

Eternal Life

What is it and How do I Get It

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Preamble

Have you ever wondered about what will happen to you when you die?

Maybe you don't like to think about it. Maybe you think you would like to live forever – at least as long as you have good health.

One of the quests of the ages has been to find the secret of long life - the fountain of youth. A great deal of scientific research and money is directed to this end.

The amazing thing is that the secret of living forever is freely available to anyone who desires it. This booklet is written to enable you to find how to have eternal life in the here and now.

Maybe you are thinking - Oh I've heard this all before!

Maybe in the past someone led you to "ask Jesus into your heart" or say the "sinners prayer" - but nothing ever came of it. Maybe something did come of it, and you grew up enjoying Sunday school, church, and youth activities, until college or early marriage - and then it all faded away. Or you may have made a "commitment" to Christ as a result of a gospel appeal - but there haven't been any results worth mentioning.

Maybe you have been raised in a church and have been instructed in doctrine and have been confirmed as a church member but it all doesn't mean too much to you now.

Or you may have been a good church member for years, and feel that this constitutes being a Christian.

Like many, you may have been turned off concerning Christianity because of the terrible examples of some Christians.

On the other hand, in all honesty, you may have felt unworthy in yourself of ever being accepted by God, and you have wondered about heaven and whether you could know for sure that you have eternal life.

If you sincerely want to find answers to your questions, then this booklet is written for you.

The First Adam

We need to go back to the very beginning to lay a proper foundation upon which to build the truths that will lead you to eternal life.

In God's Image

In the very first chapter of the Bible, we read, that God said, *“Let Us make man in our image, according to our likeness;”* (Genesis 1:26). God in his great love and kindness decided to make mankind in order to have someone whom he could love and care for. Thus God made the first man, Adam, in His image that He might give His love, and in turn receive man's love.

The first question that comes to mind is - in what way was Adam made in God's image? This was not a physical image or likeness because God is a spirit. But it is a likeness of the invisible aspects of God and man. Adam was created with a mind to know God, with emotions to love God, and with a will to choose to follow God. In this way God and man would enjoy close friendship with each other.

God is infinite, eternal, uncreated, heavenly, and the source of all life. God exists on a heavenly plane. Adam, however, was created by God as a finite, time bound, physical and spiritual being. Adam received his life directly from God. *“Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.”* (Genesis 2:7)

Even though God and Adam existed in different realms; God in heaven and man on the earth; they could share the invisible aspects of thinking, feeling, and choice with each other.

God made Adam to be the source, the pattern, the head, and the representative man of the entire human race. All the human family came from Adam and Eve. In that way the human characteristics of Adam would be passed on to the entire race.

God's eternal purpose for mankind was that Adam and all of his descendents would grow in God's moral image, and thereby become increasingly like God. This race that came from Adam would continue in an intimate friendship with God.

The Condition

God was the creator, and Adam was created by God; therefore, God was the ruler and Adam was the subject. Within the range of God's overall plan and purpose for Adam, Adam had complete freedom to develop in every way for his own eternal benefit.

To set bounds for his will for Adam, God gave a single condition. He said to Adam *“You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for if you eat of its fruit you will surely die.”* (Genesis 2:16, 17).

God had provided everything good for Adam. God knew that it was best for Adam not to have any knowledge of evil and so Adam was forbidden from eating of the tree of good and evil.

In order for Adam to develop into a responsible and loving companion for God, not a mere robot or slave, it was necessary for God to give him that choice: to accept God's will - the way of eternal life; or to reject God's will - the way of eternal death.

Enter Satan

Satan was the most beautiful of all of the angels created by God in the beginning of time. He enjoyed the highest rank of all of the angels. But he wanted to take over the very throne of God, and to become like God. God cast him down from his exalted position because of his sin of pride. As a result God condemned him and his followers to eternal death in the lake of fire. *“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ Nevertheless you will be thrust down to the grave, to the recesses of the pit.”* (Isaiah 14:12-15).

