

## **Handbook for New Christians**

The Bible can seem big and complicated although its message of grace is quite simple. This handbook will help you understand what the Bible really says, and it will help protect you from teachings that are not from the Bible. The key is to rely only on the Holy Spirit to teach you because spiritual truth is *spiritually understood*. This means that your human mind is incapable of understanding the Bible unless the Holy Spirit teaches you. This principle is best explained in 1 Corinthians 2:1-16. (See Appendix)

There are four sections in this handbook:

### **Section I: The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

Helps you understand the important beliefs of Biblical faith.

### **Section II: How to Understand the New Testament**

Five critical insights that will help you understand the New Testament.

### **Section III: Important First Steps as a New Christian**

Things to remember when you first become a Christian.

### **Section IV: Life as a Christian**

Helpful information about how to live a fulfilling and obedient life of faith. Divided into 3 parts:

- How to Live the Christian Life
- Life with Other Christians
- Life with Unbelievers

### **Appendix**

Text of 1 Corinthians 2:1-16

Bible Verses Supporting the Biblical Gospel of Jesus Christ

Jesus Emptied Himself Verses

## **Section I: The Gospel of Jesus Christ**

The Gospel, or "Good News," of Jesus Christ can be divided into 4 basic truths: [1] the forgiveness of your sins, [2] as a believer, being given a new heart, [3] receiving the gift of righteousness and [4] your union/faith relationship with Jesus Christ. As you understand these 4 truths, you will understand the Gospel; you will also understand why Jesus Christ is the only way to God.

### **1. Your Sins Were Forgiven and Forgotten on the Cross of Jesus Christ**

When Jesus Christ went to the Cross nearly 2,000 years ago, God forgave all of your sins - past, present and future. Anything that you have ever, or will ever, do, think or say that is not righteous according to God's holy standard has *already* been forgiven. You *never* need to worry again about being forgiven. Since even the unsaved are forgiven, you as a believer are most certainly forgiven.

2 Corinthians 5:19 namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them**, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

1 John 2:2 and He Himself is the **propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**

There is one sin that God did not forgive on the Cross, the eternal and unforgivable sin of unbelief, the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior. Why is unbelief an eternal sin? It is because trusting Jesus Christ is the only way to be made righteous and being made righteous is the only way to be saved. So, if you reject Jesus Christ, you reject any hope of being made righteous and, consequently, any hope of being saved.

**Note:** Here is the first place where trusting the Holy Spirit to teach you becomes important. Most people are taught that only Christians are forgiven. And, they are taught that you must accept the gift of forgiveness in order to be forgiven. Neither of these beliefs is from the Bible. Rather, the Bible teaches that all sins of all people for all time were forgiven on the Cross of Jesus Christ, except the eternal sin of unbelief. It is the gift of righteousness, not the gift of forgiveness, which must be received in faith.

Mark 3:28a Truly I say to you, **all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men ...**

Hebrews 10:12a but **He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time**, sat down at the right hand of God ...

## **2. God Gives You a New Heart**

All may be forgiven but not all are saved because salvation is more than forgiveness. Jesus said:

John 3:3b ... **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**

So, what does it mean to be born again? This is where faith is necessary. When you begin trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior, that last sin of unbelief is forever gone. You now have no sins that are not forgiven. Two things then happen: [1] God takes out your old sinful spirit (also called your "heart" or your "nature") and replaces it with a brand new, clean heart and [2] God, as His Holy Spirit, comes to live in your new heart in order to make you righteous. This is what it means to be born again and being born again is specifically what saves you. These verses explain these two truths:

### A New Heart:

[1] Romans 6:6 knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin** (your old sinful nature) **might be done away with, that we should no longer be**

**slaves to sin;** (At the moment you begin trusting Jesus as Savior, God removes your old, sinful heart.)

[1] Ezekiel 11:19a **I'll give you a new heart.** I'll put a new spirit in you. (The Message) (God replaces your old sinful heart with a brand new, clean heart.)

#### Being Made Righteous:

[2] 1 Corinthians 3:16-17b Do you not know that you are a **temple of God**, and that the **Spirit of God dwells in you?** [17] ... for **the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.** (The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit makes you righteous.)

[2] Romans 8:9b ... if indeed **the Spirit of God dwells in you.** But **if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ,** he does not belong to Him. (Jesus now lives in your born again heart.)

**Note:** Saying that "Jesus lives in your heart" is the very same thing as saying "the Holy Spirit dwells in you."

With a new heart, you have become a brand new person.

2 Corinthians 5:17 So that **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation;** the old things have passed away; **behold, all things have become new!** (Literal Translation)

Your inner, born again spirit is the real, essential you; your physical body is your temporary "earth suit." It was not changed when you trusted Christ as Savior. The inner part of you is righteous but the outer part of you is still dead because of sin. This is why believers can still sin.

Romans 8:10 and if Christ is in you, **though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.**

Even though your "earth suit" causes you trouble, one day it will be exchanged for a new, righteous body to go along with your already righteous inner spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:2 For indeed **in this house we groan,** longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,

Romans 8:23b ... even **we ourselves groan within ourselves,** waiting eagerly for {our} adoption as sons, **the redemption of our body.**

### **3. God Makes You Righteous**

Now that you have a new, clean heart, God has a "clean vessel" within you where He can live. He could not live in your old sinful heart, nor could He give you a new clean heart until that last sin of unbelief was removed from your life.

Through faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior, God gives you the greatest gift you will ever receive. The reason that faith is essential here is because only when you turn from unbelief to faith in Jesus Christ can God make you righteous.

Romans 5:17b ... much more **those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. (Notice the phrase, "those who receive." It is those who receive by faith the gift of righteousness who are made righteous and are saved.)

**Note:** Nowhere in Scripture does it say that you must accept the gift of forgiveness before you are forgiven. Forgiveness was God's gift of grace to all people; righteousness is God's gift of grace to those who believe.)

The Cross was for sin and death. The resurrection is for righteousness and life. The Cross allowed God to forgive you; the resurrection allows God to give you a new heart and then come to live in you to make you righteous *and* give you eternal life. Here is an easy way to understand this important truth: You are righteous because the Righteous One lives in you, and you possess eternal life because Eternal Life now dwells in your heart. Both righteousness and eternal life are really the person of Jesus Christ.

These verses make it clear that you, a believer, are literally righteous here and now in your born again heart:

Ephesians 4:24 and put on the new self, **which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth. (Note that this verse says "has been" created in righteousness, not "will be.")

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, **that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Hebrews 10:14 **By his one sacrifice he has forever set free from sin** the people he brings to God. (Contemporary English Version)

Many Christians fear that they can lose their salvation if they sin too much or commit particularly bad sins. This kind of thinking is focused on sin, not on what God focuses on – righteousness. The Christian life is all about righteousness, not worrying about or controlling sin. Yes, grace can be abused but God has made His home inside of you so that you can live a righteous life.

Because Jesus lives in your new heart, you can never sin again in your born again spirit. Jesus cannot sin; therefore, you cannot sin in your new heart.

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** (This verse is talking about your new spirit, not your still-able-to-sin mortal "house.")

#### **4. Your Relationship with Jesus Christ: Union and Faith**

Your new relationship with Jesus Christ, as a member of the family of God and, is one of union and faith. You are in union, or oneness, with Jesus in your born again heart and you respond to His life being lived out in you by following Him in faith. Jesus lives, you follow in faith. This is a real, literal union, not an abstract idea. You are "in Christ" and Christ is "in" you.

