

11

What Must I Do Now? Escaping Sin's Penalty, Power and Presence

Salvation is the most important issue in this life and certainly, in the life to come. If you are *not* saved, all other pursuits and concerns cannot compare to the gravity of this issue. Salvation delivers a person from the *penalty, power and presence* of sin.¹

- **The penalty of sin**—Eternal punishment in the lake of fire warranted because of sin.
- **The power of sin**—The Holy Spirit within the believer *enables* the Christian to overcome sinful temptations.
- **The presence of sin**—Deliverance from sin with an eternity with Christ.

Only the gospel can free a man, woman or child from these three elements of sin. This gospel enables the sinner to see himself as God sees him, condemned and under the wrath of God. Until an individual sees himself in this fashion, he has no reason to turn to God for forgiveness. Unless a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ (Who is God) to save him, he has no hope in this life or in the life to come (that is, in eternity).² But what constitutes the essence of salvation? There are really only two basic types of teachings concerning salvation: the first is **man-centered** and the other is **God-centered**.

- **Man-centered “salvation”**—*earned* through works
- **God-centered salvation**—granted solely on the *unearned, undeserved, unmerited* favor of God.

¹ Revelation 21:8

² Ephesians 2:12

Both of these teachings compete for the hearts and lives of every person. Every teaching falls into one of these two categories. Salvation is either all of God or man must play a part in it by working to attain it.

All of the information in this book, and indeed all the books that have ever been written, will profit you nothing if you are not first a child of God. For a moment, forget all the confusion in the world, and spend some time to gain the assurance³ that you have this one issue eternally settled. How does a person insure that heaven will be his home?

Almost anyone, when asked, will tell you that he desires to go to heaven when he dies. Many individuals assume that heaven will be their home as long as they try to be good people and live good lives. Living a good life is a commendable endeavor, but certainly is not sufficient to earn a place in heaven. Either salvation involves works or it is all of grace.

The Spiritual Disability List

Salvation is impossible to earn or achieve through human efforts. Man simply cannot duplicate the work of God and has no basis for replacing God's work with anything else. Therefore, Satan attempts to complicate spiritual matters, including the most important issue of all. The Bible refers to this as the *simplicity* in Christ Jesus.⁴ This simplicity concerning salvation refers to the fact that man does *not* have to live in a state of constant fear and uncertainty, attempting to achieve the unattainable through works. It is blasphemous for anyone to claim that they are able to somehow improve upon the work of the cross. Man's innately sinful state renders him spiritually disabled and utterly impotent in this regard.

How, one may inquire, does a person recover from this disabled state? Only salvation can accomplish this process and effectively remove a person from this "disability list." Following salvation, the new convert begins to work with a new source of power and an entirely new motivation. Instead of striving to work *for* salvation, he or she begins to work as a *result of* salvation. God made salvation simple (by grace through faith) rather than complicated (through any works system devised by man) so that anyone can have the peace and assurance of knowing he has eternal life.

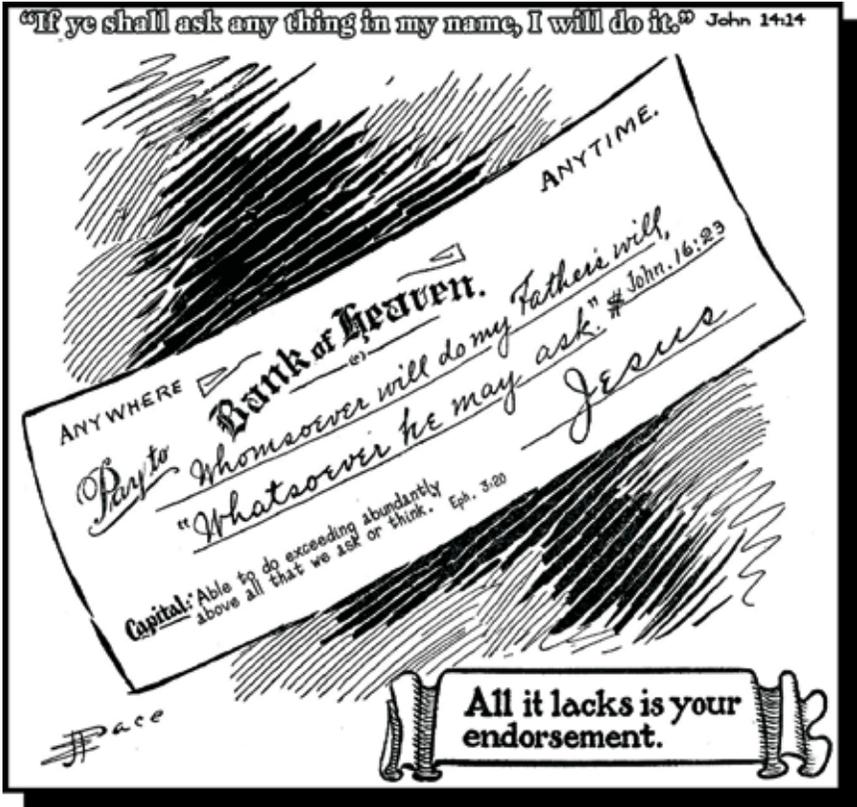
*These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.***⁵

