

## D. The 5 Biblical Marks of True Salvation

- **Note:** The concept that “Salvation is in Christ alone” is not complicated, but rather it is simple to understand. However, with so much bad doctrine, and false teachers, it distorts the truth of Gospel.

*2 Corinthians 11:3 “But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*

- a. Paul’s concern for the Corinthians was that they would fall victim, like Eve, to satanic lies and have their minds confused and corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.
  - This tells us that Salvation and the pure Gospel should not be complicated, and is simple to understand.
- b. When we look into the Word of God you will notice four classes of people that God addresses:
  - 1) Believers (true Christians)
    - A believer is someone who has genuinely trusted Christ as their own personal Saviour and there are “marks” in their life that prove their faith.
    - **A believer is someone that has a real, DEVOTED relationship with God.**

*John 10:27-28 “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish,”*

- 2) Non-believers (not Christians)
  - A non-believer is someone who rejects Jesus as their own personal Saviour.
  - They know the truth of God’s Word and they choose not to believe it.
  - **A non-believer is someone who has a DEVIL-LIKE relationship with God.**

*John 8:44 “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”*

- 3) Backsliding believers (wayward Christians)
  - A backslider is someone who genuinely knows Jesus as their own personal Saviour, but has moved away from the things God, and is going in the wrong direction, spiritually.
  - It is someone who lives a carnal Christian life.
  - **A backsliding Christian is someone who has a DISTORTED relationship with God.**

*1 Corinthians 3:3 “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”*

- 4) Professing believers (false Christians)

- A professing believer is someone that claims to have trusted Christ as their own personal Saviour, but does not demonstrate a new life in Christ.
- In other words, they do not show the marks of a true believer.
- *Matthew 7:21-23* is a proof-text of a professing believer.

***Matthew 7:21-23*** “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (22) 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.”

- **A Professing believer is someone who has a DECEIVED relationship with God.**

c. Notice the 5 Biblical marks of a person that possesses true Salvation

1. The CALL of the Sinner
2. The CHANGED Life
3. The CONFLICT between the flesh and the Spirit
4. The CHASTENING hand of God
5. The COMFORT of the Father

## 1. The CALL of the Sinner

- a. A Conviction of Sin

**Note:** Before someone can be truly saved or be a true Christian they must come under a DEEP conviction of their sin.

- This therefore eliminates the notion of someone saying, “*I have been a Christian ever since I was born*”. Nobody is ever born a Christian.

**Note:** When a person truly sees their sinfulness, and seriously comes under deep conviction of their sin, it is then, and only then, that they will be able to see their need for the Saviour – Jesus Christ.

- b. The Confession of the Saviour

- The Religious people had trouble see their sinfulness.

***John 9:39-41*** “And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. (40) And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, Are we blind also? (41) Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.”

- Religion blind the eyes of a person to see their need of Christ.

➤ Having a deep conviction of sin leads a person to the Saviour – Jesus Christ.

1) Peter saw his sinfulness

- When Peter doubted and challenged the Lord Jesus, Peter saw his sinfulness.

***Luke 5:8** “When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”*

2) Prodigal saw his sinfulness

- When the Prodigal son left his Father's house and ended up in the pigpen, the Prodigal saw his sinfulness.

***Luke 15:18** “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,”*

3) Publican saw his sinfulness

- When the Publican saw his sinfulness, he cried out to God for mercy.

***Luke 18:9-14** “And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: (10) Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. (11) The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. (12) I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. (13) And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. (14) I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”*

- **Question:** What is a person being saved from? **SIN**
- Therefore, this is the main purpose in coming and calling on the Lord.

***Matthew 1:21** “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”*

- One of the functions of the Spirit of God is to convict sinners of their sin.

***John 16:8** “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”*

c. A Call of Faith

***Romans 10:13-14** “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?”*

- When a person sees their need for a Saviour, they are to call on the Lord by faith alone.
- A person is not saved by saying a prayer, or just confessing their sin.
- A person is not saved by attending church, or keeping the Ten Commandments.
- A person is saved by putting their FULL trust in Jesus Christ alone.

1) Salvation is through faith alone

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

***1 Peter 1:5** “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”*

2) Salvation is through Christ alone

***Acts 4:12** “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”*

3) Salvation is through the blood of Christ alone

***Colossians 1:12-14** “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: (13) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: (14) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”*

- **Turn to: Luke 5:17-23**

d. The Complete Joy of Salvation

**Note:** When a person CALLS on the Lord by faith alone, and the Lord saves them, they experience a peace and joy through the Holy Ghost.

***1 Thessalonians 1:5-6** “For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. Vs 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:”*

***Romans 5:10-11** “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Vs 11 And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.”*

***1 Peter 1:8** “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:”*

**Note:** When a person gets saved there is joy all around. There is joy in Heaven, on earth, and in hearts.

- 1) In the parable of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son, one of the recurring emphases is joy.
  - When the lost sheep was found there was Joy
  - When the lost coin was found there was Joy
  - When the lost son was found there was Joy
- 2) The Philippian jailor and family rejoice

*Acts 16:30-34* “And brought them out, and said, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* (31) *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* (32) *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.* (33) *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.* (34) *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”*

- 3) The eunuch rejoiced

*Acts 8:35-39* “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.* (38) *And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.* (39) *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

- **A man of God said**, “The joy of the Ethiopian, even after Philip’s strange departure, shows that his faith was firmly rooted in God, not in Philip.”
  - **Albert Barnes said**, “It was joy resulting from the fact that he was reconciled to God.”
- e. A Genuine Heart to follow Christ
- Did you know that motives play a big part when a person calls on the Lord.

