

# **PERSONAL EVANGELISM,**

HOW TO SHARE YOUR FAITH:

FIRST LEVEL BIBLICAL COUNSELING

by

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### **OUTLINE**

<b>I. PRINCIPLES TO FOLLOW IN WITNESSING</b>	Page -1
A. DO NOT TRY TO DO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.	-2
B. USE THE BIBLE AS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE ALONG WITH HISTORICAL FACTS TO CONVINCe PEOPLE OF THEIR NEED TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR BY FAITH.	-2
C. BE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS THAT KNOWLEDGE ALONE CONCERNING CHRIST AS SAVIOR WILL NOT SAVE A PERSON.	-4
D. DEMONSTRATE THAT CHRIST WORKS IN YOUR OWN LIFE BEFORE YOU RECOMMEND HIM TO OTHERS.	-4
E. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST.	-5
F. STUDY THE SCRIPTURES THOROUGHLY SO YOU WILL HAVE THE ABILITY TO GIVE AUTHORITATIVE BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO THOSE WHO ASK.	-6
G. WHEN WITNESSING, MAKE SURE THAT OTHERS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND ALL THAT THEY MUST KNOW IN ORDER TO RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR.	-6
1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.	
2. THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.	
3. THE HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.	
4. THE SINFULNESS OF MANKIND.	
5. GOOD WORKS WILL NOT SAVE A PERSON.	
6. THE DEITY OF CHRIST.	
7. ONE MUST PLACE PERSONAL FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND ACCEPT HIM AS PERSONAL SAVIOR BY FAITH IN ORDER TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE.	

H. CONVINCING SOULS WITH BIBLICAL FACTS, NOT WITH EMOTIONAL ARGUMENTS.	-11
I. REALIZE THAT YOU CANNOT MAKE A DECISION TO ACCEPT CHRIST AS PERSONAL SAVIOR FOR ANYONE BUT YOURSELF AND LET THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVERT THE PERSON TO WHOM YOU ARE WITNESSING.	-12
J. THE PRAYER OF FAITH	-12
K. BE AWARE THAT PROFESSION OF CHRIST IS NOT ALWAYS AN INDICATION OF SAVING FAITH.	-14
<b>II. COMPLETING THE TRANSACTION AND CEMENTING THE DECISION</b>	-17
A. THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.	-17
1. THE FOUNDATION FOR ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.	-17
a. THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE	
b. BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL	
c. ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST AS SAVIOR.	
d. TRUST IN GOD TO KEEP HIS PROMISES	
2. THE PROCESS OF LEADING THE NEW BELIEVER TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.	-19
B. THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST:	-22
1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER.	-22
2. THE COUNSELING PROCESS OF LEADING A NEW BELIEVER TO REST IN ETERNAL SECURITY IN CHRIST.	-25
<b>III. PROPER FOLLOW-UP AFTER SOMEONE ACCEPTS CHRIST AS SAVIOR:</b>	
<b>SECOND LEVEL BIBLICAL COUNSELING</b>	-26
A. CHRISTIANS, SIN, AND THE DEATH OF CHRIST.	-26
1. THE DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION FOR VICTORY OVER SIN.	-26
a. <u>Sin is the character of lawlessness</u>	
b. <u>Christ died for our sins.</u>	
c. <u>Christ is God.</u>	
d. <u>Personal guilt.</u>	
e. <u>Excusing sin and what this indicates.</u>	
f. <u>God's discipline and the security of the believer</u>	

2. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF VICTORY OVER SIN. -29

- a. Admission of personal guilt.
- b. The indwelling Christ.
- c. Repentance as a change of mind.
- d. Recognizing God's discipline.
- e. Confessing sin.
- f. Sin without conscience.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY TO VICTORY OVER SIN. -30

- a. Sin is the disobedience to the commands of God.
- b. Sin is also not doing what God commands us to do. "
- c. Sin includes improper emotions and desires
- d. Effective Bible study

B. MAKE THE NEW BELIEVER INTO A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST. -32

1. WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

- a. Truth.
- b. A need to learn
- c. A recognition of authority.
- d. Submission
- e. Obedience

2. HELP YOUR NEW CONVERT TO DECIDE IMMEDIATELY TO BECOME A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST THROUGH DEDICATING HIS OR HER LIFE TO GROW IN CHRIST AND TO SERVE HIM.

C. INSTRUCT THE NEW BELIEVER CONCERNING BAPTISM. -32

1. Baptism is a command of Christ.
2. The meaning of baptism
3. The mode of baptism.
4. Believer's baptism.

D. EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY AND FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Prov. 15:28, II Tim. 2:15). -34

1. PERSONAL DAILY READING OF THE BIBLE.
2. SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION.
3. OUTLINING THE BIBLE BOOKS.
4. BASIC DOCTRINE.

E. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.	-36
F. HOW TO PRAY	-37
CONCLUSION	-39
BIBLIOGRAPHY	-40

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# **PERSONAL EVANGELISM,**

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## **FIRST LEVEL BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

**O**ne of the most important questions you will ever ask or hear is "How can I receive eternal life?" There are several things that one must know in order to answer this important question. How should you counsel someone who wishes to settle the anxieties related to eternity and those who are afraid of what will happen after death? Many courses on "soul winning" tell you that you should win people to Christ. The goal of this material is to insure that you are able to introduce others to Christ. It is only through trusting Jesus Christ as Savior and God that a person can gain eternal life (John 14:6; Acts 4:12) and escape eternal hell (John 3:18).

How can you communicate the facts, especially the facts dealing with salvation? How much must one know in order to be able to receive Jesus Christ as Savior? What basic principles are important to follow in order to be an effective soul winner? We will try to answer some of these questions first.

### **I. PRINCIPLES TO FOLLOW IN WITNESSING**

Almost everyone seems to love a good lively conversation. Unless pressured by time or responsibilities, even strangers can warm up to a lengthy and timely conversation concerning just about any subject. There seems to be no limit to the topics of conversation, from the mundane implications of the immediate weather to the solutions of the massive problems of the world.

Jesus Christ is a special topic of conversation. In this age of anxiety, when hearts are failing for fear of the future, very few people are neutral concerning Jesus Christ. Almost everyone who has heard about Him has an opinion. Some are against Him and resist any discussion concerning Him. Some are frightened of Him and would like to discover the way that they can establish a proper relationship with Him, and by this relationship, guarantee their eternal peace. Others are openly questing for knowledge about Who He is, and the nature of His coming. Most who discuss Christ realize that the implications for His existence have far reaching responsibilities for each person.

With a topic of discussion of the magnitude of Christ people do not desire mere opinions. Opinions alone become annoying and add to the desperation of uncertainty. The uncertainty of not making a decision merely adds to the general unrest of the people. On the other hand, people are seeking factual data that will help them arrive at significant conclusions and find practical answers for the problems of life. Mankind is seeking factual data that will help him conclude that there is hope for the eternity ahead, and that there is truly a purpose for life. Mankind is also desperately searching for individuals who have experienced the Truth, and can demonstrate through their lives that there is an answer in Christ.

You can become a source of the valued information concerning Christ in any discussion. Information and argumentation alone, however, will not convince people concerning spiritual issues. You must remain spiritually sensitive to the topic under discussion, and sensitive to the inner conflicts in the other people in the conversation. To be more effective in presenting Christ, remember to follow these rules.

#### **A. DO NOT TRY TO DO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

Knowledge alone will not save a person. Even demons know that Jesus Christ is God, yet are not saved (James 2:19; Matt. 8:29; Mark 1:34; 5:7; Luke 4:34; 8:28). People can also receive the knowledge of the truth, while rejecting Christ (John 5:39, 40), Who is the Truth (John 14:6). Psalm 127:1 states "Except the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain that build it". Let the Lord use you. Do not try to be the convicting force in your effort to win people to Christ. Use the Holy Scriptures and verifiable facts in your presentation to convince their minds. Then let God do His perfect work of winning them to Christ through faith. When people do turn to the Lord, be careful that they realize that it is the Lord that saved them, and not you. All you did was tell the truth. Give the glory to God where it belongs.

#### **B. USE THE BIBLE AS YOUR PRIMARY SOURCE ALONG WITH HISTORICAL FACTS TO CONVINCe PEOPLE OF THEIR NEED TO RECEIVE CHRIST AS SAVIOR BY FAITH.**

The Scriptures command us to witness (Acts 1:8; Matt. 28:19-20). The Greek words for witness emphasize different aspects of this responsibility. The word "martureo" emphasizes the presentation of evidence in a court of law that attests to an historical event. In Acts 1:8 Christ tells the disciples "You shall receive power after the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the world". In Acts 2:32 Peter states "This Jesus God raised up, of which we are all witnesses". Acts 4:33 states that "with great power, the apostles gave the witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus and great grace was upon them all". This means that the apostles saw the proof of the resurrection and presented the facts that were irrefutable to the people to whom they were witnessing.

The Pharisees knew that Christ had risen from the dead. When they were confronted with these irrefutable facts it changed their whole world-view. They could either place their faith in Christ or declare themselves against Him. Many believed because the Biblical and historical facts had been presented concerning the death and resurrection of Christ. In Acts 26:22-23, Paul, before King Agrippa, stated "I stand witnessing before small and also before great, nothing else than what both the prophets and Moses said was about to happen, that Christ is going to announce a light to the people and to the nations, since He was destined to suffer, and to first rise from the dead". In I Peter 3:15 we are commanded to "give the Lord God a special place in your hearts, and to be ready always to give an answer to everyone that asks you of the reason of the assurance that is in you, and do this with meekness and reverence". These and many other passages in the Scriptures indicate that we must master the evidence for the person, deity, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in order to be

effective in presenting Christ to others. *Evidence that Demands a Verdict, Vol. I*, by Josh McDowell will help you with some of the historical evidence for Christ.

This concept of witnessing does not mean to emphasize how you feel about your faith in Christ. Although it is true that knowing Christ has taken my sins and given me eternal life "Makes me feel good", this should not be offered as a valid reason why others should accept Christ also. If you have ever been before a judge as a witness in a court of law you will realize that the judge will not allow any testimony concerning how you feel about the case. He will allow only the testimony to be admitted concerning the historical facts of the case being tried. He will ask you what people said or what you saw happen. He will ask you to explain details of the event that you saw, but he will not allow you to express your interpretation of the event. Like the court decision being governed by the statutes of the law, even so, salvation is determined by the verdict that the sinner reaches when he accepts Christ as his Savior by faith. Faith in Christ is effective in producing eternal life in the believer and is proven effective by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Rom. 4:25) as a very well documented fact in history. Faith in Christ is not effective because it makes us "feel so good". It is not trusting Christ when we place our faith in something that "could be a myth" in our own eyes but is considered a comforting story. To answer the doubts of people who do not know Christ we must establish the reasons why we believe in Christ on the observable facts of history concerning Christ and on the objective teachings of the Word of God concerning Jesus Christ and receiving Him as Savior. We must be armed with the facts of history and the authority of the Scriptures before we can expect to be effective in convincing the lost of the reality of Christ and their need to accept Him as their Savior. Theological discussion without convincing people concerning Jesus Christ only leads to superstition, mysticism, agnosticism or rejection of faith in Christ as superstitious foolishness. In leading people to Christ, we must convince them with the truth.