³ I Thessalonians 1:5

⁴ II Corinthians 11:3

⁵ I John 5:13

God gave this promise in His word for a reason. Satan wants to destroy and defeat God’s people. He knows that he can win if an individual spends his life in bondage to doubt and spiritual insecurity. God offers peace and assurance! Satan achieves his desired objective by confusing mankind and providing a multitude of voices that point in different directions—all away from the Saviour!



Disability Checks Are Not Earned

What does the Bible teach concerning the way to be saved? The following chart illustrates what every sinner should personally acknowledge to God based on the scriptural declarations provided. **It should be noted that simply repeating a prayer saves no one!** This chart should help the individual better understand the *Gospel of the Grace of God*; however, it is not meant to be used as a formula for prayer. No single magic prayer for salvation exists. One must simply believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and call upon Him in order to be saved. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of

the Lord shall be saved”⁶ Repeating these “personal acknowledgements” without the heartfelt conviction of trusting in Christ will simply be an act of futility.



1. Acknowledge that you are a sinner

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<p><i>Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:22-23).</i></p>	<p>Realize that you are a sinner: “I know that I have broken the laws of God and am a sinner, and my sin causes me to come short of God’s perfect standard.”</p>

Think about this: How many banks would you have to rob in order to comprehend that you are a bank robber? Only one, of course. The same principle holds true concerning sin. Committing even one sin should

⁶ Romans 10:13

convince you that you are a sinner. For example, if you ever told a lie or simply disobeyed your parents as a child, you broke a biblical command and sinned. Therefore, you are a sinner. Every person is a sinner. You must first understand and accept the fact that you are a sinner.⁷ The end of Romans 3:22 above refers to the fact that it does not matter whether one is a murderer, prostitute or a “petty” sinner “*for there is no difference ...all have sinned.*”

2. Acknowledge the penalty for being a sinner

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<p><i>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 3:18).</i></p> <p><i>He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).</i></p>	<p>Recognize that you are currently under God’s wrath and deserve to end up in hell because of your sin: “<i>I believe the Bible which says that I am currently under the wrath of God and condemned to hell. I justly deserve to be eternally punished for my sin and know that I am simply awaiting the execution of my sentence by the eternal Judge once I die.</i></p> <p><i>Thankfully, the Son of God has paid my sin debt by dying and shedding His blood in my place so that I could have eternal life by believing on Him.</i>”</p>

*For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*⁸

Wages are what a person has earned or deserves. Because of your personal sin, you have earned and deserve death. Death indicates a separation. There are two types of death. These are the *physical* death (the separation of the soul from the body) and the *spiritual* death (the separation of the soul from God). The preceding verse refers to eternal life (spiritual life) and, consequently, to an everlasting death—also spiritual.⁹

When the body dies (physically) the individual experiences the *first* death. Following the judgment of the lost, the individual experiences the *second* death.

