

■ DIGGING IN...

# What is True Saving Faith?

Since faith is mentioned in the Bible so many times, it is essential that we understand the meaning of faith in Jesus Christ, and that we know what repentance is.

## The Meaning of Faith in Jesus Christ

- Faith is receiving Jesus Christ. In salvation we give nothing, we receive everything. Our hearts are corrupt, and therefore not acceptable to God. They must be cleansed from sin before they can become a proper offering to Him. This cleansing is brought about only through the blood of Jesus, which is applied to us by faith.

*1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin."*

- Faith is receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ. To rest upon Jesus means to trust Him so that you are no longer anxious about the result. If somebody offers you R100, you would show faith in the gift if you not only receive it, but you also spend it or put it in the bank for future use. He who has true faith in Christ has no doubt that his sins are all forgiven, and that he is truly and eternally reconciled to God. Therefore, his soul is at peace on these matters.

*Isaiah 26:3 "You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You."*

- Faith is receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ alone. God will not permit any partnership with Himself in the work of salvation. He must do it all or none. All the work we may try to do will never save us from our sins. It may be good in its place, but our works cannot take the place of our Saviour. He stands alone as our Redeemer.

*Ephesians 2:8,9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

- Faith is receiving and resting upon Jesus Christ alone as he is offered to us in the Bible. Our own ideas about Christ are not enough. We must know what kind of a Savior Christ is. This we can learn only in the Bible.

*Luke 24:44 "Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."*

## The Meaning of Repentance

Repentance is a "change of mind toward God," that is, a **turning away** from sin with a sincere desire to serve and please God. We understand this by looking at Acts 26:20 and Isaiah 55:7.

Some people think that repentance is the same as being sorry for your sins. But this is not so. A person may be sorry for his sin just because of the trouble it gets him into, or because of the grief and loss it brings upon him, without ever thinking of the dishonor it brings upon God. This is not repentance.

Again, one may be sorry for sin, and yet at the very next opportunity commit that same sin again. This too is not repentance.

Thirdly, a person may be sorry for one specific sin, and yet not sorry for the many other sins he commits every day. This also is not true repentance. *True repentance makes us sorry for all and every sin.*

## True Repentance Is A Work Of The Holy Spirit

*In John 16:7-8, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, **the Helper** will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will **convict the world of sin**, and of righteousness, and of judgment"*

In this scripture the Holy Spirit is called our **Helper**. One of the ways He helps mankind is to convict men and women of their sin in order that they may repent and receive Jesus as Saviour. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to make us see that we are lost sinners.

**How does the Holy Spirit convict us of sin?** He convicts us of sin when we read or hear what God says about our spiritual condition and our need for salvation in His word, the Holy Bible (the Sword of the Spirit). Read Romans 10:8-10 and 14-17. The moment we believe what God says of us in His word is true, and we repent and turn to Him through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, we are justified, cleansed, sanctified, and forgiven of all our sins.

*"When Jesus saw their faith, He said to him, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." – Luke 5:20*

*"I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." – 1John 2:12*

*"Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool." – Isa 1:18*

## FOUNDATIONS OF FAITH: LESSON #1 - HOW CAN I BE SURE I'M A CHRISTIAN?

The most important question a person can be asked is “Are you a Christian?” And if so, how can you be sure? This question poses some interesting responses among people today. Some say they are a Christian because they were “born that way, and that’s just the way it is!” Others may say that because they go to church, that makes them a Christian.

How about you? Do you fall into this category? In fact, do you know that it is possible to pray every day, go to church every week, and even faithfully support financially through your tithes and offerings, and still not be a Christian?

Throughout this study, we will use 5 words beginning with the letter “S”, to show who you are without Jesus Christ, and who you are with Him. Let’s begin with the first “S” which stands for Sin.

### 1. Sin

In your own words, define sin: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

“Less than 2 out of every 5 people believe that sin is going against God’s will, going against the Bible or violating the Ten Commandments.”

The word “Sin” in the Bible means, “missing the mark.”

#### Illustration:

The meaning of the word “sin” can be better understood this way. If an archer shoots an arrow at a target and misses the “bulls-eye,” this would be considered a “sin.” He missed the mark! On the other hand if he hits the “bulls-eye” every time he shoots the arrow, regardless of distance, size of the target, wind, or even if he shoots with his eyes closed, he would be considered a perfect archer.

According to the above illustration, is it possible for that archer to always hit the bulls-eye? \_\_\_\_\_

Now let’s read Romans 3:23

According to this verse who has sinned? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the result? \_\_\_\_\_

According to these verses, if everyone has sinned and fallen short, what is it that everyone has fallen short of? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The answer lies within the word **Sin**. Everyone has missed the mark! Or better stated, everyone has missed the “bulls-eye” on God’s target.