In saying *“I will”* Satan rebelled against God's will. Satan's failure to conquer God's throne in heaven didn't stop him from trying to gain control of this world and the entire human race at its start. He knew that if he could cause Adam to rebel against God, he would win the entire human race and thus become the god of this world.

The Fall

In spite of God's command, and his careful warning of death if they rebelled against him, Adam and Eve were tempted by Satan to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – and they ate!

They chose to listen to and believe Satan's lie rather than what God had told them. That was sin. It resulted in spiritual death which cut them off from God who was the source of their life. Years later they died physically - this being the final result of spiritual death.

After he died spiritually, and before he died physically *“Adam had a son in his own likeness, in his own image”* (Genesis 5:3). This son was born in Adam's own sinful likeness and was also separated spiritually from God and under the sentence of death. And, from then on, every person born into this world with a human father is under the sentence of death and eternal judgment. Man fell from innocence to a state of alienation from God.

When you look at Adam the sinner you are seeing yourself. You were born into this world having a sinful nature inherited from your father. You were born a sinner, and were therefore born spiritually dead. Spiritual death results in separation from God forever - that is hell.

God says: *“ through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned”* (Romans 5:12). And there was a terrible result. *“So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men”* (Romans 5:18). All were condemned and under the death sentence.

You may wonder - why should I be guilty for this sin nature inherited from my father? But the fact is you are doubly guilty – guilty by your very nature, and guilty by your own willful sin *“dead in your trespasses and sins,” and “by nature the children of wrath”* (Ephesians 2:1, 3). *“He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God”* (John 3:18).

You have a double problem. You are on ‘death row’, and under the judgment of God, because, first, you have a sinful nature inherited from Adam, and, second, you have sinned against God by not believing his word. You belong to the wrong family, the family of the first Adam!

A New Start

As long as you continue as part of the wrong family you will produce the wrong result. As long as your family tree is rooted in Adam, you will produce the wrong type of fruit – called sin or rebellion against God.

There is only one way for you to escape this dilemma – you need a new family! And how do you enter a new family? It is by a new birth!

If you wonder - how can this be? - you would not be the first person to ask this question. Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews in Jesus' day, was an important religious teacher. In his search for eternal life he approached the Lord Jesus and received some unexpected answers to his questions.

The Lord Jesus said to Nicodemus, *“Unless you are born again, you cannot see the kingdom of God.”* Nicodemus then asked, *“How can a man be born when he is old?” “Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?”* (John 3:3, 4)

The Lord Jesus said to him again, *“Marvel not that I said to you, you must be born again.... Nicodemus answered, and said to him, how can these things be?”* The very same question you may have asked. *“Jesus answered, and said to him, Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not understand these things?”* (John 3:7, 9, 10)

Blindness

How could such an intelligent religious leader have such a lack of understanding of what Jesus was saying to him? Simply put – he was of the wrong family! Hence he was a *“blind leader of the blind”* (Matthew 15:14)

The Apostle Paul, another one-time "blind" leader and teacher of Israel, wrote after he had received his spiritual sight, *“If our gospel is hidden, it is hidden to those who are perishing, in whom the god of this world (Satan) has blinded the minds of those who don't believe, so that they are unable to see the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God”* (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4).

Satan defeated Adam and the entire human race by means of deceit and thus became the *“god of this world”* – the god of the Adamic family.

He has blinded the mind of the natural man and has placed hostility in man's heart against God, in order to prevent him from finding the true God and eternal life.

The Bible says that *“the sinful (Adamic) mind is hostile to God; it is not subject to the things of the Spirit of God”* (Romans 8:7) *“for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* (1 Corinthians 2:14) *“There is none righteous, not even one: there is none that understands, there is none who seeks for God”* (Romans 3:10, 11).

Why Me!

