

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Conditions of Use

By opening this book the reader agrees to the following stipulations:

- 1) The author gives permission to keep or offer at no cost: any type of reproduction.
- 2) The content of this book must not be altered in any way.
- 3) Michael Morgan (the author) reserves the right to make changes at any time in any of his material.
- 4) Be sure to give a copy (cd, email the website or chapter, paper, whatever) to someone else or to another church.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

Mike Morgan

[Streamsofsalvation@gmail.com](mailto:Streamsofsalvation@gmail.com)

[www.streamsofsalvationministry.com](http://www.streamsofsalvationministry.com)

PO Box 621

Council Bluffs, Iowa 51502-0621

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,  
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman  
Foundation

Used by permission." [www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org)

Copyright © 2014 by Michael Morgan

Copyright © 2015 by Michael Morgan

At this point I need to express a very special thanks to all of the people who have contributed to my series of books, both directly and indirectly: First and foremost, His most wondrous of gifts--my wife Janet and the incredible blessings from the Lord as I continue to write this series of books. Next, all of the help and spiritual growth I received from attending and ministering in the Lord's non-instrumental churches: McPherson Church of Christ, Council Bluffs; Redline Church of Christ, Harlan, Iowa and Harlan Church of Christ. Also the instrumental churches: First Christian Church, Council Bluffs, Iowa; my home congregation--East Side Christian Church, Council Bluffs. And finally: my family, Kathleen Kachulas, and many other wonderful friends and brethren, and my nephew David West who offered his professional web design services. I truly appreciate all of their help and encouragement.

Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose trust is the Lord. For he will be like a tree planted by the water, that extends its roots by a stream and will not fear when the heat comes; but its leaves will be green, and it will not be anxious in a year of drought no cease to yield fruit.

Jeremiah 17:7-8

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Statement of Purpose

In mid-nineteen nineties I set out to research what took place when I first decided to obey the Gospel. The interest reaches back to 1978. This is when I first heard the gospel message from a preacher who served in a Council Bluffs, Iowa, Church of Christ – noninstrumental. My wife Janet had quietly and very effectively led me to attend this church and respond to the Lord’s call. Throughout our dating and engagement she consistently modeled a Christian woman, greatly influencing my interest in the Lord. She never stopped.

The minister taught me the basics of salvation and I chose to answer the Lord’s call. From this moment I became increasingly interested in learning what took place and began a systematic study of salvation. As I accumulated more knowledge and research information the thought occurred to me to share what I have learned. Thus my book began to take shape from a rough outline to a manuscript.

Through many years of writing I included other books and ending up with a series of books in various stages of completion. They speak about salvation, sin, the Lord’s work of salvation, the covenant, and an overview book.

The books include the integration of many different types of theology: theology – information about God, Christology – the work of Jesus, pneumatology – what the Holy Spirit is doing, ecclesiatology – about the Lord’s church, anthropology – mankind’s response and accountability to God, soteriology – the process of salvation, and eschatology – concerning the end of time and eternal life in the body of Christ.

This book is the overview. I have organized the chapters to briefly look at many differing aspects of salvation. It has nine chapters which include basic steps of information leading to a greater insight about God, what takes place when responding to His free offer of salvation in Christ, and spiritual confidence.

The parts of each chapter are like stepping stones, one of many crossing a stream of spiritual water. As the reader progresses from one step to another he will begin to grow in a better understanding concerning his present fellowship with Jesus and knowledge of what lies ahead. Once he reaches the other side he is able to look back across the stream and see the wonders of God’s grace. He is better equipped to recognize his participation and partnership in the Lord’s eternal plan.

I sincerely hope this information becomes as useful to the reader as it is for me the writer. May God richly bless your efforts to understand the blessings of salvation which the Lord so lovingly gave to all humanity. I pray God will give you the confidence and faith to witness the wondrous grace of God to the lost and fellow servant’s in the Lord.

# Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

## Contents

Introduction

Section One: God

Section Two: God Speaks to His People

Section Three: Expectations

Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

Section Five: God's Work

Section Six: In God's Presence

Section Seven: Partnership with God

Section Eight: With God

Section Nine: Assurance

Closing Remarks

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

Calling on God	5
Seeking God with Prayer	9
Believing in God	20
Faith in God	25
Obedience to God	32
Confessing the Lord God	36
Repentance	39
Baptism	48

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Calling on God

Jesus once said, “whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (*John* 3:16b). Even though Jesus directly referred to the Jewish people He also spoke about the pressing spiritual needs of the Gentiles. He did not speak to a certain predestined to salvation group of people – He spoke to everyone. What Jesus revealed over two thousand years ago is not out of date. People are still enslaved to sin. Servants of sin are still spiritually dead – separated from fellowship with God the Father. Everyone has the same way to accept the Lord’s offer, which is His call to anyone willing to repent and return to fellowship with God His Father--through Jesus Christ.