Once people realize the reality of Christ, His death and His Resurrection, the second word for witnessing "elegcho" (2 Tim. 3:16) begins to take effect. This word means "the presentation of evidence in a court of law that causes the guilty to recognize their guilt". Witnessing or preaching clearly with documented Biblical and historical facts begins to have its effect through the authoritative declaration of the teachings of the Scriptures. II Timothy 3:15—4:2 states "that from a baby you have known the Holy Scriptures which were able to make you wise unto salvation. All Scripture is God-breathed and is necessary for doctrine (didaskalia or clear teaching), for proving guilty (elegkson), for correction, for instruction in righteousness...Preach (karusso or declare) the Word. Be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all patience and doctrine". If we present the teachings of the Scripture clearly concerning the doctrines of salvation the Holy Spirit will take our work and use it to convince the person to whom we are witnessing that he or she should accept Christ.

How can you prove the truth of what you have learned to someone who does not know the facts? What evidence makes you conclude that God exists? What facts make you conclude that Christ is not a myth? Does the Bible really teach that Jesus Christ is God manifest in the flesh? If the Bible is true, can a person rely in faith in Christ as Savior alone to save or must he or she do something to earn or keep eternal life? What convinces you that the Bible is the Word of God?



What facts do you have to substantiate your faith? What are you going to be able to tell someone who is honestly asking you concerning the reason for the assurance that you have in Christ? How are you going to answer the confusion in the minds of the people to whom you are witnessing who have been misled by unbelievers or confused by believers and false cults who have misrepresented the truth? Good intentions or good feelings are not enough. "Jesus loves me. This I know, for my mommy told me so" will not answer the honest questions of the world. We have thousands of times the proof for the existence of Jesus Christ than we have that Julius Caesar ever lived, and yet no educated person doubts the existence of Julius Caesar. Learn the truth and present it to the world.

Satan is active in the world today, trying to confuse the issues concerning salvation so people will not come to the knowledge of the truth (II Cor. 4:4). He does not want the message of the Gospel to be clear and will try to keep Christians from being effective witnesses for Christ. He does not want you to accept Christ, and if you have, he does not want you to be an effective witness for Christ. The answers come from the facts of history and the authority of the Word of God. This will defeat the opposition of Satan.

### **C. BE ALWAYS CONSCIOUS THAT KNOWLEDGE ALONE CONCERNING CHRIST AS SAVIOR WILL NOT SAVE A PERSON.**

James 2:19 informs us that demons know who Christ is. However, because they know the truth does not save them. They possess the facts, but have decided to rebel against Christ. This brings them under condemnation. Theological convincing without an appropriate spiritual decision only serves to pervert the truth. Always encourage others to make a proper commitment after they have encountered the facts concerning Christ.

### **D. DEMONSTRATE THAT CHRIST WORKS IN YOUR OWN LIFE BEFORE YOU RECOMMEND HIM TO OTHERS.**

Romans 2:24 tells us of the consequences of witnessing to others before we apply the truth of the Scriptures to our own lives. Romans states "For the name of God is blasphemed among the heathen because of you" concerning those who were teaching the truth of the Word of God while they were doing the exact opposite. Proclaiming Christ without honoring Him in our own lives only drives others away from Him. In II Sam. 12:14 God said to David through Nathan the prophet "Because you have done this thing you have caused the enemies of Jehovah to derisively mock". Part of learning is to locate the flaws and weaknesses in our own lives and to correct or strengthen ourselves until we are spiritually proficient in all areas of our lives. This is a lifelong process. We must be Biblically critical of ourselves in order to grow into what we could become for Christ and to give Him our best. We cannot look on criticism as bad, but should love it. It helps us identify the areas in our lives that need improvement. In the original language, Hebrews 4:12 states that the Word of God is a "critic (kritikos) of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Use personal criticism as a means of growing and improving personally. You will find yourself encouraged when you are moving forward and can see improvement in your character and abilities to serve. Knowing that you are growing and are pleasing to Christ is exciting. Failing to grow, on the other hand, leads to discouragement, stagnation and bitterness. This failure to grow spiritually can also cause you to

oppose spiritual growth, oppose the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit in your church or in the lives of others, excuse your own spiritual ignorance, and discourage others from serving Christ effectively.

I Thes. 1:6–10 should be the true pattern of a Christian testimony. This passage states, "and you became imitators of us and of the Lord, welcoming the Word with joy of the Holy Spirit in much affliction, so that you yourselves became examples to all who believe. . . how you turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to await His Son, Jesus, Whom He raised from the dead, the One delivering us from the coming wrath".

As a young boy growing up on the mission field in Africa, I often saw the effectiveness of a lived testimony. One occasion stands out in my mind. In the days of colonial rule, if there was a dirty job to do, a white would always assign the responsibility to a black. One day my father, who was a missionary surgeon, was beginning the building of a hydroelectric plant. To do so meant that someone had to stand in waist-deep black, foul smelling organic ooze that resembled the inside of a septic tank in order to lay the first few courses of bricks for the wheel house. The national workers were nauseated at the prospects of being asked to take that position, and were trying to decide who would be chosen for this particularly disagreeable task. While they were discussing this problem among themselves, my father stepped into the hole, shouted to the nationals and said, "Are you men going to argue all day, or are you going to hand me the bricks?" This kind of action demonstrated his love for the people, and also set the example for the nationals who were eager to volunteer for similar responsibilities in the future. This willingness to honor others above his own welfare caused people to listen when he spoke to them about the good news concerning Christ. Faithfulness in applying the Word of God in our own lives while proclaiming the gospel eventually bears fruit.

## **E. LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT CHRIST.**

There are many instances in the Scriptures that show us how we can take advantage of daily opportunities to talk to others about Christ and how they can receive salvation. In John 3 Nicodemus sought Christ out to ask about eternal life. In John 4 Christ started a conversation with a woman at a well. In Acts 8:26-38 Philip interrupted a governmental official who was puzzling over the meaning of a passage of Scripture. In Acts 16:13–15 Paul and Silas sought out a group of pious people who had common goals and were ready to listen to the proclamation of the Scriptures. In Acts 20:20, 21 Paul speaks of daily witnessing from house to house. People were reached in synagogues, on the streets, in prisons, during trials, and the gospel even penetrated into the household of Caesar. There are many other illustrations in the Scriptures concerning how people can be reached with the good news of the gospel of Christ. Actively seek opportunities to explain the gospel to those who are seeking. Talk about Christ as part of your daily conversation and interested people will hear and respond to the truth.

## **F. STUDY THE SCRIPTURES THOROUGHLY SO YOU WILL HAVE THE ABILITY TO GIVE AUTHORITATIVE BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO THOSE WHO ASK.**

You will not be effective as a witness for Christ unless you use the Word of God in convincing the spirit of the people through Scripturally enlightening their minds. Satan desires to prevent this from happening (II Cor. 4:3-6; 3:14-17). Occasionally you will hear someone argue against the personal thorough study of the Word of God or the careful proclamation of the whole counsel of God by declaring, "there is a difference between head knowledge and heart knowledge." This is often used as an excuse not to thoroughly study and learn the specific teachings of the Word, implying that it is only important to believe what the Bible teaches, not to study it in order to know what it teaches. One individual used this argument with me against studying the Word of God by saying "I already believe everything that is in the Bible. Why should I study it?" Another similar approach that you will encounter is when those who teach say, "We do not need to learn more of the Scripture. We need to apply what we already know." While it is true that we should immediately apply what we know in the Scriptures, the implication of this spiritually debilitating philosophy is that anyone who studies the Scriptures with dedication and intensity cannot be spiritual or have heart knowledge. Often this is used as an excuse for lazy Christians to deny their responsibility to grow in grace and the knowledge of Christ (II Pet. 3:14-18). While we recognize that a person can possess "head knowledge" about spiritual issues without personally accepting and living the Biblical truth in his/her own life, we must also admit that one cannot apply what one does not know. "Head knowledge" must precede "heart knowledge" (Rom. 10:13-14). Each believer has a responsibility before God to become a master of the Word of Righteousness and to be teachers of spiritual truth both in word and deed. Hebrews 5:12-14 states that we owe a debt (ophelimos) to God to master the Word of Righteousness and become a teacher of God's truth. How can we who are trying to honor Christ offer Him less than our best?

## **G. WHEN WITNESSING, MAKE SURE THAT OTHERS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND ALL THAT THEY MUST KNOW IN ORDER TO TRUST JESUS CHRIST AS THEIR PERSONAL SAVIOR.**

While it is true that an individual can know theological truth with "head knowledge" without applying it as "heart knowledge" and, therefore not come to the point of personally trusting Christ as Savior, there are still some things that a person must know before he or she can be saved. As an effective witness for Christ, you will have to make sure that the people with whom you are counseling know and understand certain specific doctrinal truths. Memorize each Bible passage involved with the following doctrinal points so you will be able to share them with the people to whom you are witnessing.

### **1. THE EXISTENCE OF GOD.**

Hebrews 11:6 states, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him". It, therefore, is impossible for a person to gain eternal life without first believing that God exists, and that He is

involved with those who seek Him. If the person to whom you are counseling has doubts concerning the existence of God, you must take the time to present the factual evidence that indicates that God exists before you can progress further. There is much scientific evidence for the existence of God.

## **2. THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.**

Understanding the true authority of the Bible often follows salvation. Although the doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible is not absolutely necessary for salvation, it is the foundation doctrine for many of the spiritual problems that the new believer will have to solve. The Bible is the main authority for the information concerning the person, death and resurrection of Christ. A person can never be led to an assurance of salvation without being able to rely on the authority and trustworthiness of the Scriptures. If the person to whom you are witnessing has serious doubts about the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, it will be important to show that person why you know the Bible is the Word of God, and why he or she can trust the Bible as the final authority in all spiritual issues. Master the evidence that the Bible is the Word of God and be ready to answer all who are seeking the truth (I Pet. 3:15). This evidence for the inspiration of the Bible consists of external evidence and internal evidence.

a. The external evidence for the inspiration of the Bible consists of an evaluation of the Word of God against testable facts. Science, history, probability in the measurement of prophecy, human insight and the nature of man that is now being discovered through scientific investigation, manuscript evidence, and spiritual effectiveness in changing lives all support the accuracy of the Scriptures.

b. The internal evidence for the Bible being the infallible Word of God rests in the claims concerning the authority of the Bible made in the Scriptures by the writers of the Scriptures and by Christ Himself. Internal evidence for the inspiration of the Scriptures is also substantiated by the way they were received as the Word of God by the people to whom they were addressed, and in the spiritual effectiveness that resulted in the lives of the people who applied the Bible to their own lives. The following two passages in the New Testament will be a help to you in dealing with people concerning the trustworthiness of the accounts and promises in the Scriptures.

(1). II Tim. 3:16, 17 states: "All Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly furnished unto all good works".

(2). II Pet. 1:20, 21 states: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit)".

## **3. THE HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.**

A person must also be convinced that God is holy, righteous and just, and that He is morally obligated to judge all sin. Without this doctrine it could be mistakenly assumed that a person could

save himself or herself by some means other than by faith in Christ. The love of God is limited to working within the character of His holiness, righteousness and justice. Without this doctrine, a person does not even realize the need for personal salvation through faith in Christ. Without the realization of personal sin and the obligation of God to judge that sin, there is no understanding of the need to be saved from eternal condemnation (Rom. 3:19–26). Without the perception of the righteousness of God, the work of propitiation that Christ effected on the cross would also be meaningless and Jesus Christ would have suffered and died in vain.

- a. Deut. 32:3, 4 states, "Because I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He."
- b. Psalm 145:17, 20 states, "The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works. The Lord preserves all them that love Him: but all the wicked He will destroy."
- c. Habakkuk 1:13 states, "You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and can not look on iniquity".
- d. Psalm 94:23 states, "And He shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; the Lord our God shall cut them off".