Maybe you are thinking - why has God condemned me for something over which I had no control? It was not my choice to be born of the wrong family! And you are right - in part. It is true that you could not help being condemned in Adam, and therefore a lost sinner by nature. But it is also true that you are a condemned sinner by your own personal choice - in thought, in your words, and in your deeds.

Is it not true that you have broken every commandment of God? Have you even kept the first one? *“You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is*

the first and great commandment.” (Matthew 22:37, 38) *“Whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”* (James 2:10).

You have earned your condemnation before God - because of your self-centered heart and will. God says *“the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?”* (Jeremiah 17:9) When it comes to being a lost sinner, you have only yourself to blame.

You may not be as bad as many others; in fact you may lead a good life. But remember, God’s standard is perfection. His measuring stick is the perfect Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is best to admit to God that He is right after all, and that you are the one in the wrong. And the good news is that God has had your very best interest in mind all along, even though you were not aware of it.

The Last Adam

Did you know that God has two Adams, two contrasting representative men as heads of two completely different families of humanity? *“The first man, Adam, became a living being; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit”* (1Corinthians 15:45). Note the disparity between these two sources: *“The first man was of the dust of the earth; the second man is from heaven”* (1 Corinthians 15:47).

The first Adam brought forth the sinful, earthly family by natural birth. The last Adam is bringing forth the righteous, heavenly family by supernatural birth. The wrong family is entered by physical birth; the right family is entered by the "new birth".

Notice carefully what God has done for you. For all of your life you have been focused on the first Adam, through your natural wisdom and abilities. Now, you can switch your focus to the last Adam for all of eternity. Notice how God has been silently working in order to bring to pass his original purpose of making man in his image.

The first Adam ceased to reflect the image of God because he rebelled against the will of God. The last Adam perfectly kept God's image as he declared *“I came down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me”* (John 6:38).

God in loving kindness has given another Adam through whom he intends to carry out his original purpose for you. He is no less than God the Son, and hence the exact image of God. *“He who has seen me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9). Actually, the failure of the first Adam set the scene for the triumph of the last Adam.

The Lord Jesus is God's last Adam because there is now no need for another. He perfectly completed the work which He came to do and said *“It is finished”* (John 19:30)

His Credentials

Your condemnation came by human birth, through the first Adam. Your salvation also comes through one of human birth, the last Adam, Jesus Christ.

The angel announced to the virgin Mary, *“You will conceive in your womb, and bear a son, and shall name him Jesus The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy offspring shall be called the Son of God”* (Luke 1:31, 35).

That was how God the Son entered the human race. The difference was that he was born sinless, having no human father, while we were born *“dead in trespasses and sins.”* And, during His life on earth, he never sinned *“who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin”* (Hebrews 4:15).

In order for God to perfectly replace the sinful first Adam, his last Adam had to succeed where the first Adam had failed. He had to remain faithful to God under the same circumstances that had been the downfall of the first Adam. This last Adam was tempted to do the same thing, in the same way, and by the same person, as was the first Adam.

Re-Enter Satan

The Lord Jesus was led into the desert, where he fasted for forty days. When his hunger was acute, Satan tried to tempt Him to eat - the very temptation by which he had defeated the first Adam.

Satan started his attack on the last Adam, knowing that if he could get him to step outside God's will, and go his own way; he would thereby defeat this last representative man. He would then have defeated the entire human race and become their God.

Keep in mind that the Lord Jesus was not facing this temptation for His own sake, but for yours! He was doing it as your substitute in order that he might become your Savior.

Satan cast his first fiery dart at the Lord Jesus by saying *“If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread”* (Luke 4:3). Being God, the Lord Jesus could have done it. Famished as he was, he deflected this deadly dart with Scripture: *“It is written, man does not live on bread alone”* (Luke 4:4). As the last Adam, the Lord Jesus was in willing submission to his Father, and he refused to do anything contrary to God's will for him. *“Behold, I have come to do your will”* (Hebrews 10:9).

