God”

“Repentance toward God” - The word “repentance” here means ‘a change of mind’, ‘a new mind’, ‘a new attitude’. So, in order for us to be saved, we need ‘a change of mind’, ‘a new mind’, ‘a new attitude’ towards God.

The question is, ‘What kind of ‘change of mind’ towards God did the apostles call for?’ We have already seen that the Lord showed that the majority of people resist Him, so a large part of what it means to be repentant “toward God”, is being prepared to yield our wills to God. We find in Scripture that being completely yielded to the Lord is a very significant part of **BEING a child of God.**
“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Romans 12:1-2)

Verse 1 – God’s children are to GIVE their bodies as a “living sacrifice”, i.e. given to God completely, to live for His purposes; “holy”, i.e. pure and separate from that which is impure; “acceptable unto God”, i.e. according to His standards of acceptance as revealed in His Word. See also 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ...

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

When believing in Christ, we need to be repentant in that we need to be prepared to give ourselves to Him. Most are not willing to go this far with the Lord, and many cannot though they make some attempt (Luke 13:24)

Verse 2 – The child of God’s whole person, all that they are, is to be given wholly to the Lord. Their whole being is described here as “your mind”, must be given wholly to the Lord in that they are not to be shaped in their hearts, or their minds, or in their values by the rebellious world, but to be completely changed, “transformed” to be “holy, acceptable unto God” and used in Almighty God’s purposes. They are to be a living demonstration of, “what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (See also, 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Colossians 3:17)

With the Lord calling each child of His to be completely yielded to Him in all things, it is not hard to appreciate that being “repentant toward God” means to yield ourselves / our wills to Him. And that unless the Lord finds us repentant towards Him, when we are also brought to where we believe in the Lord Jesus’ substitutionary death on the cross, that we will not be born again.

**2.3.2.1. YIELDING OUR WILLS TO GOD AS TAUGHT BY THE LORD JESUS**

*The Lord Jesus Is THE Example That God’s Children Must Follow*

The Lord Jesus taught that we are to follow Him, or follow His example ...

“And he [THE LORD JESUS] said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.” (Luke 9:23)

*The Lord Jesus Yielded His Will To The Father*

One of the important things that the Lord Jesus was an example of was being COMPLETELY yielded to the will the Father ...

“Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.” (Luke 22:42)

“Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” (John 4:34)

The Lord Jesus’ will was yielded to the will of the Father. In fact, doing the Father’s will is what sustained Him, “My meat [MY SUSTINANCE] is to do the will of him that sent me.”

“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:30)
“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 6:38)

“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 6:38)

“Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.” (Hebrews 10:7)

The Lord Jesus gives us a perfect example of what is expected of us in the command to be “repentant toward God” - to yield our wills to God.

And so we now have what “repentance toward God” mainly means …

- Being prepared to yield our wills to God!
- Being prepared to yield our lives to God!
- Being prepared to allow Him to change our way of thinking, from ‘I run my life, my way!’, to ‘Lord, my life is yours!’

Do you see why the Lord says that the way to be saved is ‘narrow’, and we have to ‘strive’ to enter through the ‘narrow’ way? To ‘strive’ where many others have failed? We have to be very serious with the Lord in order to be saved, or born again! It is not everyone who is so convinced, or who so strongly believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, that they are willing to yield their wills to God!

But being repentant towards the Lord alone will not save us. It is the first vital step of getting saved, or born again. The second part of the apostle Paul’s Gospel presentation, tells those with the right repentant attitude towards God, that they MUST also have “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ”.

ii. “Faith Toward Our Lord Jesus Christ”

The Lord Jesus Himself best explained what “faith” in Him is, AND WHAT IT ACCOMPLISHES for those who will have the right kind of “faith” in Him.

In John 3 the Lord teaches Nicodemus, and us, how to be “born again” (another term for being “saved”)

“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: 2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. 3 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. 4 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? 5 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. 6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:1-6)

The Lord Jesus tells us that unless we are “born again”, we cannot “see” or “enter” the “kingdom of God”. Therefore it is vital that we get to know what the Lord Jesus meant when He said that we must be “born again”.

2.3.2.2. We Must Have A Spiritual Birth!

The Lord tells us that being “born again” is a spiritual birth “of the Spirit” – the Holy Spirit (v5, 6) Just as we have all had a PHYSICAL BIRTH, OF PHYSICAL PARENTS, that gave us life in this physical world. We must have A SPIRITUAL BIRTH, OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD, to give us spiritual life with God.
In verse 5 the Lord Jesus explains the spiritual birth by comparing it to the physical birth which Nicodemus understands. Nicodemus would know that at birth the mother’s ‘water breaks’ and helps push her baby out:

V 5/ Except a man be **BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT**, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Then again in verse 6 the Lord again compares the physical and spiritual births:

V 6/ That which is **BORN OF THE FLESH IS FLESH**; and that which is **BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS SPIRIT**.

And so, just as our physical births have given us physical life in this world, and life with family and friends. A spiritual birth into the spiritual family of God would give us spiritual life with God in His eternal spiritual kingdom. Our spiritual life begins the moment we are born again, and so our relationship with God, as Father, begins in this life and not only after we leave this world and go to be with Him in Heaven.

**2.3.2.3. The Spiritual Birth Places Us Into The Family Of God**

In John 1 we are told that through the Lord Jesus Christ we can become sons or daughters 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)

We are then, through the spiritual birth brought into the kingdom of God, which IS the family of God. Which happens when we “receive” Him, or “believe on his name.” In John 3 the Lord Jesus explains ‘becoming a son (or child) of God’ using the terms “born again”, “born of the spirit” and “believe”. These various terms are used in order to help us fully understand how we get saved and what actually happens to us, and between us and the Lord, at the time that we get saved.

*If we must “be born again” in order to become sons or daughters of God, how does one get to “be born again”?

**2.3.2.4. HOW CAN I BE BORN AGAIN?**

In summary of what we are about to look at ... We are born again as the Spirit of God leads us to ‘by faith look to the Lord Jesus dying on the cross for our sins’, believing in Him to save us. That only those who are honest with the Lord in their belief in Christ truly respond to Him. (This ties up the Lord Jesus’ teaching here with the apostle’s teaching of “repentance toward God, and faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:21)

Let’s now continue through John 3 and see how the Lord Jesus explains to Nicodemus ‘the way to be born again’.

**i. By The Spirit Of God**

“**Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. 8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: SO IS EVERY ONE THAT IS BORN OF THE SPIRIT.**” (John 3:7-8)

The Spirit of God is working in our hearts and minds to help us TO UNDERSTAND, AND KNOW that we MUST be born again...
“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I [JESUS] go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [THE HOLY SPIRIT] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. 8 And when he is come, he will REPROVE THE WORLD OF SIN, AND OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND OF JUDGMENT.” (John 16:7-8)

In John 3:8, “The wind bloweth where it listeth…”, the Lord tells us that the second birth, from the human perspective, is something unpredictable. Just as the invisible wind is unpredictable, so is the working of the Spirit of God in the heart and mind of an individual. We cannot see what is happening in someone else’s heart and mind, as the Spirit of God is attempting to lead them to be born again. However, knowing that the Holy Spirit is trying to lead us to being born again should cause us to expect His leading. It would not be out of place to tell the Lord that we WANT / NEED His Spirit’s leading, SO THAT WE WILL TRULY BE BORN AGAIN. And take the matter supremely serious!

Nicodemus Did Not Understand

Nicodemus does not understand the second birth, nor the working of the Spirit of God. Everyone needs the help of the Spirit of God to understand spiritual matters. The Lord will help ALL WHO ARE OPEN AND YIELDED to His Spirit’s leading.

“Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? 10 Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? 11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. 12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? 13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven.” (John 3:9-13)

Nicodemus’ lack of understanding spiritual matters is a reflection of the spiritual state of Israel at the time of Christ. If you are struggling to understand and believe your need for the spiritual (second) birth. Then you need to be praying and asking the Lord to help you understand and accept what He is saying about your need to be born again.

ii. By Faith In Christ

We are born again by whole hearted faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus speaks to Nicodemus of His (Jesus’) coming death on the cross. The Lord tells Nicodemus that He must be lifted up on the cross to die for our sin...

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;” (John 3:14)

“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.” (1 Peter 3:18)

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

The Brass Serpent Illustration

The Lord uses the illustration of the dilemma of the Israelis’ in the wilderness to help Nicodemus – and us – understand what God means by ‘believing in the Lord Jesus’. 
“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:14-17)

As recorded in Numbers 21, Israel were complaining against the Lord and Moses for the conditions that they were living under. And so the Lord sent poisonous snakes among them to punish them for their wicked dissatisfaction of His provision in their lives. And it is recorded how many of them were bitten by the snakes and died. The punishment brought them to realize their sin, and they confessed to Moses that they had sinned against the Lord. And asked Moses to ask the Lord to remove the poisonous snakes. The Lord’s answer to them was that Moses must make a brass snake which he must put up on a pole where everyone could see it. So that when anyone was bitten they could look at the brass snake and be healed.

The Lord could have simply removed the snakes, but the Lord wanted them to exercise faith in Him. And so they were given a very strange way of dealing with the deadly poisonous snakes. When any of them were bitten they had the choice – look to the brass snake and believe God that they would be healed, or don’t look at the brass snake and die. This took faith. They had to believe God that looking at the brass snake would heal them. And so those that believed God looked to the brass snake and were healed. But those that did not look at the brass snake when bitten, were not healed and they died. It was that simple.