Christ "in" you means that Jesus lives in your born again heart.

John 14:20 In that day you shall know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

But what does it mean to be "in Christ"? Not only does Jesus come to live in you, He *joins* as one with you in your new spirit. Jesus and you become *one* spirit. Again, this is a literal union; Jesus really lives as one spirit with you in your new heart.

1 Corinthians 6:17 But **the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit**

This new relationship is now inseparable; it is so close and so intimate that the Bible says that you “partake” in God’s divine nature.

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them **you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

This does not mean that *you* become divine, but rather that Divine has joined as one with you. This is why you are now righteous in your born again heart. This is why you possess eternal life. And, this is why you can never lose your salvation.

1 John 5:20b ... and **we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.**

John 10:28-29 and **I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.** [29] My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.**

**Important Fact:** It was God’s decision, not yours, to leave you in a mortal body that is still dead because of sin. You cannot help that you are in this state. But, you have a choice: [1] you can live by your own human strength in which case you will fail, sin more often and not do the good works that God has prepared for you or [2] you can walk in faith.

Faith means actively following the life that Jesus is living in you. Jesus lives out His life in you *all the time*, no matter how you respond. You may not even be aware of this if you are a new Christian or if no one has ever taught you to listen for the voice of the Lord in you. Many Christians have no everyday awareness that Christ lives in them or that He is living out His life through them. Even with many sincere Christians, their lives are dominated by their mortal flesh because they have been taught to try with all their human strength to please God. Without knowing it, they are letting the part of them that has not yet been redeemed rule their life. As a result, they do not hear the voice of the Lord.

Galatians 3:11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident (you cannot live righteously by your own works); for, **"The righteous man shall live by faith"** (you *can* live a righteous life pleasing to God as you walk in faith).

**Note:** This is something worth remembering: the Gospel is for unbelievers; it tells them about new life in Jesus Christ; everything. after that should focus on learning to walk in faith.

Even Jesus lived by faith. Because of this, He is your *model* for a life of faith. Jesus said over and over that He did not *initiate* any of the works that He did. Rather, He did what the Father in Him did. These verses will help you know how to live by faith.

John 5:19b ... **the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing ...**

John 5:30a **I can do nothing on My own initiative.**

John 14:10b ... The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but **the Father abiding in Me does His works.** (The Father in Jesus was the one who did His works; Jesus in you is the one who does His works through you.)

In summary, you cannot sin in your born again heart; this is why you can never lose your salvation. But, you can sin in your not-yet-redeemed mortal body; this is why you live by faith. This verse sums up your union/faith relationship with Jesus Christ.

Galatians 2:20a **I have been crucified with Christ**; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

**Note:** Check out the many Bible verses at the end of this handbook that support the 4 truths of the Gospel: forgiveness, a new heart, being made righteous and your union/faith relationship with Jesus Christ. (See Appendix)

## Section II: Five Insights to Understand the New Testament

As mentioned in the very beginning of this handbook, it is essential that you trust only the Holy Spirit to teach you the Bible. The Holy Spirit will teach you in one of two ways: directly or through someone to whom He has given the spiritual gift of teaching. When the Holy Spirit teaches you directly, it may come in different ways. Sometimes it will be while you are reading the Bible. For example, you might have read a certain verse many times but now, all of a sudden, it makes sense to you – this is the Holy Spirit teaching you. At other times, He might teach you through some life circumstance. It is hard to predict how the Holy Spirit will teach you, but when He does, you will know it. Your confidence will grow as you keep asking Him to open your eyes to *His* truth.

When God teaches you through a person to whom He has given the spiritual gift of teaching, it is not always easy to recognize those who have the gift from those who do not. Many people teach the Bible but a lot of them do not have the spiritual gift of teaching. Notably, the Apostle Paul said it does not matter if the teacher is a polished speaker; what matters is if the person is teaching the Bible accurately.

1 Corinthians 2:4 (the Apostle Paul speaking) and **my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,**

**Important Fact:** Unless you give all of your beliefs over to God, He cannot teach you. To illustrate, if you believe that you are still a “sinner” after being saved, then you are not going to believe that you are fully and forever righteous in your new, born again spirit. Your old belief is blocking what the Holy Spirit is trying to teach you. Giving up your old beliefs is not easy; only the Holy Spirit can make this happen. But, when you do, you will be teachable and you will be able to “hear” the voice of the Lord. You will begin to understand the Bible like never before.

So, if it is so important to listen only to the Holy Spirit, why should you read this or any other book? You might ask, “Should I believe what I read in Christian books?” The answer is simple: you should not. In the case of this handbook, it was written with the strong belief that it reflects the teaching of the Holy Spirit. But, it was also written by a mere mortal. Therefore, it is recommended that you read the material carefully but then take it to the Lord and ask Him to separate truth from error.

Below are five insights that will help you understand the New Testament as God intended it to be understood. They clear up a lot of confusion and they counter many of the teaching errors that are common even today. The first one is what has been said already, but it deserves even further comment.

### **Insight #1: All Spiritual Truth is Understood by the Illuminating Revelation of the Holy Spirit**

Scripture declares that all spiritual truth is understood only by the illuminating revelation of the Holy Spirit since the human mind is incapable of comprehending God's unfathomable truths. God's truth is the transforming agent of change that allows you, a Christian, to understand the Bible and hear God's spiritual "voice" teaching and leading you. God's truth is what *grows* you

as a believer. The road to the abundant life of Jesus Christ is God's pure, unfiltered and untainted Word as taught by the Holy Spirit.

People seem to have a strong natural desire to figure out things using their own intelligence and ability to reason. This probably works well in most things, but not when it comes to understanding the Bible. God cautions you to avoid teaching that comes from human reasoning.

1 Corinthians 2:13a things we also speak, **not in words taught by human wisdom**, but in those **taught by the Spirit**, ...

It is the Holy Spirit alone who can make you understand the Bible. Trust Him and He will teach you. Then, you will know how to walk in faith.

John 16:13a But when **He, the Spirit of truth**, comes, **He will guide you into all the truth**;

Colossians 1:9b-10a ... that you may be **filled with the knowledge** of His will in **all spiritual wisdom and understanding**, [10] so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, ...

### **Insight #2: The New Testament Must be Interpreted in its Original Context**

The Bible was written by Jews primarily to Jews. This does not mean that God is excluding the Gentiles from His written word. It is just that God revealed Himself to the world through His chosen people, the children of Israel. The Gentiles are presently being “grafted” into a *Jewish* salvation. (Look up Romans 11:17-25 to understand this better.)

John 4:22b (Jesus speaking) ... for **salvation is from the Jews**.

For many centuries, people actually lost the understanding that Jesus was a Jew. There was a lot of anti-Semitism against the Jews. Many simply ignored the fact that Jesus, the Prophets and the Apostles were all Jews. As a result, Gentiles reinterpreted the Bible without understanding its proper 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish context. This changed the message and created two unbiblical doctrines that negatively affect most Christians: a salvation message that focuses on sin and forgiveness instead of righteousness and the indwelling life of Christ, and the teaching that Christians are still sinners.

So, as you read the Bible, it is important to recognize to whom the letter or book was written. Here is an illustration that has had significant consequences. For a long time, there has been a controversy over “predestination” versus “free will”; in other words, does God choose you or do you choose God. The predestination group will usually cite a number of passages to “prove” their point; Romans 8 is often used as is Ephesians 1:

Ephesians 1:5,11 **He predestined us to adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ... [11] also we have obtained an inheritance, **having been predestined according to His purpose** who works all things after the counsel of His will,

But, verse 12 makes it clear that the Apostle Paul was speaking to the Jews.