### **The Parable of the four Soils**

- Jesus gives a parable of the four soils which details four different responses to the Word of God.
- The Soil is a symbol of a person’s heart, and the seed is a symbol of the Gospel message.
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<b>The Heart</b>	<b>The Parable Spoken</b>	<b>The Parable Explained</b>
<p>The Way Side</p> <p>This soil depicts the person who hears the Word, but immediately allows the devil to snatch the seed away. <u>It is a hardened heart toward the Word of God.</u> This person hears with their ears only.</p> <p><b><u>This is NO Faith</u></b></p>	<p><b>Luke 8:5</b> “A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it.”</p>	<p><b>Luke 8:12</b> “Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.”</p>
<p>The Rocky Ground</p> <p>This soil illustrates the person who emotionally hears and receives the Word. They quickly respond to the message, but do not count the cost. They are only interested for a while, but their interest soon dies and they do not continue. In times of testing they fall away. Testing comes to all professing believers to prove their faith.</p> <p><b><u>This is a Shallow Faith</u></b></p>	<p><b>Luke 8:6</b> “And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.”</p> <p><b>Warren Wiersbe said,</b> “Persecution can deepen the roots of a true Christian, but it only exposes the shallowness of the false Christian.”</p>	<p><b>Luke 8:13</b> “They on the rock <i>are they</i>, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”</p>
<p>The Thorny Ground</p> <p>This soil shows a person who does not repent. They choose the pleasures of this life over God. They love their sinful lifestyles and reject the Saviour.</p> <p><b><u>This is a Dead Faith</u></b></p>	<p><b>Luke 8:7</b> “And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.”</p>	<p><b>Luke 8:14</b> “And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of <i>this</i> life, and bring no fruit to perfection.”</p>
<p>The Good Ground</p> <p>This soil alone is fruitful. It illustrates a person who hears the Word, understands it, and with a pure heart receives it. This person is truly saved, and godly fruit proves their faith. Not every Christian produces the same amount of fruit, but all true believers who call on the Lord, with a PURE heart, will produce some fruit as evidence of a New Life. That is the next Mark of a True Christian.</p> <p><b><u>This is a LIVING Faith.</u></b></p>	<p><b>Luke 8:8</b> “And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”</p>	<p><b>Luke 8:15</b> “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep <i>it</i>, and bring forth fruit with patience.”</p>

**Note:** Circumstantial salvation is not the genuine call of faith. There were people in the Bible who called on the Lord to deliver them out of the circumstances.

### Examples of Circumstantial Salvation

- 1) 10 Lepers.
  - How many come back to give God the glory? Only one.
  - They wanted to be physically cleansed.
  
- 2) Simon the Sorcerer
  - Simon wanted to buy the Holy Spirit. He was seeking spiritual power.
  - The Bible speaks of him believing and being baptized, yet Peter said “Thy money perish with you”.
  
- 3) Thief on the Cross

***Luke 23:39-43** “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.*

**Note:** A person who fails to see their sin, and just “calls on the Lord” because they don’t want to end up in hell, must examine themselves.

- Jesus came to save sinners from their sin, not from what sin causes – not the surface issues, but the deep root problem, which is a sinful wicked heart.

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

***2 Timothy 2:22** “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”*

- The First mark of a true Christian is “The Call of the Sinner”

## **2. The CHANGED Life**

**Note:** Paul challenging the Corinthians would indicate to us that there were professing believers within the church.

***2 Corinthians 13:5** “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates”*

- Here Paul is urging these people to examine themselves, and to put

themselves to the test.

- The test is simply this “Does Jesus Christ live in you?” and if Christ does not live in you, then you are reprobates – you are rejected.

➤ **The Second mark of a TRUE Christian is “A CHANGED LIFE”**

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

**Note:** There are several terminologies the Bible uses regarding the “The Changed Life”.

1) New Creature

- This is defined as becoming a NEW PERSON. This process could only be done in Christ alone.

*Galatians 6:14-15* “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (15) For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creature.**”

*Alberts Barnes said,* “The fact that a man is created a new, constitutes the real difference between him and other people. This is what Christ requires; this is the distinction which he designs to make. It is not by conformity to certain rites and customs that a man is to be accepted; it is not by elevated rank, or by wealth, or beauty, or blood; it is not by the color of the complexion; but the grand inquiry is, whether a man is in fact a new creature in Christ Jesus;”

2) Regenerated.

- This means to be revived, restored, and have a spiritual renovation.

*Titus 3:4-5* “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, (5) 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;”

- Washing” here means “bathed all over”. When a sinner trusts Jesus as Saviour, they are CLEANSED from all their sins by the blood of Christ, and they are made NEW by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

*John Philips said,* “In God’s sight, we are so vile that a complete bath is required - “the washing of regeneration.” The agent of that cleansing is the blood of Christ Once the “washing” has taken place, the “regeneration” can take place.”

*CH Spurgeon said,* “A supernatural work of the Holy Ghost must be wrought in every one of us, if we would see the face of God with acceptance.”

### 3) Born again

- This is known as the second birth, or the spiritual birth. Jesus explains to a very religious man that he MUST be born again to enter into Heaven.

**John 3:3-6** “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.”

**A man of God said,** “You do not manufacture Christians any more than you manufacture babies! The only way to enter God’s family is through the new birth.”

**Someone once approached George Whitefield and asked,** “Why do you always preach that we must be born again?” “Because,” he replied, “we must be born again.”

#### a. The Foretelling of a Changed Life

**Note:** The doctrine of a “changed Life” was not completely foreign to the Jews, and was particularly foretold, taught, and would be fulfilled in the time of Christ.

##### 1) The Lord gives the COMMAND

**Deuteronomy 10:16** “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked.”

- Outward circumcision is something man can do. Inward circumcision is something only God can do. So, in reality, God was compelling His people to seek Him for this inner work.

##### 2) The Lord declares the new COVENANT

**Jeremiah 31:31-33** “Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: (32) Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: (33) But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

- This NEW covenant God made with His people would only be fulfilled through Jesus. This would be the truth that sets people free from the bondage of sin.

**John 1:17** “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

- The reason why “*the keeping of Law*” cannot save a sinner is because the sinner is a law-breaker.

**Galatians 4:4-5** “*But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law (5) To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.*”

- 3) The Lord CONFIRMS the new heart.

**Ezekiel 11:19-21** “*And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: (20) That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God. (21) But as for them whose heart walketh after the heart of their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their way upon their own heads, saith the Lord GOD.*”

- God never desired outward conformity, God always sought a heart that was seeking God by Faith alone.