⁷ Romans 5:12

⁸ Romans 6:23

⁹ Matthew 25:41, II Thessalonians 1:8-9

*And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the **second death**. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.¹⁰*

If you pay what you owe as a sinner, you must spend eternity in the lake of fire (hell) separated from the love of God. It is important for you to not reject the truth and remain unrepentant.

3. Acknowledge that Christ paid your debt

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<i>But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).</i>	Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for your sins: <i>“I believe that Christ died for my sins and also rose from the dead for my justification”</i> (see I Corinthians 15:1-4).

The Lord Jesus Christ was not a sinner, yet He suffered death and separation from God the Father on the cross. He became sin for us on that cross so that He could pay our penalty and die in our place. The Bible describes the agony He suffered as He took our sin upon Himself. He did this for us!

*And about the ninth hour **Jesus cried** with a loud voice, saying, **Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?** that is to say, **My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**¹¹*

The Lord could not die until he took our sin upon Himself. At that moment, all of the wages of sin were placed upon Him. The Lord was buried in the sepulchre and three days later arose from the grave. Why was this necessary? God requires payment for sin. The Lord Jesus Christ paid your debt and mine. He took responsibility for all of our sins while hanging on the cross,¹² and God punished Him in our place to satisfy the debt that **we** owe, but did not leave His soul in hell.¹³ Praise God!

Because of Christ’s payment, God can now draw the sinner to Himself. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*¹⁴ He offers the gift of eternal life through the *death and blood shed* by the Lord Jesus Christ. However, as with any gift, unless the receiver accepts the gift from the Giver, there is no benefit. This brings us to the fourth principle.

¹⁰ Revelation 20:14-15

¹¹ Matthew 27:46

¹² II Corinthians 5:21

¹³ Acts 2:27, 31

¹⁴ John 6:44

4. Repent of trusting in anything else to save you

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<i>Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Romans 2:4-5).</i>	Repent of trusting in anything else to save you: <i>“In believing on Jesus Christ, I know that I must trust in Him and Him alone. If I try to add anything (good works, baptism, church membership, etc.) to Christ’s payment then I am saying to God that His Son’s sacrificial death and blood shed on the cross was not sufficient to pay for my sin.”</i>

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?...¹⁵

To call upon the name of the Lord, you must believe in Him. You cannot just believe on a mental or intellectual level. The word *believe* means to trust; to depend upon; to rely on. The act of believing involves a turning to Christ. A necessary complement to a true belief in Christ is repentance, for the Lord said, *“Nay: but, **except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**”¹⁶*

The word *believe* means to trust; to depend upon; to rely on..... To repent is to turn from something.

Repentance and belief are the two sides of a single coin. To repent is to turn from something. You must turn **from** believing and trusting in your own efforts, your church membership or simply being religious. You must turn **to** believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is *not* the lost sinner’s promising to clean up his life in exchange for salvation. It is certainly not contingent upon the promise of some future behavior following salvation.

Anyone that does not believe *solely* on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation is trusting in his own good works to acquire that which cannot be earned—heaven’s glory. Salvation comes *not* from what we do, but simply from Whom we’ve trusted. Christ suffered for us on the cross of Calvary. The book of Ephesians reveals that the Lord Jesus Christ—and He alone—

¹⁵ Romans 10:13-14

¹⁶ Luke 13:3

must be the object of our belief and *trust*. The Bible says that we are to trust in a person.

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,¹⁷

When a person hears the truth, he must determine whether he will accept this biblical truth over (or instead of) every competing position. Once the individual repents of *trusting* in anything but Christ, a simple heart belief in the payment Christ has made is sufficient to save any lost sinner. It is impossible to trust in Christ **and** simultaneously believe that one’s good works will help merit a place in heaven. Those who continue to trust in their own works fail to completely appreciate that **“you do not get better in order to get saved; you get saved in order to get better.”** Reformation without salvation simply deludes the sinner into a false sense of security and an eternity in hell.