When food failed, Satan tried again. He offered the Lord dominion over all the kingdoms of the world if he would worship him. The Devil said to Him, *“I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.”* (Luke 4:6). Again, Jesus replied using Scripture *“It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only”* (Luke 4:8)

Finally Satan offered Him the entire world. Notice that the Lord Jesus did not challenge Satan's claim but by His silence acknowledged that Satan is indeed the god of this present world.

Satan's ultimate desire was for Jesus, the last Adam, to worship him. This was his ultimate attempt to become like God. But it didn't work. The last Adam defeated the tempter and the temptation.

The Mediator

God sent His beloved Son from heaven, not only to be your last Adam, but to be the Mediator between Himself and you. A Mediator is one who stands between two parties to reconcile their differences when there is a difference between them. And the gulf between you and God is vast.

The Lord Jesus is God's only Mediator. And he is the only possible mediator for you. *“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man, Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5).

A mediator must be one who is accepted and trusted by both of the involved parties. God said of the Lord Jesus, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear him”* (Matthew 17:5). God was satisfied with his Son as his mediator. He wants you to accept and trust His Son as your mediator.

In order to be the Mediator between God and man, the Lord Jesus had to enter into the very nature of the parties involved. He had to have both God's nature and man's nature. And this he did. He was indeed both fully God and fully man.

The Lord Jesus was always God; He had God's nature from all eternity. By being born of the virgin Mary, he took upon himself the nature of man. He is referred to in many places in the Scriptures as both *“Son of God”* and *“Son of man”*.

The Debt Paid

Notice what else God says of Him: *“Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross”* (Philippians 2:6-8)

The Lord Jesus willingly shed his life-blood on the Cross, dying the most agonizing and shameful criminal death for you. As the Lamb of God, he was sacrificed in order to pay your penalty. *“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness”* (Hebrews 9:22).

He has made peace between God and man. *“having made peace through the blood of his cross. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, yet he has now reconciled you in his body through death, to present you before him holy and blameless and beyond reproach ”* (Colossians 1:20-22).

Your Condition

You have no rights before God, except for your condemnation for your sin. Furthermore there is nothing you can do about it. Although you had nothing to do with your birth into the wrong family, by your own choice you have guaranteed your own condemnation.

No matter how much you try to change your condition, or how good you try to be, you are still doing so from the wrong source, one that is totally unacceptable to God. What can you do? Nothing! Agree with God that you can do nothing about your spiritual dilemma. Also recognize that only God can rescue you.

And he has already done all that is required for you. He sent his Son to take your place in the death that sin required. The Lord Jesus took upon him that death and paid the penalty for you. *“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed...but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God”* (1 Peter 1:18-21).

Free at Last

All that has been considered so far adds up to this: *“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:22). Your only hope is to be freed from eternal death in Adam, and to be born again so that you have eternal life in Christ.

When you are able to face up to the bad news, and admit that Satan has you hopelessly bound in guilt, condemnation, and death; it is then, and not until then, that God comes to your rescue and enables you to embrace the Gospel, the good news.

And was there ever such good news? *“Since then the children (of Adam) share in flesh and blood, he himself (the last Adam) likewise also partook of the same, that through death he might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives”* (Hebrews. 2:14,15).

God’s offer

God has always taken the initiative. He made the first and every other move toward you, while all your moves have been away from him.

Just as the father embraced his prodigal son, so God loves you and receives you just as you are. *“God demonstrates his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). Did you notice who it is that God loves? *“Him who justifies the ungodly”* (Romans 4:5) God loves us the way we are, but he loves us too much to leave us that way.

Could the good news of the Gospel be more explicit? *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). *“Whoever”* includes you. Place your name there. You can thank God for that! You escape eternal death and enter into eternal life by believing in the Son. Born to die, you are reborn to live. *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; but whoever rejects the Son will not see life”* (John 3:36).