#### b. The Foundation of a Changed Life

**Note:** The new birth is the renewing of the whole soul in righteousness and true holiness, and Heaven is a place of Holiness into which we cannot enter, apart from Christ, who is the PURE and PERFECT One.

- NO REAL CHANGE could ever take place unless we are in Christ and Christ is in us.

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

- Notice what Jesus expressed to the Disciples

**Matthew 5:20** “*For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*”

- Jesus makes it clear that the religious rulers displayed some sort of righteousness.
  - **The Scribes** were doctors of the law. The Scribes were responsible to copy the Law/Scriptures (carefully copy out the Scriptures from one manuscript to another.) They were to read God’s Word/Law to the people, and cause them to understand it, and to help them apply it in their own lives...
  - **The Pharisees** were separated to practice and carry out the law which the Scribes taught – in every area and in every minor detail.
- This statement by Jesus would have grabbed the attention of all that were listening.

- **The Common people** perhaps were thinking, “How can we exceed them?” and “What hope do we have?”
- **The Scribes and Pharisees** perhaps were thinking, “Our righteousness is not good enough?”
- So the question has to be asked, “Why was the righteousness of the religious rulers not good enough?”

### 1) They had the Wrong Foundation

- The Pharisees justified themselves on the basis of what they did and didn't do.... in other words, they justified themselves by their own works.

*Romans 10:1-4* “Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. (2) For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. (3) For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. (4) For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

- These Religious Rulers are what one would call “Legalists”.
- A Legalist is someone who tries to attain or earn salvation (earn/merit God's favour) by their own works.
- **They try to justify themselves by themselves.**

### 2) They had Wrong Motives

- Some of the things which the religious rulers practiced were done with wrong motives.
- They fasted, prayed and gave money to APPEAR righteous.

*Matthew 23:28* “Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.”

- They did certain works to justify themselves before men.

*Luke 16:15* “And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”

### 3) They had the Wrong Priorities

- The Pharisees were more concerned with looking the part than being the part...

*Matthew 23:25* “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.”

- From the outside they looked like they had it together, but they had not dealt with the inward sinful heart.

*Matthew 23:26* “Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”

- The Pharisees had it backwards. To exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees is to have the righteousness of Christ.

**Note:** God is looking for someone that He has a hold of and can do a miracle work in them, rather than someone trying to get a hold of God by their own righteousness.

### c. The Fruit of a Changed Life

- One of the greatest fruits of a changed life is someone who has truly repented. Someone that has truly turned to God with their whole heart.

➤ Notice what John the Baptist said.

*Luke 3:8* “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.”

- God is not looking for a mere profession, but rather a heart that is genuine. Genuine repentance produces fruit. Being a descendant from Abraham was not sufficient. Being brought up in a Christian home is not enough.
- People brought-up doing what their tradition expects them to do, is not what makes a person a NEW Creature.
- **A change of habits is not a changed heart.**

➤ Notice what Peter said...

*Acts 3:19* “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;”

- Peter is saying that God will wipe away our record of sin, if we turn to God through Christ.

- **When a person has NEW LIFE IN CHRIST, there is adamant new growing desire to walk in the ways of God.**

### 1) A growing hatred for sin

*1 John 3:9* “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.”

2) A growing love for God's people

*1 John 3:14-15* "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. (15) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

*1 John 4:7* "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

3) A growing separation from the world

*1 John 5:4-5* "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. (5) Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?"

*Galatians 6:14* "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

4) A growing love for the Lord.

*1 John 5:1-3* "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. (2) By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. (3) For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."

• **Examples:**

- Zacchaeus – Luke 19:1-10
- Christians in Thessalonica – 1 Thessalonians 1:9
- Believers in Ephesus – Acts 19:18-19

d. The Faithfulness of a Changed Life

- The evidence of a professing believer becoming a NEW PERSON in CHRIST is a **continued renewed walk.**

*Colossians 2:6* "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:"

*CH Surgeon* "Sanctification is the great open separator of Christians from the world!"

**Galatians 5:25** “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

- After a person believes on the Lord Jesus there is a continued desire that comes from the Spirit of God, to follow Christ and obey His Word.

➤ Notice what Jesus said,

**John 8:31** “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;”

- A genuine believer holds fast, obeys, and practices the Word of God. They follow through. They are practically sanctified by the Word of truth.

**John 8:32-36** “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. (33) They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? (34) Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin. (35) And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. (36) If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

Notice several examples from Scripture

### 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

**1 Corinthians 6:9-10** “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, vs 10 Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Vs 11 “And such **were** some of you...”

**1 Corinthians 6:11** “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.”

### 2) Colossians 3:5-8

**Colossians 3:5-8** “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry (6) For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience (7) In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. (8) **But now** ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”

### 3) Titus 3:3-5, 8

**Titus 3:3** “For we ourselves also **were** sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, **servi**ng divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy,

*hateful, and hating one another.”*

**Titus 3:4-5** *“But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, vs 5 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 3:8** *“This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”*

4) **Romans 6:20-22**

**Romans 6:20** *“For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.” vs 21 “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.”*

**Romans 6:22** *“But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”*

5) **1 Peter 2:9-10**

**1 Peter 2:9** *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: vs 10 Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”*

6) **Ephesians 5:6-8**

**Ephesians 5:6** *“Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Vs 7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.”*

**Ephesians 5:8** *“For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:”*

**Albert Barnes:** “And as every man is a sinner, it is necessary that each one should experience this change, or he cannot be happy or saved.”

- Salvation is God turning bad people into good godly people, and transforms slaves of sin into sons of God.

### 3. The CONFLICT between the flesh and the Spirit

**2 Timothy 3:1-5** “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. (2) For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, (3) Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, (4) Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; (5) Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”

- Churches are filled with people that are religious, that love to sing, they give of their money, they attend services, they do charity work, **but at the same time** they love themselves and they love lustful pleasures more than loving God.
- They seem godly by their talk and profession, they have a form of spirituality, but deep down they do not love God.
- Judas was a perfect example of that. The Scribes and Pharisees were a perfect example of that.
- Paul’s concern for Timothy is that he would not be deceived by this Christianity. Paul encourages Him to avoid this kind of Christianity, and reaffirms to Timothy that TRUE GODLY people will suffer persecution.