#### **4. THE SINFULNESS OF MANKIND.**

Mankind is naturally sinful and desperately in need of help. A person who does not recognize his or her sinfulness cannot be saved. I John 1:10 states, "If we say that we have never sinned, we make Him (God) to be a liar, and His Word is not in us". If God is a liar, we cannot trust Him for salvation. If trusting in Christ is the only way mankind can be saved, then the person coming to Christ must admit that he or she is naturally sinful. Denying that one is a sinner indicates that the Word, Jesus Christ Himself (John 1:1–3, 14), is not indwelling the individual claiming to be saved. In Matt. 5:20, Christ stated, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The scribes and Pharisees were very rigid in their practice of "righteousness", and they did not qualify for heaven, apart from the work of Christ. One cannot qualify for heaven by being good. This can only be done through faith in Christ. God is obligated to deal with sin. There is no other way to eternal life but through Christ (Acts 4:12; John 14:6).

- a. Romans 3:23 states, "For all have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God."
- b. Romans 6:23 states, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord".
- b. Hebrews 9:27 states, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."

## **5. GOOD WORKS WILL NOT SAVE A PERSON.**

There is a philosophy being taught that faith in Christ is not necessary to gain eternal life, if the good works of the individual are greater than the individual's sins. This is a doctrine that proclaims the love of God while denying His holiness, righteousness and justice. The Bible, on the other hand, states clearly that no one can be saved by good works apart from faith in Christ. Good works should be a result of spiritual new life through faith in Christ, not as a result of fear of an eternity in hell and an attempt to earn salvation by personal merit.

a. Ephesians 2:8–9 states clearly, "For by grace (undeserved kindness) are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

b. Titus 3:5 states, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost (Holy Spirit)."

c. Galatians 2:16 states, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we who have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

d. Romans 3:28 states, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

If the person you are counseling is relying on anything other than Jesus Christ and His death on the cross to save him, go back and be sure that this person understands the previous teachings of the Scripture. Keep repeating the reading of the passages and discussing the doctrines taught in them until these doctrines are understood and accepted.

## **6. THE DEITY AND DEATH OF CHRIST.**

God so loved the world, that as Jesus Christ, He came down in the flesh to die for our sins. This is a foundational doctrine concerning salvation. Evidence for the deity of Jesus Christ is both historical and Biblical. In counseling a person concerning accepting Christ as Savior, be careful that person understands and accepts the following Biblical doctrines.

a. A person cannot be saved if he or she does not believe that Jesus is God come in the flesh. The Biblical term "Son of God" has reference to God Himself coming in the flesh to die for our sins (John 1:1-3, 14; 3:14–18, I Tim. 3:16). God and the Son of God are the same entity manifested differently. Jesus Christ is God.

(1). John 1:1–3 defines Jesus as God Himself in stating, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him not one thing was made that was made." The underlined verbs are in the imperfect tense in the Greek, which indicates "action in progress in past time" (Dana & Mantey, p. 187). The imperfect tense in John 1:1–3, therefore, indicates that the Word was already in existence when all creation began.

(2). John 1:14 tells us that, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

(3). I John 2:22, 23 states, "This is the Antichrist, the one denying the Father and the Son. Everyone denying the Son, the same has not the Father."

(4). I John 4:2, 3 states, "By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: this is the spirit of antichrist..."

(5). I John 4:15 states, "Whosoever shall confess (agree) that Jesus is the Son of God dwells in him, and he in God."

(6). I John 5:1 & 5 states, "Whosoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. . . Who is he that overcomes the world but he that believes that Jesus is the Son of God."

b. A person must believe that Christ died to pay the penalty for the sins of the world, and that, dying on the cross, Christ satisfied God's righteous obligation to judge sinners.

I John 2:1, 2 states, "My little children, these things I am writing to you, that you sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

The doctrinal word "propitiation" means the satisfying of all the requirements of the holiness, righteousness, and justice of God through the payment for the sins of the world by Christ's death on the cross. Through Christ's death God is no longer obligated to judge the sinner who has accepted Christ as Savior (I John 2:1, 2). The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines propitiation as follows.

"Now in the blood of Christ sin is condemned and expiated, and God is able to establish and maintain His character for righteousness, while He continues and extends His dealing in gracious love with sinners who exercise faith in Jesus. The propitiation originates with God, not to appease Himself, but to justify Himself in His uniform kindness to men deserving harshness." (Vol. IV, p. 2467).

c. Because of His death on the cross, a person must believe that Jesus Christ is able to remove sins and to give eternal life.

(1). John 3:14–18 states, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world might be saved through Him. He that believes on Him is not condemned: but he that does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

(2). I Peter 2:24 states, "Who His Own Self bore our sins in His Own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by Whose stripes you were healed."

(3). II Corinthians 5:21 states, "For He (God the Father) has made Him (God the Son) to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

## **7. ONE MUST PLACE PERSONAL FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST AND TRUST HIM AS PERSONAL SAVIOR BY FAITH IN ORDER TO RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE.**

Salvation is a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ. Unless the individual personally trusts Jesus Christ to have died for his or her sins and accepts Christ as his or her personal Savior, the individual is not saved.

a. Romans 4:20—5:1 states, "He (Abraham) staggered not at the promises of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what He (God) had promised, He (God) was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed (deposited as in a bank) to him (Abraham) for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered because of our offenses, and was raised again because of our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

b. John 1:12 states, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become the children of God, to them that believe in His name."

## **H. CONVINCING SOULS WITH BIBLICAL FACTS, NOT WITH EMOTIONAL ARGUMENTS.**

Always use the Bible in spiritual counseling. Be sure to have the person, with whom you are counseling, read the Scriptures for himself or herself if able to read. Do not only quote the Scriptures to the individual unless that person cannot read the Word personally. Show the individual



the Scriptural passage that clearly states the doctrinal truth concerning Christ and have him or her read the passage aloud for himself or herself, so you can hear the passage. Ask pointed questions to be sure that each passage is clearly understood.

## **I. REALIZE THAT YOU CANNOT MAKE A DECISION TO ACCEPT CHRIST AS PERSONAL SAVIOR FOR ANYONE BUT YOURSELF AND LET THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVERT THE PERSON TO WHOM YOU ARE WITNESSING.**

After you have clearly and carefully explained all the Biblical facts necessary for a person to make a decision to place faith in Christ as personal Savior and the individual demonstrated by the answer to your questions that he or she fully understood the Biblical passages, encourage the person to make a decision. If the individual responds by placing faith in Christ as personal Savior, it is good for the individual to be led to pray out loud immediately, verbally accepting Christ before you as a witness. On the other hand, you cannot force this decision on anyone. Make sure that the individual understands that receiving Christ as Savior is his or her personal responsibility and that he or she will have to decide personally to accept or reject Christ. People sometimes make fake decisions for Christ to escape inappropriate pressures placed on them by the witness. If a person does this, he or she may use this false conversion experience as an excuse not to consider Christ again for the rest of his or her life. They will either say, "I have already accepted Christ as my Savior" or "Someone once tried to force me to accept Christ and I am no longer interested".

## **J. THE PRAYER OF FAITH**

Although we understand that a ritual prayer does not save anyone, it is important to have the individual whom you are leading to Christ pray to receive Christ in your presence. Be sure that the individual prays loud enough to hear what he or she is saying. This way you will be able to correct any misunderstandings concerning that person's faith, or to correct any oversight in their prayer that will cause doubt in the future concerning what the new believer did at the time of accepting Christ as personal Savior. Many times the individual will come to the threshold of accepting Christ as Savior and will pray about everything but accepting Christ. It may be necessary for you to help the individual pray through suggesting what he or she should say in order to have assurance of salvation after this decision.

A sample believer's prayer is somewhat like the following prayer: "Dear God, (1) I know that I am a sinner and that I have sinned against You. (2) I know that you are holy and must judge sin. (3) I believe what You have said in the Bible (4) that You loved me so much that You came down and were born as Jesus Christ and died for my sins. (5) Right now, I accept Jesus Christ as my Savior. Thank You for saving me and giving me eternal life right now. Amen." If the believer shows some confusion in any of these areas in the prayer of faith, it is important to interrupt the believer and suggest what should be said by leading them sentence by sentence through the prayer. Leading the new believer through his or her prayer of acceptance is done best by asking leading questions concerning each doctrinal point, then instructing the counselee to tell God the answer to each question in his or her prayer. This will give the new believer a clear-cut understanding of what he or she did at that time of accepting Christ.

I recommend the following process in counseling someone who comes forward at an evangelistic meeting or who asks for counseling concerning how he or she can obtain eternal life.

- (1) Ask the person his or her name and introduce yourself.
- (2) Ask, **“Do you wish to trust Christ as Savior?”** Do not ask an open question such as “What do you want to do?” The confusion of the situation may sidetrack them and they will often give an answer that does not reflect their need to trust Christ. If they came forward for another reason they will tell you and you can deal with that need.
- (3) Hold up your Bible and ask, **“Do you know what this is?”** The counselee will often say, “the Bible”. Then you ask, **“What is the Bible?”** and the counselee will almost always respond, “The Word of God”. Then you ask, “Does God lie?” The counselee will almost always respond, “No!” Then you ask, **“If I can show you in God’s Word how you can obtain eternal life will you believe what God says and do what is necessary to gain eternal life?”** After the counselee responds, “Yes!”, you are ready to use the Bible to lead that person to faith in Christ.
- (4) Turn to **Rom. 3:23**, point to the verse, and ask, “Read this verse out loud please.” After the counselee reads the verse you ask, **“Do you confess that you are a sinner just as God said in this verse?”** The counselee will almost always say, “Yes!”
- (5) Turn to **Rom. 6:23** and have the counselee read the verse out loud. Then you ask, **“Unless God does something to change your situation do you agree with what God says that the results from your sin will be eternal punishment (death)?”** The counselee will almost always say, “Yes!” If the counselee tries to say that he or she are trying to be good and earn God’s favor, turn to Rom. 3:28 and after having the counselee read the verse ask, “do you see that God is saying that you cannot obtain eternal life through the works of the Law or by doing good works?” Get an affirmative answer.
- (6) Turn to **Rom. 9:5** and have the counselee read the verse. Then ask, **“Do you confess That Jesus is God in the flesh as this verse states?”** The counselee will almost always say, “Yes!”
- (7) Turn to **Rom. 5:8** and have the counselee read the verse. Ask the counselee. **“Do you believe as this verse states that Jesus Christ died for your sins?”** The counselee will almost always say, “Yes!”
- (8) Turn to **Rom. 10:13** and have the counselee read it. Ask the counselee **“Would you like to pray and call on the Lord to save you right now?”** When the counselee says “Yes”, bow your head and pray for the counselee, asking God to give the counselee true saving faith.

Then have the counselee pray so you can hear and make sure that he or she understood the Biblical teaching concerning faith in Christ.

(9) **Listen** to the counselee's prayer. Help the counselee concentrate on trusting Christ and making the decision to submit to Jesus Christ as God manifest in the flesh and having died for his or her sins. Do not let the counselee stray from the major issue into other less important areas of need or prayer.