What is God’s target? Well, let’s see what God says:

#### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS:

- |  |               |                   |                    |
|--|---------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. You shall have no other gods before Me                    | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Matt 4:10)    |
| 2. You shall not make for yourself any idol                  | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Lk 16:13)     |
| 3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Matt 5:34)    |
| 4. Remember to keep the Sabbath day, to keep it holy         | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Mark 2:27-28) |
| 5. Honor your father and your mother.                        | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Eph 6:1)      |
| 6. You shall not murder                                      | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Matt 5:21-22) |
| 7. You shall not commit adultery                             | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Matt 5:28)    |
| 8. You shall not steal.                                      | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Eph 4:28)     |
| 9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.   | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See Eph 4:29)     |
| 10. You shall not covet your neighbor’s possessions.         | Guilty? _____ | Not Guilty? _____ | (See James 4:1-4)  |

As you have read and considered each of these laws, how did you do? If you have ever disobeyed your parents, you're guilty of #5. If you have ever taken anything that did not belong to you, you are guilty of #8. Have you ever desired to have something that belonged to someone else - like their house, or their car? You just failed #10! If you checked guilty to any of the above Commandments, then according to the Scriptures, you are a sinner!

You may be asking yourself, "What happens if I have only broken one and not all of the Ten Commandments?"

Let's see what the Bible says about this:

"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all." – James 2:10

According to this section on Sin, are you a sinner? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Now that we have covered the first "S" (Sin), let's take a look at the second "S" - Separation.

## 2. Separation (death)

There are two deaths spoken of in the Bible:

- **Physical Death.**
- **Spiritual Death**

Spiritual Death is defined as Separation from God. (Genesis 2:15-17, Genesis 3:1-24). You and I inherited this Separation/Death from God through Adam when he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, and God sent Adam out of the garden.

### Let's read together Genesis 2:15-17

What did God tell Adam not to do? \_\_\_\_\_

What would happen if Adam chose to disobey God? \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 5:12 says,

*"Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered the world, and death (separation) through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned."*

**Now let's read Romans 6:23.** What are the wages (or earnings) for our sin? \_\_\_\_\_

So not only have we inherited this fatal spiritual disease from Adam, but according to his last scripture, we also earned it.

If we have inherited and earned separation from God, what exactly does that mean?

*"...in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD."*  
– 2 Thes 1:8-9

So far, all that we have heard and seen in this study is pretty bad news! "Does it ever turn into good news?" you may be asking. Yes it does! In fact right now as we look at the third "S" - Savior.

## 3. Savior - Jesus Christ

**So far, the grim news is this:**

- We all have missed the mark – God's perfect standard.
- We all are sinners.
- We have all inherited this sin from Adam.
- We have all individually earned the wages of our sin.
- The wages we have inherited and earned from our sin is death!
- We are all eternally separated from God.

Is there any hope? Is there a cure for this fatal disease called sin? Can we ever measure up to God's perfect standard? Can we hit the bulls-eye? If there is an answer, what is it?

*"And she will bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus, for He will save his people from their sins..." Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, 'God with us'" – Matt1:21,23*

### **Let's read 1 John 4:7-10**

In verse 8, what does it say God is? \_\_\_\_\_

According to verse 10, what are two reasons God sent His Son Jesus into the world?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Note: Propitiation means "to appease or satisfy the demand."

### **Let's also read Romans 5:8**

What was it that God demonstrated toward us? \_\_\_\_\_

God looked upon you and me and saw our fatal condition, and because of His love and compassion for us and His desire to spend eternity with YOU and ME, He sent His Son Jesus to pay the penalty for our sins. You see, even though God is a merciful God, he is also a God of justice. The Bible says:

*"...without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." - Hebrews 9:22*

The penalty for sin must be dealt with. God does not just sweep sin under a cloud and pretend that everything is OK. He won't place it behind the planet Pluto and then forget about it. Sin before God is a serious offense which causes death. Furthermore, because you and I are sinners, we are unable to pay for our sin. The only person who can pay for sin is one who has never "missed the mark," someone who has never failed to hit a "bulls-eye" every time, someone who measures up to God's perfect standard.

Seeing that we have already concluded that according to the Bible, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), this excluded you and me. Is there someone who has never failed? Is there one who is sinless? Let's see what the Bible says about the man Christ Jesus:

*"...(Jesus) was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." (Heb 4:15)*

*"For He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21)*

The penalty that Jesus paid for you and me was the shedding of his innocent blood and His dying in our place because we were unable to pay the penalty ourselves. Jesus Christ did all this, not because He had to, but because He chose to!

Think seriously about the penalty Jesus paid for us:

*"Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed." (Isaiah 53:4-6)*

This brings us to our fourth "S" - Salvation

## **4. Salvation**

We have all heard the statement, "All roads lead to heaven!" Is that really true? Do all roads go to heaven regardless of the life they choose to live? Does it really matter who (or what) we believe in, especially if we all going to wind up in heaven anyway?