**2 Timothy 3:12** “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.”

- Godly people are made by God, through the working power of the Holy Spirit.
- Believers are born again/regenerated by the Holy Spirit of God and they become NEW Creatures. **This means that have a NEW Nature.**
- And because of the NEW nature – the Holy Spirit that indwells every TRUE believer – there is a battle that rages within.
- There is a battle and conflict because we still have the OLD nature.
- God’s purpose for every blood-bought, born again believer is to be conformed and transformed into the image of His Son Jesus Christ.

**Galatian 4:19** ‘My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,’

- **When a person is truly saved there will be a CONFLICT between the flesh and the Spirit.**

a. The Reality of the Conflict

- Every TRUE Christian will face the conflict within.

**Galatians 5:16-17** “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (17) For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.”

- 1) **They are Contrary** = The flesh and the Spirit are always in conflict with one another,

- Our sinful flesh fights against the Spirit. to hinder the work of God in our lives. The fight is evident. The reality is obvious.
- The flesh and the Spirit are two completely different NATURES that are at war with each other. They are divided. One is from the earth and the other is from Heaven.
- The flesh pulls me in one direction and the Spirit pull me in the opposite direction, and while the Spirit of God would lead us one way, our carnal nature would lead us another, and there is tension and apparent disagreement which occurs in our hearts and minds.

*Warren Wiersbe said “Our old nature is like the pig and the raven, always looking for something unclean on which to feed. Our new nature is like the sheep and the dove, yearning for that which is clean and holy. No wonder a struggle goes on within the life of the believer! The unsaved man knows nothing of this battle because he does not have the Holy Spirit.”*

**2) They are Enemies** – The flesh and the Spirit are opponents.

*Romans 8:5 “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*

- **The Flesh** seeks after its own lustful desires, and is never able to please God.
- **The Spirit** seeks after the things of God, and always pleases God.

➤ In Verse 6 we see the Contrast between the flesh and the Spirit

*Romans 8:6-7 “For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (7) Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”*

- **The Flesh** is carnal and bring forth death.
- **The Spirit** is spiritual and brings forth life and peace.
- **Note:** Paul didn’t say that the carnal mind was being at enmity with God - he said “*The carnal mind is enmity against God.*”

*Romans 8:9 “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.”*

- When a person is born again, they are under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- A nonbeliever does not have the presence of the Holy Spirit in their life, leading them and guiding them.
- Having the Holy Spirit in us makes a BIG difference in the way we live.

**Even our outlook on life is completely different.**

- Our minds are fully enlightened and we see things from a godly perspective.

*When D.L. Moody described his conversion experience, he said: "I was in a new world. The next morning the sun shone brighter and the birds sang sweeter . . . the old elms waved their branches for joy, and all nature was at peace." Life in Christ is abundant life."*

- The flesh is still alive and present with us.

a. Paul's Example

**Turn to – Romans 7:18-25**

- This passage must be understood in that Paul is facing this battle as a saved believer. He is not speaking about his past condition, but rather he is speaking of his current condition.

**Romans 7:18** *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing..."*

- 1) In verse 18 – Paul clearly understood that in his flesh dwells NO GOOD THING. The flesh being the old nature, the old man.

**Romans 7:18** *"...for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not."*

- Paul also confirms that he has the desire to do what is right, but admits that by himself he cannot do what he desires to do.
- He cannot perform or accomplish what is right in his own strength.

- Notice what Paul mentions to the Church at Philippi

**Philippians 1:6** *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"*

**Robert Murray McCheyne said,** *"for every look we take at ourselves, we should take ten looks at Christ."*

- 2) In Verse 19 we see Paul's Conflict.

**Romans 7:19** *"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."*

- Paul now confesses his personal problem that he has in the flesh: He states that he cannot do the good he wants to do, and the evil things that he does not want to do, he does.  
Paul is actually saying, because of his old fleshly nature, he does not have the ability,

or power, to do what God expects him to do.

- The problem Paul had is not a lack of knowledge - he knows the right thing to do. Paul's problem is a lack of power. The ability to do what is right is not found in his flesh, or own ability.

- 3) In verses 20-21 Paul directs us to the ROOT problem to his dilemma. The SIN of ADAM. The SINFUL NATURE that abides with him.

**Romans 7:20-21** *“Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. (21) I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.”*

- Paul is not rejecting his accountability as a sinner ... he is simply stating the fact that when he does wrong. or when he disobeys the Lord, it is because of his sinful nature. Paul takes the blame. Paul owns up to his responsibility, Paul does not blame the devil, others, or even God.

- 4) In verse 22 Paul brings our attention to his current standing as a born again believer.

**Romans 7:22** *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:”*

- Paul points out that the desire to follow after the things of God is from another member that dwells in him. He calls it the “INWARD MAN”
- The INWARD man is the NEW man created in Christ Jesus.
- Paul makes the first distinction and understands that the impulse to sin comes from the OLD man, and the delight to obey God comes from the NEW man.

- 5) In verse 23 we see the GREAT BATTLE of PAUL. This is the MARK of a TRUE Christian.

**Romans 7:23** *“But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”*

- Even though Paul has a great desire to obey God, he is absolutely powerless and helpless to win the battle on his own. Paul by himself cannot stop sinning, and cannot please God.

- 6) In verses 24-25 Paul give the solution to victory over the flesh.

**Romans 7:24-25a** *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? (25) I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord...”*

- Who shall deliver me? = Jesus Christ
- Paul is saying that victory and winning the battle over the flesh only comes through Jesus Christ. Having power over sin is through Jesus Christ.

*Morris said "It is worth bearing in mind that the great saints through the ages do not commonly say, 'How good I am!' Rather, they are apt to bewail their sinfulness."*

- Notice Paul's conclusion:

**Romans 7:25b** "... So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

- 7) In Romans chapter 8 we are given divine instruction to maintain personal holiness and victory over the flesh by the Spirit of God.