(10) **Get the counselee's name, address, and phone number** so you or someone from a Biblical church can contact the new believer to help him or her grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **K. BE AWARE THAT PROFESSION OF CHRIST IS NOT ALWAYS INDICATING SAVING FAITH.**

Whenever you are dealing with people concerning their conversion experience or have received a statement from an individual that indicates that a prayer was said previously receiving Christ as Savior, it is important to be aware that the necessary doctrines needed for salvation may not have been realized and the person may not have known what he or she must know in order to be saved. The individual who does not understand the basic doctrines concerning Christ and His death on the cross to save sinners may have accepted something concerning Christ, but this decision would have been something other than saving faith. If the individual is having a spiritual problem that is not common with one who genuinely knows Christ as Savior (I John 2:4, 3:6–10), then it is important to deal with what this person's faith really means, and lead this individual into true saving faith. According to I John 2:4 and 3:6–10, a person with habitual sin, no chastening from the Lord (Heb. 12:8), and an unwillingness to obey the commands of Christ as found in the Word of God has never come to know Christ as personal Savior in the first place. It is important to realize this principle in Biblical counseling and deal with the disease, not merely treat the symptoms. Eliminating the symptoms before you diagnose the disease and begin a cure for that disease may make the patient think that he or she is cured and stop the necessary treatment for curing the disease. This may cause the death of the patient. In the same way be careful to lead your counselee to Christ. Do not try to straighten out any other problem until you have become assured of his or her salvation.

Be aware that not all responses to receive Christ are genuine beginnings of saving faith. What do some of these responses, to receive Christ as Savior, really mean? Let us look at a few of these reactions.

**1. Willing to investigate further.** Some of the people who come to ask about receiving Christ are merely registering a willingness to investigate the claims concerning Christ. They have been warned about hell or have a fear of dying. They do not yet believe that Christ is God born in the flesh, and that He died for their sins (I John 4:2, 3, 10, 14, 15, 5:1, 2:1, 2). This is why it is so important to get new converts into a gospel-oriented, Bible-teaching church immediately after they have made their decision so they will have contact with the very doctrines that will bring them into true salvation, if the first experience was not genuine or complete.

**2. Joining a social group.** Some of the people who are inquiring concerning Christ do not know about the authority of the Scriptures. They, therefore, do not have any foundation for their faith other than the word of man. When under pressure the word of man can be doubted. This faith that they have accepted can become a social issue rather than being convinced that God will keep the promises which He made in the Scriptures concerning eternal life as a result of believing in Christ (II Tim. 3:15–17, Rom. 4:20–25). These people need to be in a church or fellowship that will teach the doctrines of the Scriptures and show by solid evidence how we know the Bible is the Word of God. The Scriptures are our only real source of assurance through faith in Christ. Anything else is only wishful thinking.

All pastors should assume the responsibility of seeing that these foundational salvation doctrines are clearly and consistently taught in their churches. They should also make sure that their membership understands these doctrines that are so important to receiving Christ and having assurance of eternal life through trusting Him.

**3. Seeking knowledge alone.** Some of the people have acknowledged the truth concerning Christ but have refused to accept Him as their Savior. These people may have come to learn more about Christ, but have previously become openly rebellious (James 2:19) or passively rebellious (Matt. 12:30), and have not really trusted Him as personal Savior. Knowing the truth alone does not save a person. Otherwise we could win the whole world to Christ by sheer argument. People must be led to place their faith in Christ, not merely to believe about Him.

**4. An act of righteousness.** Some of the people, wishing to receive Christ as personal savior, "went forward" or asked for counsel concerning what they must do to be saved. They did not yet know the Scriptural teaching concerning Christ that would bring them to a place where they could have truly accepted Him as their personal Savior. The person asked to counsel them diverted them from accepting Christ with some irrelevant side issue and had them baptized, join the church, pray through, or perhaps some other act of "righteousness". Through this diversion they were not helped to understand the Scriptural teaching concerning Christ and helped to take Christ as Savior by trusting Him for what He did on the cross. These people need to be led back to the basic simple doctrines concerning salvation, and then, led to personally accept Christ for themselves.

There are many other ways that people who wish to find Christ are diverted, sidetracked or confused away from their original goal of settling the problem of their eternal destiny. When you are dealing with people with problems, be very conscious that these people may not be saved, regardless of their profession or ministry. Always go back to the basic simple doctrines concerning salvation and probe into the genuineness of their original salvation experience to see if there is some problem. If you find the problem, it is usually a simple matter of bringing them to a position of really accepting Christ as Savior. From then on they can be sure of their eternal destiny. If they resent your probing into their salvation experience, it indicates that they were never saved. Sometimes learning the truth in time to remedy the situation causes anxiety, but the one exposing the danger did not cause the problem. In either case, you will not have done any harm by trying to show them the truth. On the other hand, God may have made you instrumental in saving their souls (Jude 20–23).

It seems appropriate, at this point in the discussion, to address pastors on this issue. There is a philosophy being advanced in many churches today that the gospel should not be preached from the pulpit, but that the membership should be made responsible to win people to Christ. While it is true that every believer in Christ should be sharing the reason for his or her assurance in Christ with others (I Pet. 3:15), it is not true that the gospel of Christ should not be taught from our pulpits and in Bible classes as the foundation for everything that we do in the rest of our lives of faith. The books of the New Testament were written to be read in front of the local church congregations. The central theme of the New Testament is the gospel concerning Christ. The gospel should be also the clear foundation for anything being taught or preached from your pulpit. Getting your members' lives well regulated socially and giving your members a good self image is purely Christian behaviorism if you are not introducing them to Christ. Without Christ your members will still spend eternity in the lake of fire, regardless of how happy they are or how well they were adjusted in their behavior here in this life. When you proclaim the "whole counsel of God", you must make the gospel concerning Christ so clear Biblically that each person in your congregation could accept Christ wherever that individual is sitting or standing. If a person has not received Christ as personal Savior, this should become clear to that individual that he or she is in danger of eternal judgment from listening to your Bible teaching or preaching. If the gospel is not the foundation of what you are teaching, then you are preaching secular humanism and Christian behaviorism, and you are merely manipulating the lives of your people as a profession. The great preacher, Charles H. Spurgeon once stated, "It is a terrible thing to ride to hell on a pew". Make the gospel clear in your preaching.

The invitation to "come forward and accept Christ" is also often used as a substitute for the clear teaching of the doctrines needed for someone to be able to come to true saving faith. The gospel should be the central theme underlying everything else that you preach or teach. Because of your ministry, Jesus Christ should be magnified and adored as God in your congregation, and all service should center around Him. Only Christ and His Word are the source of growth, strength, happiness and effectiveness in your people. The gospel should be clearly preached so that your people can clearly understand and receive it. Only then will you be able to build your work and the lives of your congregation on Christ, the Solid Rock (I Cor. 3:11).

## **II. COMPLETING THE TRANSACTION AND CEMENTING THE DECISION**

After an individual has trusted Christ as personal Savior, your responsibilities as a "soul winner" are not yet complete. There are still several very important areas that you should review with the new convert to insure that the new convert has fully apprehended saving faith. Just as a newborn baby is not cast out in the weather to support itself, a newborn Christian should not be abandoned and left alone to grow in the faith without parental help. It is your responsibility as a spiritual parent to help the new convert to grow for the first few steps so this new believer can begin a process of maturing spiritually throughout life. Many of these steps should be taken immediately after you have introduced the person to Christ. The new convert should immediately be led Biblically into assurance that he or she has eternal life, and that, once genuinely saved, he or she can never lose that eternal life.

### **A. THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.**

In many cases, a person lacks assurance of salvation after receiving Christ because true trust has not been established in reality. It is, therefore, extremely important that your counselee be brought to the point of complete realization of the security found in Christ.

#### **1. THE FOUNDATION FOR ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.**

Salvation through Faith in Christ is not founded on superstition, on cunningly devised myths, or on wishful thinking. The Apostle Peter states this reality clearly in II Peter 1:16 where he asserts "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables (myths), when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty". The assurance of our faith rests not in how we feel about the facts of history and the promises of God as found in the Scriptures. This assurance of salvation rests on our knowing and accepting the fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures (I Cor. 15:3, 4). Assurance of salvation is also founded on our confidence that God will keep His promises to those who have believed in Christ (John 3:36) and who have aligned themselves in right relation with Him through a decision of faith (John 1:12). There is no substitute for having the utmost confidence in God (faith), knowing that the penalty for all our sins has been paid through Christ (I John 2:1, 2), and knowing that we are in a right relationship with God through faith in Christ. Any assurance of salvation that you cultivate in the new believers with whom you are working must be founded on the following facts of the Scripture.

**a. THE INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE.** The counselee must believe that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, and have decided to place his or her complete faith in the promises of God that are found in the Bible. Whenever a question of salvation arises, therefore, it will be possible to authoritatively answer the question by a statement of the Scriptures. This would remove all doubt or confusion concerning the believer's personal position with God and his or her security in

Christ. Confidence toward the Bible is the foundation for any assurance and cannot be found apart from the unreserved acceptance of the Bible as the Word of God and that it is completely trustworthy in what God promises.

**b. BELIEF IN THE GOSPEL.** The counselee must understand and believe what the Scriptures teach about the salvation doctrines previously discussed. The Scriptures teach (1) that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23) and, consequently, (2) must be judged by a holy and righteous God (Ps. 145:17) (3) Who loved us so much that, as Jesus Christ, He paid the penalty for our sins on the cross of Calvary (John 3:14-18) demanded by His righteousness and justice, and (4) that if anyone trusts Christ as Savior, he or she will have eternal life (John 1:12; 3:36).

**c. ACCEPTANCE OF CHRIST AS SAVIOR.** When dealing with many people, especially those who received Christ as Savior when very young, you will find a confusion over when they accepted Christ, or a confusion concerning what was involved with this decision. In order to have assurance the counselee must remember a specific occasion when he or she personally accepted the redeeming work of Jesus Christ in His death on the cross as payment for his or her personal sins, and accepted Christ as personal Savior by trusting Him to save as He promised He would do in the Scriptures (Rom. 10:13). It is important that the counselee remembers a specific occasion when he or she trusted Christ as Savior, because without this memory of having personally accepted Christ as Savior, a stable assurance is impossible. It is not important that a person be able to tell you the date, time or place where this decision was made. However, it is important that each person remembers a specific occasion when he or she turned to Christ as God, and accepted Him as personal Savior. If you are dealing with someone who is having trouble with assurance of salvation, and this person cannot remember the occasion when he or she accepted Christ as Savior (and personal God), then lead this person through the specific Scriptures concerning salvation. Next, lead the counselee through the process of confirming this acceptance by having him or her pray to receive Christ if not done previously. After accepting Christ, lead this person on to assurance. Remember that it is better to reconfirm the counselee's past acceptance of Christ as Savior than it is to retain doubt concerning the counselee's eternal destiny.

**d. TRUST IN GOD TO KEEP HIS PROMISES.** For a person to be certain that he or she personally is saved through faith in Christ, the person must come to the realization and complete acceptance of the following Biblical promises.

**(1). God is not a liar but will do exactly as He has promised to do.** Numbers 23:19; I Sam. 15:29; Titus 1:2, and Hebrews 6:18 all affirm the truth that God, because of His character, cannot lie but must tell the truth. In Hebrews 11:6 God also teaches us that "without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those that diligently seek Him". When God promises salvation through believing in Christ, those who believe can trust Him and rest assured that He will keep His promise. "He remains faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (II Tim. 2:13).

**(2). All conditions God required of the person seeking salvation were fulfilled** through Christ's death on the cross and were concluded at the time the counselee received Jesus Christ as his or her personal Savior. God promised this in John 1:12. After a person accepts Christ as Savior by a decision, that person can be assured of the confirmation of himself or herself as a child of God now in this present age (I John 3:2).