God continually calls out to all people because He is trying to save every- one from certain self-destruction. However, only those willing to respond to His call will receive the blessings of His grace of redemption through Jesus Christ. In *Romans* Paul quoted a prophecy written by Joel: “For whoever will call upon the Lord will be saved” (10:13). The “whoever” is not a divinely predetermined people predestined to respond to His call, but those to whom God foresaw calling upon Jesus for redemption from their bondage to sin, out of free will. God predestined redemption, but not the redeemed. The redeemed are predestined because the predestined redeemer offered the opportunity to join with His predetermined destiny.

Just as there is but one Word with the power to save or lead a slave of sin to Jesus, there is but one call on God to receive His grace of redemption through Jesus Christ. In his *first* letter *Peter* described the response of calling upon God’s grace as “an appeal to God for a good conscience” (3:21b). Spiritual renewal can only happen by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, sins must be forgiven and all accountability to sin within the conscience cleared. The spirit and self of a man, his life force and who he is, must be recreated and renewed in order to return to fellowship with God. In order to achieve this miraculous spiritual task God must cleanse the unholy servant of all accountability to his debt of sin. Only those reborn into innocence are able to receive reconciliation with God the Father through Jesus Christ.

All servants of sin “show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them” (*Romans* 2:15). Even though Paul primarily addressed Jewish confidence in the Law of Moses, God holds both the Gentiles and the Jews accountable to an instinctual moral law just as binding and powerful. All have the instinctual “knowledge of good and evil” (*Genesis* 2:17a). When a servant of sin calls on God for forgiveness and cleansing he is making a plea to God for his justification.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Calling on God

God searches all hearts, thus, when a slave of sin approaches Him for redemption, He knows what motivates his belief and hears his prayers. He knows the extent of a servant's faith and looks for proof of his conviction, the sincerity of his confession, and his willingness to prove his confession and repentance through obedience to the Lord Jesus.

God has an intense interest in the heart of His servant. David addressed his people concerning the building of a new temple and quoted what God told him concerning the highly anticipated project. God would not allow him to direct the construction, this would be left up to his son Solomon next in line to the throne, "As for you Solomon know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever" (1 *Chronicles* 28:9).

The servant of sin must be willing to search his heart to discover his sincerity to God. Is he willing to confess Jesus as Lord, Master, and Savior? Is he willing to fulfill his confession by obeying Jesus and His covenant? Is he willing to give himself to God's word concerning the unseen process of salvation taking place through belief and faith motivated obedience? Is he willing to serve Lord Jesus for the rest of his life? Even though no one is able to determine his spiritual path from beginning to end, he must choose to begin his spiritual journey by calling on God's mercy and grace according to his belief and faith according to His expressed will through Jesus.

To call on God requires a willingness to apply a singular response of belief, faith, confession of the Lordship of Jesus, and a commitment to obedience-- repentance, baptism, and continuing in faith for the rest of life. A redeemed servant devotes himself every day to serving his Lord's will.

#### Questions

No one is excluded from God's call for salvation.

John 3:16

- 1) Do you think people are predestined by God to eternity in either Heaven or Hell?
- 2) Can a servant be so wicked and evil God will never allow him to repent?
- 3) Is God calling all people or just some of the best?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Calling on God

The only people who die in sin are those who choose to die separated from God.  
Romans 10:13

- 1) Is salvation strictly an issue of a servant's freedom of choosing whom to serve?
- 2) What are the two spiritual choices of service does God offer to every person?
- 3) How do you feel about your closest relative or friend choosing to end life in slavery to sin?
- 4) Do you believe God allows people to alter His plan of salvation in order for deathbed conversions to take place?
- 5) Are there any circumstances in life or near death which justify altering God's word?
- 6) What is most important: a servant's desire to save a lost loved one by any means or obeying God's will concerning his salvation?