Ephesians 1:12 to the end that **we who were the first to hope in Christ** would be to the praise of His glory. (The “we who were the first to hope in Christ” were the Jews.)

Thus, this argument is often “proven” by verses that don’t even mean what the debater thinks they mean. This is called “proof texting” and it is quite common; it is when a verse is taken out of context to “prove” some point.

In chapter 2, verse 11, Paul shifts his attention directly to the Gentiles ...

Ephesians 2:11 **Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh**, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands -

Ephesians is probably the easiest of all the letters of the New Testament to identify the target audience. Ephesians 1:1 – 2:10 was written specifically to the Jews; Ephesians 2:11 – 3:21 was written to the Gentiles; and, chapters 4-6 were written to all. (The original letters were not divided into chapters and verses; that came hundreds of years later.)

But, and this is a really big “but,” every word of the entire letter is critically important to both Jew and Gentile. Ephesians speaks of the eternal purposes of God and of the fact that Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ.

Every word in the Bible is important to understand, but it must be understood in its proper context. As a believer, you have the mind of Christ because Jesus Christ lives in your new heart. It is by faith, not human reasoning, that you will come to know what the Bible really teaches.

As a general rule, stay in the New Testament until you understand it. The Gospel of John is a good place to start; Romans and Ephesians are good 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> books to read. Prophecy is less important than the Gospel and less important than learning to live by faith. The Old Testament was fulfilled by Jesus Christ and much of it is about Jewish life under the Hebrew Law. Yet, many of the great stories of the Bible are in the Old Testament. Also, Psalms and Proverbs are great books if you read them in their proper context.

### **Insight #3: All People are Spiritual Beings Living in Mortal, Human "Tents."**

Your inner spirit was redeemed and forever made righteous when God saved you. But, your outer mortal body and human soul (that is, your human thoughts and emotions) still await a future redemption.

**Note:** There is much confusion about the word “soul.” Many people think “spirit” and “soul” are the same - they are not. And, many believe that your soul is saved when you trust Jesus Christ as Savior. Using the Apostle Paul’s use of the word “spirit,” it is the inner part of you that has been redeemed and made righteous. Your “soul,” commonly defined as your mind, will and emotions, is part of your outer mortal self that has not yet been redeemed or made righteous. Here is how you can know if your soul has already been saved or not: is every thought and emotion you have perfectly and always righteous? If not, then your “soul” is part of your mortal self that has not yet been redeemed.

So, there is a *big* difference between your inner redeemed spirit and your outer not-yet-redeemed and still-able-to-sin mortal body and human soul. You are righteous in your born again spirit; as a result, you are *always* in perfect union with Jesus Christ because He lives in

your heart. But, in your mortal body, you are still in your original state: dead because of sin. This verse explains the difference.

Romans 8:10 If **Christ is in you**, though **the body is dead because of sin**, yet **the spirit is alive because of righteousness**.

**Romans 8:10 Explained:** If **Christ is in you** (this means the verse is speaking to Christians), though **the body is dead because of sin** (because your physical body *has not yet* been redeemed or made righteous), yet **the spirit is alive because of righteousness** (because your spirit *has* been redeemed and made righteous).

**Note:** When a believer dies, their mortal body is placed in the grave because it has not yet been made righteous; but, their spirit goes to be with the Lord forever because it is righteous and can stand in the presence of a holy God.

You cannot live a righteous life pleasing to God by your own human strength since your mortal body is still dead because of sin. Even though people do not often think of themselves as having two parts, the Bible explains this directly.

John 3:6 That which is **born of the flesh is flesh**, and that which is **born of the spirit is spirit**. (Your spirit and your mortal body *are* different even though they are both you.)

2 Corinthians 5:4 For indeed **while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened**, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this **treasure in earthen vessels**, that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves; (This is the reason that you still live in a mortal body - so that your power to live life comes from God, not yourself.)

The Apostle Paul says that there is hope.

2 Corinthians 4:16 Therefore we do not lose heart, but though **our outer man is decaying**, yet **our inner man is being renewed day by day**. (It is a struggle living in your mortal body; faith overcomes the struggle.)

Romans 8:23b even **we ourselves groan within ourselves** (because it is not righteous like your inner spirit), waiting eagerly for {our} adoption as sons, **the redemption of our body** (then, your salvation will be complete in both spirit and body).

Believers understand that they are waiting for that moment in the “twinkling of an eye” when they will be changed from their present mortal state to an eternal state; what most don’t recognize is that they have already been changed in their born again heart. (Read 1 Corinthians 15:35-58 to understand how your body will one day be changed.)

#### **Insight #4: Jesus, Eternal God and Creator, Emptied Himself to Live Fully as a Man During His Time on Earth**

Jesus Christ *is* the eternal God and Creator, the "unoriginated" God with no beginning and no end. He is sovereign over all things and creator of all things. The Bible is clear on this teaching.

Isaiah 9:6 For **a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us**; And the government will rest on His shoulders; and **His name will be called** Wonderful Counselor, **Mighty God, Eternal Father**, Prince of Peace. (Note that the names given to Jesus include the names the Bible uses for the Father, the Son *and* the Holy Spirit.)

Colossians 1:16 For by Him (Jesus) **all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible**, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities - **all things have been created through Him and for Him**.

Yet, because of this, you may think of Jesus during His time on this earth as being vastly different than you. You might say, "Jesus was the 'God-Man' while I'm just 'a sinner saved by grace.'" This non-Biblical belief hides two critical truths and makes the life that Jesus lived seem far removed from your experience: [1] the power that Jesus had to live life is the same power that God gave you; and [2] when you trusted in Christ as Savior, God changed you from a lowly sinner into the highest created being in the universe - a righteous saint. (You are the highest created being because God now lives in you; He does not live in angels.)

Scripture declares that the eternal God emptied Himself to live fully as a human while here on the earth.

Philippians 2: 5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, **although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself**, taking the **form of a bond-servant**, and being made in the **likeness of men**. Being found in **appearance as a man**, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a Cross.

John 1:14 And **the Word became flesh** (He became human), and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Bible is filled with passages to support the fact that Jesus became fully human in order to become like you in "all things," yet without sin.

Hebrews 2:17a Therefore, **He had to be made like His brethren in all things**, ...

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **One who has been tempted in all things** {as we are}, **yet without sin**.

The reason this insight is so important is that you *can* live a righteous life pleasing to God because the Holy Spirit that lives in you is the same Holy Spirit that lived in Jesus. This does not mean that you will never stumble. But, it does mean that you have the very same power to live life that Jesus had. The only way you will ever be able to do the good works that God has prepared for you and the only way you will ever live righteously is to live by faith.

**Note:** There are 25 other verses that show that Jesus emptied Himself to become fully human while here on this earth. (See Appendix)

### **Insight #5: The Law Was an Exclusive Covenant Between God and Israel**

Christians and unbelievers are *not* under the Mosaic Law because Jesus Christ ended the "external" Law and *moved* His righteousness, as reflected in the Law, into the hearts of those who trust Him. Jesus fulfilled and ended the Law *prior* to God ever offering salvation to the

Gentiles. Now, the power of the Holy Spirit in you fulfills the Law instead of you trying and failing, by your own human strength, to fulfill the righteousness of the Law.