The Devil desires to confuse anyone seriously searching for the truth. Many times those searching are at a crossroad in their lives. As a result, these individuals are exceptionally vulnerable to satanic attack. Such was the case with the Philippian jailer. After attempting to take his own life, he exclaimed, *“Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* The jailer certainly posed his question to the right two men. Paul and Silas responded in unison, *“...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”¹⁸*

5. Accept God’s Gift of Salvation

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<i>For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).</i>	<i>Accept God’s gift of salvation: “I believe that Jesus died for my sin and I accept His gift of salvation freely given to me based on the promise of God.”</i>

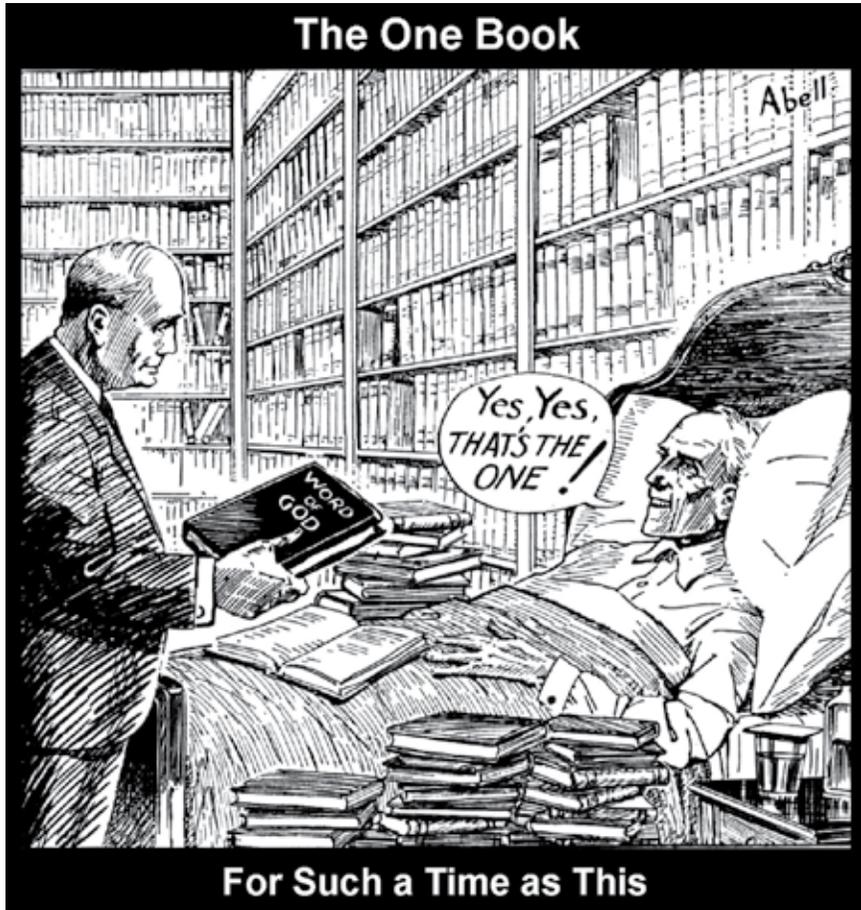
Fortunately, justice was *satisfied*, and sinners can be *justified* through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross. When the justified child of God stands before his Maker, it will be as though this believing sinner has never sinned. The following is a good way to conceptualize justification: Just-if-ied = *Just as if I’d never sinned*. To be justified is far greater than to be merely forgiven.

¹⁷ Ephesians 1:13

¹⁸ Acts 16:31

Human beings can *forgive* one another for a wrong committed, but they can never *justify* the individual for the sin committed. The story of the prodigal son is a good example of how we should recognize our sin. Like the erring son of the parable, we must realize that we have not simply sinned against a person, but have transgressed the standards of a holy, pure and righteous God.

*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.***¹⁹



When a person comes to Jesus by faith, the Lord goes beyond forgiveness and justifies the sinner, meaning He wipes the slate clean as though no sin had ever existed. Thus, though our “...sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool”²⁰

¹⁹ Luke 15:21

²⁰ Isaiah 1:18

Martin Luther, the German monk at the center of the Protestant Reformation, began to understand justification when he transitioned from studying the Latin to the Greek, the original language of the New Testament. The Latin word for justification means to *make just* whereas the Greek word means to *regard or treat as just*. Luther knew that the requirements of God could never be satisfied no matter how hard he tried. He realized he could never be made just through his own efforts. Yet, he also knew that he needed to be a just and good man according to the scriptures! This dilemma tormented him until he came to understand that only Christ could satisfy the holy demands of the Father and justify the sinner. He came to understand the intention of the Apostle Paul's writing in the book of Romans concerning the imputation of God's righteousness to the sinner.