Calling on God is a heartfelt appeal for a cleansed conscience.  
First Peter 3:21b; Romans 2:15; Genesis 2:17a

- 1) How does a servant of sin appeal to God to receive a new conscience?
- 2) What is a person's conscience?
- 3) Why is the conscience so important?
- 4) How does a servant of sin who is in open rebellion against God plead to Him for anything?

Calling of God is plea to Him for justification.

- 1) Does a plea for forgiveness require faith and belief in the integrity of God's word?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Calling on God

- 2) A plea requires a self-realization of spiritual helplessness are you ready to accept your helplessness?
- 3) Do you feel helpless?
- 4) How is a slave of sin helpless to change his eternal destiny?

What a servant does physically as he calls upon God is not near as important as why.  
1 Chronicles 28:9

- 1) Why is motivation more important than the response?
- 2) Why must both response and motivation conform to God's will?
- 3) If what a servant is thinking in his heart is so important why is a physical response necessary?
- 4) Does motivation link the works of belief and faith with the servant's heart?

Calling upon God is confessing Jesus as Lord and Master.

- 1) Does motivation play an important part of a servant's confession of Jesus as Lord?
- 2) Does confession require the servant to serve the Lord's will?
- 3) If you confess Jesus as Lord and Master what does this mean?
- 4) What happens to a servant's confession if he decides he does not have to do what his Master is asking of him for salvation and service?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Seeking God with Prayer

Very little is mentioned about prayer and how it works within the process of salvation. However, prayer is a very important spiritual tool because it helps a servant of sin to focus on Jesus. Prayer sends a message to God about what the sinner thinks he believes is in his heart. In (*Psalms* 145:18-19) David wrote: "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth, He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them." David offered insights concerning the attitude of heart God looks for in those seeking His help. He mentioned at least two vital truths concerning an appeal to God:

- 1) Prayer is conditional, the one praying must "call upon Him in truth," and the only way to do this is to hear or read the word of God and follow the counsel of the Spirit.
- 2) The one praying must develop "fear," which is to respect Him as Lord God. Fear helps him to see his position as a created and fallen servant which in turn may lead him to honor God his Creator and Lord--Master. He needs to recognize and decide who he desires to serve, sin and the god of this world – Satan, or God the Father through Jesus Christ. No one owns his life, God his creator owns him. No one controls destiny on his own. Yet God gives everyone the basic freedom to choose whom he wishes to serve during his lifetime and throughout eternity. Prayer helps the servant to work through his intentions with life.

In (*Psalms* 10:17), David spoke of the importance of humility, it's another condition: "O Lord, Thou hast heard the desire of the humble; Thou wilt strengthen their heart, Thou wilt incline Thine ear." God will not honor an attitude of self-righteousness or self-anything. A servant of sin must realize his position of utter helplessness and hopelessness outside of Christ. God is counseling him to appeal to Jesus for redemption by prayer with an attitude of humility. All he can do in the process of his salvation is to believe in Jesus, allow belief to grow into active faith, and obediently follow His counsel.

When combined with Scripture, prayer helps a servant of sin realize there are no other options available by which he is able to receive freedom from his debt to sin and its curse of death. Salvation cannot result from anything he is able to accomplish on his own. A servant is able to influence his physical death but is powerless to resurrect himself back into life, either physically or spiritually. Only Jesus is able to transform a servant of sin into a servant of righteousness.

In his gospel letter, *Matthew* recorded Jesus stating: "And everything you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive" (21:22). Prayer played a very important part in the process of salvation before the new covenant took place. The vital element of prayer is ones attitude motivating the prayer. His mind-set helps him to focus his heart on Jesus, through whom prayer is received by God the Father. Believing in Jesus is an essential

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Seeking God with Prayer

condition of the new covenant and the overall plan of salvation. Belief and faith in the work of God--His unseen blessing of salvation, labor to create an effective prayer. One must confidently believe God is answering prayer because he may never physically experience the answer even though God has answered.

God listens and answers the prayers of those who believe He is doing what He has promised. Prayer preps a servant of sin for salvation because it helps to build a foundation of belief and faith. This may in turn develop into a confession of Jesus as Lord leading to repentance in conformance to His will.

God answers prayer because of the lifestyle and attitude which is motivated by the prayer. Prayer is important to God. Prayer is the revelation of one's heart. It reveals belief and faith not only to God but to the one seeking God. Belief and faith determine whether the prayer is a self-deception of self-righteousness, legal obligation, an obligation of guilt, physical fear, or an unassuming revelation of one's humble acknowledgment of his moral and spiritual imperfection before a righteous God.