This very well illustrates how we must be born again. We are born again by looking in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ dying for us on the cross. That just as the bitten Israeli was to look at the brass snake in faith to be saved from certain death. We are to look to the Lord Jesus lifted up on the cross and dying for our sin – by faith in order to be saved, or born again. And just as the Lord, through Moses, told the Israelis that looking at the brass snake would heal them. The Lord is telling us in the Bible, that in the same way when we believe in the Lord Jesus dying for our sin on the cross. That we too would be saved, or born again into the family of God. That we would be made citizens of the kingdom of God.

Lastly, those who are born again are those who are COMPLETELY honest with the Lord …

**iii. Taking The Lord VERY Seriously Illustrated**

There are many people who have ‘a bit’ of faith or belief in the Lord Jesus. Like the thief on a cross next to the Lord Jesus who said to the Lord, ...

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.” (Luke 23:39)

He addresses the Lord “IF thou be Christ” showing that he was not convinced that the Lord was the promised Christ. And many today also do not believer with all of their hearts, and therefore are not born again.

**The other thief** being crucified with the Lord demonstrates ‘saving faith’ wonderfully ...

“But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:40-43)
He was dying on a cross, and the Lord Jesus was dying on a cross! And in faith the dying thief asks the Lord to remember him when He get to His Kingdom! The thief clearly believed that the Lord Jesus and he would not end their existences on their crosses! But that they would after their deaths be alive, and he wanted to be with the Lord in eternity. And so the Lord, seeing his faith, promises him that that very day he would be with Him in paradise (Heaven)!

We Must BELIEVE In Christ And What He Did On The Cross For Us

Today, looking back through the record in the Bible, we know that the Lord Jesus did go to the cross and die for us. The Bible says that the Lord Jesus died for the sins for the whole world when He died on the cross (John 3:16-17; 1 Peter 3:18 see below) And in order for the Lord Jesus’ death to save us, or give us eternal life, or give us the second birth, we must believe in Him...

“That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (John 3:15-18)

(“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:” 1 Peter 3:18)

People use the word ‘believe’ in more than one way. One person says that they ‘believe’, but we discover that their ‘belief’ is very weak – weak like a fragile reed on the bank of a river. Another says that they believe and we discover that their belief is with full commitment of their whole being – strong like an oak tree! And their faith affects, and shapes, every area of their lives!

In order for our belief in Christ to save us, and bring about the second birth, our belief must be with all of our hearts. The Ethiopian eunuch, in Acts 8, was told by Philip when he asked what hindered him from being baptized (which is only for one already born again), that he needed to believe in Christ with all of his heart. i.e. He needed to be born again.

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts 8:37)

The Lord Jesus ends this vital lesson on being born again, by explaining – from God’s perspective – who are those who truly come to Him for salvation...

Lastly from John 3:19-21...

We Must Believe With Complete Honesty

The Lord divides humanity into two groups. Those who respond positively and truly believe in Him and are born again, and those who will not truly believe in Him and therefore are not born again. The Lord also tells us of an important truth regarding the hearts and minds of those who believe to the saving of their souls, and those who do not believe as the Lord requires them to.

“And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that DOETH EVIL hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21 But he that DOETH TRUTH cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:19-21)
Those “That Doeth Evil” – John 3:20

People who resist belief in Christ, or who reject belief in Christ are those who – according to the Lord – habitually practice what He calls evil. They habitually resist God, and live life their way. This is made clear by the words “that doeth evil”. The original language (Greek) is helpful here. The practice of evil is ‘multiple acts of evil’, i.e. They are repeatedly doing that which God says is wrong. And so when faced with being called by God to believe in Christ to be born again – they resist. Being born again would not fit their life that they have chosen to live – living it their way, on their terms.

Some in this group ‘believe’, but on their own terms, and so are they not born again. As per the beginning of this Gospel presentation, we saw the requirement from the Lord that when we “believe” in Christ, we MUST also be repentant toward God (Acts 20:21) Multitudes, we saw, are willing to have this kind fickle belief in Christ only. And so, according to the Lord, they are not born again.

These people need to be brought to the end of such an approach to life and God. They need to be willing to make a complete change from living according to their rules. And be willing to live whole heartedly God’s way under His authority. As we saw...

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

Those “That Doeth Truth” – John 3:21

“But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.” (John 3:21)

In v21 the Lord Jesus speaks of the type of person who will believe in Him. It is the type of person who is living by the highest moral standard that they know. This is the person of integrity.

In this verse the Lord speaks of those “that doeth truth”. Again the original language helps us to accurately understand what the Lord means by these words. The sense is not of someone who does many acts of good, but of someone who is moral, or living according to the highest moral standards that they know. This person lives, not perfectly, but as consistently as they possibly can according to their knowledge and understanding of what is right.

And so, when they learn that God requires that they believe in Christ – that He died to pay for their sin. They immediately respond to believe in, or receive, Christ as the Spirit of God often easily convinces them to do so.

2.4. The Lord Jesus And The Apostles Preached The Same Gospel

Do you see the parallel, the harmony, between the Lord Jesus’ and the then future apostles’ Gospels? Both called for the right hearts and minds towards God in order for lost sinners to be saved. The Lord Jesus we saw preached that we must look to Him on the cross with honest faith – i.e. We must be repentant towards God.

And the apostle Paul preached, “repentance toward God”.

Both called for a certain heart and mind attitude towards God. The Lord Jesus said that those who were honest with God would believe in Him and be saved. And the apostle Paul that all, with the wrong hearts and minds towards God, need to change that and be repentant towards Him – when believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.
What Will YOU do?

You too must make your choice! A choice that will have consequences for all of your life in this world and in eternity to come!

Has the Lord convinced you that you MUST believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that you MUST be prepared to yield your life and your will under His authority? That anything less will not save you, will not bring about an actual spiritual birth into the family of God?

Your decision is ultimately between you and the Lord. He knows more than you do about your heart and mind towards Him, and towards the Lord Jesus Christ. Has HE convinced you to yield yourself to Him, and believe with all of your heart in the Lord Jesus Christ and what He did for you on the cross?

I ask you now, has the Spirit of God been working in your heart and mind to believe in the Lord Jesus with all of your heart?

“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. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” (Romans 10:9-10)

“And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts 8:37)

Will you privately tell the Lord that you truly believe in the Lord Jesus to save you from your sin?

And then …

Ask Him to help increase your faith, and to lead you to live a life that is consistent with your being a son or daughter of God. To lead you into a relationship with Him that He will acknowledge and be actively involved in...

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)

If you have believed in the Lord Jesus to save you and make you a son or daughter of His. Read your Bible each day asking the Lord to open His Truths to your understanding. Teaching you what it is to be a child of God in your daily life. Start reading in the New Testament in the book of John. That book of the life of the Lord Jesus will help you to know and understand Him better. And give the Holy Spirit a way to minister to your soul. And to start opening your mind up to God’s Truths, and His ways and values. Reading the Bible will open up Who God is, and help you to change in ways that He wants you to change.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

If you are English speaking I strongly recommend the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible as it has not been changed as the modern English bibles have. And is without error. And if you are Afrikaans then I highly recommend you read the Ou Vertaaling (1953) as it too is a complete bible without changes as other modern Afrikaans bible have been changed. Each person will need to check for the oldest Bible version in their language. Not all languages have a good Bible, and you may have to find one is another language that you know. One test is to see whether 1 John 5:7 is in your Bible …
“For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” (1 John 5:7)

Ask the Lord to lead you to a local church where you will be taught God’s Word (the Bible) as it should be taught. Keep looking to Him to guide you to HIS truth. Never be shy or afraid to question Bible teachers and preachers. Only God is without fault, and He wants you to know, understand and live His Truth each day WITH Him.

On the http://kingswaybibleschool.co.za/ website you can read and download Bible Studies to help you establish a solid Bible foundation in the Christian Faith.

If you have any questions you can write to russell@kingswaybaptist.co.za

(NEXT: III. REGENERATION)
3. REGENERATION

3.1. Stated

“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)

“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. . . . 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” (John 3:3, 5)

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Peter 1:23)

“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” (1 John 3:9)

See also 1 John 2:29; 5:4, 18.

3.2. Explanation

3.2.1. It Is Not Reformation

Some people think that by turning over a ‘new leaf’ one becomes a child of God. Some men quit drinking because of a bad heart, not because they know it is sin against God. One could cease from all sin (if that were possible to the lost); yet this is not regeneration.

3.2.2. It Is Not Confirmation

Some churches, as they administer a certain ritual of the church – that is not taught in the Bible - claim that the participants (usually children of twelve or thirteen years of age) receive the Holy Spirit with the anointing of oil. This is a false doctrine. One does not receive the Holy Spirit by any act of man, but upon receiving Christ as Saviour.

3.2.3. It Is Not Water Baptism

There is no saving faith in all the water of the world. Someone may ask, then, ‘Why are we commanded to be baptized?’ It is the answer of a good conscience toward God (1 Peter 3:21b) It is an ordinance depicting the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, and nothing more. By public baptism the new child of God declares to the all that witness their baptism, that they identify with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Meaning that their old self is gone / dead and their new regenerate self now walks / lives with God in this world.

3.2.4. It Is Not Church Membership

We are told in Hebrews10:25 not to forsake “the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is.” However, this does not bring about change in a sinner’s heart. Remember, the word “church” means “a called-out company,” or “assembly.” Joining a human assembly cannot bring about salvation. Some people believe that the Church saves. Is there a Church / assembly on earth which can give salvation? Is there a called-out company which can make a person a child of God? No! There is no assembly that we would trust with the saving of our soul. Plainly put, the Scriptures do not teach this.
3.2.5. It Is Not The Taking Of The Lord’s Supper

There is no ‘saving efficacy’, or ‘cleansing of sin’, in partaking of the elements of the Lord’s Supper. The Lord’s Supper cannot bring about the needed second birth into the family of God (John 3 KJV) The Lord’s Supper is taken by command to remember Christ and His work upon Calvary. We shall do this in remembrance of Him until He comes.