**(3). God has promised that "Whoever believes on Him already has everlasting life"** (John 3:36). If the individual accepts this promise from God, and is trusting God to do as He promised, assurance of salvation will be assumed as guaranteed eternal life.

**(4). Other passages of the Bible also confirm** that an individual can know that he or she has eternal life.

**(a). I John 5:10–13**, states, "He that believes on the Son of God has the witness in himself: he that does not believe God has made Him a liar; because he did not believe the record that God gave of His Son. And this is the record that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son does not have life. These things I have written to you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe on the name of the Son of God."

**(b). John 3:14–18**, and verse 36 states, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved... He that believes on the Son has everlasting life."

This last statement that the believer has everlasting life is in the present tense in the original language meaning that the believer has everlasting life immediately when he or she believes. If this is God's Word, and God states that the believer has everlasting life now, the believer can know that he or she is saved, founded on confidence in God and trusting Him to keep His promises. If there remains a doubt, the person is not believing God but doubting Him.

**(c). In John 11:25, 26**, Jesus states, "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

A believer can know that he or she has eternal life because God promised everlasting life to those who believe.



## 2. THE PROCESS OF LEADING THE NEW BELIEVER TO ASSURANCE OF SALVATION.

Whenever you counsel a person concerning eternal life in Christ, you should develop the habit of helping all these new converts to arrive at a personal assurance of salvation. This can be accomplished in the following process.

a. After the individual has prayed to accept Jesus Christ as his or her personal savior, ask the person specifically "**Are you now saved?** Do you have eternal life through believing in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior?" This question will require that the new convert give you a response which can be evaluated by you to determine the confidence that the new believer has placed in Christ.

b. If the new convert answers "Yes" to your question concerning whether he or she has eternal life, then ask "**How do you know that you have eternal life?**"

c. If the new convert's answer is "**Because God promised in the Bible that whosoever believes on the Son of God has everlasting life. I have believed on Him and have accepted Him as my personal Savior. God does not lie. Therefore I know that I have eternal life**" or any other statements of assurance founded on God's Word, you can accept the stability of that assurance. I find that it is a good practice to write the Scripture references for their assurance of salvation along with the date, place and witness of their decision in the flyleaf of their Bible if they have it with them so the new converts can refer back to this record if they ever have doubts of their salvation experience.

d. If the response to your question concerning how the new convert knows that he or she has eternal life is an emotional response like "**I hope so!**" or "**Because I feel so good!**" you should reply by asking, "**If the day should come that you wake up with a headache, everything is going wrong, and you no longer feel like you are saved, will you still know that you have eternal life?**" By asking this type of question you are trying to get the new believer to document his or her answer on the promises of God as found in the Scriptures, and on the new believer's acceptance of Jesus Christ as personal Savior, not in his or her own feelings. Regardless of the response to this question, use this time as an opportunity to lead the new believer back through the Biblical passages documenting the doctrines concerning Christ and saving faith. Go back to the same verses that you used to point the person to saving faith in Christ. Help him or her to see that God promises eternal life to all who believe in Christ and that this eternal life is promised as a result of this faith in Christ alone. The only requirement for the believer is to trust Christ as Savior. Help the new convert to see that this eternal life is not dependent on how the new convert feels about his or her decision to accept Christ as Savior, but on what God promises in His Word concerning salvation to all who believe on Him. Do not accept any non-Biblical answer but lead the new convert back to the Bible as the lone source for the assurance of salvation until the believer recognizes the truth taught in the Bible.

e. If the new convert replies "No!" to your question "Do you now have eternal life because you accepted Christ as your Savior?" ask the question: "**Why are you not saved?**" If the response

involves the individual's unbelief in Christ where the individual prayed the "prescribed prayer" but did not really believe that Christ was God, nor that Christ could save him or her, then return to the Scriptures concerning salvation. **Review with your counselee the Scriptures that teach of the significance Christ, His death, burial, resurrection and passages teaching that the trusting of Jesus Christ as Savior by faith accomplishes the receiving of eternal life to all who believe.** The individual needs to be convinced concerning these matters and you may have to spend some time with the person to answer his or her doubts through historical and Biblical evidence. More evidence for the trustworthiness of the Scriptures is summarized later in other subjects in our internet sight. Do not complicate the counseling process at this time by reviewing all the evidences if the counselee does not need this review. Only use the facts and arguments that solve the counselee's present doubt. Then teach all the evidences at a later time as a part of maturing and equipping your new believers to enable them to serve by answering the problems of others.

f. If the new believer's answer is "**No**" to your question "Do you now have eternal life from having accepted Christ as your Savior by faith?", again ask, "**Why are you not saved?**" If the reason given for this doubt involves the new believer's inability to live up to Biblical ideals, the new believer's personal unworthiness, the new believer's belief that there is some act of piety that he or she must yet perform in order to secure this salvation for himself or herself, **reread the salvation verses with the new believer that you used to bring him or her to Christ in the first place.** If your counselee believes that he or she must perform some act of piety such as joining the church, being baptized, or some similar idea, you must counteract this idea before you can bring your counselee to an assurance of salvation. **These false ideas can be easily corrected in the mind of your counselee as you again read these salvation verses.** This time, however, substitute the phrase used by the counselee as the reason he or she is not yet saved for the word "believe" in the salvation verses. John 3:16 would thus read "That whosoever is baptized should not perish, but have everlasting life". Have the counselee follow your reading in the Scripture and let him or her correct your error. Read several verses the same way, substituting the person's own phrase in the verse every time you encounter the word "believe", "receive", or whatever other faith word is used in the Bible. Do this until the new believer understands that he or she has been substituting that phrase, and that, in doing so, he or she has not been trusting God to keep His promises. Continue this type of misreading of Scripture, having the believer correct any errors in your reading of the Word, until the new believer accepts what the Scriptures state and the new believer places complete confidence in Jesus Christ to save him or her.

g. When you are done with your questioning the new believer concerning his or her assurance of salvation and have received a Biblical answer documenting this assurance in the promises of God in the Bible, it is helpful for older believers who can read to **ask them to show you in their Bible where God promises them eternal life because they have accepted Christ as Savior by faith.** They will be awkward at first and you may have to help the new believer find the passages. At the same time you can make sure that the new believer is trusting in the promises of God which never change, instead of trusting in themselves, their feelings or in something that they have done to save them. Any other factors will become confused in their minds, and lead the new

believers into doubt with time. Write John 3:36,; I John 5:11–13 or similar verse in the cover of their Bible so it can be easily found in the future.

**NOTE:** It is important to lead the new believer to a complete faith in Jesus Christ as his or her Savior at this time. So much time is lost by believers in doubting their salvation through faith alone and a great deal of anxiety can be eliminated if the believer is resting securely in the confidence that "what God has promised He will also perform" (Rom. 4:19—5:2). The new believer's mind should be set at ease on this issue so they can begin to advance and to "grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (II Pet. 3:18).

## **B. THE ETERNAL SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER IN CHRIST:**

The next major step that you should take with the new believer is to be sure that he or she understands that once an individual has been truly saved through accepting Jesus Christ as personal Savior and has been given eternal life through faith in Him, the believer can never lose this eternal life. This doctrine is sometimes expressed as "Once saved, always saved". After the believer has come to an assurance of salvation, ask him or her "Now that you have eternal life, can you ever lose your eternal life?"

### **1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER.**

**The security of the believer is a firm doctrine of the Scriptures.** Just as eternal life is bestowed on the believer by faith in the completed work of Christ and not by his or her own works (Eph. 2:8-9), even so the believer is kept secure by the character of God (I Pet. 1:5; Jude 2). To lead a person into understanding that he or she is secure through faith in Christ, make sure that the new believer knows, understands and accepts the following doctrines.

**a. The believer receives eternal life as soon as he or she accepts Christ as Savior** and that this is a completed fact before the believer's death. John 3:36 states, "Whoever believes in Him (Jesus) has everlasting life." If this life is everlasting it cannot be terminated or removed. The verb is in the present tense in the original Greek and indicates that it is a present and continual possession of the believer.

**(1). If the believer does not receive eternal life before death, then God is a liar** and the Scriptures are in error. If this is the case, then we have no authority for believing about Christ and receiving eternal life through faith in Him. If God is a liar or the Scriptures are in error then we have nothing on which to establish our faith.

**(2). If the believer has eternal life given him or her through faith in Christ alone and then could lose eternal life after having received it, then this is not eternal life. God would again be a liar and the Scriptures would again be in error.** I John 3:2 states "Beloved, we are now the children of God". The believer is a present member of the family of God through faith in Christ. This belonging to the family of God is not something that occurs after death if the believer

has managed to live the right kind of life and has not offended God through some sin too ugly for God to forgive, as some cults teach. This membership in the family of God is the present possession of both the believer and God Himself.

**(3). Since God can be relied on to tell the truth** (Heb. 6:18), and since the believer has accepted Christ as personal Savior through faith in Christ (John 1:12), then **the believer can be positively assured that he or she has eternal life** (I John 5:13). If this is truly eternal life as God has promised, then the believer can rest assured that he or she can never lose this eternal life.

**(4). Since receiving eternal life is from accepting Christ by faith alone** and salvation is not by works of righteousness which we have done (Tit. 3:5), so **keeping eternal life is also not the act of man**. Neither is eternal life due to the efforts or merits of man (Gal. 3:1–5; 2:16). Therefore, eternal life cannot be lost through a fall from grace.

**(5). Keeping eternal life is a gracious act of God in preserving the believer and is a direct result of the righteous character of God** (I Pet. 1:5). The security of the believer is not because the good character of the believer has caused his eternal life to be preserved by good works (I Pet. 1:5; John 27–29; Jude 24). Eternal life is permanent because God is reliable. God will fulfill His promises.

**(6). The eternal security of the believer is taught throughout the Scriptures.** This security is by God's promise. Since God is reliable, His word can be trusted. Since the Scriptures are God's Word, eternal life can be expected according to the promises of God. The following passages substantiate this doctrine.

**(a). Psalm 37:28** states, "The Lord loves judgment, and **forsakes not His saints; they are preserved forever**: but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off".

**(b). John 10:27–29** states, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them **eternal life**; and they shall **never perish, neither shall anything pluck them out of My hand**. My Father, Who gave them to Me, is greater than all; and **nothing is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand**."

**(c). Romans 8:1, 9 and 37-39** state, "**There is therefore now no condemnation** to them that are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk after the flesh, but walk after the Spirit... But you are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if it be so that the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us. For I am convinced, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord**."

**(d). Romans 11:29** states, "For the gifts and calling of God are **without repentance**".

(e). **I Thes. 5:9, 10** states, "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep (the same word for purposelessness in verse 6), we should live together with Him."

(f). **Eph. 1:13, 14 and 4:30** states, "In Whom (Christ) you also trusted, after you heard the Word of Truth, the gospel of your salvation: in Whom also after you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory."

(g). **Hebrews 6:17–20** states, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability (unchangeableness) of His council, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope (assurance) set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entered into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

(h). **Hebrews 10:14** states, "For by one offering He has perfected for ever them that **have been Sanctified.**"

(i). **Hebrews 13:5** states, "**I will never leave you, nor forsake you.**"

(j). **I Pet. 1:3–5** states, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope (assurance) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed at the last time."

(k). **Jude 1 and 24-25** state, "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:... Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

(k). **John 14:16** states, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of Truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it sees Him not, neither knows Him; for He dwells with you, and shall be in you".

