

04 SALVATION

HOW TO BECOME A CHILD OF GOD

By Winkie Pratney

If you have never really met Jesus, you can, right now.

You may not have much in common with Christians you've met or read about. You may be from a different nation, with different abilities, a different income, a different educational or religious background. You may be saying "What's all this got to do with me?" Or, "That's fine for them, but my situation, my problems are hopeless." Well, here's good news! The answer they found is the same answer you can find for yourself. Victory over any adversity may be found by living for Jesus Christ. Whatever you are going through, there is hope in Jesus.

God is real. Jesus is alive! He loves you and is concerned for your well-being. He is the absolute Reality on which all truth is ultimately grounded. His message for you and your world is contained in the collection of 66 books called the Bible. Its transcendent teachings have stood the test of time, the scrutiny of scholars and the furnace of practical experience. They speak not only about history but how to live today in every level and facet of life.

The Bible's theme is God's plan of freedom from sin and death, a message that has delivered millions in every nation from self-destructive habits and given them a life both abundant and eternal. By first entering into and then developing a personal relationship with this living God, you will find everything you need for life on earth and for all eternity. Your life will have a sense of purpose marked by confidence and peace of mind. You will understand the true meaning of life. And God Himself will be your loving Father and your great Friend to give you power and to guide your steps.

From the Bible we learn these facts:

1. God created humanity and nature for a wonderful purpose, but a stupid act of rebellion and self-centeredness by the first man and woman caused our race to lose our original relationship with Him and fall into a state of sin. Our sad legacy is now a nature wholly self-centered and impure in thought, word and deed. Our best efforts are selfish; apart from God we cannot even agree on what "good" is.
2. God's laws revealed in the Bible are not inventions, but descriptions of reality. They truthfully tell us how things actually are in the moral world. We do not actually "break" Gods laws; they break us. We are punished by our sin as much as we are punished for our sin. All true law has a penalty as important as the law it is designed

to protect. The penalty for sin, the violation of God's moral law is endless death and eternal separation from God; if we live like hell here, our death will only confirm to us the reality of Hell forever. Whether we consider our violations large or small, the sentence must be the same; the "wages of sin is death; the soul that sins shall die."

3. On our own we can do nothing to cancel or escape this sentence. We deserve to be judged. Nothing we can say or do can possibly justify the life we have lived and the things we have done to hurt ourselves, others and most of all, God.
4. But God has no personal problems in seeking to forgive and restore us. God has never stopped loving rebellious man nor seeking to pardon us. At great cost to Himself, God found a way to provide a way back to His heart and our true home.
5. In Jesus Christ God became a man and lived among us. He put on display God's love, wisdom, power and compassion. Born like no man before Him, He lived a sinless life without historical equal, spoke in wisdom like no man ever spoke, and demonstrated beyond contention Divine power and love in His miracles of healing, provision and deliverance. He even raised three people from the dead. Then to the astonishment of the world He did it decisively Himself!
6. What seemed at first tragedy turned out to be Divine strategy. To liberate us from our death sentence and reconcile us to Himself, Jesus laid down his sinless life as a substitute for the penalty you and I so thoroughly deserve. He gave Himself as the ultimate sacrifice for our sin and made our forgiveness and pardon possible. Now if you will trust Him as your substitute, you can go free. The God-Man on the middle cross has taken your place!
7. After three days in the tomb Jesus rose from the dead by the power of His Father. He was seen then by hundreds of witnesses, has been met since then by millions all over the world and lives today as the Ultimate Victor over sin, death and the grave. Because of what Jesus did, anyone who believes Jesus Christ is God's Son, and trusts in His complete work on the cross for pardon and cleansing will be forgiven of sin and be restored to friendship with God. By His Holy Spirit God Himself will enter your life and break the enslaving power of sin once and for all.
8. You will not only be given the gift of His eternal life to live forever with him, but life here and now will be forever different. But to experience this you must make a deliberate and conscious decision to surrender your life to Christ as your Lord and Savior.
9. This experience is called the "New Birth." God tells us in the Bible that the only way a person can become a true Christian is to be "born again." The essential conditions for receiving this new life in Jesus are:

Conditions Of Real Conversion To Christ:

- A. **Honesty:** All your life you have been living a lie. When you come to God, you must face for the first time the truth about your wrong. To do this you must be utterly real. God will not do business with people who do not mean business with Him. "He that

covers his sins shall not prosper; but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall have mercy." (Prov.28:13)

- B. Repentance: "I confess that I am a sinner and I cannot save myself from sin." True repentance means turning completely from your selfishness, with the determination to sin no more. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see, hate and forsake your sin. True repentance means giving up all rights to your life; you must die to all your own plans, dreams and ambitions and put yourself into God's loving hands for whatever He wants of your life.

True repentance also means the willingness as far as humanly possible to make right all known wrong. Whatever the Holy Spirit speaks to you about, whether it is forgiveness of those who have hurt you, confession of wrong to another, restoring or repaying someone, the Lord Jesus will give you the courage and words to make it right.

- C. Faith: "I believe that God is real, and that Jesus Christ is His son. I freely confess He died on the cross for the penalty I deserve. I believe that I can receive both His forgiveness and a new life through the power of His Spirit living within me." This act of faith is neither an idea nor a feeling but an intelligent and deliberate act of the will. Give Him your doubts, your weakness and your loneliness. Your heart will never have peace, your doubts will never clear up, you will never die to the world until you trust, surrender, believe from your heart!

Why wait any longer?

Jesus Christ is knocking at the door of your heart, waiting to come in. You can pray a simple, life-changing prayer right now.

In your own words confess to Him that you are a sinner and you hate your sin. Ask him to forgive you and cleanse your soul from all that is not right. Surrender your life wholly to His mercy and power, and ask Him to take over the total control of your life, now and forever. Thank Him for His forgiveness and ask Him to show you how to live for Him. The Bible says "if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved. For with the heart man believes to righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made to salvation ... the same Lord over all is rich to all that call on Him. For whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be saved." (**Romans 10:9-13**)

What he has done for countless other young men and women around the world - He can and will do for you. Just ask.

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