“For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till he come.” (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

See 1 Corinthians 11:23-28 for full teaching.

3.2.6. It IS The New Birth

Regeneration through Christ is a spiritual birth, an actual second birth, as we have seen in the previous section of lessons – ‘Faith’ - in John 3...

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is BORN OF THE SPIRIT is spirit.” (John 3:6)

In 2 Corinthians 5:17 the child of God is said to be “a new creature”...

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Then...

“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him” (1 John 2:29)

This is righteousness that the Lord acknowledges, and the Lord only acknowledges righteousness in His Children. Of the lost He says, comparing lost Jews with lost Gentiles...

“What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; 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.” (Romans 3:9-12)

The greatest good, or righteousness, that a lost person can do is seen as unrighteousness by the Lord. Therefore we must conclude that, as stated in 1 John 2:29 above, that “born of him”, is a dramatic change, it is even more than that, it is a new person. In a sense the same person, but a godly, passionately God loving, version of the former person. Paul, we previously saw, as lost Saul loved the corrupt Jewish religion of his day. He loved his high position that he enjoyed as a Pharisee. BUT, after he was born again, regenerated, he had the following to say about his previous life...

“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for WHOM I HAVE SUFFERED THE LOSS OF ALL THINGS, AND DO COUNT THEM BUT DUNG, that I may win Christ,” (Philippians 3:8)

In our modern times today, church going folk are typically morally reformed, or religiously reformed, versions of their former self. None must be satisfied with merely improving themselves,
but we all MUST be born again so that before Almighty God we ARE new creatures, that we HAVE been regenerated.

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Romans 6:4)

This point challenges many people in Churches today. So many have simply added Church life, or added ‘Christian-like behaviour’ to their lives. But their goals in life, their passions, are mostly of the world, or just like that of the moral lost that claim no allegiance to Christ. The person who has been regenerated, or born again, is the one whom has allowed the Holy Spirit to lead them to make the Lord, and His Biblically stated purposes, the prime goal and passion of their lives.

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” (John 14:21)

“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:21)

Before the ‘new birth’ life was according to the sinful passions of the flesh, but after the new birth life is about Christ and His purposes.

3.3. Necessity

“Ye must be born again.” It is a necessity declared by the Lord Himself. As well as...

3.3.1. As Seen In The Depravity Of Man

i.e. Man cannot save himself...

“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.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“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.” (Isaiah 64:6)

This teaches us that there is nothing that we can do, of ourselves, to save ourselves from the penalty of sin. We are incapable to making ourselves acceptable to the Lord. We cannot be good enough, we cannot be religious enough. Our sin, and the resultant corruption of sin, must be dealt with; and the Scriptures we have seen plainly reveal that we are incapable of bringing about the Lord's required regeneration, the spiritual birth.

3.3.2. As Seen in the Universality of Sin

There is not a man anywhere who doesn’t need to be born again...

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” (Romans. 3:23)

Sin has ruined all of us in the eyes of the Lord.

And we can see the devastating effects of sin that has ruined our world. Crime all around the world is mostly out of control. Wickedness is more common place than good.
3.3.3. As Seen in the Holiness of God

If we are to be received as a child of God by a righteous and holy God, a **great change** must take place to make us holy...

“Because it is written, Ye shall be holy; for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:16)

A very important truth relating to the holiness of God, is that it means that He is against all that is unholy, all that is sinful – which really means: ‘all that is in conflict with Him, with Who He is’. And raising ourselves to God’s standard of holiness is beyond our capability!

3.4. In Practice

3.4.1. The Divine Work In The Regeneration Of An Individual

The process of becoming a child of God is not by natural generation. Man cannot regenerate himself...

Firstly, the Holy Spirit draws us by helping us to see that we have a sin problem between us and God...

“Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [HOLY SPIRIT] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove [CONVICT] the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:" (John 16:7-8)

The Holy Spirit’s convicting work is only successful if we are receptive to His inner work in our hearts and minds. Part of the Holy Spirit’s inner work is to help us to understand our terrible sinful condition in the eyes of God, and then He enables us to respond in the way that Almighty God requires us to respond...

“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)

Practically speaking, we had nothing to do with our first birth, and we cannot – of our selves – bring about the second birth. Remember what we discovered in John 3 that relates to this point?

“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 3:5-6)

A soul getting ‘saved’ / ‘born again’ / ‘regenerated’ is a work of God, through the Holy Spirit. The ‘regeneration’ / ‘spiritual birth’ of a soul happens **when the Holy Spirit witnesses the required response** from the lost individual...

3.4.2. The Human Element In The Regeneration Of An Individual

Here we want to make clear just what our responsibility is towards our getting to be born again. While it is God who regenerates the believing sinner, yet there is our part as well...

**We Must Be REPENTANT...**

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now **COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERY WHERE TO REPENT:**” (Acts 17:30)
“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

With the Lord requiring repentance: **we must choose** to respond to the inner work of the Holy Spirit, by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us to being ‘repentant towards God’. Being ‘repentant towards God’ is a change of our thinking, a change in our attitude, towards the Lord. A change from being resistant towards His authority over us, to willingly yielding to His loving authority over us.

When the required repentance has been accomplished we will easily be led by the Holy Spirit to...

**We Must BELIEVE!**

“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.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6)

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD, AND FAITH TOWARD OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.” (Acts 20:21)

“For by grace [THE LORD’S UNEARNED GOODNESS] are ye saved through faith” ['faith’ on the part of the individual]. “No man cometh unto the Father but by me.” Yes, Jesus is the way, but the sinner must come! The sinner must allow himself to be led by the Holy Spirit to be ‘repentant towards God’, **AND ’have faith** in the Lord Jesus Christ’. We each, either of our own will / choice, must respond to the inner working of the Holy Spirit, or we are resisting Him!

This is the human part. God does the rest. He makes the individual who gets saved ‘a child of God’ (John 1:12 KJV) The Holy Spirit causes the individual who gets saved to have ‘a spiritual birth’ (John 3:6 KJV) The Lord acknowledges saving repentance and faith in an individual, and brings about ‘the miracle of regeneration’ – ‘the new creature’...

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, HE IS A NEW CREATURE: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

We can only response positively to the leading, the inner working, of the Holy Spirit with all of our hearts - the spiritual part of regeneration only the Lord can do.

(NEXT: JUSTIFICATION)
4. JUSTIFICATION

4.1. Scripture

We are...

“...justified by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” (Romans 3:24)

The righteousness of Christ shall be imputed to us...

“... if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Romans 4:24,25)

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” (Romans 5:1)

“And such [thieves, covetous, drunkards, and the like] 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.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)

See also Romans 3:26; 5:9; Galatians 2:16, 17; Titus 3:7.

4.2. Explanation.

To justify is ‘to reckon, to declare, or to show righteous.’ To ‘justify’ does not mean to make righteous. When one is born again through repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ they are born again, and made righteous before God. The term ‘justify’ is where God declares the believer to be righteous because of their spiritual birth. Justification is a legal term: meaning ‘a good standing’.

In the human law courts, the law is over the judge. If the judge is an honest and just judge, he can show no mercy. He must declare the defendant guilty, or not guilty, according to the law. In God’s law court, the believer, a guilty person, is brought before the judgment bar of God and is declared not guilty.

In a human law court, a guilty person may be pardoned, the crime forgiven but not paid. In God’s law court this is not so. All sins must be paid for, and the sinner punished. Three things are incorporated in God’s justification.

4.2.1. Forgiveness

“But he [CHRIST], whom God raised again, saw no corruption. Be it known you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.” (Acts 13:37-39)

A Christian is not a pardoned criminal; he is a righteous man. God declares him so. The Christian is someone who has had his sins paid for by Another, his Substitute, the Lord Jesus Christ. God never pardons apart from Christ.

4.2.2. Imputation

“Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” (Romans 4:8)

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is no imputed when there is no law.” (Romans 5:13)
“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.” (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Imputation (Greek: logizomai) means ‘metaphorically to pass to one’s account’.

Therefore, the righteousness of Christ is passed to the sinner’s account. All of the believer’s sins were put to Christ’s account — He paid them in full. In turn, His righteousness was imputed, ‘put to’, the believer’s account, and he stands there, declared to be righteous and therefore justified in the eyes of God.

4.2.3. Fellowship

Paul writing to all those who have been born again writes, “One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Ephesians 4:6) This is the fellowship of ‘God and the believer’ as ‘Father and son’, made a reality because of sinners, when born again, are through Christ justified before God. Remember, God is Father only of His children, not of unbelievers. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3) A child of God with a shallow ‘iffy’ / ‘uncommitted’ walk will not be able to ‘discern’ / ‘truly notice’ the hand of God in their walk. They will not enjoy the experience of their being justified as a child of God, while they resist the Holy Spirit Who is attempting to lead them in their personal walk with the Lord. Who is attempting to develop their life / relationship with Him.

4.3. Condition

4.3.1. Negative

4.3.1.1. Not By Works

“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.” (Romans 4:4, 5)

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Romans 11:6)

i.e. We cannot earn our justification before God, we cannot earn our salvation.

4.3.1.2. Not By The Deeds Of The Law

“That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” (Galatians 3:11)

“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.” (Romans 3:20)

See also Romans 3:20 KJV.

i.e. Keeping the law of Moses, by doing good, no one is justified before God.

4.3.2. Positive

4.3.2.1. By God

God sent Christ Jesus, “To declare... his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Romans 3:26)
“...It is God that justifieth.” (Romans 8:33)

Only Almighty God Himself could provide justification that He would accept.