Amazing, isn’t it! God has placed all your sins upon his perfect Son when he was on the Cross of Calvary. The Lord Jesus took all your sin into death, thereby paying your just penalty of death. Since he himself had no sin, he was free to come out from under the paid penalty and rise from the dead. *“He was delivered over to death for our sins, and was raised to life for our justification”* (Romans 4:25).

Freely Forgiven

Now God, in effect, says to you, ‘Full payment has been made. Receive my beloved Son as your personal payment, and you will be free from the first Adam and born again into the last Adam.’

Yes, Jesus paid it all! *“Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ... He made him (Jesus), who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him”* (2 Corinthians. 5:18, 21).

To make it even clearer this is what God says. *“To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness”* (Romans 4:5).

Wow! No works, no changing, no self improvement plan; he just asks you to trust Him as you are - an *“ungodly”* sinner.

Being a sinful child of Adam, you fully qualify for God's gift of his Son. *"It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."* (1 Timothy 1:15) *"For Christ also died for (your) sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God"* (1 Peter 3:18).

You have earned your wages, death, but God offers you his free gift of eternal life here and now. *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord"* (Romans 6:23).

Long ago a man asked the question of the Apostle Paul *"What must I do to be saved?"* The answer given was *"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved"* (Acts 16:30, 31).

What do you have to do to be saved? Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ just as the individual in Acts 16 did. It's that simple; in fact you can't do anything other than this to be saved. The Lord Jesus Christ has paid your sin debt in full.

There is nothing left for you to pay. It's similar to a bank or credit card debt that you might have. If someone has paid what you owed then you can't also pay the same debt.

Who are you now?

As a Christian, it is important to know what happens to you when you reject the first Adam and accept the last Adam. You have become a Christian, not on the basis of what you feel or don't feel, but upon whom you have believed and therefore have received. *"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name"* (John 1:12).

As Adam brought death by your natural birth, so the Lord Jesus brings life by your spiritual birth. When you accept the Savior, you not only receive what He did for you on the cross, but you receive the One who did it. By his Holy Spirit, he comes into your spirit to be your Christian life. *"Christ, who is our life"* (Colossians 3:4).

When you place your faith in the Lord Jesus, God transfers you from the fallen Adamic family and he spiritually re-creates you as a member of the new heavenly family that springs from the last Adam. *"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creation"* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

As you were one with Adam by nature, you become one with the Lord Jesus by a new nature.

God places you in his Son by means of a spiritual birth, and he places his Son's very nature within your spirit so that you are now his child. Believing, we become *"partakers of the divine nature"* (2 Peter 1:4).

At the moment of your new birth, the Lord Jesus enters your spirit by means of God the Holy Spirit. He is the Spirit of Christ. In that way you are in living and eternal union with God the Son. *"I (Christ) will ask the Father, and he will give you another helper (the Holy Spirit), that he may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth ... In that day you shall know that I am in My Father, and you in me, and I in you"* (John 14:16, 17, 20)

Becoming a born-again Christian is receiving and being indwelt by a Person. It is not a matter of feeling, but of Biblical fact. It is not making a commitment, or deciding to follow Him, or anything else. God gives you eternal life by giving you his Son who is life eternal. The Lord Jesus said, *"I am...the life"* (John 14:6).

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:11-13).

Now What?

What is God's eternal purpose for you now? Remember God's purpose. *“Let us make man in our image”* (Genesis 1:26). And the Lord Jesus is the *“exact representation of his (God's) nature”* (Hebrews 1:3). Thus, by means of your new birth you were re-created in the image of God.

As a Christian, God will be working out his eternal purpose for you, and God will be slowly making you into his likeness. Like the Father, and like the Son! *“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of his Son”* (Romans 8:28, 29).

You have begun a wonderful new life, and it will continue through all of eternity. And you will be getting to know the Lord Jesus more fully; and by him you will increasingly know and love your heavenly Father. *“For in him (Christ) all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form”* (Colossians 2:9).