God purposely places every person in a specific locale, at a particular time, for a precise reason: "that they should seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each of us" (*Acts 17:27*). Sin fogs up God's reality. A slave of sin lives in what may appear as a sea of continually thickening fog which decreases his spiritual vision as the effects of sin gradually harden his heart. All the while his inability to see truth allows his corrupt heart and Satan to deceptively lead him to believe his limited spiritual sight is normal. But the effects of sin and the acceptance of life as normal cannot alter the true intentions of God or His love for mankind.

Paul tried to communicate to the people of Athens, who worshipped many different gods, God is never far away. They made the critical mistake of searching for a distant God, believing their physical efforts to please Him would appease Him. The deceptions of sin, lust, a corrupt heart, and Satan take advantage of the unseen work and nature of God to deceive captives into believing God is far away and must be approached by diligent human effort through religion, god's, or whatever.

Paul advised them to make radical changes. God is not far away. Instead of worshipping His perceived likeness, they needed to begin their approach through belief in His unseen existence and faithfully search for Him through prayer and listening to the gospel. They needed to begin relying on the counsel of God found in Scripture instead of the perceptions and traditions from other people just as deceived as themselves. Jesus once said to the Pharisees: "if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (*Matthew 15:14b*).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Seeking God with Prayer

Many earnestly seek for His grace but simply do not know how. Prayer helps to break down the distance between God and the seeker by focusing his eyes to see His light and presence through belief and faith.

Take a look at Paul before his redemption. When Jesus approached Saul, prayer did not play a significant role in the course of salvation. The Lord initiated his salvation as he traveled to Damascus. After his encounter with Jesus, the Lord asked: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me" (*Acts 9:4-5*). He told him to go to Damascus for further instructions, "but arise, and enter the city, and it shall be told to you what you must do" (*9:6*).

While in Damascus he waited for instructions concerning what he needed to do next. Luke also mentioned how Ananias played a role in his conversion, "and the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go to the street called straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for behold, he is praying'" (*9:11*).

Saul could not have prayed for His salvation according to the New Covenant in Christ Jesus because he had no way of knowing anything about the covenant. In fact he ignorantly fought against the covenant as a false religion. Very likely as he fought Jesus he prayed to God in the context of what he had learned as a Pharisee, praying for the destruction of the Way – the Lord's new and growing body of believer's. Saul had developed into a very devout and righteous Pharisee, a chosen son of God, living according to the Law, a true son of God. Or so he felt. But his heart, sin, lust, and Satan deceptively misled him to fight against the very God whom he thought he worshipped and loved.

The Lord gave the job of teaching the gospel to Saul to Ananias. During the time between arriving in Damascus and the arrival of Ananias, Saul needed to collect his thoughts about Jesus, what He had told him about the Way and the new faith he so passionately tried to destroy. His encounter with Jesus humbled him and instilled a new sense of fear toward God. He began to understand the true identity of Jesus, and it must have greatly frightened him. He may have begun to understand who he really served – Satan.

When Ananias met Saul he found him in a state of complete helpless bewilderment before God. Within the time span of a few moments during an otherwise uneventful trip to Damascus Saul's entire life turned upside down after Jesus enlightened him concerning his true status before God--an enemy of God. Through prayer, and in most likely great fear, he humbly prepared his heart to accept whatever came next.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Seeking God with Prayer

Saul readied himself to hear the true will of God with an attitude of respect, fear, and humble obedience. Even though his prayer could not have focused on New Covenant salvation it prepared his heart to hear the gospel with a willingness to believe and place his faith in what he heard.

His prayer could not have played a part in the actual pathway to salvation. He did not know what to believe in, he did not know how to act out his faith because he couldn't have faith in an unknown faith. He didn't know how to confess Jesus. He didn't know what he needed to do in order to be considered as repentant. Prayer is simply not the same as a spiritual death united with Jesus. Prayer is not a burial with Jesus. Prayer is not a resurrection into a new life with Jesus. Prayer cannot effect his spiritual circumcision. Sin requires a death and prayer cannot substitute dying with Jesus.

Luke mentioned Cornelius as another example of prayer in context with the salvation process of the New Covenant. Cornelius habitually prayed "to God continually" (*Acts* 10:2b). Luke highlighted his attitude as "a devout man, and one who feared God with all his household, and gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually" (10:2). Cornelius practiced righteousness without self-righteousness as best he could under the counsel and stipulations of the Law of Moses. However, he didn't realize Jesus had replaced the Law of Moses with the New Covenant at the moment of His death.