*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.²¹*

6. Trust in the Lord Jesus Christ to save you

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<p><i>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 10:9-10).</i></p> <p><i>For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).</i></p>	<p>Ask the Lord to save you by simply trusting in Him and His word: <i>“I believe that God wants to forgive my sins and has graciously provided the way for me to receive that payment on my behalf.”</i></p> <p>Now in your own words, if you are ready to trust in Christ, ask Him to forgive you and save you for Ephesians 1:13 says: <i>“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.”</i></p>

The choice is now yours. You must either accept or reject the gift of God. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ means placing the matter of your eternal life in His hands, and not attempting to add anything to His complete and perfect salvation.

²¹ Romans 4:6-8

*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.*²²

There is no middle ground. Either you believe or you believe *not*. To believe on the Lord Jesus Christ is to accept that you are a sinner; that you owe the sin penalty; and that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the debt you owe. If you continue in *unbelief*, you are condemned because you *must* believe in order to be saved. You can choose to change your eternal destination today. Once you have accepted Him as Saviour, the peace and assurance of knowing that you have eternal life is yours.

*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.*²³

If God is dealing with you about the matter of salvation, please take time right now to put your belief and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour.

The Lord Jesus Christ indicated that salvation is only the beginning when He spoke the following words:

*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.*²⁴

The Lord Jesus Christ wants you to be saved (to have life). Once you are saved, He wants you to serve Him (that is, to have life more abundantly). You cannot serve without salvation; you cannot have salvation without accepting His payment for your sin. Once a person trusts in Christ, the Bible says that the Holy Spirit of God seals him “*unto the day of redemption.*”²⁵ The Christian is indwelt, led and sealed by the Holy Spirit of God. Receiving Christ as Saviour, resulting in the sealing by the Holy Spirit, is a conscious choice a person must make. No one is *included* in Christ by default through simply hearing the truth, as the parable of the sower clearly affirms.

*And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.*²⁶

²² John 3:18

²³ I Timothy 1:16

²⁴ John 10:10

²⁵ Ephesians 4:30

²⁶ Mark 4:15

Satan wants to snatch the very truth the moment a person hears the gospel. Attending church faithfully, viewing televangelists, listening to the Bible on tape or engaging in any other act of righteousness or religiosity is woefully insufficient to cause a person to be *included* in Christ. Salvation involves a personal, conscious and deliberate decision on the part of the sinner in order to be justified. The Bible says, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved...*”²⁷ There is no other way of salvation!

One must act upon the truth he hears. That is, a person must TRUST in Christ **by believing** that He died for his sins and rose for his justification. No one is *included* in Christ simply by *hearing* the truth; such a statement is equivalent to claiming to have been born a Christian. No one is a Christian by birth. Each person must make a conscious decision to receive Christ.

*But as many as **received him**, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: **Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.***²⁸

Everyone must be born a second time—of God. The Bible says that being born a Christian is a matter of the spiritual rebirth, not the physical birth from the mother’s womb.²⁹ The expression “not of blood” indicates that salvation does not come to anyone through his familial relationships, but only through a spiritual rebirth through the work of Christ.

Some religions teach that a person is born a Christian because his or her parents were Christian and baptized them into the family of God. Others believe that going to church makes one a Christian. The famous evangelist, Billy Sunday, once said, “*Getting into a church will not make you a Christian any more than getting into a garage will make you an automobile.*” One must purposely trust in the Lord Jesus Christ by *believing* on Him. Nowhere does the Bible indicate that God will check the church roll books (or a book of works) to see who is going to heaven and who is going to hell. The chart is summarized as follows:

²⁷ Acts 16:31

²⁸ John 1:12-13

²⁹ I Peter 1:23

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<i>For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).</i>	1. Realize that you are a sinner: <i>“I know that I have broken the laws of God and am a sinner, and my sin causes me to come short of God’s perfect standard.”</i>
<p><i>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 3:18).</i></p> <p><i>He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him (John 3:36).</i></p>	<p>2. Recognize that you are currently under God’s wrath and deserve to end up in hell because of your sin: <i>“I believe the Bible which says that I am currently under the wrath of God and condemned to hell. I justly deserve to be eternally punished for my sin and know that I am simply awaiting the execution of my sentence by the eternal Judge once I die.</i> <i>Thankfully, the Son of God has paid my sin debt by dying and shedding His blood in my place so that I could have eternal life by believing on Him.”</i></p>
<i>But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8).</i>	3. Believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for your sins: <i>“I believe that Christ died for my sins and also rose from the dead for my justification” (see I Corinthians 15:1-4).</i>
<i>Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God (Romans 2:4-5).</i>	4. Repent of trusting in anything else to save you: <i>“In believing on Jesus Christ, I know that I must trust in Him and Him alone. If I try to add anything (good works, baptism, church membership, etc.) to Christ’s payment then I am saying to God that His Son’s sacrificial death and blood shed on the cross was not sufficient to pay for my sin.”</i>

Scriptural Declaration:	Personal Acknowledgement:
<p><i>For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:23).</i></p>	<p>5. Accept God's gift of salvation: <i>"I believe that Jesus died for my sin and I accept His gift of salvation freely given to me based on the promise of God."</i></p>
<p><i>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 10:9-10).</i></p> <p><i>For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved (Romans 10:13).</i></p>	<p>6. Ask the Lord to save you by simply trusting in Him and His word: <i>"I believe that God wants to forgive my sins and has graciously provided the way for me to receive that payment on my behalf."</i></p> <p>Now in your own words, if you are ready to trust in Christ, ask Him to forgive you and save you for Ephesians 1:13 says: <i>"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."</i></p>

Review Questions (Chapter 11)

11-1. Salvation delivers a person from the three elements of sin: The _____, _____ and _____ of sin.

11-2. In what way does the gospel enable the sinner to see himself as God sees him? _____

11-3. What are the two basic types of teachings concerning salvation? _____

11-4. What does man-centered salvation elevate? _____

11-5. How is God-centered salvation granted? _____

11-6. What are the four principles that a person must understand in order to go to heaven? 1. _____
 _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
 _____ 4. _____

11-7. What is the separation of the body from the soul? _____

11-8. What is the separation of the soul from God? _____

11-9. God requires payment for sin. Explain what Christ accomplished by dying on the cross? _____

11-10. What must a person do to benefit from the gift of God? _____

11-11. To *believe* does not simply mean on a mental or intellectual level. What does it mean? _____

*The Church Walking with the World*³⁰

*The Church and the World walked far apart
 On the changing shores of time,
 The World was singing a giddy song,
 And the Church a hymn sublime.*

*“Come, give me your hand,” said the merry World,
 “And walk with me this way!”*

*But the good Church hid her snowy hands
 And solemnly answered “Nay!*

*I will not give you my hand at all,
 And I will not walk with you;
 Your way is the way that leads to death;
 Your words are all untrue.”*

*“Nay, walk with me but a little space,”
 Said the World with a kindly air;
 “The road I walk is a pleasant road,
 And the sun shines always there.*

*Your path is thorny and rough and rude,
 But mine is broad and plain;
 My way is paved with flowers and dews,
 And yours with tears and pain.*

*The sky to me is always blue,
 No want, no toil I know;
 The sky above you is always dark,
 Your lot is a lot of woe.*

*There's room enough for you and me
 To travel side by side.”*

*Half shyly the Church approached the World
 And gave him her hand of snow;*

³⁰ Matilda Edwards, *Best Loved Poems* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing, 1936), pages 345-347.