The Lord Jesus is your very life now, and he will be so forever. All that he is, he is for you. All that he has, he will give to you - and that will require all eternity! *“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”* (Galatians 4:7) and *“...heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”* (Romans 8:17)

What you have now discovered is true life indeed. *“My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”* (John 10:10). It is a life that never ends. *“I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish.”* (John 10:28)

What is eternal life? *“Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”* (John 17:3)

The Principle of Grace

Born by Grace

As a new Christian you understand that you were born again on the principle of grace - the unearned, free gift of God. *“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord”* (Romans 6:23). *“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it (salvation) is the gift of God”* (Ephesians 2:8).

Grow by Grace

As a new Christian, you also need to understand that your new life is to be lived on the same principle as your new birth - that of grace. *“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him”* (Colossians 2:6). *“For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him, and the power to do what pleases him”* (Philippians 2:13).

As you progress in your new life you will find that you sometimes struggle with how to live the Christian life and you may even experience failures. These struggles and failures are the means by which the Lord Jesus will teach you the vital grace principle of *“not I, but Christ”* (Galatians 2:20). During this process you will learn that you cannot live the Christian life in your own strength, not even with the Lord's help.

The Lord Jesus expressed this principle by this illustration. *“I am the vine, you are the branches, he who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing”* (John 15:5).

Your part, as a branch in the Vine, is to rest in him, depend upon him, and maintain a close friendship with him.

You are joined to the vine by your new birth, and his life will flow in and through you, *“so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body”* (2 Corinthians 4:11).

As you abide in Christ, resting upon him, know that he will bring you victory in the midst of failure. *“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in his triumph in Christ”* (2 Corinthians 2:14). You do not triumph by means of your own strength and plans; it is your Father who gives you life and growth in his Son.

Serve by Grace

God has his eternal purpose and plan for you as an individual, and as you grow spiritually you will be living the life he has chosen for you. *“For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:10).

He has promised to provide you with all that you will need for every task he gives you to do. *“God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed”* (2 Corinthians 9:8).

He equips you for the task he has for you by His grace, *“But by the grace of God I am what I am”*, and his grace enables us to become His willing servant. *“and his grace toward me did not prove vain; but I (Paul) labored even more than all of them, yet, not I, but the grace of God with me.”* (1 Corinthians 15:10).

Our birth, our growth, and our service are all based on the principle of grace received by faith. God through his grace is the enabling power of our lives. All of it is based on the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross.

Acceptance with God

The first aspect of your spiritual foundation is your complete acceptance before God

What about my failures?

One of the major struggles of the Christian life is to understand how God can accept you when you so often fail him. If your acceptance with God is not properly understood you will struggle with doubts about whether you are really a Christian. You need to understand why you experience defeat and how God uses this for his purposes.

The new life in Christ is in some ways like the growth of a tree. There may be periods of rapid growth and there may be periods of stagnation. There may even be dry periods when you seem to slip backwards. This process is described as, *“When I want to do good, I don't. And when I try not to do wrong, I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:19).

Notice how God uses this process to drive you to himself *“Thank God, the answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Romans 7:25). He teaches you that you have been joined to another *“that you might be joined to another, to him who was raised from the dead.”* (Romans 7:4) You learn that *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me”* (Galatians 2:20)

Why is it that we struggle? We struggle because we now have two coexisting natures within us – the old nature inherited from the first Adam, and the new nature received by the new birth from the last Adam, Christ. It is by this means that God gives us the constant choice: to abide in our old nature and be Adam-like, or to abide in our new nature and become Christ-like.