God still considered Cornelius in bondage to sin, despite his righteous life and attitude towards Him. Like Saul he didn't understand who he served – sin and Satan. After all, the Law could not do anything about sin debt once it became established. The writer of *Hebrews* noted, "For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins" (10:4). His prayers to God could not have any influence upon his debt of sin either or the way in which sin is forgiven through redemption. Like Saul he didn't know anything about salvation in the New Covenant. He could not place belief and faith in Jesus or in His redemption because of his complete ignorance of both.

Cornelius believed in God and expressed faith through how he worshipped Him as the Jewish people had taught him. He greatly feared God and desired with all of his heart to serve Him according to His will. However, he did not believe in Jesus, and he could not express his faith to God the Father through Jesus, even though he had faith in God as directed by the Law of Moses.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Seeking God with Prayer

God considered him as a servant of sin regardless of his righteous appearance, just as Saul appeared righteous to all who knew him even as he lived in bondage to sin. Both Saul and Cornelius more than likely felt righteous before God and served Him accordingly. However, they had a major problem--the impossibility of directly worshipping God the Father. *John* recorded Jesus revealing this to His disciples, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me" (14:6b). The moment John baptized Jesus spiritual access to God the Father made a dramatic change. From then on God the Father only recognized those who chose to serve Jesus as Lord. Prayer directly to God immediately ended. People could pray all they wanted but God only listens to prayers in the Lord's name.

God will not directly save anyone who prays to Him for salvation. He will however, lead anyone searching for Him to saints able to teach the gospel in order to learn how to respond according to the will of Christ. Once a servant of sin hears the Lord's gospel he receives the opportunity to choose to believe and express faith to God through obedience to the New Covenant of Christ or to continue in his current spiritual path. Even though prayer may lead a servant of sin to the Lord to receive salvation it does not play an active part in the servant's initial response to receive salvation. He is required to respond with belief, faith, confession, repentance, baptism, and serving Jesus as Lord and Master.

Cornelius needed to hear about Jesus and how to worship God the Father through Him. For this purpose, God sent Peter to preach to him, his family, and friends, the gospel so they could have the opportunity to respond to His grace of salvation.

Cornelius sent three men to bring Peter to his home: "And they said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was divinely directed by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and hear a message from you'" (*Acts*10:22).

Cornelius could not be saved by Jesus until he heard the gospel. He needed to hear the gospel message, believe it, and then respond to the will of his Lord by belief and faith motivated obedience. However, Paul and Cornelius' response did not include prayer. In fact prayer is never brought up anywhere in Scripture as a part of the rebirth experience with Jesus.

As the story progressed, Peter began his first official gospel sermon to the Gentiles by revealing an important fact about the connection between prayer and salvation, "Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your alms have been remembered before God" (*Acts* 10:31). Cornelius' prayers did not play an active part of the salvation process in the sense he needed to pray for forgiveness in order to fulfill his belief and faith.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Seeking God with Prayer

However, his prayers did function to catch God's attention. Peter's gospel sermon led Cornelius, his family, and friends through the course of redemption. They chose the right spiritual path by obeying the gospel and exercised their new found belief and faith with a confession, commitment to repent, and submission to baptism. It is spiritually impossible for prayer to substitute any part of a servant's response to Jesus for salvation.

Luke reinforced his example when he quoted Peter: "but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him" (*Acts 10:35*). In this short statement Peter revealed what God had in mind when He mentioned "fear" and "does what is right." He referred specifically to the Gentile's heart motivated physical response to the gospel message.

Even though many people may practice what is perceived as fearing God and serving His will they are sometimes misled into a false-righteousness and assurance of salvation. "Fear" and "right" express how salvation must be realized according to God's will through belief and faith. Both aspects of response – heart and physical, are realized when the slave of sin begins to fulfill his vow to repentance and confession. He honors the word of Jesus when he submits to baptism, and continued obedience to His will. This is how he proves his fear of the Lord. Prayer is not a viable substitute for baptism. Nor is baptism simply a post salvation ritual. Prayer cannot physically prove a servant's fear of God, but it is able to motivate his fear to serve His will.