4.3.2.2. By Grace

“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:7)

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:” (Romans 3:24)

The Lord did not reach out to man because he deserves to be saved and justified. It is purely His grace – ‘His goodness’ that we never earned’.

4.3.2.3. By Blood

“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.” (Romans 5:8-9)

See also Romans 3:24, 25 KJV.

Christ’s blood that was shed on the Cross cleanses the sinner that is born again. Cleanses them so that they are declared ‘justified’ by God Himself.

4.3.2.4. By Faith

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:” (Romans 5:1)

The sinner is ‘saved’ / ‘born again’ through ‘belief’ / ‘faith’ in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so ‘justification’ is also received by the same saving faith through which the lost sinner is born again.

4.3.2.5. Finalized By Christ’s Resurrection

Faith shall be imputed to us for righteousness...

“...if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” (Romans 4:24, 25)

Christ’s resurrection was the last ‘element’ (‘action’, ‘thing done’) in God’s work of redemption through His Son. i.e. Christ’s resurrection was necessary to complete God’s redemption offer to man through Christ.

4.4. Illustration

The following Bible testimonies of past saints illustrate that we are saved by faith and not works or the keeping of the laws of Moses. And so too is our justification before God by faith.

4.4.1. Abraham

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 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.” (Romans 4:1-5)
4.4.2. David

“Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works. Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.” (Romans 4:6-8)

4.4.3. Noah

“By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." (Hebrews 11:7)

4.5. Shown

4.5.1. In Works

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” (James 2:21-23)

James is not teaching that works are needed for one to be saved, but that works are a necessary evidence of saving faith. James was dealing with those who claimed faith, but their lives did not show evidence of their being saved. Paul was dealing with those who looked to their keeping of the Law and their good deeds for their salvation...

“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.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

Both James and Paul taught the same Faith, but were not dealing with the same challenges against the Faith. And so in the end this point is regarding the fact that the saved soul will see evidence of their salvation, and justification, in the good that the Lord leads them to live and do because of their love for Him.

See also...

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.” (1 John 2:3-5)

i.e. Keeping of Christ’s commandments (the New Testament) is an outward sign that we “know Him”, that we are born again.

4.5.2. In Experience

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulation 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” (Romans 5:1-5)

In the life of the justified child of God they will experience God in their walk / life with Him. They will, “…have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ …”. They, “…rejoice in hope …”. Tribulation is practical in the life of the child of God by producing spiritual maturity… “Tribulation” in a faithful
walk produces “patience”, “patience” produces valuable spiritual “experience” in their spiritual life with their Father.

See also...

“O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” (Psalms 34:8)

“Experience” produces “hope” from God. “Hope” that is solid because God’s children have, “the love of God” produced in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. Seeing these truths taught in the Scriptures being produced in their own walk with the Lord, shows God’s children that they have been justified in Christ.

However, the primary ‘witness’ / ‘experience’ is the child of God’s assurance of salvation that of the Holy Spirit, leading the obedient child of God to love God as Father, and leading them to know assurance of salvation; and therefore being assured of being justified before their Father...

“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:” (Romans 8:14-16)

(NEXT: SANCTIFICATION)
5. SANCTIFICATION

This is one phase of salvation which is very much confused today. The Bible student will be surprised at what God has to say about sanctification. Much is said about experience, and we believe in experience; but let us be cautious and let the Word of God interpret our experience, rather than our experience interpret the Word of God.

5.1. Scriptures

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: . . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7)

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: . . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3, 7)

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours: Grace be unto you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:2-3)

“For both he that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,” (Hebrews 2:11)

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:” (Hebrews 12:14)

See also 1 Peter 1:2; John 17:17; Exodus 13:2; Jeremiah 2:3; Ephesians 1:1 (KJV)

The words ‘sanctification, holiness, and saints’ all come from the same root word in Greek.

5.2. Explanation

5.2.1. It Is Not A Betterment Of The Flesh

Never does it say in Scripture that the work of the Holy Spirit is to improve the old nature. The natural man cannot understand the Holy Spirit. How could the natural man be improved by the Spirit? This is hard to say, but nevertheless, it is true, that the flesh of the believer is no better than the flesh of the sinner.

The Scriptures say, “Mortify the deeds of the flesh.” To “mortify” means to put to death. God’s children are to, by the enabling of the Holy Spirit, to put the flesh to death. This is not a once off thing, but must be done daily!

“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.” (Romans 8:12-13)

Mortifying the deeds of the body is only achieved as the child of God develops in their walk with the Lord. As they learn, by the Spirit, to walk after the Spirit and not the flesh. It is something to strive for! We must develop our walk with the Spirit, and strive – with the Spirit’s enabling – to daily put our flesh (the old nature) to death.

5.2.2. It Is Not Sanctimoniousness

Sanctification is not an affected, or hypocritical devoutness; neither is it false saintliness. Sanctification is not marked by the wearing of a beard, or black stockings, and the like. You can tell whether saintliness is real or false. It is not how we look but what we are on the inside – our minds and hearts.
“And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.” (Luke 11:39)

5.2.3. It Is Not A Second Blessing

“And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit;” (2 Corinthians 1:15)

In 2 Corinthians 1:15 Paul speaks of wanting to give the Church a second benefit, not a second blessing. This epistle was written to people who were already sanctified (1 Corinthians 1:2 and 6:11 KJV)

“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:” (1 Corinthians 1:2)

“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.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)

Paul speaks of visiting them again so that they may have a second benefit of him ministering to them in person.

5.2.4. It Is Not The Eradication Of The Sinful Nature

There are those who contend that a believer may have a purifying experience that will burn out all carnality, and so making him sinless, incapable of committing sin. We do not deny the child of God has spiritual experiences, but we caution the believer to test his experience by the Word, rather than trying to interpret the Word by his experience. Even though the Old Testament is written in the Hebrew, and the New Testament is written in the Greek, the words “sanctification,” “holy,” and “saint” all have the same root meaning in both testaments.

To those who hold that sanctification is an experience by which the sinful nature is eradicated, let us turn to the Word and see how sanctification is used:

“And thou shalt anoint the altar of the burnt offering, and all his vessels, and sanctify the altar: and it shall be an altar most holy.” (Exodus 40:10)

Where is the eradication here? Did the altar have a sinful nature?

“And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.” (Exodus 19:23)

Did Mount Sinai have a sinful nature?

“And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.” (Exodus 19:22)

How could priests eradicate their own sinful natures?

“Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent unto the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?” (John 10:36)

Here Christ Himself is spoken of as being sanctified. There is no sinful nature here!
“For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.” (John 17:19)

Here Christ speaks of sanctifying Himself. Again clearly He is not sanctifying Himself of a sinful nature.

Does this mean eradication of the sinful nature? Of course not.

“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” (1 Corinthians 7:14)

Is it possible that believing wives can eradicate the sinful nature from their unbelieving husbands?

If sanctification means eradication from the sinful nature, explain the following:

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:” (1 Peter 3:15)

Carnal Christians are sanctified; this does not speak of the eradication of the sinful nature...

“Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, TO THEM THAT ARE SANCTIFIED in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:” (1 Corinthians 1:1-2)

“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto CARNAL, even as unto babes in Christ.” (1 Corinthians 3:1)

The Corinthian believers are said to be sanctified, yet carnal.

So what then is meant by the believer being sanctified?

5.2.5. It IS “To Be Set Apart”

The root idea always means ‘to be “set apart,”’ or ‘separation.’ To sanctify always means to set apart for a purpose, whether in respect to ‘saint’ or ‘sinner’. Unsaved men can separate, or sanctify themselves unto sin.

“They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind the tree in the midst, eating swine’s [PIG’S] flesh and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 66:17)

Jesus sanctified Himself; to say He made Himself sinless is blasphemous. The Sabbath was sanctified, it was the seventh day “sanctified” / “set apart” from the other days of the week.

Again we emphasize that the words “holiness,” “sanctification,” and “saint” all come from the same word meaning “set apart,” “separation.” In the Old Testament the word “sanctify” in Exodus 13:2, and the word “holiness” in Psalm 29:2, and the word “saints” of Psalm 34:9 are the same root Hebrew word. In the New Testament he word “sanctify” of John 17:17, and the word “saint” of Philippians 1:1, and word “holiness” of Hebrews 12:10 are all from the same Greek root word. Meaning that they all mean ‘to be set apart’.
5.2.5.1. Sanctification, Being Set Apart, Is Spoken Of In Three Ways

5.2.5.1.1. Positional

“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.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)

God’s children are sanctified the very moment we are born again.

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:” (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

The born again child of God, right from spiritual birth, belongs to the Lord as His child. They are fully sanctified the moment that they are born again. Which means that the moment that a lost sinner is redeemed through Christ, the Holy Spirit ‘sets them apart’ from the lost of the world – as a child of God. A child of God who is no longer of this wicked world, but now of God. At their spiritual birth they are made completely, eternally a child of God. This ‘positional’ sanctification is 100% complete. Time cannot set them more apart as a child of God – this sanctification is complete. Note though the sanctification has to do with being a child of God.

5.2.5.1.2. Practical

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Corinthians 7:1)

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever. Amen.” (2 Peter 3:18)

This is our present ‘state of sanctification’. In the previous point we looked at the child of God’s ‘positional’ sanctification, and noted that at their spiritual birth they are sanctified / set apart thereafter as God’s child forever. This sanctification being complete.

The child of God’s ‘practical’ sanctification, in this second point, has to do with their sanctification, or being set apart, from the wickedness of the world around them. Our Scriptures here urge the child of God to bring their ‘practical’ sanctification to be a reality in their daily walk, “… let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” It is anything but complete, but an on-going process. An on-going process that will only complete when they get to Heaven. Perfect practical holiness is to be as perfectly holy as Christ – this is not possible.

