Step 1: What does it mean to "believe?"

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Step 1: Understanding the Gospel

How to be sure you are a true believer

The two essential steps to spiritual growth are:
(1) An understanding of God’s plan of salvation
(2) Personal security of your own salvation

Becoming a Christian means to receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ and His death as the gift of God for the forgiveness of your personal sins. Receiving Christ involves three aspects: intellect, emotion and will.

Our relationship with Christ can be illustrated by the marriage relationship, which also calls for those three same aspects. A man can be intellectually know a lot about the life of his girlfriend, but that does not make them married. Also he can feel strong emotions and love her with all his heart, but true marriage requires more. It requires the involvement of the will as well. The couple is not married until they make a commitment before a judge or a minister and witnesses. This commitment makes all the difference.

It is the same in our relationship with Christ. It is not enough to believe in Christ intellectually; nor is an emotional experience sufficient. Both are important, but no one becomes a Christian until, by an act of his will, he receives the Lord Jesus Christ personally to be a permanent part of his life as Lord and Savior.

Salvation

Man’s belief

Intellect
  1. Learns he has violated God’s laws
  2. Understands that apart from Christ he has no hope
  3. Believes in the sacrifice of Christ’s death as payment for his sins

Emotion
  1. Feels unworthiness from conviction of his sin
  2. Senses personal sorrow for Christ’s suffering for him
  3. Commits his heart and allegiance to His Savior

Will
  1. Changes his opinion of how good he is
  2. Decides that Christ is worth more than his sins
  3. Invites Christ into his life to be his Savior forever

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What did that make you? A ____________.

Have you ever taken something that was not yours? □ Yes □ No

What did that make you? A ____________.

Have you ever lusted after a person in your mind? □ Yes □ No

Jesus said that to lust after a person is adultery. Then what does that make you? An _____________. These are just three of the ten commandments!

In James 4:17, we learn, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin...” We often know what is right, but our actions are contrary to our conscience, therefore, we sin because we are sinners.

Perhaps someone might think that his sins are not so bad. Read James 2:10.

1) How many sins make one guilty?___________

2) Therefore, if one is guilty of one sin, he guilty of ______________

So there is no difference; we are all guilty.

THE CONSCIOUSNESS of our sinfulness is found in Isaiah 59:2. If a person is a sinner, what, then is his relationship with God?

______________________________________________________________

It is sad that in our day many admit to being "sinners" in general, but do not understand the seriousness of their condition: they are SEPARATED from God, and therefore LOST. Multitudes do not see themselves as God sees them.

Sinful Man       Holy God

Sin Separates

Dead in Sin      →   Eternal Life

The Punishment for Sin

In Romans 6:23, Paul shows us a great contrast. What is the consequence (the wages) of being a sinner? ____________

What is the result of receiving "the gift of God?" _______________

Death is the punishment for sin, which means SPIRITUAL DEATH. Adam and Eve, the first human sinners, died SPIRITUALLY when they decided to disobey God (Genesis 2:17). This was not a physical death, but a SPIRITUAL death, that is they were immediately separated from God’s life and communion with God.

Read Ephesians 2:3.

What is the condition of each person BEFORE God gives him eternal life?

______________________________________________________________

In 2Thessalonians 1:8-9, Paul graphically describes the meaning of eternal separation. Who are those who receive this punishment? ____________

What is the punishment? ______________________________________

Punishment for SIN must be given to all sin

Read Hebrews 9:27. What type of death is referred to here?

□ Physical death

□ Spiritual death

If this is physical death, what immediately follows it?

No one escapes death, and no one escapes judgment. Notice that there is no second life in which to become better (reincarnation is false) nor a second opportunity, nor an option to pay for your sins later (Purgatory).

When a person dies, his eternal destiny is SEALED. Therefore, each person must stand before God, the Judge, and receive the consequences of his sin.

In Romans 2:16, what will God judge?

______________________________________________________________

Nothing that is spoken, done or thought will escape his scrutiny. Everything will be openly judged. Because God is holy and just, He must judge everything.

Why do we not find much hope in Romans 2:11 for those who think that they are an exception or someone special?

□ God never shows partiality or preference for “special” people. He is just. The guilty must pay for their sins.