**Note: The unbeliever does not go through this conflict.**

- b. The reason for the conflict

**Note:** There are several reasons why TRUE Christians face battles between the flesh and the Spirit.

- 1) The sinful flesh is still active

**Galatians 5:17** "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and **ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.**"

- This indicates to us that when a person is saved, the flesh is still present, active, and living.
- We must understand that when a person receives Christ as their Saviour, they do not become sinless. They grow to sin less and get victory over the flesh.
- There are people that teach a doctrine called "sinless perfection".
- Sinless perfection is where a person claims to never sin after their salvation experience, or they grow to the point where they could never sin at all.

- **Turn to 1 Peter 1:2:1-3**

**1 Peter 2:1-3** "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, (2) As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: (3) If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

**Hebrews 12:1** "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,"

- **Note:** If we as Christians are being instructed to lay aside sin, this would mean that we struggle with sin.

- Sinless perfection is a FALSE doctrine!

*“Spurgeon was at a conference where a preacher taught on “sinless perfection” in a confident way and even claimed to have reached a state of sinless perfection himself. Spurgeon didn’t challenge him on the spot. Instead, the next morning before the meeting started, Spurgeon poured a jug of milk over the man’s head, to which the ‘perfectionist’ responded with rage, hostility, and the man lost his temper. Perfectionism debunked.”*

- A Pastor boasted about how he didn’t sin for seven years, and another preacher searched him out and challenged him and told him there were two sins he was NOW guilty of. The Pastor replied “What sins are they?” and the preacher replied “PRIDE and LYING”.

*1 John 1:10 “If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”*

*Romans 6:1-2 “What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? (2) God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”*

- What we must understand is, that when Christians are born again, they are not PERFECT, nor will they ever be on this side of Heaven, but rather, they are being PERFECTED.
- The reason for the Conflict “The Sinful flesh is still active” and...

## 2) The Spirit of God is at work

*Philippians 2:12-13 “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. (13) For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*

*2 Corinthians 4:16-17 “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. (17) For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory;*

- **Note: There are several terminologies from Scripture regarding “BEING PERFECTED”**

➤ **Sanctification** = to purify, to make Holy, to sanctify, to set apart for divine use.

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-4 “For this is the will of God, even your*

*sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: (4) That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;*

➤ **Holiness** – to be pure

**1 Thessalonians 4:7-8** “For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. (8) He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.”

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

➤ **Renewing** = Renovation, to make new

**Romans 12:1-2** “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.”

➤ **Perfect man** = Matured or made complete

**Ephesians 4:11-13** “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; (12) For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (13) Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:”

**Note:** The way in which God chooses to sanctify, grow, and mature a TRUE Christian is by the **WORD of GOD**.

- It is so important that Christians are taught the Word of God, as soon as they are saved. It is part of the Great Commission.
- The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to perfect or grow the new believer.

**John 16:13** “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...”

**John 17:17** “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: (17) That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

**1 Peter 2:2** “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:”

- It is important to note that as the Spirit of God is at work in our lives, we can grieve the Spirit and quench the Spirit. This stops spiritual growth in the life of the Christian.

c. The Response to the Conflict

**Note:** It is the responsibility of saved Christians to be filled with the Spirit and to walk in the Spirit of God.

1) Be Filled with the Spirit

***Ephesians 5:18*** “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;”

- Paul is not speaking about being indwelt by the Spirit of God. Every TRUE Christian has the Spirit of God living in them. However Paul is talking about being FILLED or CONTROLLED by the Spirit ... to be completely under the influence of the Holy Spirit.
- When a person is filled with alcohol, it means they are being controlled by it.
- When a person is filled with wrath or envy, it means they are being controlled by their emotions.
- When a person is filled with lust, it means they are yielding themselves to those passions.
- God desires for every Christ to be yielding to the Spirit of God!

2) Walk in the Spirit

***Galatians 5:25*** “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

***Galatians 5:16*** “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

- To “walk in the Spirit” is to be in step or in line with the Spirit of God. It is to follow the Spirit’s leading in our life.

***Galatians 5:22-24*** “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. (24) And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”

❖ *Illustration – Fruit (Singular) but many characteristics that flows from it.*

- An Orange has how many Vitamins? (C and A)
- One orange provides 130 percent of your vitamin C needs for the day, 2 percent of vitamin A.

➤ **Notice some Biblical Principles that will help us to walk in the Spirit.**

1) Make no provision for the flesh

***Romans 13:14** “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*

- The words “no provision” have the meaning of planning ahead, or forethought. Most Christians fall into sin, because they deliberately put themselves in a place of temptation.

***Proverbs 22:3** “A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”*

2) Abstain from fleshly lust

***1 Peter 2:9-10** “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (10) Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.*

***1 Peter 2:11** “Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;*

***Abstain** = Hold yourself, or keep yourself away.*

- When a person approaching a house and they see a sign on the fence saying “BEWARE of the DOG”, what do they do? They may look around to see if there is a dog behind the fence. As they get closer, they see the fence start to shake and the dog starts barking. What do you do then? **KEEP AWAY!!!**

3) Mortify = To deaden, or subdue, to put to death.

***Colossians 3:5-8** “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry (6) For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience (7) In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. (8) **But now** ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”*

- How do you something to death? Do NOT feed it.
- Starve the flesh, and feast on the Word of God.

**“SIN WILL KEEP YOU FROM THIS BOOK, AND THIS BOOK WILL KEEP YOU FROM SIN”**

***Psalms 119:11** “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”*

## 4. The CHASTENING hand of God

*Hebrews 12:6-8* “For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. (7) If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? (8) But if ye be **without** chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

- The Hebrew writer makes it very clear that if professing believers do not experience the chastening hand of God, then they are bastards, and not sons.
  - **Bastards** = Illegitimate child. One born in unlawful wedlock, indicating that they are not born again from the Spirit of God.
  - As you read specifically in the book of Hebrews you will find the writer addressing four classes of people.
  - The Believer, the Non-Believer, the Professing Believer, and the Carnal Christian.
  - There are two different carnal Christians. One that is a babe, and is growing in Christ, and the other who is a backsliding Christian.