If the believer has already received eternal life through faith in Christ as the Bible indicates he or she has, and then the believer can lose his or her eternal life after receiving it, then the Holy Spirit would have to leave the believer when the lost believer was cast into hell for eternity. Since God has promised that the indwelling Holy Spirit is the seal of the believer and that the Holy Spirit would remain with the believer forever, if the Holy Spirit were to desert the believer who lost his or

her eternal life through some wicked act, then God would be a liar and the Bible would be untrustworthy.

The only other alternative if the believer could lose the eternal life given for accepting Christ as personal Savior would be that **the indwelling Holy Spirit would not leave the lost believer but that the Holy Spirit would go to hell for all eternity with the lost believer.** Both of these alternatives are unacceptable and against the clear teachings of the Bible.

## **2. THE COUNSELING PROCESS OF LEADING A NEW BELIEVER TO REST IN ETERNAL SECURITY IN CHRIST.**

Many pastors and religious leaders fail to teach their believers concerning the Scriptural teaching that the saints are eternally safe in Christ, believing that the lack of security in their faith will keep them obedient to the teachings of the church. Therefore, many believers spend much of their lives fearing that they can lose their salvation. The sound Scriptural position is that believers obey the commands of Christ and serve because they believe in Christ and love Him, rather than working because they are trying to keep their salvation. Since the clear teaching of the Scriptures indicates that a person is given eternal life at the point of time that he or she trusts Jesus Christ as personal Savior, and since the Scriptures clearly state that saints are preserved forever in Jesus Christ, the doctrine of the security and perseverance of the saints should be clearly taught to every new believer. Because of this doctrinal foundation the new believer is able to rest in Christ and go on to spiritual maturity rather than struggle for an indeterminate amount of time to try to maintain his or her salvation through the power of the flesh.

### **III. PROPER FOLLOW UP AFTER SOMEONE ACCEPTS CHRIST AS SAVIOR: SECOND LEVEL BIBLICAL COUNSELING**

After a person has gone through the process of trusting Christ as Savior, and has understood and accepted the teachings of the Scriptures concerning assurance of salvation and the security of the saints, your responsibilities toward the new believer are not complete.

#### **A. CHRISTIANS, SIN, AND THE DEATH OF CHRIST.**

The new believer will immediately believe that his or her troubles are all over and that the new life of faith will be one of immediate happiness and victory. If left alone, the new believer will be seriously disillusioned and may seek answers from some source other than Christ. The first time the new believer encounters a serious temptation to sin will be a surprise and a shock, and could be a source of defeat in his or her new life of faith. This problem of the Christian and sin should be introduced immediately after an individual has believed in Christ as Savior. This should be done by you as the person who led the individual to Christ. After you have prayed with the individual trusting Christ and dealt with the issues of assurance of salvation and the security of the believer, and are satisfied that the new believer has completely dealt with these issues, ask the new believer, "Now that you have accepted Christ as Savior, can you continue to sin? What do you mean by continuing to sin? What is sin? What does your sin do to Jesus Christ? Does that knowledge make a difference in your desire to sin?" This type of questions will help you to analyze where the new believer stands in understanding the relationship between the death of Christ and the sins of the believer. By asking this type of question you will not only be able to evaluate the genuineness of the salvation experience. Through these questions you will also be able to help the new believer take a giant step into maturing spiritually, teach him or her how to deal with the problem of temptation, and also show the new believer how to unleash the power of the Holy Spirit in living a victorious life of faith in Christ.

#### **1. THE DOCTRINAL FOUNDATION FOR VICTORY OVER SIN.**

The new believer's victory over sin depends on his or her accepting the Biblical doctrine concerning the believer's sin and the death of Christ. This depends on the following Biblical points which you should discuss with the new believe.

**a. Sin is the character of lawlessness.** I John 3:4 states, "Sin is the transgression of the law". The believer must also be led to understand that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), and that "the payment for sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

**b. Christ died for our sins.** I Cor. 15:3 states, "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures". This crucifixion was actual, historical and concrete, and was not just abstract or just an idea that has been invented to promote an emotional religious experience from the sympathy with a mythical hero

figure. Those were real nails that were driven into His real hands and feet. It was a real whip with which they scourged Him. It was a real crown of thorns that they drove into His head. It was a real spear that they drove into His side. He was buried in a real tomb. Isaiah 53:1-9 predicted Christ's passion, and I Pet. 2:24 defined the significance of His death in theological terms. It is also wonderful to realize that He really arose from a real death and really lives today as the real Savior-God (Titus 2:13).

c. **Christ is God.** As God, He is, in all His character, in all time and space throughout eternity, past as well as future, at every present moment of eternity.

(1). **Micah 5:2**, in the original language, states, "But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel: Whose goings forth **are right now of old, before eternity past.**"

(2). **Isaiah 9:6** predicted the birth of Christ, and called Him "**the Mighty God, the Eternal Father**".

(3). **Colossians 1:17** states in the original language, "He **Himself is right now before all things**". Colossians is emphasizing that Christ is Creator of everything that ever was made. This passage has already emphasized that Christ holds the position of first rank in all authority (prototokos) in all creation. Now with the statement of Colossians 1:17, a distinction is made in the original manuscripts that places Christ before all creation in time and emphasizes through the emphatic present tense that He is constantly before all things in all time.

(4). **In John 8:58** Christ Himself emphasized this eternally eternal characteristic of Himself when He states, "Before Abraham came into existence, **I Myself am right now**". The Pharisees understood the theological significance of this statement, that only God was in all time at the present, and "they took up stones to cast at Him".

(5). **Revelation 13:8** calls Jesus Christ "**the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world**". Since Christ is God Himself, and in all time throughout all eternity past and future at this very moment, when Christ allowed Himself to be crucified, He placed Himself on the cross for all eternity, past and future, for us all. Since our sins placed Him on the cross, our individual sins today are every bit as important in His crucifixion, and we individually are every bit as guilty as Pontius Pilate in causing His death. If we do not hold this to be true, or if we deny our own guilt, this indicates that we have not ever received Christ as personal Savior and have never received eternal life (I John 1:7-2:4).

d. **Personal guilt.** Although, as believers, we can and do sin (I John 2:1,2), because we believe that Christ died for our sins (I Pet. 2:24), we also believe that in sinning, we personally are responsible for crucifying Christ (Heb. 6:6; 10:29). Realizing that, when we sin, we are nailing Jesus Christ on the cross, it is inconceivable that we would be able to continue to do the things that we believe nailed Christ on the cross (I John 2:4; 3:3-10).



e. **Excusing sin and what this indicates.** When an individual denies the seriousness of sin, this indicates that this person does not believe that his or her sin crucified Christ, and **may indicate** that person has never been truly saved in the first place (I John 1:6-2:4; 3:3-10). There is an insidious doctrine being taught in some churches that, since one is saved through faith, and since Christ has already paid the penalty for all our sins, and since a believer is eternally secure in Jesus Christ, that as Christians, we can do whatever we wish. One pastor told his congregation, "If you feel like doing something, do it. Christ has already paid the price." This doctrine is a direct contradiction of the Scriptures and the new believer should be taught the truth about the impact on Christ of his or her sin at the very beginning of the Christian walk, before he or she is confused with some of these false doctrines.

(1) **I John 2:3, 4** states in the original language, "In this we constantly know that we have come to know Him at a specific time in the past with continuing results, if we **constantly keep His commandments**. He who is claiming 'I came to know Him at a specific time in the past' and is not constantly keeping His commandments is a liar." The perfect tense in the Greek indicates that the event being discussed happened at a specific historical point of time in the past with continuing results. The lie, according to this passage, is the claim that the person has come to know Jesus Christ. According to this passage and others, this claimed event has **never** occurred.

(2) **I John 3:6-10** emphasizes this doctrine over and over in the original Greek. It includes the doctrine of the security of the believer but also stresses that the "believer" who continually sins has never been saved. This passage states, "Everyone remaining in Him **does not continually sin**. Everyone continually sinning **has never ever at any past point of time seen Him**, neither has he **ever come to know Him at any past point of time** with any continuing results....Every one who **has ever been born of God at a specific point of time in the past with continuing results does not continue to sin**, because God's seed (Jesus Christ: Col. 1:27) remains in him. And he is **unable to continue** to sin, because he **has been born of God at a specific time in the past** with continuing results. By this the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed: everyone **not constantly doing righteousness is not of God**." The use of the perfect tense in combination with the present tense in the original Greek New Testament emphasizes the position that, although a Christian can commit sin, a believer in Christ cannot continue to practice the sins that he or she believes placed Jesus Christ on the cross. The conscience of the person who loves Christ and worships Him as his or her God cannot continue to act against His character and do the things for which He died.

f. **God's discipline and the security of the believer.** The believer that sins, instead of losing his or her salvation, will be disciplined by God to make him or her become what he or she should be in Christ. On rare occasions when the gracious discipline of God is ignored beyond the point of the believer being able to be spiritually effective in this life, the believer is taken home by death to be with the Lord. The new believer should be informed of this warning of the Scriptures as soon as possible in order to help him or her to avoid any approach to this dangerous position in the Christian life.

(1). **Hebrews 12:6–8** states, "Whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and whips every son whom He receives. If you endure discipline, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father does not discipline? But if you are without this discipline, of which all have become sharers, then you are bastards (claiming to be an heir in a family with which you have no blood tie) and not sons."

(2). Concerning the sin of desecrating the Lord's supper, **I Cor. 11:30** states, "Therefore among you are many weak, and sick, and enough are dead".

(3). **I John 5:16, 17** states, "If anyone sees his brother sin a sin not unto death, he shall ask and He (God) shall give life to those not sinning unto death. There is a sin unto death. I say that you should not ask (for life) concerning that (sin). All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death."

## 2. THE PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE DOCTRINE OF VICTORY OVER SIN.

All proper Christian living comes from knowing Christ and the teachings of the Bible. The Holy Spirit does not work directly through hunches in the lives of Christians but does work through the exact teachings of the Holy Scriptures. The doctrines of the Scriptures are life-changing and extremely practical in directing the lives of the saints. One can know the doctrines of the Scriptures, however, and still not apply these doctrines to living. Be sure to lead your new believers to acknowledge the following truths and decisions.

**a. Admission of personal guilt.** "Since Jesus Christ is God, and since God is in all time right now throughout all eternity, when I sin today I am nailing Jesus Christ to the cross even though He died back in history (Heb. 6:6; 10:29). I am as guilty in the crucifixion of Christ as Pontius Pilate and the Jews who put Him on the cross."

**b. The indwelling Christ.** "I know that Jesus Christ is living in me (John 14:18; Col. 1:27) and He knows my every thought (Luke 5:22; 6:8; 9:27; 11:17; I Cor. 3:20; Psalm 139:2). My secret thoughts, therefore, become like prayers stated openly before Christ."

**c. Repentance as a change of mind.** "I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and my God, and knowing that my sins put Christ on the cross, I will no longer continue to think the thoughts and do the things which crucified Him (I John 3:8–10)".

**d. Recognizing God's discipline.** "I have eternal life now (John 3:36) and will have it forever. I can never lose my salvation through faith in Jesus Christ as my personal Savior (John 10:28, 29). On the other hand, when I sin, God promises to discipline me (Heb. 12:6–8). Knowing this I will try to avoid the things which will cause the Lord to have to whip me. Instead I will try to do the things which will keep me closer to Him."