Hebrews 10:16a This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: **I will put my laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them, ...**

Of the several reasons that God gave the children of Israel the Old Covenant Law; the primary purpose was to be the standard by which God judged His people as righteous or unrighteous. No one could fulfill the Law by their own human strength. So, God sent His Son into the world to fulfill the Law for His people. Now, Jesus is the way a person becomes righteous; you can never be counted as righteous before God by trying to keep the Law yourself.

Romans 10:4 For **Christ is the end of the law for righteousness** to everyone who believes.

These next verses show that the Law was given only to the children of Israel. The Gentiles had their conscience, not the Law, to tell them whether they were doing right or wrong. Today unbelievers have their conscience and the laws of their government.

Romans 9:4 who are **Israelites, to whom belongs** the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and **the giving of the Law** and the temple service and the promises,

Romans 2:14-15 For when **Gentiles who do not have the Law** do instinctively the things of the Law, these, **not having the Law**, are a law to themselves, [15] in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, **their conscience bearing witness and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them**, (Their conscience told them the difference between right and wrong.)

The Old Covenant Law was replaced by New Covenant grace.

Hebrews 8:13 When He said, "**A new covenant,**" **He has made the first obsolete.** But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear.

Hebrews 10:9b ... **He takes away the first** (Old Covenant Law) **in order to establish the second** (New Covenant grace).

It may seem counterintuitive at first to think that neither Jew nor Gentile is under the Law of God. There certainly has been a lot of controversy about it, particularly over displaying the Ten Commandments in public places. But, because of a sinful heart that all inherited from Adam, the Law actually caused transgressions to *increase*, not a decrease. And, it resulted in the death of the people.

Romans 7: 9 **I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;** (Since it was holy, the Law itself was not the actual cause of death; rather, indwelling sin was the cause of their death.)

The holy Law combined with a sinful heart actually gives sin its power. The Law, therefore, does not have the power to curb sin in the mortal flesh. Therefore, those who teach that you are under the Law of God are, without knowing it, teaching something that will cause more sin, not less sin.

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, and **the power of sin is the law;**

This is the reason that the Apostle Paul referred to the Law as the “ministry of death” and the “ministry of condemnation.” Since the people were not able to keep the Law through their own human self effort, righteousness before God could never come through human works. The Law only brought the wrath of God.

2 Corinthians 3:6,7,9 servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for **the letter kills**, but the Spirit gives life. 7 But if **the ministry of death** (the Law), in letters engraved on stones, [9] For if **the ministry of condemnation** has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness (faith in Christ) abound in glory.

Romans 4:15a for **the Law brings about wrath**, ...

There is a second reason that the Gentiles were never under the Hebrew Law: the Law itself was the actual barrier between Jew and Gentile. It kept the Gentiles from drawing near to God and receiving the promises of God. So, if the Hebrew Law were still in effect, the Gentiles would have no hope of salvation.

Ephesians 2:14-15a For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups (Jews and Gentiles) into one, and **broke down the barrier of the dividing wall**, [15] **by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments** (the Mosaic Law) ...

Ephesians 2:12 remember that **you** (Gentiles) **were at that time** (that is, the time of the Law) **separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.**

So, what is your relationship to the Law today? The *spirit* of the Law, its representation of God's holiness, is eternal. But the *doing* of the Law was replaced by Jesus Christ 2,000 years ago. The Law under the Old Covenant was *external*, powered and accomplished by *works* (human self effort). The "laws" under the New Covenant are *internal*, powered and accomplished by the *spiritual power* of Jesus Christ in you. The Old was imperfect because of human weakness; the New is perfect because of Jesus Christ.

Romans 3:31 **Do we then overthrow the law by this faith?** By no means! **On the contrary, we uphold the law.** (You uphold the righteousness of the Law because you can live righteously by the power of Christ in you; you cannot live righteously by your own human strength.)

## Section III: Important First Steps as a Christian

### **Remember the Most Important Beliefs**

These are the most important truths in true Biblical faith:

1. All sins were forgiven and forgotten on the Cross of Jesus Christ, except the eternal sin of unbelief.
2. All are forgiven but not all are saved because salvation is more than forgiveness. Only when that last sin of unbelief is turned to faith in Christ does God remove your old sinful nature (also known as your "heart" or your "spirit") and replace it with a brand new, clean heart.
3. Now a "clean vessel," the Holy Spirit has a place in you to live. His indwelling presence makes you fully and forever righteous in your born again spirit. You are righteous because the Righteous One has joined as one with you; and, you possess eternal life because Eternal Life now lives in your heart.
4. But, you still "live" in the same mortal body as you did before you became a Christian, and it is still dead because of sin. Your physical body awaits a future redemption. This is the precise reason you live by faith: you cannot live a righteous life through your own human strength. But, as you follow Jesus Christ, who literally lives in your new heart, He will live out His righteous life in you and He will do His good works through you. You follow in faith what Christ in you is doing.

**Note:** To read the dozens of verses that proclaim these 4 truths, [Click Here](#)

### **Get Baptized**

Now that you are a Christian, it is important that you get baptized. Baptism in water is a picture of the spiritual baptism of the Holy Spirit. It is a teaching tool to help you understand how God saved you.

Anywhere you can find water deep enough to immerse in will be fine - river, lake, pool, etc. It is good if a Bible teacher can baptize you; but if not, any Christian can baptize you. Do not worry if you are not physically able to be baptized because water baptism does not save you; it is a picture of the spiritual baptism that does save you. In this case, have a Bible teacher explain the meaning of baptism and picture in your mind being physically baptized.

As you go down into the water, it is a picture of you dying and being buried with Christ in your old sinful nature. This represents God taking out your old sinful heart. On the Cross, Jesus actually "became sin" on your behalf; He died so that you would not have to die. This is why God is able to make you righteous when you trust in Jesus as Savior.

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him (Jesus) **who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

When you come up out of the water, it pictures being raised with Christ from the dead. Jesus had to be raised from the dead; so do you. God gives you a new, clean heart and the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. You have been born again into the family of God and now have new life in Jesus Christ. God transfers you out of the kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Romans 6:3-4 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus **have been baptized into His death?** [4] Therefore **we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead** through the glory of the Father, **so we too might walk in newness of life.**

Remember, your salvation thus far is spiritual; in the future - when Jesus returns - you will get a new, righteous body to go along with your already righteous new heart.

### **Pray**

Talk to God about anything and everything. Then listen for His "voice." It probably won't be an audible voice\* but one you hear deep down inside of you. Your salvation is spiritual and your life with God is primarily spiritual - that is, on the inside instead of being experienced through your physical senses.

**\*Note:** There are many reports in Muslim countries of God speaking to people in an audible voice. This is not the norm but it apparently does happen.

To hear the voice of God, remember that God wants to talk with you. His "voice" may come in a thought or some kind of inner sense. God knows how to communicate with you; listen in faith. It will take time to learn to distinguish the voice of God from your own inner voice and the voices of the world around you.

You are part of God's family now and He wants to share His life with you. God always loved you before, but now you are even more special because you are part of His family. Ask God to reveal Himself to you and to teach you to live by faith so that He can do His good works through you. Pray for others as well. Don't focus too much on physical things as many are in the habit of doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 **pray without ceasing**; (This means that God wants you to talk with Him often.)

The purpose of prayer is to build your trust in God, not to bemoan your faults. Many will try to tell you that you have to confess your sins every day or you will be "out of fellowship" with God; they use 1 John 1:9 as the reason.