The living Christian still has the flesh, the old carnal nature, in him and obeys it at times. When the child of God is yielded to, and obeys, the leading ministry of the Holy Spirit, they will know His leading from a carnal, worldly life, to a spiritual, godly life. This spiritual development, or spiritual maturity, IS the ‘practical’ sanctification we are discussing in this point.

God, by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in His wisdom gives out chastisement when necessary. This is to help an sinning child of His to turn from sinful acts or behavior...

“… 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.” (Hebrews 12:5-6)

Even the tough chastening and scourging from the Lord is for the child of God’s good – for their practical sanctification.
5.2.5.1.3. Final

Perfect, practical sanctification will occur in the future at Christ’s second coming.

“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” (1 Thessalonians 3:12, 13)

5.3. Condition

5.3.1. The Divine Side

In the child of God being sanctified, or set apart, the Lord’s part is in their ‘positional’ sanctification. The child of God plays no part in this sanctification other than allowing the Spirit of God to lead them to be repentant towards God, and having faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ, and thereby being born again. (John 16:7-8; Acts 20:21)

5.3.1.1. Positional Sanctification Through God

“But of him [God] are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:” (1 Corinthians 1:30)

i.e. God’s children receive their positional sanctification from God through Christ.

5.3.1.2. Positional Sanctification Through Jesus Christ The Son

“Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:12)

God’s children are here shown to be sanctified through Christ’s shed blood.

5.3.1.3. Positional Sanctification Through The Holy Spirit

“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:” (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

Here the Holy Spirit is said also to be involved in the positional sanctification of the child of God.

5.3.2. The Human Side

The human side of sanctification is related to the child of God’s ‘practical’ (day to day) sanctification. Which we saw related to their personal walk in this world, where the child of God has to choose to follow the lead of the Holy Spirit, rather than the lusts / passions of their flesh. And in proportion of how much each child of God co-operates with the Holy Spirit, depends on how spiritually minded He is able to lead them to be. Which can also be stated as, how much they will know the reality of ‘practical’ sanctification in their walk.

5.3.2.1. Practical Sanctification Through The Study Of, And Obedience To The Word Of God

“Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 15:3)

Meaning that through the Scriptures the child of God is educated in the ways of God, and thereby can make definitive (clear definite) choices to obey their Father, and be changed to be more and
more like Christ our perfect example. It is important to emphasize that every child of God has to make a real effort in the study of God’s Word, in order to understand how daily life with God works, and thereby be able to co-operate with the inner working / leading of the Holy Spirit. And therefore make steady progress in practical sanctification.

5.3.2.2. Practical Sanctification Through Yieldedness

“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” (Romans 6:19)

Each child of God must CHOOSE to obediently yield themselves “servants” to the “righteousness” taught in the Scriptures. i.e. That which is taught to be right in the eyes of God. To the end that they will, in practical sanctification, be holy before their Father. This choice must be made again and again throughout each day.

5.3.2.3. Practical Sanctification Through Chastening

“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth...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.” (Hebrews 12:6, 11)

Here we are taught a sobering truth that flies in the face of ‘modern christianity’. God’s children don’t spend their short lives in this world floating along in the sunshine of ease. They are engaged in a spiritual battle, and it is needful that the Lord manage His children’s’ spiritual development with chastening, and even scourging at times. The Lord allows hardships, and even harsh difficulties, in His perfect wisdom, to help His weak children keep on the straight and narrow path of righteousness, to greater and greater practical sanctification.

As is taught in Hebrews 12 these harsh lessons bring about “the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.” i.e. The harsh lessons bring about the blessed fruit / benefit of righteousness which will result in a greater joy and peace between them and their heavenly Father.

5.4. Definition Summary

1. Sanctification is the work of Christ for the believer, which sets him apart for God.

2. Sanctification is that work of God in the believer, through the Spirit and the Word, which changes him into the image of Christ progressively.

3. Sanctification is the work of God which perfects the believer in the likeness of Christ at their appearing with Him in glory.

(NEXT: ADOPTION)
6. ADOPTION

6.1. Scripture

“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.” (Romans 8:15)

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23)

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:5)

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,” (Ephesians 1:5)

6.2. Stated

We are all born into God’s world and because of sin are merely His creatures, and are not His children. Once a soul is successfully led to be repentant towards God, and have faith towards Christ (Acts 20:21 KJV) they are born again into the family of God, as His child (son or daughter John 3 KJV) The Scriptures also refer to one becoming a child of God as their being literally adopted into the family of God.

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, AND faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6)

6.3. Explanation

6.3.1. Predestined

Predestination has to do with the Lord’s foreknowledge (knowing ‘ahead of time’ / ‘in the past’) of whom would be born again, and declaring them predestined, or elected (1 Peter 1:2) The child of God’s adoption is here declared as having been predestined. i.e. The saved soul is not only saved from the penalty of their sin, but predestined to being adopted as a child of God at salvation through Christ (Ephesians 1:5)

“Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,” (Ephesians 1:5)

“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.” (1 Peter 1:2)

The point being made here is that the Lord can see what is coming in the future. What an amazing God He is! Predestination is not so much about that we have been ‘elected’ or ‘predestined’ to salvation, but that the Lord knows our future!
6.3.2. Redeemed From The Curse Of The Law

“To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:5)

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree:” (Galatians 3:13)

Being made a child of God the individual is eternally secure from the curse of the law. ‘The curse of the law’ refers to our inability to keep the law, and therefore be condemned by the law...

“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.” (Galatians 3:10)

Once a lost soul has been born again, they are adopted into the family of God, and because of the substitutionary death of Christ applied to them at salvation, they are thereafter, as children of God, eternally secured from the curse [CONDEMNATION] of the law.

6.3.3. Almighty God Becomes Their Father

“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.” (Romans 8:15)

What a glorious truth this is! It is astounding enough that the God that created everything by His speaking creative power, should be the God of all who have been born again. But that this glorious God is their Father, and they are His sons, or daughters! This is where the ministry of the Holy Spirit makes this a reality to the individual. He brings each child of God to regard their Creator as their Father, not simply as a fact, but with the love of a child for their parent, “...whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

6.3.4. The Anticipated Full Realization Of Adoption

“And not only they [creation], but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23)

The child of God who is actively “walking after the Spirit,” and daily resisting the temptation to, “walk after the flesh” (Romans 8 KJV) And making sure that they are not tainted / affected (with the wickedness of the world around them) Will from time to time, particularly when the spiritual battle is tough, really, really look forward to being with the Lord in Heaven. They, as our Scripture here states, can hardly wait, “...groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”, for the full realization of their adoption. i.e. The full experience of their adoption, when their sinful flesh and the wickedness around them – which continually taunts (tempts them to sin) their flesh – will finally be left behind them forever.

(NEXT: REDEMPTION)
7. REDEMPTION

The Bible is full of redemption. It is God’s character to save. He can destroy, but He loves to save. The theme of the Bible is Jesus Christ. The message of the Word is redemption.

7.1. Scriptures

7.1.1. Old Testament

In the Old Testament we find the laws of ‘redemption’ for property and people that have been sold. Laws governing how they may be redeemed. These ‘picture’ how the Lord has provided redemption of the lost sinner through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold...And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger’s family: After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him.”
(Leviticus 25:25, 47, 48)

7.1.2. New Testament

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace;”  
(Ephesians 1:7)

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: “  
(Colossians 1:14)

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: ”  
(Galatians 3:13)

“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:”  
(1 Corinthians 1:30)

“And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”  
(Romans 8:23)

7.2. Explanation

7.2.1. Old Testament

There are four Hebrew words in the Old Testament that have to do with redemption, and all mean “to set free.”...

**ga’al**- to deliver, redeem, act as a kinsman, avenge. **geullah**- (right of) redemption. **padah**- to redeem; ransom. **peduwth**- ransom or redemption.

The word “redemption” is used two ways:

**Firstly**, the ‘person who redeems’: The “redeemer” was always a near kinsman (family)

**Secondly**, the ‘act of redeeming’: While the word “redemption” means “to set free,” it includes the meaning “to buy back, to purchase.”
7.2.2. New Testament

The redemption of the child of God is by his Near Kinsman, the Lord Jesus Christ, who alone has the redemptive price — His own precious blood!

7.2.2.1. Redemption Taught

Is Provided By God

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16)

Is Through a Person — Christ

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation [LIFE] received by tradition from your fathers; But **with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” (1 Peter 1:18-19)

Is By Blood

“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but **by his own blood** he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Hebrews 9:11-12)

(NEXT: ASSURANCE OF SALVATION)
**8. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION**

One of the most glorious truths revealed through the Scriptures is that God is love, and that He loves us. God’s love is abundantly demonstrated by His giving of His Son to redeem us from the penalty of our sin. Another very important demonstration of God’s love is His provision of assurance of salvation that He provides His children. What a torment if this was not the case! What a torment if we had to wait until we leave this world, and only THEN find out if we were truly born again?! In this study we want to reveal the Lord’s provided assurance of salvation, and make clear the difference between assurance of salvation, and blind assumption.

8.1. Scriptures

“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.” (1 John 5:13)

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)” (2 Corinthians 5:1-7)

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (2 Peter 1:10)

“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:” (Romans 8:14-16)

8.2. Explanation

8.2.1. Assurance Of Salvation Is Given

“These things (THE 1 JOHN EPISTLE) 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.” (1 John 5:13)

“For WE KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. THEREFORE WE ARE ALWAYS CONFIDENT, KNOWING that, whilst we are at home in the body, we ARE absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)” (2 Corinthians 5:1-7)

In an expression of divine love the Lord has provided His children with assurance of their salvation. How terrible is would be for each child of God to have to wait for eternity, to wait for Judgment Day, to find out if indeed they were born again?! Praise God we do not have to wait!