### **Let's look at a few statements that Jesus made:**

*"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction (Hell), and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult (confined) is the way which leads to life (salvation), and there are few who find it." - Matt 7:13-14*

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by Me." - John 14:6*

## Let's read John 11:25-26

What did Jesus say about Himself in verse 25? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you think Jesus meant when He says in verse 25, that if anyone "believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." And then in the very next verse He says that "whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die."?

**Do all roads lead to salvation?** Is there any other way to get to heaven? Any other religion? Any other doctrine? Any other person?

**Let's look at Acts 4:12.** *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

Not only is Jesus Christ the only One who can give salvation, He is the author of eternal salvation. (Heb 2:10; Heb 5:9) *"And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him"* (Heb 5:9).

We have traveled a great distance thus far in this study. We have looked at our inheritance of Sin from Adam, we have realized our inherited and earned Separation from God as the penalty for that sin. We have also recognized the incredible love of God and the glorious sacrifice of Jesus Christ as Savior, which is the only road to Salvation. What could be the final "S"? What more could be added to this? A Savior leading to Salvation is only valid if you choose to Select Jesus as your Lord!

## 5. Selection - choice

"What do you mean, I have to choose? I thought that this study was over! Why do I have to choose Jesus as my Savior?"

### Let's read John 3:16

What was God's motivation for sending His Son Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

Who did God make eternal life available to? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the condition God placed upon our receiving eternal life? \_\_\_\_\_

Looking back again at our spiritual condition, we have not only inherited, but we have also earned this fatal spiritual disease called Death. God, in His compassion and desire to restore our spiritual health, looked at our fatal condition and sent His Son Jesus to pay the ultimate price - Death - so that He could become the "antidote" or "cure." The antidote must be administered before the healing occurs.

You see, you can read about, hear people talk about, or even watch other people healed by an antidote (or cure), but you will never be made whole unless you also receive it and consume it.

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." - Romans 6:23*

Jesus freely gives this antidote to whoever will receive it - the Bible even calls it a gift. But just like any gift, if the one for whom the gift was given does not receive it, it no longer is a gift.

Jesus is a perfect gentleman. He will never force anyone to take the free gift of eternal life. In fact, Jesus said in Revelation 3:20 *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..."*

You see, Jesus does not say here, "Hey Man! You're getting on my nerves! I've been out here long enough! If you don't open up, I'm going to vaporize you!" No, Jesus will not come into a heart which doesn't want Him. He will not forcefully administer His antidote to someone who chooses to remain ill.

### Let's read together Romans 10:9-10

What does the Bible say to do with your mouth? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the Bible say to do with your heart? \_\_\_\_\_

What does the Bible say happens to you when you sincerely do these two things? \_\_\_\_\_

**Read these verses together out loud:**

*"And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and that life is in His Son. He who has the Son (Jesus) has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may KNOW that you have eternal life, and that you many continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."  
1 John 5:11-13*

Notice the capitalized word "**KNOW**". This does not say you "might" have eternal life. It also doesn't say, if God's in a good mood you just might get into heaven. No, it doesn't say any of this. It says you can "**KNOW**" that you have eternal life.

It is a comforting feeling to know that you are saved, not because of anything that you have done in you life, but because of what Jesus Christ did for you on the cross the day He paid for your penalty.

**Let's read Ephesians 2:8-9**

According to verse 8, how were you saved? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the "gift of God"? \_\_\_\_\_

We will never be in a place as Christians where we can take the credit for our eternal life. We will not spend eternity in heaven talking to one another about how we worked ourselves into heaven.

Fellow Christian, it doesn't work that way. Jesus paid for your sin when he willingly offered Himself as a substitution for you, and your sin and was brutally executed on the cross. What we will be doing in heaven is worshiping God, and our most common word will be "Wow!" There will be no other word to express our hearts.

**Have you ever wondered what Jesus was thinking about while He was dying on the cross?**

*"...Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the JOY set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2)*


Friend, He was thinking about you! You are that JOY that was set before Him. Jesus Christ was thinking about you, personally. He was thinking of the day He would be reunited with you in heaven.

**We have gone over a lot in this study. Did it accomplish its purpose? Are you sure that you are a Christian? Do you pass the test? Do you know for sure that you will spend eternity with God? Take the Test!**

- |   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| 1. I am a sinner?                                 | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 2. I can never pay the price for my own sins.     | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 3. I believe that Jesus dies for my sins.         | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 4. I believe that Jesus rose from the dead.       | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 5. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 6. I received God's forgiveness.                  | Yes _____ | No _____ |
| 7. I thank God for my assurance of eternal life.  | Yes _____ | No _____ |

**How did you do?** If you checked "yes" to all of the above, you can be sure that you are truly a child of God, and have been forgiven of your sin. You can also be sure that you have been healed from the fatal disease which was separating you from God - Jesus healed you. **YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN!!!!**

On the other hand, if you checked "no" to any of the questions above, please let us know. We are here to serve you, pray with you, and answer any questions you might have.

 Well done! You have completed Lesson 1. Once you have turned in your completed lesson, you may proceed to Lesson 2 in the Foundations of Faith Bible study series.