**Note:** In our passage the writer makes it very clear that the heavy hand of God is upon the saved Christian, who is not running the Christian race like they should.

- TRUE Christians are faced with diverse trials in their life.
  - To know that God works together for good in the life of His people is one thing, but it is another thing to begin to thank God for what He allows in our life.
  - It is good to grow to understand the heart of God in the midst of a storm. Job, Paul, Jonah, and David were faced with distinct trials and struggles and in the middle of their anguish they understood the heart of God.
  - As a matter of fact, James exhorts us to count it all joy, when we are faced with different kinds of trials.

*James 1:2-4* “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

- James states that trials test our faith, and in the process, work character in our life, and perfect us as Christians, teaching us to be content.

- **Note: The Trials that we go through cover four areas of the Christian life.**

- 1) The **Challenging** hand of God.
  - God uses trails to **REFINE** us!
  - Job’s faith was tested, proved, and refined.

*Job 23:10-11* “But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold...”

2) The **Constructive** Hand of God.

- God uses trials to **REFORM** us!
- Paul’s thorn in the flesh humbled him, in order to finish what God had started in his life.
- To makes us like Christ, to finish our course and calling, with joy.
- Paul finished his course because of God’s grace. Grace is given to the humble, and trials humble us.

*1 Corinthians 15:10* “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”

3) The **Caring** hand of God.

- God uses trials to teach us **RESPONSIBILITY**.
- As you grow closer to the heart of the heavenly Father, you grow to know that God does not spoil His children.

*Galatians 6:7* “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

4) The **Corrective** hand of God.

- God uses Trials to **REVIVE** us!
- Jonah’s storm helped him get back into the Will of God.

*Jonah 2:1-2* “Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice.”

a. The Cause of the Backslider

- To backslide simply means to move away, or draw away, from the Lord.
  - To go backwards, instead of forwards with the Lord.
  - This is why James states “Draw nigh to God and He will draw nigh to you”
- Note what the Lord said to Samuel regarding King Saul.

*1 Samuel 15:10-11* “Then came the word of the LORD unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: **for he is turned back from following me**, and hath not performed my commandments. And it grieved Samuel; and he cried unto the LORD all night.”

- The truth is, **if we are not** moving forward with the Lord, then we are sliding back.

- To backslide would indicate that a person was once near to the heart of God.

➤ There are several things that would cause Christians to backslide.

- These several things are simply acts of rebellion and sinning against the Lord.

*Jeremiah 14:7* “O LORD, though our iniquities testify against us, do thou it for thy name's sake: for our backslidings are many; we have sinned against thee.”

- It is to be filled with our own ways again.

*Proverbs 14:14* “The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.”

**1) Unfaithfulness to the Lord**

- Friendship with the World.

*James 4:4* “Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

- This a figurative description of spiritual adultery – unfaithfulness to God.
- The unfaithful Israelites were known for their harlotry when they sought after heathen idols.
- It is no mistake that John encouraged Christians, with the foundation of their assurance of their salvation. (He that hath the Son hath life) writes:

*1 John 5:21* “Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.”

- The idols that we face in Australia are not statues.
- Our idols are...pomp, pride, pleasure and possessions, money, movies, and sports.

❖ Demas was is a perfect example of this.

*2 Timothy 4:10* “For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world...”

❖ Paul encourages Timothy not be entangled with the affairs of this life.

*2 Timothy 2:3-4* “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (4) No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.”

- It is so easy to be entangled. It is so easy to be caught up with the temporal things of this life. It is easy to lose focus. It is easy to be go with the whirlwind of our culture.

**2) Unconfessed sin.**

**Proverbs 28:13** “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper...”

- Not dealing with sin God’s way will cause a person to backslide.
  - Covering up sin leads to making excuses for our behaviour.
    - It will start to shift the blame.
    - It starts to undermine our sinful actions.
    - Unconfessed sin does not only cause backsliding, but also can cause bitterness.
    - You are prone to get bitter with hot-Christians. You can become a despiser of those that are good, those that are moving forward with God.
    - Most of all, you can grow bitter against the Lord. That is a bad place to be.
- 3) Unwilling to respond to the Holy Spirit and obey the Lord.

**1 Samuel 15:11** “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king: for he is turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments...”

b. The Cost of the Backslider

- **Quote:** “Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay. –”

➤ What are some things that TRUE Christians can lose when they are backsliding?

1) Joy

**Psalms 51:12** “Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.”

- It is very important that we understand that we do not lose our Salvation.
- Our Salvation rests in the finished work of Christ.
- In some cases the backslidden Christian could appear like an unsaved person.

- **David said** “Restore the Joy of our Salvation”

**Psalms 51:15** “O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.”

- You lose your shout, your praise, your song. You cannot sing with your whole heart.
- A person can try to lift up their voice, but loudness does not equate to joy, peace, and rest.

**Note:** The most miserable person in this world is not the non-believer, but it is the believer that knows better. The wayward believer. WHY? Because they have the Holy Spirit of God living them.

- A TRULY SAVED CHRISTIAN CANNOT enjoy their sinful lifestyle like the unsaved person does, and if they can I question their Salvation.

2) Lose your Testimony – David, gave the heathen an excuse to blaspheme God.

*2 Samuel 12:14* “Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.”

- King David lost more than his testimony, he ended up losing his son.

*Proverbs 3:35* “The wise shall inherit glory: but shame shall be the promotion of fools.”

- It is a foolish thing to go back to our vomit. Backsliding is returning to our folly...

*Proverbs 26:11* “As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly.”

- It is folly to live without God ruling our lives - **living like an atheist.**
- The backslider may not say there is no God with their lips, but the backslider communicates it by their life...
- Know ye not that the way we live depicts who is God over our lives. The decisions that we make are the steps that we take.

*Proverbs 20:11* “Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right.”