Prayer helped to guide Cornelius and Saul to accept a radically new and different way to worship God the Father. It helped to prepare their hearts to humbly offer themselves to serve Him in the same way through Jesus Christ according to His new covenant despite radically differing spiritual influences between the two people. However, prayer never played an active part of the actual process of salvation necessary for redemption to take place.

#### Questions

Almost nothing is mentioned about prayer and its connection with salvation.

- 1) Why do you feel prayer is important to salvation?
- 2) Why do you think prayer is never mentioned in connection with salvation?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Seeking God with Prayer

Prayer sends a message to God concerning a servant's desire for salvation.

Psalms 145:18-19

- 1) Do you believe prayer communicates to God your desire to receive forgiveness?
- 2) Why is the servant's attitude and motivation so important when he prays to God for salvation?

God respects the prayers of those who "fear" Him.

Psalms 25:14, 33:6-19, 34:4-8, 111:10-112:2; Acts 10:1-4

- 1) What does it mean to "fear" God?
- 2) What does "fear" have to do with motivation and attitude?
- 3) Is fear a feeling or more of an attitude towards God which motivates action?

Prayer helps to reveal the servant's attitude of self towards God.

Psalms 10:17

- 1) Why is it important to reveal attitude and heart to God?
- 2) Does a servant's prayer help him to realize the importance of what he is revealing to God?

Prayer emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus.

Matthew 21:22

- 1) Is believing in God important for prayer?
- 2) Can a person pray to God even if he doesn't believe in Him?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Seeking God with Prayer

Prayer helps a servant of sin to realize his need to “seek” God.

Acts 17:27; Matthew 15:14b

- 1) How does prayer affect your hearts’ feeling towards God?
- 2) Does prayer help you realize your need to search out for God?
- 3) How does your prayer “seek” God?

Saul’s conversion helps to reveal insights about the importance of prayer as salvation is taking place.

Acts 9:4-5, 9:6, 11

- 1) How do you think Saul’s prayer to God helped to prepare His mind and heart for salvation?
- 2) Do you think Saul had any idea of what Ananias would say to him?
- 3) What part in His salvation did prayer play?
- 4) What part in your salvation does prayer play?

Prayer helped prepare Saul’s heart to prepare for and accept dramatic changes in his beliefs and life.

- 1) Prayer offered Saul the ability to reflect about deep seated inner feelings, emotions, and predetermined concepts about God. Does prayer do the same for you?

Other than helping to prepare his heart to accept Jesus, his prayer did not play an important part in salvation.

- 1) Did Saul pray for salvation?
- 2) Do you think he understood what new covenant salvation involved?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Seeking God with Prayer

- 3) Did Saul receive salvation as a result of his prayers?
- 4) What do you feel about linking prayer with salvation?
- 5) Do you think Saul served sin and Satan while He thought he served God?
- 6) If he didn't serve Satan why did he need saved?

Cornelius habitually prayed to God, yet his prayers did not save him or anyone in his family.

Acts 10:2

- 1) While Cornelius prayed his very sincere prayers to God did he serve sin and Satan?
- 2) Do you think Cornelius prayed to God very much?
- 3) Was he sincere in his prayers?
- 4) Is any slave of sin who is sincere in his prayers any different?

God still considered Cornelius in bondage to sin despite his prayers and righteous life.

- 1) Do you really believe Cornelius served sin and Satan?
- 2) How could someone serve God so righteously and yet in spiritual reality be hostile and committing evil towards God?
- 3) Are you able to think you believe in Jesus while still serving sin and Satan?
- 4) How can you tell if you are being deceived about your salvation?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Seeking God with Prayer

Neither Saul nor Cornelius understood the new covenant and the radical spiritual changes which took place when Jesus died.

Hebrews 10:4

- 1) Do you think spiritual ignorance plays a part in spiritual deception?
- 2) Can a servant be completely self-assured of salvation and yet remain enslaved to sin and Satan?
- 3) Do you know anyone who has fallen victim to this deception?
- 4) What are you doing to help open his or her eyes?
- 5) Do you think all faiths which worship God the Father through Jesus are okay?
- 6) Is your heart a reliable determining factor to judge whether or not you are saved?
- 7) How do you know the difference between deception and truth?
- 8) Can you feel salvation?

It is not possible to bridge the spiritual gap which sin causes by prayer alone. Prayer cannot replace or be included in the Lord's intended spiritual path to salvation – belief, faith, confession, repentance, baptism, life of faith.

John 14:6b

- 1) Do you feel prayer is able to replace any of the intended parts of salvation if the intentions are good?