You are to know and believe that the power of your old nature, the self principle, has been broken by Christ’s death on the cross. *“Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with him.”* (Romans 6:6). Thus you no longer need to live under its control. *“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus”* (Romans 6:11)

The first thing is learning to recognize your old sinful Adamic self nature for what it is, totally self-centered and at enmity with God! The second thing is learning to nourish your new nature by reliance upon the Spirit of Christ who is your new self. *“but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God”* (Romans 6:13)

Unconditional Acceptance

You must know the solidity of your spiritual foundation. When you become keenly aware of your failures, you may be tempted to wonder whether or not you are a Christian, after all. So you need to know the strength of the foundation upon which you are to live and grow.

As a born again believer in Jesus Christ you are fully accepted by God because He now sees you through your identity as part of his family. You are as surely a Christian as, in the natural realm; you are a member of the family of your physical parents. Your spiritual birth identity is in Jesus Christ.

Like everything else in your Christian life, your acceptance by God is of grace. *“He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, through which he has made us accepted in the Beloved”* (Ephesians 1:5, 6).

Could anything be more complete and eternal? To the extent that the Father accepts his beloved Son, he accepts you in Him. You can forever thank him that your acceptance does not depend upon what you are in yourself!

Position not Condition

If you judge God’s acceptance according to your day-to-day condition, you will never be absolutely sure that he fully accepts you. When everything is going well and you are happy in the Lord you are likely to conclude, that you are pleasing to God; and thus that he loves and accepts you. But when you fail him, or he brings testing into your life, you may feel you must be displeasing to God; and thus that he doesn’t love or accept you any longer.

With God, position is everything when it comes to your acceptance in his Son, and he wants that fact to be first in your mind. Of course, God is concerned about your day-to-day condition, and he expects you to be concerned also. But your acceptance is not based upon your condition.

Your acceptance by God will often be denied by Satan. He will accuse you concerning sin in your life. He will insist that God cannot possibly accept anyone in your condition. It is then that you can rest in the

Lord Jesus, who is your full acceptance before God and your shield against the devil's dart of doubt. *“For your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Colossians 3:3).

God has positioned you in Christ. As the Holy Spirit develops Christ's life within you, you will be increasingly conformed to the image of the Lord Jesus, apart from what the accuser whispers to you. *“But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Spirit of the Lord”* (2 Corinthians 3:18).

God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are working on your behalf for their eternal purpose which is: *“Let us make (this) man in our image, after our likeness”* (Genesis 1:26).

In the light of these truths, you never need to listen to Satan's lies! *“If (since) God is for us, who can be against us? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?”* (Romans 8:31, 33). The answer to this rhetorical question is - no one – no one can stand against you and accuse you before God! He has accepted you in Christ.

Assurance of Salvation

The second aspect of your spiritual foundation is the assurance of your salvation.

This is the certain conviction that you are a Christian and that you have now and forever eternal life. *“For I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day”* (2 Timothy 1:12).

To the extent that your assurance of salvation wavers, your Christian experience will be crippled.

Member of a New Family

It is much the same as in a human family. When a child is nurtured and encouraged as an important member of his human family he is assured of his acceptance by his parents. Even though he may at times act in a way that is inconsistent with the values of his parents, he knows that he will always be accepted as a full member of his human family. He knows that nothing can remove those birth credentials that are his.

It is similar in the Christian life. Your unshakable assurance as to your spiritual parentage comes from the Bible. Your new position is as sure and unchangeable as the eternal Scriptures upon which it is founded. Your actual condition fluctuates from time to time, however your position in Christ is the only ground for assurance of your salvation.

Spiritual birth has to do with family position, and not with experiences. Your new birth may have a great effect upon your condition. You may be filled with love, joy, and peace - that is the result of your position. These and other aspects of your condition will ebb and flow.

There will be growth all during your life, but your family position will never change. And it is upon your position in Christ that your assurance of salvation is established. *“We know also that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true – even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God, and eternal life”* (1 John 5:20).

Facts not Feelings

Normally, when a person first becomes a Christian they have a great feeling of love and enthusiasm for the Lord. There is a great change in their condition. Many of the old sins and habits drop away, and they become a joyous and outgoing Christian. They feel this new life flooding their being.