1 John 1:9 **If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

This is *not* what the Bible teaches. Although people are not aware of it, the confession of sins actually denies the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God forgave all sins, except unbelief, when Jesus shed His blood on the Cross. Asking for forgiveness day after day means you don't really believe that Jesus already accomplished forgiveness on the Cross. Some people will say, "No, no, this is "family" forgiveness, not "salvation" forgiveness. "Family" forgiveness is a made up notion that is not found in the Bible.

Although confession is one of the most universally practiced rituals among Christians, there is absolutely no Biblical basis for confessing your sins. Confessing is only mentioned two times in the New Testament. James tells believers to admit their faults to one another and the Apostle John gives a salvation message to his fellow Jews encouraging them to believe in Jesus Christ so that they can come into fellowship (that is, salvation fellowship) with God. The confession of

sins is *never*, even one time, taught by the Apostle Paul. Do you think the Apostle Paul, the one and only Apostle to the Gentiles, would neglect to teach such an important doctrine? Confession of sins is a product of religion, not Biblical faith.

**Note:** Religion is what a person can do to please God. Biblical faith, based on grace, is what God has done for you. By faith, you receive what God has already done for you through the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by faith you follow the life of Jesus Christ in you.

### **Walk in Faith**

(Review Section I, #4 for what has already been said about walking in faith.)

There are several ways that the Bible says the same thing when it comes to living a life of faith; it uses phrases like “live by faith,” “walk in the Spirit,” “have your mind set on the Spirit,” “walk in Him,” “stand firm” – they are all saying the same thing. Faith is actively following in your mortal body the life that Jesus Christ is living out through you from His dwelling place in your born again heart. Jesus lives the life; you follow in faith.

Another way to understand faith is to learn about the “fruit of the Spirit.” This taught in Galatians.

Galatians 5:22-23 But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, [23] gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law.

The last phrase, “against such things there is no law,” means that these 9 qualities can never be lived out by human self effort. They come from the Holy Spirit living in you (that is, Jesus living in your heart).

Jesus lives out *His* life in you. He loves others through you, is gentle through you and does good works through you. Good works are always and without exception initiated by Jesus; works that have eternal value never originate in your own mortal flesh.

Jesus is your peace and He is your patience. And, what may be particularly helpful is the fact that Jesus is your *self-control*. Jesus, by His power in you, will control your behavior and keep you from temptations and bad habits.

### **Read the Bible**

(Review Section II, Insight #2 for what has already been said about reading the Bible in its proper context.)

The two best faith builders are reading the Bible and talking to God.

The Bible is a collection of books and letters written by the Prophets and Apostles of God. As mentioned, stay in the New Testament until you understand it; then move on to the Old Testament. The reason for this is that the Old Testament is mostly about the Mosaic Law which God gave only to the children of Israel. Jesus fulfilled the Law in order to replace it with Himself as the way to be counted as righteous before God. No one was ever keep the Law; now, Jesus makes you righteous in your born again heart when you believe that He is your Savior. (See Section II, Insight #5 for a better understanding of the Mosaic Law.)

Even the four Gospels are mostly about Jewish life under the Law, but they are the record of the life of Jesus. It is very important to separate Law from grace. Law is human self effort (the Bible

calls it “works”); grace is the power of God as He initiates His good works in you. Grace is Christ living His life *in* you and *through* you.

The Gospel of John is a good place to start. Then, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians and Philippians are important next books. Just remember to read the Bible in its proper context as most of the Bible was written to Jewish believers. As always, trust only the Holy Spirit to teach you.

Someone, from time to time, may try to tell you there are other “gospels” that are not in the Bible. Just remember that the Bible has enough truth for a lifetime.

### **Gather with Other Believers - "Church"**

Almost everyone thinks that you go to “church.” This is impossible because “church” is not a building or a place but “church” is a people. Every member of the Body of Christ makes up the “ecclesia” – the church. In the early church, Christians used to gather in someone's home. Today, they usually meet in a designated building. The early church was better because it allowed all the Christians to be equal and to exercise their spiritual gifts as led by the Holy Spirit. Today, most sit passively and listen to sermons and music.

Did you know that sermons were not a big thing in the early church? This is the culture that has been built up over the centuries. The Gospel is easy to understand if you rely on the Holy Spirit to teach you. You do not need to spend months and years learning something that can be stated in just 4 sentences (see “Most Important Beliefs” at the beginning of this section). The purpose of gathering together is to learn to walk in faith. You will never learn to walk in faith sitting listening to a sermon. This is because learning to walk in faith is learning how to act, think and feel about the everyday things that confront you in your life. And, it is learning to hear the voice of the Lord so that you can follow what Jesus Christ is initiating in your life.

The most important thing about gathering with other believers is that Jesus Christ, Himself, is the head of the meeting.

Colossians 1:18 **He (Jesus) is also head of the body, the church;** and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that **He Himself will come to have first place in everything.**

In the early church, there was not a separation between “clergy” and “laity.” This religious custom has not been helpful for many reasons, the most important of which is that the pastor becomes the head of the meeting instead of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is for unbelievers. All subsequent activity - “church” - should focus on learning to walk by the power of the Holy Spirit in you. It is very important to be around other believers. They will help you grow in your faith. You will see the power of Christ working through them and through you. But, beware of people who try to make you follow laws and rules instead of the inner life of Jesus Christ.

### **Use Your Spiritual Gift(s)**

Learning to walk in faith has been talked about twice already. Another way to understand faith is through “exercising” your spiritual gift(s). Today, there are two main points of view when talking

about spiritual gifts. One says that spiritual gifts died out with the canonization of the Bible; this is not true. The other group says that everyone should speak in tongues; this also is not true.

The Bible says that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to every believer.

1 Corinthians 12:7 But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. (The Holy Spirit gives every believer a spiritual gift.)

Spend a minute reading this section of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthian church.

1 Corinthians 12:8-14 For to one is given **the word of wisdom through the Spirit**, and to another **the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit**; [9] to another **faith by the same Spirit**, and to another **gifts of healing by the one Spirit**, [10] and to another **the effecting of miracles**, and to another **prophecy**, and to another **the distinguishing of spirits**, to another **various kinds of tongues**, and to another **the interpretation of tongues**. [11] But **one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills**. [12] For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the **members of the body**, though they are many, **are one body, so also is Christ**. [13] For **by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. [14] For the body is not one member, but many.

A spiritual gift is simply the way that Jesus Christ lives out His life through you. So, if you believe that there are no spiritual gifts, what do you think is going to happen? You will not hear the voice of the Lord leading you. Or, if you believe that the only gift is speaking in tongues, then you will not hear the voice of the Lord either.

You have been given a spiritual gift, one that the Holy Spirit chose for you. Jesus actively lives His life in you and He does His good works through you using the spiritual gift given to you. A spiritual gift is not an ability that God has given you in your mortal flesh, like the talent of singing. In fact, a spiritual gift is not dependent on your human abilities at all. Rather, it is the power of Christ being lived out through you. The two primary chapters in the New Testament that describe spiritual gifts are 1 Corinthians 12 (the entire chapter) and Romans 12 (especially verses 1 through 8). The important thing is that the Holy Spirit is the one who determines who receives which gift.

1 Corinthians 12:11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, **distributing to each one individually just as He wills**.

Spiritual gifts benefit both believers and unbelievers, and help you grow in your faith. Here are some of the gifts; this is not a complete list.