Through the Scriptures the Lord tells us that we can, and should, know that we HAVE been born again. And that we are secure for all eternity. “These things (THE 1 JOHN EPISTLE) have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; THAT YE MAY KNOW THAT YE HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.”
is clear that the Lord has made provision of His children to know that they have eternal life with Him.

In 2 Corinthians 5 this truth of the child of God’s assurance is repeated, “FOR WE KNOW that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we HAVE a building of God …”, and, “THEREFORE WE ARE ALWAYS CONFIDENT, KNOWING that, whilst we are at home in the body, we ARE absent from the Lord.”

8.2.2. We Are Urged To Make Certain Of Our Salvation

“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?” (2 Corinthians 13:5)

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (2 Peter 1:10)

Both the apostles Paul and Peter write to those they are ministering to, to counsel them to make certain that they have been born again. Paul, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith…”, and Peter, “…give diligence to make your calling and election sure …”. Why would the apostles do such a thing?

It Is Because We Are Prone To Self-Deception

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

It Is Because The Lord Jesus Warned That There Would Be Many Religious, Actively Serving ‘Christians’, Who Were Not Born Again

“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.” (Matthew 7:22-23)

No doubt many of these of Matthew 7, who ‘served in the name of Christ’, would have ‘claimed’ such wonderful verses such as...

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 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.” (1 John 5:11-13)

The Scripture is gloriously true. Those who DO HAVE Christ have eternal life through Him. No doubt about it, however, this passage doesn’t tell YOU if YOU have eternal life.

There are many, many who are willing to have some sort of ‘belief’ in Christ to get them to Heaven, but not all are willing to be ‘repentant, “…toward God AND have faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21) Salvation is only known by those who are willing to be both repentant towards God AND have faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the Lord, in His wisdom, has provided assurance of salvation through the Holy Spirit’s inner working in each child of God.

8.2.3. Assurance Of Salvation Is Known Through The Ministry Of The Holy Spirit

Every child of God has the Holy Spirit living within them...

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” (Romans 8:9)
The Holy Spirit leads the obedient child of God to regard Almighty God as their Father, with affection, with child/Father love. And brings them to KNOW that they are a child of God. Therefore the growing, spiritually minded, child of God knows for certain that they have been born again, through the ministry of the Holy Spirit...

“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:” (Romans 8:14-16)

The wording of Galatians 4:6 is slightly different from Romans 8:15. Though echoing Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6, slightly differently worded, adds the ‘assurance of salvation by the Holy Spirit’ of Romans 8:16...

“And because ye ARE sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Galatians 4:6)

i.e. The child of God’s love for their heavenly Father is a big part of their assurance of salvation. And will be the greatest motivating factor in their life. This love will strongly motivate them to willingly, lovingly...

“Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”, (1 Corinthians 10:31)

...where such a command is like bondage (a huge burden) to an unsaved person, or a carnal child of God.

The following passage in 1 John 5 echoes and adds to what we have learnt from the above Scriptures:

“... And IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT BEareth WITNESS, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON OF GOD HATH THE WITNESS IN HIMSELF: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 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.” (1 John 5:6b-13)

In 1 John 5 we are taught that every child of God has God’s witness within themselves, “...he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:”. This witness is the indwelling Holy Spirit, “...it is the Spirit that beareth witness, ...”, Who communicates the Lord’s record of the Son of God: The record is that God has given man eternal life, which is in His Son. Therefore, he that has the Son has eternal life, and he that does not have the Son, does not have eternal life. In Romans 8, and Galatians 4, we saw that the indwelling Holy Spirit leads God’s Children to love their God and Father, and testifies / communicates with their spirit that they are children of God. THIS is assurance of salvation known / experienced! In verse 13 of 1 John 5 John tells us that these Scriptures are given, “...that ye may KNOW that ye have eternal life ...”.

For those who are struggling with assurance of salvation. The Lord’s answer is straight forward. ‘Learn what the reality of walking after the Spirit, and the reality of not walking after the flesh’ is, and you WILL be led by the Holy Spirit into a walk with the Lord, where the Holy Spirit will bring
you to love God, and witness with your spirit that you are a child of God. As we have seen, you have His Word on that!

(NEXT: PRAYER)
9. PRAYER

When we are born again we are made a child of God. And as we have seen, the Holy Spirit leads us – if we are obedient to His leading – to love God as our Father (Romans 8:15 KJV) What child, that loves their parents, doesn’t love to talk to them, to spend time with them? When we love the Lord, we talk to Him. We want to talk to Him.

Prayer is an essential element of Christian character which is lacking in most believers today. One reason for this is that prayer is misunderstood. Another is that the modern child of God is self-centered, and not focused on the Lord. Prayer is mostly thought of as asking and receiving. It is that; however, it is much more. So many fail to see the value of prayer as fellowship with the Lord ...

“To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2 Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. 3 Thou compest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. 4 For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O LORD, thou knowest it altogether. 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it.” (Psalms 139:1-6)

9.1. Scriptures

It Is Sin to Neglect Prayer

“Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:” (1 Samuel 12:23)

It Is Appointed by God

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:7-11)

It Is Commanded by God

“Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

“It is appointed by God

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;” (Colossians 4:2)

It Is Necessary to Ask

“... Ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2c)

9.2. Exemplified

Here are some examples of saints from Scripture where the Lord acknowledges their prayers:

Jacob Prays The First Recorded Personal Prayer

“And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand...
of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.” (Genesis 32:9-12)

**Joshua’s Cry To The Lord In The Time Of Crisis On Behalf Of Wicked Israel**

“And Joshua rent (TORE) his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads. And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?” (Joshua 7:6-9)

**David Prays With Thanksgiving When The Lord Promises To Use His Future Sons As His Kings Over Israel**

“Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto? And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord GOD; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant’s house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord GOD, knowest thy servant. For thy word’s sake, and according to thine own heart, hast thou done all these great things, to make thy servant know them. Wherefore thou art great, O LORD God: for there is none like thee, neither is there any God beside thee, according to all that we have heard with our ears. And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods? For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, O Lord, art become their God. And now, O LORD God, the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever, and do as thou hast said. And with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever.” (2 Samuel 7:18-29)

**The Prayer Of The Apostles And Disciples When The Early Church Began To Be Persecuted**

“And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thine hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.” (Acts 4:24-30)

Prayer may be defined simply as the child of God, knowing that their Father is present, talking to Him anywhere, at any time. He is never not available to the obedient child of God. And He is always ready to hear the prayer of the repentant, disobedient child of God.
9.3. Explanation

9.3.1. Expanded Scriptural Definition

As A Child Going To Their Father

“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.” (Romans 8:15)

It is incredible to think that Almighty God wants individual sons and daughters to talk to Him directly. It is even harder to appreciate that Almighty God is the actual Father of those who have been born again! And so the relationship between the children of God is more than that of creature and Creator, but of children and loving Father.

As A Child Crying To Their God

Saul / Paul when the Lord appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and identified Himself as the One Whom Saul was persecuting, immediately repented, and cried out to the Lord…

“Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:6)

Here we have a brand new child of God, crying out to His Saviour for Him to guide His child into His will. And there are many other reasons why a child of God would find the need to cry out to their God, their Heavenly Father. The most common reason would probably be a sinning child of God who has been brought repentance by the Holy Spirit. Another reason would be a child of God who finds themselves in circumstances that are distressful, and so their cry out to the Lord for Him to guide them, protect them, provide for them.

The Needs Of Others

Bringing the needs of others before their Father.

“I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;” (1 Timothy 2:1-3)

Prayer is not only for God’s children’s personal needs, but God’s children to lift the needs of others’ before their Heavenly Father too. They are called to pray for one another.

Praying For Their Own Needs

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” (James 1:5)

In the walk of the child of God they will from time to time not know what the best choice is in the situation they find themselves in. Whether for God’s will for ministry, or His will for a life’s partner, or in their career, etc. The child of God is exhorted to go to their Father for personal needs, whatever those needs be. And with certain needs, the Lord will withhold supplying those needs until His child looks to Him for those needs to be met, “…ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2)
Believing Prayer

Prayer must be made believing that their heavenly father will hear, and answer their prayer. The Lord requires that His children believe that He will answer their prayers, and that He will supply their needs...

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:5-8)

Not Carnal Prayer

Prayer must not be carnal to meet the child of God’s fleshly desires

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” (James 4:3)

Wrong motives are known to the Lord, and He will not answer the prayers of the carnal, lukewarm child of God who prays for carnal reasons. i.e. Fancy car, very expensive home, a job that pays very high, for money to be able to buy expensive, fancy looking clothing. All to make us look good in our, and others’ eyes.

Sin Hinders Prayer Being Answered

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:5-8)

Prayer Guided By The Holy Spirit

The Spirit led child of God’s prayer is guided by the Holy Spirit in what / who they should be praying for.

“Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26)

The child of God is also assured here that when they pray that they have the support of the Holy Spirit, Who intercedes on their behalf before their Heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit will guide them in what, and for whom, they should be praying for. God’s children are not always aware of another child of God’s needs at that time. This is where the Holy Spirit brings them to mind during prayer times.

9.4. Motivation

The child of God’s motivation to pray.
Loving Obedience

Loving obedience to the Lord’s command to prayer.

“Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;” (Colossians 4:2)

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. (Matthew 7:7-8)

Abundant Testimony

Abundant testimony of Christians demonstrates that God answers prayer.