**e. Confessing sin.** "When I sin (I John 2:1, 2) I will immediately recognize that I am

crucifying Christ, confess my sin to God, hate that sin as God hates it, and abandon it, vowing never to repeat that sin ever again (I John 1:9).

**f. Sin without conscience.** "If I ever continue to live in sin without problems of conscience or without having the Lord intervene to straighten out my life then I realize that it indicates that I never really received Christ as Savior by faith in the first place (Heb. 12:8; I John 2:4; 3:10). I will therefore accept Christ as my Savior and my God, and will stop doing the things that put Him on the cross."

**g. Relying on the Holy Spirit to enable us to live a Christ honoring life.** If a person tries to live a righteous life through personal determination he or she is destined to failure. No one can live a righteous life or attempt to retain salvation by good works (Gal. 3:1). Salvation came through the mercy of God, and not through any works of righteousness that we have done (Titus 3:5; Eph. 2:8, 9). God has taken up permanent residence in our hearts through our trusting Christ as our Savior (the Holy Spirit, John 14:16; the Son, John 14:18; Col. 1:27; and the Father, John 14:23). The Holy Spirit permanently comes into the individual at the moment of true faith and regenerates that individual as a new spiritual being (Titus 3:5). If a person does not have the indwelling Holy Spirit then he or she has not truly trusted Christ as Savior nor has he or she ever been saved (Rom. 8:9). The Holy Spirit seals the new believer unto the day of redemption (Eph. 1:13, 14; 4:30). The Holy Spirit Baptizes the new believer and permanently places that new believer in the body of Christ, the true church (I Cor. 12:13). Although the indwelling Holy Spirit lives in us after we trust Christ as our Savior, this does not remove our personal responsibility to make all our decisions in harmony and obedience to the Character of Christ as commanded in the Scriptures. We are commanded to live and act in obedience to the commands of God as contained in the Bible, but we must rely on God who is indwelling us to energize our acts of obedience so they may have spiritual effectiveness and bear fruit.

The promise and effect of the indwelling Holy Spirit. Titus 3:5. Gal. 5.

The fine line between the enablement of God and the command of the will.

Doing the will of God by making His will our will.

## **2. THE IMPORTANCE OF PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY TO VICTORY OVER SIN.**

**Hebrews 4:12** states, "For the Word of God is quick (living), and powerful (energized with the ability to perform whatever is asked), and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and **is a discerner (critic) of the thoughts (considerations) and intents (conceptions) of the heart** ("the seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavors, etc. Thayer, p. 325).

Immediately after a person receives Christ as Savior, the new believer should be

encouraged to begin a daily personal study of the Bible in order to understand what sin is and to begin spiritual growth which will lead to personal effective service for Christ. This involves turning away from the old way of life and the associations which influence the thoughts and behavior in unholy ways, and turning to godly influences, especially the Scriptures, to be ultimately able to reach the world (I Cor. 15:33, 34). Immediately start the new believer looking in the Bible for direct commands of attitudes and behaviors that God expects of His own children. A good practice is to have the new believer underline all the commands that are found in daily Bible reading in a special color such as blue. This will make the commands of Scripture stand out in the Bible and can be easily used as a check-list for spiritual responsibilities. Teach the new believer to use this checklist to evaluate his or her life in relationship to the Word of God and to immediately change anything that he or she finds in life that conflicts with the character of Christ. Press the new believer to commit personally to be obedient to the Word of God.

a. **Sin is the disobedience to the commands of God.** "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

b. **Sin is also not doing what God commands us to do.** "Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

c. **Sin includes improper emotions and desires.** "Stop grieving the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and temper tantrums, and grudge bearing anger, and shouting arguments, and self-righteous pontification be put away from you, with all ugliness. Become gentle with everyone else, full of compassion, causing undeserved kindness to fall on everyone of you, even as God caused His grace to fall on you for Christ's sake. Therefore, become imitators of God, as dearly beloved children, and walk constantly in love, even as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us..." (Eph. 4:30—5:2).

d. **Effective Bible study.** The study of the Bible, especially for the new believer, should be for the purpose of changing the character and obedience of the believer, as well as equipping the believer to serve Christ more effectively. Psalm 119:9–11 emphasizes this characteristic of effective Bible study by stating, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Your Word. With my whole heart have I sought You: O let me not wander from Your commandments. Your Word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against You."

Help your new believer to establish a schedule for reading the Bible daily for the purpose of developing a holy and Christ honoring life. "Work hurriedly to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Tim. 2:15). More will be mentioned later about how to help the new believer start daily personal Bible study. A more complete discussion and schedule for beginning Bible study is also contained in the Techniques of Bible Study Handbook.

## **B. MAKE THE NEW BELIEVER INTO A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST.**

In **Matthew 28:19,20** we are commanded to make disciples of the people we are evangelizing, not merely to educate them about the historical facts and the teachings of the Bible concerning Christ. Placing faith in Christ as Savior and God also carries the responsibility with it of learning what the Bible teaches, doing what God commands, and developing into effective servants of Christ. This can only happen if the new believer commits himself or herself to Christ, to Grow in Him, and to serve Him effectively with all that he or she can become. Lead the new believer to a permanent personal commitment to Christ as soon as possible after receiving Christ as Savior.

## **1. WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?**

According to the Greek term, a disciple has certain characteristics that should be immediately developed in the lives of new believers. None of us as Christians are perfect. On the other hand, all of us owe a debt to the Lord to grow to spiritual maturity and become able to teach others to help them become what they should be in Christ (Heb. 5:11–14). Therefore, every believer must become a disciple of Christ if he or she is to become effective in Christ. The Greek lexicons include five main ideas under the concept of being a disciple.

**a. Truth.** A disciple is one who believes in the system of truth that enlists him or her to become a disciple and gives new meaning and effectiveness to life.

**b. A need to learn.** A disciple recognizes that he or she needs to learn and develop in the truth that gives new meaning to life.

**c. A recognition of authority.** A disciple of Christ recognizes that the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and godly, mature Christians are the teachers of spiritual truth.

**d. Submission.** A disciple of Christ submits to the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit through the Holy Scriptures and the accurate biblical teaching of spiritually mature Christians.

**e. Obedience.** A disciple of Christ is committed to be and is obedient to the Biblical truth which he or she has learned.

## **2. HELP YOUR NEW CONVERT TO DECIDE IMMEDIATELY TO BECOME A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST THROUGH DEDICATING HIS OR HER LIFE TO GROW IN CHRIST AND TO SERVE HIM.**

The second step a new believer should take is the step of becoming a disciple of Christ. This is done through dedicating his or her life to Christ to serve Him and to acknowledge Him Lord of all that is done. You should present this responsibility immediately to the new believer and encourage him or her to make that decision. Then you should begin to help the new believer to grow in the Lord through fellowship, Bible study, praying together, and getting the new believer involved in a good Bible teaching church. A fruitful area where you can help your new converts grow in the Lord is through service projects where you can serve together. This way you can set the example for

them, as well as be on hand to supervise and help them as they begin their life of service.

### **C. INSTRUCT THE NEW BELIEVER CONCERNING BAPTISM.**

In **Matt. 28:19, 20** Christ issues a command to make disciples of all nations. Part of that command involved the responsibility to baptize the new converts while another part of the command required teaching them. In Acts 2:38 the responsibility to be baptized is placed on the individual who has received Christ as Savior. Many people drift throughout life for years after they have received Christ without learning about this doctrine. Many others are confused concerning the responsibility to be baptized or the significance of this act. It is, therefore, important that you instruct the new believer concerning baptism as soon as possible. The following doctrinal concepts are important in your instructing your counselee.

1. **Baptism is a command of Christ.** Christ gave the command to baptize the individuals who believe in Him as their Savior (**Matt. 28:19, 20**). Those who believe in Christ as Savior are obligated to obey His commands. Therefore, all new believers should be informed concerning Christ's wishes and should take immediate steps to arrange baptism. Remember that delayed obedience is disobedience.

2. **The meaning of baptism.** Baptism is symbolic of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. **Romans 6:3–5** teaches the meaning of baptism where the believer, by going through the ritual of water baptism is giving testimony to the new relationship with Christ as the Savior Who died and raised from the dead to defeat the power of sin. Romans 6 states, "Do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that even as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection."

The new believer, by being baptized, is declaring to the world that he or she now belongs to Jesus Christ, is to be identified with Him, has renounced sin and has turned to a life of serving Him.

### 3. **The mode of baptism.**

Although there is much debate on the proper Biblical mode of baptism, I believe that the Bible teaches that baptism should be by immersion in water. The Greek word, "baptizo", means "to dip..., to immerse, submerge" (Thayer, p. 94). This is the Greek term for washing of cups, pots, pans, and the linen from the couches in **Mark 7:4**. All other supposed modes of baptism would not fit this passage.

#### **4. Believer's baptism.**

The ritual of baptism is a declaration by the believer that the believer is to be identified with Christ from now on. Baptism, as any other act of righteousness, does not save (Titus 3:5), but gives testimony to the believer's having received eternal life through faith in Christ. Peter's argument in both **Acts 10:44–48 and 15:7–9** was that the gentile believers were given the indwelling Holy Spirit at the time of their trusting Christ as Savior. Peter continues by saying, "**Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?**" (Acts 10:47). Cornelius and his family were clearly baptized after they had received Christ as Savior and had received the indwelling Holy Spirit. Therefore, any baptism prior to placing trust in Christ and receiving Him as Savior is invalid, and the unbaptized believer needs to submit to true believer's baptism as soon as possible.

#### **D. EMPHASIZE THE NEED FOR PERSONAL BIBLE STUDY AND FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH (Prov. 15:28; II Tim. 2:15).**

It is important that the new believer be started immediately in a habit of spending time with the Lord through Bible study and prayer. The sooner this habit can be started, the less likely will be the stumbling of the new believer in carnality and worldliness. The more the new believer walks with the Lord, studies the Bible, and listens to the Holy Spirit speaking through spiritually mature Christians, the greater will be his or her growth, and the greater will be the probability that he or she will find a significant service for Christ. Introduce your new converts immediately into the following simple Bible study methods and help them to systematically cover the whole Bible as soon as possible.

##### **1. PERSONAL DAILY READING OF THE BIBLE.**

Emphasize the systematic reading of the Bible as well as the reading of smaller select passages so the new believer will read through the whole Bible at least once a year. Help the new believer set up a schedule of Bible reading, starting with the Gospel of John and Acts first. Next have him or her read the portions that lead the new believer into consecrating his or her life to Christ, including I through III John, I and II Corinthians and the book of Romans. Then help him or her set up a system of Bible reading where he or she will check the chapter heading after reading each chapter, and then check off each book in the Bible index after having read all the chapters in each book. It may help to write in the date as the reading of each book is completed. It may also help if you will ask the new convert occasionally for a report on how this Bible reading project is progressing or to share with you what he or she is learning in systematically reading the Scripture. Be careful to make this a joy for the new believer. Be careful NOT to play the role of an authoritarian teacher giving an assignment. Remember that if you enjoy the Bible, your enthusiasm will be contagious to your new converts. If you, on the other hand, do not read the Bible for yourself, or if you find the Scriptures tedious, then so will this attitude be contagious to the new believers with whom you are working. You cannot teach what you do not know any more than you can come from where you have never

been. If you are rebelling against the Lord your attitude will contaminate your young Christians (Matt. 23:15). If you are disobedient to the Word of God and rebellious to Christ, those believers under your leadership perhaps will also become disobedient or rebellious. Hypocrisy slaughters young saints.