*And the old World grasped it and walked along,
Saying, in accents low:*

*“Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I will give you pearls to wear,
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair.”*

*The Church looked down at her plain white robes,
And then at the dazzling World,
And blushed as she saw his handsome lip
With a smile contemptuous curled.*

*“I will change my dress for a costlier one,”
Said the Church, with a smile of grace;
Then her pure white garments drifted away,
And the World gave, in their place,
Beautiful satins and shining silks,
Roses and gems and costly pearls;
While over her forehead her bright hair fell
Crisped in a thousand curls.*

*“Your house is too plain,” said the proud old World,
“I’ll build you one like mine;
With walls of marble and towers of gold,
And furniture ever so fine.”*

*So he built her a costly and beautiful house;
Most splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there
Gleaming in purple and gold.*

*Rich fairs and shows in the halls were held,
And the World and his children were there.
Laughter and music and feasts were heard
In the place that was meant for prayer.*

*There-were cushioned seats for the rich and the gay,
 To sit in their pomp and pride;
 But the poor who were clad in shabby array,
 Sat meekly down outside.*

*“You give too much to the poor,” said the World.
 ”Far more than you ought to do;
 If they are in need of shelter and food,
 Why need it trouble you?*

*Go, take your money and buy rich robes,
 Buy horses and carriages fine;
 Buy pearls and jewels and dainty food,
 Buy the rarest and costliest wine.*

*My children, they dote on all these things,
 And if you their love would win
 You must do as they do, and walk in the ways
 That they are walking in.”*

*So the poor were turned from her door in scorn,
 And she heard not the orphan's cry;
 But she drew her beautiful robes aside,
 As the widows went weeping by.*

*Then the sons of the World and the Sons of the Church
 Walked closely hand and heart,
 And only the Master, who knoweth all,
 Could tell the two apart.*

*Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said,
 “I am rich and my goods increase;
 I have need of nothing, or aught to do,
 But to laugh, and dance, and feast.”*

*The sly World heard, and he laughed in his sleeve,
 And mockingly said, aside—*

*“The Church is fallen, the beautiful Church;
And her shame is her boast and her pride.”*

*The angel drew near to the mercy seat,
And whispered in sighs her name;
Then the loud anthems of rapture were hushed,
And heads were covered with shame.*

*And a voice was heard at last by the Church
From Him who sat on the throne,
“I know thy works, and how thou hast said,
‘I am rich, and hast not known*

*That thou art naked, poor and blind,
And wretched before my face;’
Therefore from my presence cast I thee out,
And blot thy name from its place.”*

Don't You Care That My Son Died for You?

Is the ultimate sacrifice to lay down your *own* life, or is there a sacrifice far greater?

During the Great Depression, a Missouri man named John Griffith was the controller of a great railroad draw-bridge across the Mississippi River. One day in the summer of 1937 he decided to take his eight-year-old son, Greg, with him to work. At noon, John put the bridge up to allow ships to pass through and sat on the observation deck with his son to eat lunch. Time passed quickly. Suddenly a train whistle shrieking in the distance startled him. He quickly looked at his watch and noticed it read 1:07—the Memphis Express, with 400 passengers on board, was roaring toward the raised bridge.

He leaped from the observation deck and ran back to the control tower. Just before throwing the master lever he

glanced down to see whether there were any ships below. As he did, a sight caught his eye that caused his heart to leap and pound in his throat. Greg had slipped from the observation deck and had fallen into the massive gears that operated the bridge. His left leg was caught in the cogs of the two main gears!

Desperately, John's mind whirled to devise a rescue plan. But as soon as he thought of a possibility he knew there was no way it could be done. Again, with alarming closeness, the train whistle shrieked in the air. He could hear the clicking of the locomotive wheels over the tracks. That was his son down there—yet there were 400 passengers on the train. John knew what he had to do, so he buried his head in his left arm and pushed the master switch forward. The massive bridge lowered into place just as the Memphis Express began to roar across the river. When John Griffith lifted his head with his face smeared with tears, he looked into the passing windows of the train. There were businessmen casually reading their afternoon papers, finely dressed ladies in the dining car sipping coffee, and children pushing long spoons into their dishes of ice cream. No one looked at the control tower and no one looked at the great gearbox.

With wrenching agony, John Griffith cried out at the train: "*I sacrificed my son for you people! Don't you care?*" The Memphis Express rushed by, but nobody heard the father's words that echoed the words in the Book of God.