3) Fellowship the Lord

- When a person is out of sorts with God they lose a lot...
  - Blessing and rewards
  - Wisdom and direction (the still small voice of God)
  - In some cases, disqualification of the calling of God upon our lives.
- But most of ALL, that sweet communication with the Lord.
  - There came a point in Kings Saul’s life when the Lord ignored Him altogether. **WOW!**

*1 Samuel 28:6* “And when Saul enquired of the LORD, the LORD answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets.”

- King Saul become that desperate to hear from God that he sought after a witch.

4) Lose your Life – You can lose your life (King Saul did).

- King Saul eventually lost his life. (the Sin unto Death)

*1 John 5:16* “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.”

- King David had his life spared.

*2 Samuel 12:13* “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”

c. The Correction of the Backslider

*Proverbs 3:11-12* “My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: (12) For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”

- The main purpose of God’s chastisement is for our benefit.

1) To LEAD us to Repentance.

- Notice what the Lord said to the church of Laodicea.

*Revelation 3:19* “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.”

2) To LEARN the way of the Lord.

- The Psalmist acknowledged the good hand of God.

*Psalms 119:71* “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.”

3) To LOVE and keep the Word of God.

*Psalm 119:67* “Before I was afflicted I went astray: **but now** have I kept thy word.”

d. The Confession of the Backslider

**Note:** The backsliding Christian is able to come back, but they must demonstrate true repentance.

1) The Church in Ephesus

- Jesus gives simple instructions to the church at Ephesus as to the way back.

*Revelation 2:4* “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works...”

- i. **REMEMBER** “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen...”
  - God desired the backslider to identify the time when they fell out of love with Him.
  - In other words, God wanted them to acknowledge their sin.
- ii. **REPENT** “...and repent,”
  - To change their mind and turn back to the Lord.
  - This requires a decision. A decision that is from the heart.
  - A full surrender.
- iii. **REDO** “...and do the first works;”
  - A call to come back and live by faith and have sweet fellowship with the Lord.

## 2) The Church of Laodicea

- Jesus also challenges the church of Laodicea to have a proper evaluation of themselves.

*Revelation 3:18* “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich...”

- **Buy of me gold tried with fire** = The church professed to be rich, but they were very poor. They thought they could live the Christian life, without the power of God.
- The gold that the Lord has is pure gold.

*Proverbs 23:23* “Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.”

- Salvation is free, but being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is COSTLY!!! It will cost us our whole life!

## 3) The Church of Corinth

- The Corinthians demonstrated a TRUE heart of repentance.

*2 Corinthians 7:9-11* “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. (10) For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

(11) *For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort,*

**What carefulness it wrought in you,** = This was carefully thought through, it was diligently considered. It was not “She’ll be right mate!” attitude.

**Yea, what clearing of yourselves,** = after they considered their ways, they took full responsibility. They took ownership.

***Yea, what indignation,*** = They were absolutely angry with their own behaviour and sinfulness. They had a HOLY RIGHTEOUSNESS EMOTION towards their own sinfulness.

***Yea, what fear,*** = This is a healthy kind of fear. It is the right kind of fear. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. And it is wise to fear the fact of backsliding and being so far from the Lord. Can you imagine, they thought they were ok, when they weren't? A lot of people today can be in church, but their hearts are far from God.

***Yea, what vehement desire,*** = they had HOT FERVENT desire to make things right. They were not going to tolerate sin anymore. They were going to HATE it with a PASSION!!!

***Yea, what zeal,*** = They were so eager to MAKE the wrong right. *A passion to do things GOD's WAY!!!*

***Yea, what revenge!*** = They were ready to fight the GOOD FIGHT of faith. They were ready to make the hard decisions no matter the COST!!!

*"In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.*

- Paul is saying, if I have ever seen TRUE repentance, here it is!

#### 4) The Jewish Believers

- James gives the remedy to backslider - he instructs them on how to come back and get right with the Lord.

***James 4:7-10*** *"Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."*

- Submit to God
- Resist the Devil
- Come to God
- Cleanse your hands and hearts
- Cry out to the Lord
- Humble yourselves

#### 5) King David

- David was a perfect example of a backsliding believer getting right with God.
- There was a MASIVE/HUGE difference between the way King Saul repented and King David's repentance.
- Psalm 51 vs 1 Samuel 15:30

***Psalms 51:17*** *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."*

- **GOD IS LOOKING FOR BROKEN PEOPLE!!!**
- God can only make and mould broken people!

## 5. The COMFORT of the Father

- The comfort of the Father is the greatest witness we can ever have for our Salvation.

### a. The Inner Witness (Our Adoption)

- **This is where God reveals to us that we are His Children.**

***Romans 8:14-16** “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (15) 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. (16) The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”*

***Romans 8:16** “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:”*

- **Vs 16** - This is the greatest evidence of a person’s salvation they can ever have.
- **WHY?** – Because it is confirmation from God Himself.
- **You cannot get greater than that.**

***1 John 5:9-12** “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. (10) 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. (11) And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.’”*

***Albert Barnes** “One of the clearest evidences which we can have that we are the children of God, is derived from the influences of that Spirit on our hearts.”*

***1 John 4:13** “Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.”*

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

***Galatians 5:25** “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

- In other words, Paul is saying that if you have the Spirit, then let us walk in the Spirit. To live in the Spirit simply means we have been born of God, and if we have been born

of God, then let us then walk as the children of God.

- If you don't have the Spirit, then you remain in the flesh, and those that are in the flesh do not belong to God.