The assurance that God answers prayer is taught in the Word of God. This is enough for the true child of God. However, it is wonderful to read of many children of God’s testimonies, in missionary biographies, of God answering prayer just as the Bible promises. A wonderful example is George Muller. This Brother’s biography is available on the internet for free at various websites – just Google his name. The book makes wonderful, edifying reading.

Wealth Of Promises

The wealth of the promises by God to praying believers. One example is...

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering [DOUBTING]. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.” (James 1:5-6)

Confidence Of Access

The confidence of access through Jesus Christ.

“Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:19-22)

i.e. Those who have been born again (saved) may approach God in prayer. They have been given personal access to Him through them having been born again. As God’s children they have personal access to their Heavenly Father.

Assurance Of Help

The assurance of help by the Holy Spirit. Again we consider this wonderful Scripture...

“The Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans 8:26)

The child of God does not always know what to say to their Heavenly Father. Sometime they are not sure how to ask, or how to explain what they are going through. At times we even misunderstand our circumstances, not having all the facts as the Lord has, and why our circumstances are as they are. In these cases the Holy Spirit is said to assist us before our Heavenly Father.
Supply Of Grace

The limitless supply of grace in Christ.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

Almighty God does not neglect His children and promises to meet their every need.

Another wonderful Scripture is...

“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32)

Chapter 8 of Romans is one of the most precious chapters in the Bible. In this chapter Paul describes the wonderful life of the child of God. And as he draws to the end of the chapter he sums up with the above statement. Also, adding that if God has given His children His Son to save their souls. Why would He withhold supplying their simple material needs?

The Abundant Ability Of God

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,” (Ephesians 3:20)

As the Bible shows, Almighty God’s abilities are beyond our comprehension. No one, nor any circumstance, can prevent Him doing whatever He chooses to do. And having committed Himself to take care of His children none can prevent Him from doing so. And neither are any of His children’s needs beyond His ability to provide for them.

9.5. Illustrations Of Answered Prayers

Abraham Interceding For Sodom (Genesis 18:22, 23; 19:29)

“And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the LORD. And Abraham drew near, and said, Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” (Genesis 18:22-23)

“And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt.” (Genesis 19:29)

For the whole account read Genesis 18:17-33; 19:1-29.

Prayer Of Abraham’s Servant

Abraham sent his oldest servant back to his family in Mesopotamia to fetch a wife for his son Isaac. We take up the record where the servant has arrived in Mesopotamia. He does not know exactly where Abraham’s family live, and so he asks the Lord to prosper his mission. So that he not only finds Abraham’s family, but that the Lord would lead him to the woman whom would be the right one for a wife for Isaac...

“And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. 11 And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. 12 And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day,
and shew kindness unto my master Abraham. 13 Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: 14 And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast shewed kindness unto my master. 15 And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham’s brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. 16 And the damsel was very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. 17 And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. 18 And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. 19 And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. 20 And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. 21 And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. 22 And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; 23 And said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father’s house for us to lodge in? 24 And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. 25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. 26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. 27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren.” (Genesis 24:10-30)

The rest of the record makes blessed reading as the Lord blesses Abraham’s servant’s efforts to bring a wife from Abraham’s family. Abraham lived as a willing, happy child of God, and sort to honour the Lord in all he did. And so enjoyed the provision of His God, and Father.

This record well illustrates a Scripture that we have looked at in this study on prayer...

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (James 1:5-8)

The Lord answered this Abraham’s servant’s prayer probably for two reasons, 1. Because of the Lord’s commitment to Abraham, and 2. The Lord answered the believing servant’s honest prayer.

It is also worthy to note that Abraham’s servant was probably won to the Lord by the godly testimony of Abraham’s walk with the Lord. The above Scripture testifies to the servant’s faith in the Lord, and how he – in front of Rebekah – bowed his head and worshipped the Lord Who had answered his prayer by leading him to Abraham’s family. And straight away to a likely candidate, Rebekah, as a wife for Isaac. Which the record goes on to confirm.

**Personal Prayer Of Jacob**

At the Lord’s command Jacob returns to the land of his family...

“And the LORD said unto Jacob, Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred; and I will be with thee.” (Genesis 31:3)

The trouble was Jacob had left home fleeing from his brother Esau, after Jacob had deceived their father to give him Esau’s birth right blessing. But Jacob had the Lord’s word that He would be with him. And though he greatly feared Esau his faith in the Lord keeping His promise was sufficient to bring him to obey the Lord’s command. Jacob also had the motivation that his welcome at his father-in-law’s home was gone. The Lord had come to Jacob in a time of great distress, and the
Lord told him what he was to do, and that if he obeyed the Lord would be with Him. Jacob obeyed the Lord and, not without difficulty, he left his father-in-law’s land.

Now to face his brother Esau! And here we have the prayer example. Jacob goes to the Lord in prayer regarding, in his mind, his perilous situation...

“And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him. 7 Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed: and he divided the people that was with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands; 8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. 9 And Jacob said, O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the LORD which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee: 10 I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast shewed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan; and now I am become two bands. 11 Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau: for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. 12 And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude.” – (Genesis 32:6-12)

And so, although imperfect in faith, Jacob chose to go with the Lord and obey Him despite that doing so seemed fool hardy from the human perspective. In his prayer to the Lord in this distressful situation, Jacob speaks of the Lord’s promise to take care of him, and of the Lord’s promise of to give him a future family so large that it will be likened to the sand of the sea. And as the record in the Scriptures reveals we are told of the unexpectedly good welcome Esau gave Jacob. Esau welcomed his brother with great enthusiasm and love. And all ended well between the two. Jacob could not know how this would turn out, but he did know the Lord’s guidance in the situation. And so Jacob had the opportunity to trust the Lord where he could only see disaster being the outcome. Jacob had to trust the Lord and not lean on his own understanding of the situation.

“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. 6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Proverbs 3:5-6)

Jacob’s prayer of faith, and exercising faith, in the Lord in this distressful situation, will certainly have strengthened his faith!

Nehemiah’s Prayer For Jerusalem

“The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. 4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: 6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father’s house have sinned. 7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandest thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandest thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: 9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. 10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be
attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king’s cupbearer.” (Nehemiah 1:1-11)

“And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence. 2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, 3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? 4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. 5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that I may build it. 6 And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me. 7 Then I came to the governors beyond the river, and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.” (Nehemiah 2:1-9)

Here is a truly blessed example of the Lord opening the way, for a faithful child of God - whom He has given the desire to rebuild the destroyed city of Jerusalem - to go and fulfil His purposes by beginning the process of restoring Jerusalem, and starting the nation of Israel with the few remaining faithful. Notice how the enemy king’s heart is prepared by the Lord to allow Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to repair the city of Jerusalem - at the expense of the Persians!

**Joshua’s Prayer For Discernment**

Here as we continue looking at the godly examples of the prayers of renowned saints in the Scriptures. This time we have a look at a prayer of Joshua’s where he is in difficult circumstances, and we will see him waver initially, but then get his focus back on the Lord. After Israel’s great victory in destroying Jericho, they are defeated by a much smaller enemy – Ai. Not understanding what had gone wrong, and why the Lord did not give them the promised victory, Joshua and the elders of Israel went to the Lord in the attitude of mourning. They all sat in the presence of the Lord, represented by the ark, until the evening. Then Joshua, having lost focus, forgets the Lord’s great plans for Israel and prays...

“And Joshua said, Alas, O Lord GOD, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan! 8 O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies! 9 For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?” (Joshua 7:7-9)

Trusting the Lord in circumstances that don’t make sense to us, takes real faith. And to Israel the probability of their getting destroyed by the rest of the Canaanites became a greater reality to them, than the initial reality of their perfect safety in the hands of the Lord as they earlier took comfort in.
The Lord knowing all, and the reason for their failure answers Joshua...

“And the LORD said unto Joshua, Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? 11 Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff.
12 Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you.” (Joshua 7:10-12)

And the Lord then instructed them in how He wanted them to discover which Israelite took what the Lord had forbidden them in Jericho. And the sin of Achan is discovered and dealt with. This passage is really worth reading the whole account. The added learning for Israel, and us, is: that the Lord means what He says, and disobedience has serious consequences!

Hannah’s Prayer for a Child

Hannah the barren wife of Elkanah turns to the Lord for a son, whom she would give to the Lord for His purposes.

“And when the time was that Elkanah offered, he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions: 5 But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion; for he loved Hannah: but the LORD had shut up her womb. 6 And her adversary also provoked her sore, for to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb. 7 And as he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, and did not eat. 8 Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou? and why eatest thou not? and why is thy heart grieved? am not I better to thee than ten sons? 9 So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. 10 And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. 11 And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. 12 And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. 13 Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. 14 And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. 15 And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. 16 Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. 17 Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him. 18 And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more sad. [HANNAH TRUSTED THE LORD TO GIVE HER A SON. IT COULD ALSO BE THAT THE LORD GAVE HANNAH PEACE OF MIND REGARDING HER PRAYER REQUEST FOR A SON, WE ARE NOT TOLD.] 19 And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. 20 Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, saying, Because I have asked him of the LORD. 21 And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. 22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. 23 And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Do what seemeth thee good; tarry until thou have weaned him; only the LORD establish his word. So the woman abode, and gave her son suck until she weaned him. 24 And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child was young. 25 And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. 26 And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. 27 For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: 28 Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.” (1 Samuel 1:4-28)
What a godly women! How she must have loved young Samuel, but Hannah loved the Lord more, and kept her promise to the Lord to give / lend Samuel to Him. And what a start in life Samuel had! Raised in his earliest years by his mother who genuinely loved the Lord. And then Samuel lived in the temple where he had the opportunity to learn and see how worshipping and serving God was done in the Old Testament Faith. And with his excellent training by his mother, though he was still very young, Samuel did not follow careless Eli, nor Eli’s wicked sons. Samuel had responded to what he was taught by his godly mother with all of his heart. Hannah no doubt continued to pray for her son and he became a godly man who was wonderfully used by the Lord!