□ In his sinful state, it would be impossible for anyone, on his own, to achieve communion with God and eternal life. However, there are many who think they will go to heaven because they are good sincere people (members of a church, baptized, tithe, give to the poor, etc). Based on what
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you now know, why are your own good works insufficient to bring you eternal life? _________________________________

Sinful Man

Holy God

Death

Religion

Eternal life

Morality

Good Works

Ephesians 2:8-9

Salvation is a Gift

Since we do not deserve salvation and it is impossible to earn it by our own merits, the only way to get it is to freely receive God’s gift. We should give thanks to God, because this is precisely what God is offering us: salvation as a free gift. This is why the message is called the GOSPEL, “Good News.”

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. In verse 8, what is God’s motive for giving us salvation? ______________________________

Not of __________________ . . . it is the gift of God.

“Grace” is the motive for giving something undeserved. We can only accept or reject that which is given. Why does it have nothing to do with us and our efforts? _________________________________

Because God is a God of love, He wants to give us salvation as a gift since we can never deserve it, but, how can He give us salvation and still be JUST? This is a dilemma.

Christ made the payment for sin

Praise God! He had a marvelous plan to rescue us from our desperate state, but the price was tremendous.

God has provided the bridge of the cross of Christ as the only way to achieve communion with God and to have eternal life.

Read 1 Timothy 2:5.

How many "mediators" are there between God and man? __________________________

If THERE ARE NO OTHER mediators but Christ, there is no use putting your confidence, no matter how sincere, in any other person. Christ is the ONLY MEDIATOR.

For this reason, in John 14:6 Jesus told us that NO ONE comes to the Father, but by Him.

In Romans 5:8 what was our spiritual condition before God when Christ died for us? __________________________

He did not wait for us to get better. God loved us so much that He sent His Son into the world to pay OUR DEATH PENALTY on Calvary.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:21.

Who did not have sin? __________________________

What was Christ was made? __________________________

What would be the benefit for us? __________________________

In 1 Peter 2:24, what did Christ carry in His flesh on the cross? __________________________

In reality, by insisting on doing good works or presenting ourselves as good persons in order to impress God, or try to deserve heaven, we are effectively rejecting the price that Christ paid on the cross of Calvary.

So perfect was the price that Christ paid that now, He can freely offer us three marvelous things. Read John 5:24 and write the three things:

(1) ________________________________________

(2) ________________________________________

(3) ________________________________________

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Salvation must be received as a gift

Read John 1:12. How do we get the salvation that God offers us? "As many as ..." To whom was the promise offered? What is the promise?

We must personally receive Christ into our lives. We must understand intellectually what He did, and accept his gift, but comprehension in itself is not enough. We can feel desperation and sadness for our sins, but that is not enough. We must PERSONALLY INVITE HIM to enter into our lives. This invitation is a commitment to Christ.

Read Revelation 3:20. What does it mean to “open the door”?

If we open the door to our lives, what does Jesus promise us?

As soon as we invite Christ into our lives, He has promised to come in immediately and, will sup with us, in other words, He will have communion with us forever.

Jesus Christ is “received” by faith (Ephesians 2:8), that is to say, by believing in the Word of God and by committing to trust in His promises He will fulfill His part by forgiving and accepting us as His children.

Any sinner who recognizes what Christ did on the cross and is willing to depend only on the death of Christ as payment for his sins, has Jesus’ promise to be his personal Savior forever. His life can then be lived in gratefulness to Christ for His salvation.

Review #1 Salvation

1. What is the meaning of the word “gospel”?

2. What is the consequence of sin in Romans 3:23?

3. Another consequence of being a sinner is found in Isaiah 59:2. It says sin, S ________________ us from God.

4. Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is D ________________.

5. What happens immediately after physical death according to Hebrews 9:27? The J ________________

6. The only hope man has is to have eternal life before death. Is it possible to better ourselves enough to merit eternal life? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. In Ephesians 2:8-9 eternal life must be received as a G ________________.

8. In 1 Timothy 2:5, the Bible tells us how many mediators there are between God and man. How many are there? ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ more than 10 ☐ many

9. According to John 5:24, what three benefits do we receive when we receive Christ as Savior?

10. How do we appropriate these benefits? There are two verses that indicate what we should do:

If someone were to ask you, “Where would you go if you were to die today?” how would you respond?

Congratulations if you have truly received Christ!