Even though prayer is important, a servant's confession of Jesus as Lord and Master does not require prayer in order for salvation to take place.

- 1) Can you find a Scripture in the context of the new covenant where God assures salvation with a prayer?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Seeking God with Prayer

2) Did Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John write in the context of pre-new covenant spiritual conditions or new covenant?

In Cornelius' case prayer caught the attention of God. He then led Peter to his house to teach him the gospel. He still needed to respond according to the Lord's will.  
Acts 10:22, 31, 35

- 1) Do you believe prayer will help lead you to Jesus as it did with Saul and Cornelius?
- 2) Do you believe prayer will help to prepare your heart and mind to accept Jesus as Lord and Master?
- 3) Is prayer a necessary step in your path to salvation?
- 4) Is prayer a vital step in your path to salvation?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Believing in God

In order to receive God's offer of redemption according to His will, a slave of sin must believe in the deity of Jesus with all of His heart. If he is willing to do this he may be ready to serve Jesus as Lord and Master. Jesus stated, "He who believes in Me does not believe in Me, but in Him who sent Me" (*John 12:44b*).

The Lord is setting parameters around belief in God. To believe in God the Father in the new covenant age a slave of sin must first believe in Jesus Christ. No one is able to worship God without worshipping Jesus as God, Savior, and Lord.

In order to believe Jesus is Lord, a slave of sin must first hear the gospel and accept it as truth. Then, the belief must be confirmed through a demonstrated willingness to serve Him as Lord, Master, and God.

Paul stated in *Romans*: he is, "not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (1:16a). The gospel is defined by Jesus, who He is, what He has accomplished, and His continuing work within the human experience. In this short statement Paul clearly revealed an important truth about believing, a servant who believes is one who has submitted his life to serve Jesus. A believer is one who serves Jesus as Lord. However a servant of sin is perfectly capable of believing in Jesus while remaining in his unsaved condition.

Belief is required by God and is demonstrated through a response. Just as faith is proven by works of obedience belief must be proven as well. As a result of expressing belief and faith through obedience, the two responses merge into a singular response to the will of God through Jesus. In *John's* gospel letter, he recorded a question from a crowd of followers: "what shall we do, that we may work the works of God" (6:28b).

The people could not have anticipated the answer. Jesus told them believing in God has changed since He began His ministry. No one has favored status before God, even those who are chosen as a result of being Jewish, Abraham's descendant, physically circumcised, or under the Law. He told them, "this is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent" (*John 6:29b*). In order to believe the Lord Jesus, God's people must serve Him as their divine Master, which is affirmed by their unconditional worship of Him. This in turn confirmed their belief in God the Father. Belief and worship cannot be separated.

Jesus began revealing a major spiritual change the moment He started His ministry. In order to remain believers in God, the Jews needed to willingly place their faith in God's prophetic word concerning Him as well as His own teachings regarding His divine identity. The people needed to realize the words spoken by Jesus came from His Father in heaven--God: "but I speak these things as the Father taught Me" (*John 8:11b*). To believe what Jesus taught meant the Jews had to accept relearning the true will of God in order to serve Him accordingly.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Believing in God

Jesus redefined believing by linking it to the necessity of one's willingness to accept Him as Lord God--Master. In order to serve the Lord Jesus, a slave must be willing to humbly obey whatever His Lord asks of him. Thus faith-motivated confession, repentance, and obedience to what He taught as truth is proof of belief in Jesus his Master. Upon this foundation belief becomes a work of faith resulting in heart led obedience according to the will of Christ. Which in the new covenant involves the united response of repentance, confession, baptism, and a Spirit led life until physical death.

In his letter to the *Romans* Paul wrote: "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (10:9-10). Belief must accompany faith, obedience, and the New Covenant will of Jesus Christ before resulting in righteousness. When belief, faith, and obedience to His will is demonstrated God the Father reckons the response as righteous.

When a servant of sin is justified by the sacrificial blood of Jesus he is considered holy, as patterned after Abraham's response: "Even so, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham. So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer" (*Galatians* 3:6-7, 9). Salvation based upon belief and faith is the same unchangeable response to the Lord's will. Belief and faith are fulfilled in the spiritual realm which cannot be physically sensed even though they must be acted out in physical life. The reality of salvation is based upon the servant's belief in the integrity of God's word and promises. Belief, just like faith is proven by works of obedience.