David's Prayer Of Repentance

“..."To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me throughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 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. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hid den part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. 14 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. 15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Psalms 51:1-17)

David was truly a child of God. In Acts 13:22 it is recorded that the Lord gave testimony that David was a man after His own heart. David was a man who loved that which the Lord loved, and hated that which the Lord hated. And most importantly David was a child of God who loved the Lord. Psalm 51 records how even the most spiritually minded child of God, when careless, is subject to terrible sin. David had committed adultery with Bathsheba, Uriah the Hittite’s wife. David had arranged for Uriah to be sent to the fiercest place in battle, and so be killed. This deliberate act was murder! David had so strayed from the Lord that he lived with these sins for some months, before the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David to address his sins (2 Samuel 12) David to his credit acknowledged his sin and turned back to the Lord with all of his heart. Psalm 51 was written expressing his repentance towards God and the sins that he had committed.

A sign of someone who has truly been born again is that they cannot live in sin happily. In Psalm 51 David acknowledges that his future happiness depends of knowing the Lord’s forgiveness...

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalms 51:10)

The sin of those who have been born again is forgiven when they confess the sin, and they are cleansed of it by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 1:9 KJV) However, many times they have to live with consequences of the sin...

1. While David was king over Israel he would not know peace with neighbouring nations. Israel would continually be at war...

“Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; ... ” (2 Samuel 12:10)
2. David would know great trouble from within his own home...

“Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, ...” (2 Samuel 12:11)

What is truly inspirational about this Psalm is the integrity of David’s repentance. We see this as David describes the kind of holiness that the Lord requires of His children...

“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.” (Psalms 51:6-7)

And then we further see David’s integrity in his repentance with the Lord as he looks to the Lord for His help to get his heart and mind right with Him...

“Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psalms 51:10)

**Solomon’s Prayer For Wisdom**

“In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. 7 And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. 8 And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? 10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.” (1 Kings 3:5-10; Read also 1 Kings 3:11 – 14 KJV)

Here we have another beautiful, godly prayer of a child of God. What makes this prayer godly is the fact that Solomon clearly humbled himself before the Lord, and expressed his complete dependence in the Lord. This is the prayer of a spiritually minded child of God. Solomon knows that his calling in life is beyond his capability, but that with the Lord he could do anything he was called to do. Solomon’s prayer is not self-centered. Only a spiritually minded child of God puts the Lord’s interests above their own!

It is noteworthy that Solomon had a godly upbringing. David his Father, ‘the man after God’s own heart’, had provided a godly example to all who witnessed his life. Solomon clearly was won to the Lord through the excellent, not perfect, example of his father David. This is the Lord’s plan for the family. That parents’ walk with the Lord demonstrates the reality of life in Christ. And so helping to win their children to the Lord.

**PRAYER IN EXTREME CIRCUMSTANCES...**

**The Lord Jesus’ Prayer For Strength**

“Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. 39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. 40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? 41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. 42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.” (Matthew 26:38-42)

Words cannot communicate what the Lord Jesus faced when anticipating taking all of mans’ sin upon Himself! Nevertheless, the Lord gives us the perfect example of how a child of God, who is
called to hardship, and to suffering to God’s glory, willingly yields themselves to their Father’s will and glory. The Scriptures and history have recorded many godly men and women who were martyred for their faith in Christ. Who, like Christ in this passage, served their Father in bringing glory to His name with such a display of love. These saints knowing that such suffering is only for a brief time, and that eternity with their Father and Saviour awaits them afterwards...

“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.” (Romans 8:18)

The Malefactor’s Prayer For Forgiveness

“And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:39-43)

The thieves on crosses next to the Lord Jesus powerfully illustrates the two responses that the Lord receives from man. Most respond like the thief who challenged Christ to show Whom He was by coming down from the cross and saving them as well. He begins His wicked challenge with the word “if”. No one was ever saved through Christ who wasn’t completely convinced to believe in Him with all of their hearts! The unbelieving thief wasn’t even acknowledge by the Lord. The second thief believed in Christ. His whole hearted faith expresses as he and the Lord were dying on their crosses...

“Lord, remember me …” The Lord acknowledged his faith, … Today thou shalt be with Me in paradise.”

God’s children’s prayers must be made in faith, and not in doubt!

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering [DOUBTING]. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. 7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. 8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.” (See also James 1:5-8 KJV)

Stephen’s Prayer Of Submission

“And cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet, whose name was Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.” (Acts 7:58-60)

Stephen was truly a spiritually minded child of God! He surely knew that rebuking the Pharisees would lead to his death (Acts 7:1-57) But being convinced that such a testimony was the Lord’s will, Stephan boldly spoke against the leaders of Israel’s hypocritical, inadequate faith. And as he is stoned to death, this child of God prays for those who were murdering him! The leader of those stoning him, Saul, not long after is born again on the road to Damascus, on his way to persecute God’s children there. An answer to godly Stephan’s prayer?

9.6. Regulation

9.6.1. As To The Posture Of The Body

There is much supposition concerning the posture of the body while in prayer. Some contend that prayer is not prayer unless one is on his knees, believing it to be blasphemous to pray while
walking, and the like. According to the following Scriptures there is no set rule as to the position of the body in prayer:

**Christ On His Face**

“He went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.” (Matthew 26:39)

**Solomon On His Knees And Hands Lifted Up**

“It was so, that when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the LORD, he arose from before the altar of the LORD, from kneeling on his knees with his hands spread up to heaven.” (1 Kings 8:54)

**Thief On The Cross – When Dying**

“... Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.” (Luke 23:42)

**Elijah Down On The Ground With Face Between His Knees**

“And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees,” (1 Kings 18:42)

More importantly, than the above examples of godly prayer, is the fact that there is no teaching on what posture the child of God must have when praying. What is important to the Lord is the heart and mind attitude of His children, towards Him, when they pray to Him...

“... The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16)

### 9.6.2. As To Time

The following are examples:

**Daniel**

*Three Times a Day...*

“Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” (Daniel 6:10)

**Christ**

*Early in the Morning...*

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (Mark 1:35)

**Peter And John**

*Hour of Prayer (3 P.M.)...*

“Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour:” (Acts 3:1)
Examples recorded in the Scriptures are always secondary to specific teaching/instruction. For example...

"Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing INSTANT IN PRAYER;” (Romans 12:12)

Here we have instruction that we are to be, “instant in prayer”. Meaning that the child of God should be quick to turn to their Father in prayer. In a healthy human relationship, conversation is natural. And so should our turning to the Lord be easy and natural. Not necessarily long prayers. Prayer for all sorts of life’s circumstance should provoke the child of God to turn to their Father. To praise Him, to thank Him, to pray for guidance, and to bring a need before Him.

9.6.3. As To Place

Where is the place that God meets man today?

“Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

... suggests that the child of God must be in constant fellowship with their Father. Always aware of His presence, and that He wants them to acknowledge His presence, and easily/naturally turn to Him in informal prayer. Informal, though with reverence due to Him. Some examples of godly prayer:

Christ In The Garden

“Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and said unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.” (Matthew 26:36)

Christ In The Desert

“And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.” (Matthew 14:19)

Christ On A Mountain

“It came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.” (Luke 6:12)

Paul In A Storm On Board Ship

“And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat.” (Acts 27:35)

Christ said...

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:6)

Where, or what is meant by, our “closet”? This is prayer that the Lord calls His children to is their fellowship with their Father. Prayer is time with Him alone. Time when they may worship Him, lift others needs before Him, lift their own needs before Him. Prayer is not, as with the religious lost, a public display where they attempt to impress people with their 'spirituality'...
“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” (Matthew 6:5)

The Scriptures list at least two types of prayer:

1. **Instant In Prayer:** Talking to one’s Father no matter where we are;

2. **Closet Prayer:** Planned prayer time alone with our Father, where we perhaps spend a lot more time with Him in prayer. More time than the, perhaps, shorter prayers we offer to Him at any point during the day. But prayer is an essential ‘ingredient’ of our personal relationship that the Lord offers, and wants with His children.

### 9.7. Hindrances

**Spiritual Negligence**

“... ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2)

This is very simple ... if we neglect to ask we mustn’t be surprised when we don’t receive what we need.

**Insincerity**

“And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are, for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corner of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” (Matthew 6:5)

We are insincere if we only pray in public, at church. That kind of prayer is made only because of been asked to pray, or to pray so as to be part of that fellowship, to fit in, to be accepted.

**Through Carnal, Self-Centred Motives**

“Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.” (James 4:3)

Prayer where I’m only asking for my own non-spiritual wants, not my needs that come from a careful spiritual walk with the Lord.

**Through Unbelief**

“But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord.” (James 1:6, 7)

When we pray we must believe that our Father will give us what we are asking for. When we are praying for things that we really need in our life with Him.

**Through Cherished Sin**

“If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;” (Psalm 66:18)

When we refuse to, or neglect to, deal with known sin in our lives the Lord will not listen (“hear”) our prayers.
Through Failure To Ask

“... ye have not, because ye ask not.” (James 4:2c)

Some find a conflict with the above verse and...

“Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” (Matthew 6:8)

They reason that if the Father knows what we have need of, why then should they pray? This has hurt the prayer life of many Christians. It should not. It is true that our Father knows everything we have need of; if He didn’t He would not be God. His knowledge, however, is not a guarantee that we shall have the needed things: “Ye have not, because ye ask not.” The spiritual life of the child of God is about our looking to, replying on, our Father for all things. Not specifically asking Him leads to presumption, and a presumptuous attitude towards the Lord is sin.

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