As a babe in Christ you are keenly aware of this transformation. It is so real and wonderful that you may well shift your assurance from your position in Christ to your condition. You feel so saved, and you act so saved, that you may think to yourself - I know I am a Christian by my feelings and behavior.

You are now assured of your salvation because you feel saved. But see where this leads. At some point your failures and struggles may leave you not feeling saved, and you find yourself at the end of your assurance.

Your conclusion may well be that since your condition is so bad, you just may not be a Christian.

At any rate, you make up your mind to regain your assurance. The next day you strive to look and to sound and to feel saved. In short, you begin to struggle in order to maintain your assurance.

But because you are now centering your faith upon yourself and your condition, there is nothing but failure compounded. Your positional relationship with God has not changed in the least, and never will - but your assurance of it has.

You need to know that your new Christian life, and your assurance of that life, has their source and foundation in your position in Christ as a member of God's eternal family. It is all of grace! *"Who (God) has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity,"* (2 Timothy 1:9).

The Witness of the Spirit

Another factor about your assurance of salvation is the witness of the Spirit. *"The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit, that we are children of God"* (Romans 8:16).

This witness of the Spirit is not an inward feeling of being right with God; it is a witness recorded in the words of the Bible. The witness of the Spirit is the written testimony that lies plain and clear on the pages of Scripture. What is the witness? It is this: *"Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more"* (Hebrews 8:12).

When the Holy Spirit, the Author of the Bible, speaks to your heart, he does it by means of the Bible. As you study the Scriptures concerning your position in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Spirit of Christ gives you a deep assurance within your spirit, which is beyond the realm of feelings. *"The one who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself ... And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."* (1 John 5:10-11).

Eternal Security

The third aspect of your spiritual foundation is your eternal security.

Not of works

You will inevitably encounter those who strongly oppose the truth of eternal security. These opponents insist upon some form of works in order to remain saved or to prove that you are saved. But the God of all grace, the One who saves and secures, says, *“But to the one who does not work, but believes in him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness”* (Romans 4:5).

You have acceptance, assurance, and eternal security before God. You are unconditionally and eternally secure in the risen Lord Jesus Christ. *“Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever”* (Jude 24 & 25)

It isn't that you don't fall in some measure daily in your condition, but that you cannot fall from your eternal position.

The Sovereignty of God

The key to your eternal security is the fact that your Father is the sovereign God of the universe. He has chosen you! He has made you his child! *“Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world he predestined us to adoption as sons, through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will”* (Ephesians 1:4, 5).

And He will keep you! *“And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of my hand.”* (John 10:28)

The Justice of God

In a day of great injustice, you need to know that your security is based firmly on the justice of God. *“He did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.”* (Romans 3:26). God is both just and the justifier of the believer in Jesus Christ.

Notice also that it was the Lord Jesus Christ who was just in the sight of God who has made you just before God. *“For Christ also has died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God”* (1 Peter 3:18).

God never demands double payment. Christ has paid your sin debt. You cannot do so as well. You are free from this debt.

The Love of God

Another factor in your eternal security is God's love for you. Your Father loves you as he loves his Son, because in him you are also in his Son.

Nothing can separate the Lord Jesus from his Father, and in him nothing can separate you from your Father. *“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 8:35, 38, 39)

The Power of God

Further, you are an heir of God. Your inheritance is kept for you while you are kept by the power of God. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* (1 Peter 1:3-5).

Notice you are *“protected by the power of God”*. There is nothing or no one more powerful and his promise is that he will protect and keep you.

The Promises of God

God has given many promises that he will keep you. *“All that the Father gives me shall come to me, and the one who comes to me I will certainly not cast out”* (John 6:37).

God himself has said, *“I will never leave you, nor will I ever forsake you”* (Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6)

All quotations are from the New American Standard Bible, The New International Version, or The New Living Translation.

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