## **2. SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION.**

The memorization of the Scriptures is extremely important in the lives of all believers. Many remain spiritually retarded all through their lives because they neglect this phase of spiritual growth or cease growing after a good beginning. Therefore, they struggle through problems that God never intended His saints to have because they have ignored His instructions. Start the new believer off with a list of verses that every Christian should know and help him or her start to learn them. Emphasize that these verses do not have to be memorized over night. Stress the joy of meditating on the Word of God instead and help your new believer develop a voracious appetite for spiritual things.

## **3. OUTLINING THE BIBLE BOOKS.**

Another simple method of Bible study that you can easily teach your new believers is how to outline the Bible books as they read them. As a new believer becomes hungry for the Word and is enthusiastically reading the Scriptures, show him or her how to outline the basic arguments of the books of the Bible and to summarize the arguments by stating the Biblical arguments in the form of principles which will be followed throughout life.

## **4. BASIC DOCTRINE.**

The young Christian should also study Scripture in the collecting and analysis of passages which clearly show what the Bible teaches about specific subjects. The new believer should be trained to look for the following doctrinal areas in his or her daily Bible reading: (a) The inspiration of the Scriptures, (b) the character of God, (c) the deity and work of Christ, (d) the character and salvation of man, (e) the person and work of the Holy Spirit, (f) the character and work of angels, (g) the nature and work of the church, and (h) what will happen in the future. Teach your new believers to look for specific teachings of the Scripture when they are reading the Bible for themselves and to keep lists or cross-references for specific doctrinal teachings of the Bible. ***The Great Doctrines of the Bible*** by William Evans or another similar book on doctrine may be suggested to help your new believer to look up further doctrinal references for the Biblical topics being studied.

## **E. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.**

Many times people are won to Christ on the street or through the social contact with witnessing Christians. Many of these new believers are immediately abandoned and have no contact



with caring saints who can help them grow and provide redeemed friendship that they so desperately need at this crucial time in their lives. God commands us, "not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is; but encouraging one another: and so much the more, as you see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). You should immediately encourage the new believer to seek out and join a sound, Bible teaching church. Help by recommending a good church in his or her community. Be sure that you are seeking the spiritual welfare of the new believer, not merely seeking to build your own church membership when you recommend your own church.

1. Make sure that the church into which you send the new believer teaches the gospel clearly (II Tim. 1:7-14; Gal. 1:6-9). Many evangelical churches believe that they are teaching the doctrines of salvation. Because it is so often repeated in these churches, they only summarize the gospel and seldom teach enough for a person to know a sufficient amount about Christ to place faith in Him as Savior. Many of the people who "accept Christ as Savior" do not yet know of the doctrines of the deity of Christ or of His atoning death on the cross for their sins. It is necessary to know and accept both of these doctrines before one can be saved. If the church that the new convert joins is clear on the teaching of these doctrines then the convert has a chance to trust Christ as personal Savior and God if this person has never yet truly trusted Christ as Savior. The gospel emphasis is very important in the normal preaching of the church, especially for these new members.

2. Make sure that the church into which you send the new believer accurately and systematically teaches the doctrines of the Bible (Heb. 5:11; II Tim. 1:7-14; I Cor. 3:9-11). This will lay a foundation for spiritual growth as well as protect the new believer from false teaching, false cults, and embroilment in problems and sins. It will also give the new believer the knowledge to grow positively and will help him or her to prepare to serve Christ effectively and help reach others for Jesus Christ.

3. Make sure that the church into which you send the new believer stresses the importance of the consecrated life and encourages its members to yield themselves for service to Christ (Rom. 12:1, 2). This will help polarize the membership into unity in Christ and get them moving in the same direction rather than have the division that is seen in so many evangelical churches today.

4. Make sure that the church into which you send the new believer has an active Bible training program (Heb. 5:11-6:9; Eph. 4:11-16) before you recommend it to a new convert. Many evangelical churches have degenerated into social clubs for the saints so they could "live at ease in Zion" rather than serve Christ or reach the world. The new believer needs the excitement of seeing a vibrantly alive body actively serving the Lord so he or she can receive training and become effective also within the body of Christ. If secondary issues like the church sports league is more exciting to the members of the church than Christ or the prospect of preparing to serve Him, recommend that they join another church.

5. Make sure that the pastor of the church into which you or the new believer are members is personally committed to obeying the Word of God and is exerting a positive Biblical leadership on members. He can do this only by demanding that the church obey the Scriptures as a corporate body. If the shepherd eats the flock (Eze. 34:1-10) or is led by the sheep (I Sam. 15:1-15), then the

flock will be in danger. If your church does not have a spiritually strong pastor that is committed to Christ and the obedience of the Scriptures, exert whatever Biblical pressures is necessary to force him into proper church leadership, or force him to resign if he refuses. Remember that a pastor who is not constantly growing spiritually is a disobedient pastor, and he will cause those who place themselves under his leadership to stagnate spiritually even as he is stagnating. If you cannot influence your church to become Biblical then find another church where the pastors are obeying the Word of God and training the membership to serve Christ.

6. If there is no Bible teaching, Christ honoring church in the area, especially in countries where there are few believers, suggest that the believers in the area meet every week to systematically read the Bible together and pray. Many a solid church has sprung into existence from small groups as this. The reading of the Scripture will let God speak to the people, and prayer will allow the people to communicate with God.

## **F. HOW TO PRAY**

Teach the new believer how to pray. Many times new believers are shy and do not think that they can pray, but that they should have someone else pray for them. It helps them mature if you take a little time and talk to them about prayer. Show the new believer that when they read and apply the Scriptures that is when God is talking to him or her. On the other hand, when the believer prays the believer is talking to God.

Prayer is not something that only a few can do. Everyone can talk directly to God. Phil. 4:6 & 7 states, "Do not worry about anything, but by prayer (asking or what you want) and supplication (claiming what is your right according to the promises of God) with thanksgiving let your requests (what you need) be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passes all understanding will secure your heart and rational mind in Christ Jesus." This passage was sent as a message to the whole church and gives everyone the right to talk directly to God. One new convert after hearing a more mature believer pray stated in surprise, "Why, you talk to God as though He was your friend."

Thought prayer: God hears our thoughts (Is. 66:18; Ps. 139:2, 23, I Cor. 3:20). We should constantly live in the consciousness that it is Christ in us, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). We also should constantly remember that he hears our thoughts (I Cor. 3:20). Proverbs 24:9 tells us that the thoughts of foolishness are sin. On the other hand, if we remember that God hears all our thoughts we can have a running conversation with Him at any time of day or night. We will also guard our thoughts to make sure that our thoughts are not insulting to God. This awareness and running conversation with God increases our fellowship with Him.

Oral prayer: When we pray aloud we pray to be heard by men. This is legitimate when we are praying in a group and leading others to think and pray concerning specific needs and requests. Oral prayer is also legitimate in leading others to adore and worship God in spirit and in truth. Spoken prayers do not have to be flowery in language or using a special tone or expression that is not common to our normal conversation. Speaking to God is speaking to our best friend and we can relax and speak to Him in common language just as we speak to anyone else. Of course, this is

predicated that we have decent means of expression with others and have cleaned our thoughts up to accommodate the character of Christ and to be pleasing to God. The hypocrite prayed long in public with much repetition (Matt. 6:5-7), but seldom in private. Billy Graham also added a further dimension to public prayer. He pointed out that when we pray in private our prayers should be long, but when we pray in public our prayers should be short.

Confused prayer (Rom. 8:26,27): God wants His children to talk to Him. There are times, though, when people just do not know what to pray for or how to pray. I know that I often think of other individuals and pray for them, but I do not always know what they need. Romans 8:26, 27 state that in times like this that “the Spirit also helps our weaknesses; because we do not know what we should pray for as we should; but the Spirit intercedes for us with groans which cannot be expressed, and He which searches the hearts perceives what is the mind of the Spirit, because He pleads the cause for the saints according to God.” When you do not know exactly how to pray for anyone or for a need just express your submission to the will of God and your trust in His wisdom and allow God Himself through the Holy Spirit to convey what needs to be said.

Praying in faith: Hebrews 11:6 states that anyone praying to God must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who diligently seek Him. When you pray remember that God is pleased with your coming to Him and communicating with Him. But, if you do pray to Him, you must believe that He exists, and that He rewards and answers prayer to those who truly seek Him. Also remember that He does not always answer your prayers exactly as you request. Sometimes He says “Yes.” Sometimes He tells you “No.” At other times He tells you to wait. Pray in faith that He will do what is best, and although we do not always understand what God is doing, we can always rest assured that He does. Romans 8:28 states, “For we know that He (God) always works everything together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.” If we are submitted to His will and trusting Him to do as He promises then we can relax and accept anything that He does with thanksgiving.

## **The subjects of prayer**

In the Lord’s prayer Jesus was teaching the disciples how to pray. It is a simple formula that is easy to follow and can easily be taught to those who have just trusted Christ as Savior. The Lord’s prayer had three sections: (1) the salutation, (2) the body of the prayer, and (3) the closing of the prayer.

The Salutation opens the prayer. Jesus taught that we should start prayer by addressing God directly. He used the phrase, “Our Father Who is in heaven.” God is the Father because He created us, and He is **our** Father because He gave us eternal life through faith in Christ, accepting what Christ did when He died for our sins on the cross. That He is heavenly indicates that He is above all of nature and has the authority over everything ever existing. His character is holy, righteous and just. He is also loving, merciful and gracious. God becomes our personal Heavenly Father when we trust Him by faith and accept what He did in becoming flesh and paying the penalty for our sins by dying for us. This prayer presupposes that the person praying has a personal relationship with God through trusting Him as Savior. The salutation part of the prayer also expresses the submission of

the person praying to the character as well as the will of God when the prayer states, “Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” This is a statement that the person praying is in harmony and submitted to God’s will and His promises.

In the body of the prayer there are several subjects mentioned. The first thing mentioned was a request for daily needs: food, clothing, shelter, etc. These things are found within the context of the passage. Secondly, there is a request for forgiveness for the wrongs we have done. This asking for forgiveness also recognizes that the person praying must forgive others first before he or she can expect forgiveness. Although it is true that God forgives us before we ask, it is also true that a person who does not forgive those who have wronged him or her has not really developed that personal relationship with Christ and has not truly trusted Him as Savior (I John 2:4,; 3:6–10). Thirdly, in the body of prayer we are to ask for protection from testing and forcibly removing us from evil. The Greek word for deliverance here means to grab someone by the back of the neck and forcibly drag that person to safety.

In the conclusion to prayer, Jesus taught us to give another admission of our submission to Him and His authority and our prayer ends in adoration to God. He taught us to state, “For Yours is the kingdom, the honor, and the glory forever.”

The prayer ends with Amen. This is a solemn statement by the Jews that what was said was really true and sincerely meant.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are many things that could still be said concerning personal evangelism and working with new Christians. I would like to stress the fact that the responsibilities of evangelism are not complete until the new believer is stabilized in the faith, has dedicated his or her life to become the best person that he or she could become in the Lord and to serve Him. Help your new believers start the growth pattern of Biblical training that will make the difference between being a perpetual baby Christian or living in victory and serving with spiritual power and effectiveness. Remember that you cannot teach what you do not know any more than you can come from where you have never been. If you are not personally growing in Jesus Christ, you cannot expect to help others grow in Him.

When you accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior and your God you automatically received the responsibility to win people to Christ and to work with them until they were established in their faith and walk of life. Christ gave you the command (Matt. 28:19, 20, Acts 1:8). Now the fulfillment is up to you.

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