**Prophecy** - being able to understand the Bible to a greater degree than other believers.

**Service** - helping others.

**Teaching** - explaining to others what the Bible says and how to walk in faith.

**Exhortation** - encouraging others.

**Giving** - sharing your food, money, time or other things.

**Leadership** – planning and directing activities.

**Hospitality** - welcoming strangers into your home.

**Mercy** - showing special kindness to people.

As the Lord makes you familiar with your spiritual gift, you will recognize that it operates in spite of your mortal flesh. You may be having a particularly “unspiritual” day but you can move immediately into seeing Jesus Christ do His good works through your spiritual gift.

## Section IV: Life as a New Christian

This last section of the handbook is divided into three parts: [1] how to live the Christian life, [2] your life with other believers and [3] your life with unbelievers. Within each part are tips and reminders about things that will be part of your new Christian life.

### How to Live the Christian Life

#### 1. The Life of Faith

Being a Christian is all about living a righteous life, loving others and sharing the promise of eternal life with people who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. There is only one way to live righteously, and that is by following Christ in faith as He lives out His righteous life through you. Don't try to live life by your own human strength because you will not be able to do so.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; and **it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me**; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Do not fall into guilt and shame when you stumble, either when you sin or you venture out in your human power. This is one of Satan's greatest ploys - getting Christians to focus on their sins and failures. When you do stumble, just continue walking in faith. If you have wronged someone, admit it and try make it right.

**Note:** Admitting when you have wronged someone is one of only two times that the New Testament speaks of confessing sins.

James 5:16a Therefore, **confess your sins to one another and pray for one another**, that you may be healed. ... (Admit when you are have wrong someone so that you can continue to walk in faith rather than sink into guilt; "healed" in this verse is speaking of spiritual healing.)

#### 2. When You Have Fears

All people have fears. But as a Christian it may indicate that you are not trusting God in faith in a particular situation. This is very common and part of growing in your faith. God will walk you through the situation you fear.

Hebrews 13:6 so that we confidently say, "**The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid.** What will man do to me?"

Running away from fears may cause your spiritual growth to slow down; instead, face your fears by following Jesus.

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; **but perfect love casts out fear**, because fear involves punishment, and **the one who fears is not perfected in love**.

#### 3. Don't Get Caught Up in Law and Human Self Effort

For the rest of your life well meaning people are going to tell you what you should do and what you should not do in order to please God. Remember that God is always pleased with you since He lives inside of you.

For centuries the Christian church has believed that it has to follow the laws of God to be pleasing to God. You cannot please God by following rules and laws. No one, including those who teach law, can live righteously by their own human strength. You can only please God by following the inner life of Christ in faith.

Hebrews 11:6a And **without faith it is impossible to please Him** (God),

#### **4. Suffering as a Christian**

The Christian life can be a difficult life and, if you are living a life of faith, it will include suffering.

Philippians 1:29 For **to you it has been granted** for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but **also to suffer for His sake**,

As a Christian, you will experience suffering in your life. It is a false teaching when someone says that if you have enough faith, God will remove your suffering. Suffering may be hard to understand. Satan opposes the children of God; he will bring as much suffering into your life as he can. Also, the human part of you, your mortal flesh, will make mistakes and is prone to sin - that brings on suffering as well.

Live above your suffering by living in oneness with Jesus; He will comfort you and bring joy to your heart. Don't think difficult circumstances mean the God is not blessing you. Blessing, in this age, is almost always spiritual, and you have received much spiritual blessing from the Lord.

#### **5. Free from Guilt and Shame**

Your sins have been forgiven *and* forgotten. Christ took away all of your guilt and shame. That is in the past and you no longer need to feel that God is displeased with you. God is pleased with you all the time, no matter what.

Do not focus on sin. This is common in the Christian church but it is not Biblical. Early on when the Bible was reinterpreted from a Gentile perspective, the issues of the Law got all mixed up. Jesus fulfilled the Law for you and made you righteous. This is why God is always at peace with you and loves you as His child.

Romans 6:18 and **having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**

Focus on living a righteous life - the life of faith.

#### **6. Loving all People**

This is the one of the main characteristics of your Christian life - loving other people. This, like everything you do as a member of the Body of Christ, comes from the power of Christ in you. Jesus loves all people, not just His own followers.

Sometimes you may not want to love others, especially those who have hurt you. It is not the responsibility of your human flesh to love; rather, it is Christ in you who will love the other person through you.

John 13:34-35 A new commandment I give to you, **that you love one another, even as I have loved you**, that you also love one another. [35] **By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.**

People who hate other people are not from God even if they say that are Christian; beware of these people. Also, through social and political activism, many “Christians” are highly involved in judging unbelievers; they act like modern day Pharisees. These two verses will help you understand that this kind of activity is not from God:

Titus 3:1-2 Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed, [2] **to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.**

Titus 3:3-5 For **we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures**, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. [4] But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, [5] **He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit,**

## 7. Spiritual Warfare

There is a real fallen angel named Satan and he hates you. No one knows why God’s highest angel turned against Him; it is what the Bible calls the “mystery of iniquity.” But, one-third of all the angels joined Satan and now are working full time to deceive people and cause them trouble.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such men are false apostles, **deceitful workers, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.** [14] No wonder, for **even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.** [15] Therefore it is not surprising if **his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness**, whose end will be according to their deeds.

Here is the point: everyone has been deceived to one degree or another. But, there are some who look like godly people who are out to deceive you; they work for Satan. Deception is Satan’s #1 ploy to rob you of the fullness of your new relationship with Jesus Christ.

Read Ephesians 6 to find out the many different ways that God protects you from Satan:

Ephesians 6:11-12 **Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil.** [12] For **our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against** the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against **the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

The Bible tells you to stand firm against your enemy. Verses 13 through 17 of Ephesians 6 tell you how to do this:

Ephesians 6:13-17 Therefore, **take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day**, and having done everything, **to stand firm.** [14] Stand firm therefore, **having girded your loins with truth**, and **having put on the breastplate of righteousness**, [15] and having **shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of**

**peace**; [16] in addition to all, **taking up the shield of faith** with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. [17] And **take the helmet of salvation**, and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God.

- a. You have peace and assurance because you know that Jesus Christ is the one true way to God (verse 14).
- b. You are a righteous child of God now and forever (verse 14).
- c. The good news is that God is always at peace with you (verse 15).
- d. You live by faith in the strength of Jesus Christ since you are weak in your own humanness; this is how you resist the temptations and accusations of the enemy (verse 16).
- e. You have the assurance that you are saved forever (verse 17).
- f. And, finally, you have the truth of the Bible which has set you free (verse 17).

## **Life with Other Christians**

### **1. Seeing Other Christians as Spiritual Beings**

It is natural to judge people by what they do and how they look. However, as a Christian, the Bible tells you to look at all people from a spiritual point of view, not a human perspective.

2 Corinthians 5:16 Therefore from now on **we recognize no one according to the flesh** (a human perspective); ...

The Bible tells you to look at all Christians as righteous, born again saints who, like you, are still dead because of sin in their physical bodies. They need to learn to follow Christ in faith just as you do because this is the only way that they, and you, can live a righteous life pleasing to God.

### **2. You are Equal to All Other Christians**

You are equal to every other believer in the world. This is because Christ lives in you, and Christ cannot be higher in one person and lower in another person. You will often be in a position where someone has authority over you; this does not mean that you are not equal to that person. If you are a child, for example, the Bible says to obey your parents.