*Spurgeon said "The Spirit of God is the great agent here below, to enlighten, quicken, strengthen, and guide the true disciples of Christ; and all that are born of this Spirit are led and guided by it; and none can pretend to be the children of God who are not thus guided."*

- **Notice verse 15**

**Romans 8:15** "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 word adoption in the New Testament means "being placed as an adult son."
- Adoption was common among the Hebrews and Romans, by which a person was taken out of one family and placed into another family.
- ***It has been said about*** Roman adoption—which could take place at any age — that it cancelled all previous debts and relationships, defining the new son wholly in terms of his new relationship with his father, whose heir he thus became.  
As a legal act, Roman adoption had to be attested to by witnesses; the Spirit is here the attesting witness that God adopts believers in Jesus, as his own children.
- **Vs 15, - We have received the Spirit of adoption. Not the Spirit of Bondage.**
- When a person is saved, they are adopted into the family God.
- We have been taken out of the family of *sin* and placed into the family of the *Saviour*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *darkness* and placed into the family of the *light*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *death* and placed into the family of *life*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *religion* and placed into the family of *relationship*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *destruction* and placed into the family of *deliverance*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *fear* and placed into the family of *faith*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *bondage* and placed into the family of *blessings*.
- We have been taken out of the family of *hell* and placed into the family of *heaven*.
- We have been taken out of the family of the *devil* and placed into the family of *God*.

**Paul said to the Galatians:**

**Galatians 4:3-5** "Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (4) But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

*(5) To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons."*

b. The Inheritance (Our Assurance)

**Romans 8:17** *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..."*

- When we are adopted into God's family, we have been made heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. What does that mean? It means we are royalty.
- It means we shall be partakers of that inheritance, which God bestows on his children.
- **Joint-Heirs with Christ** – Christ is the Begotten of the Father, and we are the adopted sons of God, in Christ.
- Because of Christ we have divine rights to the blessing of God.

**1 Peter 1:3-5** *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, (4) To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, (5) Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

### What is our Inheritance?

(The Promise, the Place and the Person)

1) The Promise of Eternal Life (for our Father is Eternal)

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

2) The Place in Heaven (for that is where our Fathers abides. Heaven is His throne)

**John 14:1-3** *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. (2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."*

3) The Person and Presence of our Father for Ever

- To have the promise is *one thing*, to have a place in heaven is *something*, but to have the person and presence of the Father is the *grandest thing*.

**Psalms 16:5** *"The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot."*

**Psalms 73:25** *"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon*

*earth that I desire beside thee.”*

***Psalms 73:26*** “*My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.”*

***1 Thessalonians 4:16-18*** “*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: (17) Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (18) Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”*

***Luke 15:20-24*** “*And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. (21) And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. (22) But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: (23) And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: (24) For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”*

- ***BEST ROBE*** = A robe was usually reserved for the guest of honour, but the Father said bring “the best robe”, and the BEST ROBE belonged to the Father, and God the Father gave His best to earth’s worst.

***Psalms 8:3-5*** “*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; (4) What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (5) For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.”*

- It is one thing to make man in God’s image, and honour with life, and give him responsibilities, but it is certainly another thing when God gives His only begotten son to save man, to make him part of the Kingdom of God.
- ***RING*** = The ring was a sign of royalty, it was an act of receiving him as his son. We are not animals, we are not angels, we are not hired servants, we are the children of the living God.
- ***SHOES*** = Servants did not usually wear shoes or expensive garments. Putting shoes on the Prodigal meant he was more than a servant.
- All three items depict honour.

***Luke 15:20*** “*And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”*

- **Kissed him = this is the sign of great affection that the Father had for his son, which leads us to the next point.**

c. The Intimacy (our Abba)

***Romans 8:15** “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.”*

**A man of God once said** “It is an intimate form of the word father — such as “papa” or “daddy.” While we may hesitate to use such familiar English words in addressing God, the truth remains that He who is infinitely high is also intimately nigh.”

- In Gethsemane the Lord Jesus used this exact expression, Jesus cried out "Abba, Father" (Mark 14:36).

➤ **There are many things that separate us from other religions.**

- The Atonement of Christ – Religion says do, vs Christ says it’s done (PAID in FULL)
- The Resurrection – All of the religious figures are dead and buried. But Jesus died, was buried, and is RISEN!
- But another reason that separates us from other religions is this fact that the ALMIGHTY GOD is our ABBA, FATHER! He is our DADDY!
- John the Apostle was blown away by this fact!

***1 John 3:1-2** “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

- Listen, the best thing about SALVATION is that we have a Heavenly Father that loves us and we can go to Him any time.
- He is my Father that will NEVER let me down.

***Psalms 27:10** “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take me up.”*

- If He is our heavenly Father, that means I can have a close and intimate relationship with Him.
- **Remember the “Sermon on the Mount” addresses the Children of the Kingdom of God.**

1) We can LOOK up to Him.

**Matthew 5:48** “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

**Ephesians 5:1** “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;”

- Both passages of Scripture relate to having a perfected, mature, and true, God-like love.

2) We can count on the fact that our Father is watching us.

**Matthew 6:4** “That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.”

- In other words, do all that you do for the eyes of your Heavenly Father, SEEK to please Him.

- This is the attitude that our Lord Jesus Christ set.

**John 8:29** “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.”

3) We can call and cry out to Him.

**Matthew 6:9** “After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.”

**Romans 8:15** “...but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.”

**A man of God said** “And this praying of the true believer who has the Spirit of adoption is very earnest praying, for it takes the form of crying. He does not say, “Abba, Father.” Anybody can say those words. But he cries, “Abba, Father.” Nobody can cry, “Abba, Father,” but by the Holy Spirit.

4) We can ask of Him

**Matthew 7:9-11** “Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? (10) Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? (11) 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?”

**2 Timothy 2:19** “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

- **The Lord Knoweth them that are His.** This is more than just a head count ... the Lord’s knows them intimately and nothing can change that. That is comfort.

- Notice what Jesus said...

**John 10:27-30** “My sheep hear my voice, **and I know them**, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. (29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (30) I and my Father are one.”

**Spurgeon said** “Dear friend, do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? If so, all the privileges of an heir of God are yours. If you do not believe in Christ, the Spirit of God will never bear witness to a lie, and tell you that you are saved when you are not. If you are not saved and not yet a believer in Jesus, I tell you that you are like a blank document to which the Spirit of God will never set His hand and seal, for He is never so unwise as to sign a blank paper. If you have believed, you are a child of God, and the Spirit of God sets His seal to your adoption. Go in peace, and rejoice in the Lord forever!”