Inequality is a big problem in countries that have a rigid social structure. For example, in India, the remnants of the caste system still exist even though it was officially ended years ago. Many new believers from former lower castes are being discriminated against by Christians who grew up in higher castes. This is not what God wants; rather, God wants you to see all believers as equal members of the Body of Christ and "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:19).

Galatians 3:26,27 For **you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**. . [28] There is **neither Jew nor Greek**, there is **neither slave nor free man**, there is **neither male nor female**; for **you are all one in Christ Jesus**.

### **3. Caring for the Body of Christ**

The Bible tells you to love all people, but especially the Body of Christ.

Galatians 6:10 So then, while we have opportunity, **let us do good to all people, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith.**

Ministering to other believers is a big part of your new life in Jesus Christ. Many new believers have grown up in a culture that is “me first.” People become competitive to get ahead so that they can accumulate more wealth and possessions. It is a significant shift in priorities when someone becomes a Christian. Sometimes it can be hard to adjust because your not-yet-redeemed and still-able-to-sin mortal flesh wants to remain self oriented. This, like all things, is where faith is so important. Christ in you will change your mind so that you will see life from His perspective. But, Christians who live by their mortal flesh instead of by the Holy Spirit do not make these changes; they never grow in their faith.

#### **4. Celebrating the "Lord's Supper"**

In addition to baptism, the Lord’s Supper is a “ritual” that the Bible tells believers to practice regularly. In the early church, the Lord's Supper was simply a regular meal with other Christians where they celebrated the body and the blood of Jesus Christ. This was done to remember what God had done for them through the Cross and resurrection of Christ.

Today, churches conduct the Lord’s Supper in a more symbolic form where a tiny piece of cracker and a little cup of grape juice usually substitute for the meal and wine. Unfortunately, the ritual has become something that God never intended. Often the participants are told to sit solemnly and reflect on their sin. Then, they are supposed to “repent” of their sins and promise God that they will live a life pleasing to Him. This misses the entire point of the Lord’s Supper and it, inadvertently, denies the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ because it rejects the fact that all sins of all people for all time (except unbelief) were forgiven *and* forgotten *on* the Cross of Christ nearly 2,000 years ago.

The Lord’s Supper is intended to be a celebration. It is intended to be a joyous event to remember that sin and death have already been defeated forever by Jesus Christ. Like baptism, the Lord’s Supper is a teaching tool. As the bread is divided, it represents Christ's body being broken for you. Jesus Christ actually and literally became sin on your behalf. This is what allows God to take out your old sinful heart and give you a brand new, clean heart. Christ bore your sinfulness and took it away.

As you drink the wine (or grape juice), it is a symbol of the blood of Christ being shed for you to wash your sins away. The Lord’s Supper is a time to thank God and be happy for what His grace has done for you.

### **Life with Unbelievers**

#### **1. Live a Quiet Life**

The Christian life is one of peace; it is a quiet life with the goal of letting the love of Christ shine through your life. This is the way the Bible tells you to live.

1 Thessalonians 4:11a and **to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life ...**

1 Timothy 2:2b ... so that **we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity.**

As a believer, you are now joined as one with Jesus Christ in your new heart. Once God saved you, your life is no longer your own. Although to some this may not seem good, it is the best thing that could ever happen to you.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you**, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**? [20] For **you have been bought with a price**: therefore glorify God in your body.

Jesus paid His life for yours. The life that Jesus wants to live in you is a life of peace. The three most important characteristics of the Christian's life are: [1] loving others, [2] sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ and [3] living by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit. You used to be a citizen of this world before you became a believer. Since God saved you, He made you a citizen of His Kingdom. You still live in this world but you are no longer a citizen of this world.

1 Thessalonians 5:13b-14b ... **Live in peace with one another** [14] ... **be patient with everyone.**

## 2. Submission to Authority\*

*"Authority" means government, parents, supervisors, and others who have a legitimate reason to direct your activities.*

God is sovereign over the nations and over the rulers of the world. He controls who is in power and who is not. Sometimes this is hard to understand because evil and incompetent rulers sometimes come into power. The Bible says to live in submission to the ruling authorities.

Romans 13:1-2 Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For **there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.** [2] Therefore **whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God**; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

Many have gotten into the habit of criticizing the President and other government leaders. God put these people into power even if you do not understand the big picture. So, without knowing it, they are really criticizing God.

## 3. Don't Judge Unbelievers

Many Christians fight with unbelievers and try to make them conform to their own standards of behavior. Unbelievers act like sinners because they *are* sinners; they do not have a new, born again heart filled with the Holy Spirit which would allow them to live righteous lives. Judging them pushes them away from the love of Christ and from hearing the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Judging unbelievers is not from God.

1 Corinthians 5:9-10, 12a-13a I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; [10] **I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world . for then you would have to go out of the world .** [12] **For what have I to do with judging outsiders? .** [13] **But those who are outside, God judges.**

Trying to impose God's Law on others does not make them quit sinning; it causes them to sin more. So, when Christians try to make unbelievers conform to God's laws, they unknowingly are causing sin to increase.

1 Corinthians 15:56 The sting of death is sin, **and the power of sin is the law;**

#### **4. Be Prepared to Share the Hope That is Within You**

Some people have the gift of evangelism to share Christ with many people. Most do not. You may not have this gift but the Bible says that you can be prepared to tell others about the hope that is in you.

1 Peter 3:15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, **always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you**, yet with gentleness and reverence;

Don't take a class at church on how to evangelize; that only prepares your mortal flesh to do something it should not be doing. If you do not have the gift of evangelism and go out forcing the Gospel on everyone you meet, you will push people away from God. It is God who draws people to Himself; just be prepared to respond when someone asks. Those with the gift of evangelism know it; they cannot help but share the Good News.

Notice that the verse above speaks of giving an account for the hope that is in you. People will notice the life of Jesus Christ being lived out through you when you walk in faith.

### **Full Text of 1 Corinthians 2:1-16**

1 Corinthians 2:1-16 And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. [2] For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. [3] I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, [4] and **my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power**, [5] so that **your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God.**

[6] Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; **a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age**, who are passing away; [7] but **we speak God's wisdom** in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; [8] **the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood**; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; [9] but just as it is written, "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM." [10] For to us **God revealed them through the Spirit**; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. [11] For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so **the thoughts of God no one knows except the Spirit of God.**

[12] Now **we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God**, [13] which things we also speak, **not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit**, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. [14] But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because **they are spiritually appraised**. [15] But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no one. [16] For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? **But we have the mind of Christ.**

## Scripture Verses Supporting the 4 Essential Truths of the “Biblical Gospel”

Much of the teaching that is popular today comes from tradition rooted in history and based on human reasoning rather than on the teaching of the Holy Spirit. This chart shows many of the significant differences between the Gospel as the Apostles taught it and teaching that is common today.

Truths	Biblical Gospel	Human Wisdom Gospel
<b>Goals of the “Faith”</b>	Righteousness, eternal life, grace, spiritual union, faith.	Sinning less, trying to be acceptable to God, law, human strength and self effort.
<b>Forgiveness</b>	All sins of all people for all time were forgiven on the Cross, except the eternal sin of unbelief.	Past sins or all sins forgiven after you become a Christian; you must continually ask for “family” forgiveness.
<b>Cleansing</b>	Upon faith, you old sinful spirit (a.k.a. nature, heart) is removed and replaced with a new, clean heart.	Old sinful nature is retained after you become a Christian.
<b>Righteousness</b>	Your spirit is redeemed fully and forever. You are literally righteous in your “born again” spirit. Your body (mortal flesh) had not yet been redeemed or made righteous.	You are credited (“imputed”) with Christ’s righteousness but you remain a “sinner” even after being born again.
<b>Union/Faith</b>	Indwelled with the Holy Spirit in the same way that Jesus was indwelled by the Holy Spirit during His time on the earth. The Holy Spirit is the Righteous One and Eternal Life living in you.  You follow the inner life of Christ by faith because your outer mortal flesh (body and human soul) has not yet been redeemed or made righteous	Indwelled by the Holy Spirit whose role is to convict you when you sin.  The Holy Spirit “helps” you live a life pleasing to God but it is up to you.

### **1. Your Sins are Already Forgiven and Forgotten:**

2 Corinthians 5:19 namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them**, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Mark 3: 28 Truly I say to you, **all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men** (There is no implied “if” or “when” in this verse.)

John 1:29 The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, **the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**"

Romans 5:10a For if **while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God** (forgiven) **through the death of His Son**, (Notice that God reconciled people to Himself while they were still His enemies – *before* they believed.)

Colossians 1:20 and through Him to **reconcile all things to Himself**, having made **peace through the blood of His cross**; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Colossians 2:13 And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, **having forgiven us all our transgressions**, (Your sins were forgiven while you were still dead in sin, not after you became a believer.)

I John 2:2 and He Himself is the **propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.**

## **2. You Have Been Given a New, Clean Heart:**

Ezekiel 11:19 "And I shall give them **one heart**, and **shall put a new spirit within them**. And I shall **take the heart of stone out** of their flesh and **give them a heart of flesh**, (This is the promise of the New Covenant given to the children of Israel; the Gentiles are presently being “grafted” into this covenant of grace.)

Ezekiel 36:25 Then **I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness** and from all your idols.

Romans 6:6 knowing this, that **our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin** (old sinful nature) **might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;**

Romans 6:7 for **he who has died is freed from sin** (in your spirit).

Romans 6:17-18 But thanks be to God that though **you were slaves of sin**, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, [18] and **having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.**

1 Corinthians 6:11 Such (referring to the unrighteous) were some of you; but **you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore **if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and righteous** to forgive us our sins and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

## **3. God Made You Righteous in Your Born Again Spirit:**

Romans 8:10 and if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, **yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.**

1 John 3:9 No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**

Romans 5:17 For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more **those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness** will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:16 And **if the first piece of dough be holy, the lump is also; and if the root be holy, the branches are too.**

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 Do you not know that you are a **temple of God**, and that the **Spirit of God dwells in you**? [17] If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for **the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.**

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made **Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

Ephesians 4:24 and put on the new self, **which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness** of the truth. (Notice that this verse says “has been” created in righteousness, not will be created in righteousness.)

Hebrews 10:14 For by one offering **He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.**

2 Peter 1:4 For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them **you might become partakers of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

#### **4. Your Union/Faith Relationship with Jesus Christ:**

##### **Christ in You**

1 Corinthians 6:17 But **the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit**

John 14:20 In that day you shall know that **I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.**

Romans 8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, **if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you.** But if anyone does not have the **Spirit of Christ**, he does not belong to Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19 Or do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you**, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**?

2 Corinthians 6:16b ... for **we are the temple of the living God**; just as God said, "**I will dwell in them** and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." (This is another aspect of the New Covenant.)

2 Corinthians 13:5 **Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith**; examine yourselves! **Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you** - unless indeed you fail the test?

Galatians 2:20a **I have been crucified with Christ**; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**;

##### **You Follow Christ in Faith**

Colossians 1:27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is **Christ in you**, the hope of glory.

1 John 4:15-16 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, **God abides in him, and he in God**. [16] And we have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and **the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him**.

1 Corinthians 2:5 that **your faith** should not rest on the wisdom of men, **but on the power of God**.

John 10:27 **My sheep hear My voice**, and I know them, and **they follow Me**;

Romans 14:23b **whatever is not from faith is sin**.

2 Corinthians 5:7 for **we walk by faith, not by sight**

Galatians 2:20b ... and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Ephesians 3:16-17a that **He would grant you**, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man**; [17] so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith**; ...

Ephesians 6:16 in addition to all, **taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one**.

Philippians 3:3 for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and **put no confidence in the flesh**,

Colossians 1:29 For this purpose also I labor, **striving according to His power, which mightily works within me**.

1 John 5:4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and **this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith**.

### **The Verse That Says It All**

Galatians 2:20a **I have been crucified with Christ**; and it is no longer I who live, but **Christ lives in me**; and **the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God**, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.

Return to Reading in Section II

## Scripture Verses Supporting the Truth that God Emptied Himself to be Your Savior

### Verses already used in Section II:

Philippians 2: 5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, **although He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] **but emptied Himself**, taking the form of a **bond-servant**, and being made in the **likeness of men**. [8] Being found in **appearance as a man**, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a Cross.

John 1:14 And the **Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, **He had to be made like His brethren in all things**, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but **One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin**.

### 25 Additional Verses:

Matthew 12:28 But if **I cast out demons by the Spirit of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Matthew 4:1 Then **Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil**. (James 1:13 says that God cannot be tempted by evil; Jesus was tempted because He emptied Himself to live fully as a human while on this earth.)

Matthew 12:18 Behold, my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well-pleased; **I will put my Spirit upon him**, and he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles.

Mark 13:32 But **of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone**. (Being human while here on this earth, Jesus did not know all things.)

Luke 3:22 and **the Holy Spirit descended upon Him in bodily form like a dove**, and a voice came out of heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased."

Luke 4:1 **Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit**, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

Luke 4:14 And **Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit**, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district.

John 5:19 Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, **the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing**; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:30 **"I can do nothing on My own initiative**. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

John 8:28 Jesus therefore said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and **I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me.**

John 8:29 "And **He who sent Me is with Me**; He has not left Me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him." (The Father was *in* Jesus and was His power to do the works the Father gave Him.)

John 14:10b ... The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but **the Father abiding in Me does His works.**

John 17:4-5 "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do. [5] Now, Father, **glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**" (Jesus *had* the glory of God prior to emptying Himself; when He rose from the dead, He assumed His glory once again.)

Acts 2:22 Men of Israel, listen to these words: **Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him** in your midst, just as you yourselves know - (It was the Father who performed miracles and wonders through Jesus.)

Acts 10:38 You know of **Jesus of Nazareth, how God anointed Him with the Holy Spirit and with power**, and how He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.

Acts 17:31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness **through a Man whom He has appointed**, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.

1 Corinthians 15:21 For since by a man (Adam) came death, **by a man (Jesus) also came the resurrection of the dead.** (Jesus had to become human in order to save you.)

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that **though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor**, that you through His poverty might become rich.

Colossians 1:15 And **He is the image of the invisible God**, the first-born of all creation. (What would God look like in human form? That is who Jesus is.)

Colossians 1:19 For **it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him** (This is speaking of the fullness of the Holy Spirit who dwelled in Jesus.)

Colossians 2:9 For **in Him (Jesus) all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form**, (Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit just like you are.)

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, **the man Christ Jesus,**

Hebrews 10:12 But when **Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins**, he sat down at the right hand of God, (God could not die on the Cross; God had to empty Himself to become human in order to be your Savior.)

1 John 4:2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that **Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is from God;

2 John 1:7a For many deceivers have gone out into the world, **those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh** (being human) ...