When a servant of sin hears the words of God concerning the deity of Jesus, His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of back into heaven, he is offered a choice by the grace of God to either remain a slave of sin or appeal to Jesus for redemption. If he truly believes the gospel of Christ, then he will be ready to prove the sincerity of his belief to God through his newfound desire to faithfully obey Jesus Christ as His Lord, Savior, and Master.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Believing in God

To believe in Jesus is to believe in God His Father.

John 12:44b

- 1) Why did Jesus say this?
- 2) Does this apply to you?

Believing in God the Father is conditional.

- 1) Does this Scripture mean only those who worship Jesus are able to serve God? Is God the same as God the Father?
- 2) Do you feel this is too restrictive?
- 3) How do you feel about all of the world's religions which worship God, not Jesus?

Believing in Jesus is conditional upon a response to His Gospel.

Romans 1:16

- 1) What is the difference between believing in the existence of Jesus and believing in Him as a servant trying to serve Him?
- 2) Are you able to believe in Jesus without being saved?
- 3) Is belief inseparable from faith?
- 4) Do both belief and faith require responsive works according to the will of God in order to prove their sincerity?

A servant of sin is capable of believing he is serving Jesus.

- 1) Do you think your heart can deceive you into believing you are saved when in actuality you are not?
- 2) How can you feel a spiritual reality such as salvation?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Believing in God

- 3) Do you feel saved?
- 4) Do you feel the necessity to have a sign or some spiritual experience in order to feel assured of your salvation?
- 5) Are you being led by faith if you feel physical experiences are necessary to prove your faith?
- 6) How is a servant assured his belief is connected to salvation?

Believing in Jesus is the same as having faith in Him; both require faith led works to prove the heart of the believer.

John 6:28b, 29b

- 1) Do you think that belief requires works to validate its reality?
- 2) Why is attitude and motivation so important when belief is expressed in a responsive work?
- 3) Is a servant able to respond to the Lord Jesus without doing anything physical?

Belief and worship cannot be separated.

- 1) Do you think belief is worship?
- 2) How is your belief worship?

Believing what Jesus taught is believing what His Father taught Him.

John 8:11b

- 1) Do you believe believing in Jesus is believing in God the Father?
- 2) What if you do not believe in Jesus, can you still believe in God the Father?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Believing in God

Belief, faith, and confession of the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be separated.  
Romans 10:9-10

- 1) Why is true belief inseparable from confessing the Lord's deity?
- 2) What does a confession communicate to God the Father?

Belief and faith in Jesus are essentially the same response to His call.  
Galatians 3:6-7, 9

- 1) How are belief and faith so similar?
- 2) Do both belief and faith require a physical response to the Lord's will?

A servant of sin can believe in Jesus but if he does not respond to His call with belief and faith he cannot receive righteousness.

- 1) How is the blessing of God's gift of righteousness linked to the works of belief and faith?
- 2) Why do belief and faith require works of obedience?
- 3) Are works of obedience the same as working to earn salvation?
- 4) What must you do in order to receive salvation?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Faith in God

Faith and belief are like two inseparable twin brothers working side by side. A servant of sin cannot believe in God without faith or develop faith without belief. A united effort of belief and faith must motivate him to fulfill His will through Jesus Christ. What he believes and faith expressing his belief cannot exist separately and only originate, "from hearing the word of Christ" (*Romans* 10:17). A servant is not "hearing" the "word of Christ" if he is not willing to express submission to Him as Lord.

Paul wrote to the *Galatians*, "But the scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe" (3:22). Faith and belief in the Lordship of Jesus work together. Both are proven by works motivated by a desire to serve God the Father through Jesus Christ according to His revealed will in the New Covenant scriptures. *James* noted Abraham's example, (*Genesis* 15:6), "and Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness ... You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone" (2:23b-24). Faith cannot be realized without works but the works must not be motivated by law.

God determined Abraham's belief and faith by his physical response to His will. He considered his answer to His call as holy and used him as an example of how belief and faith work together to motivate an obedient response resulting in New Covenant justification through Jesus Christ. This is how righteousness is given to the faithful believer in Christ; it is determined by his response. Righteousness is a gift of God's grace which is utterly dependent upon the servant's choice to serve the Lord's will. In the New Covenant righteousness is only given to a newly reborn servant, one who has died and has experience a spiritual resurrection with Jesus. Only a recreated spirit is holy, innocent, and sinless.

Faith is a heart-felt and driven desire to obey God; it is developed by an ever growing sense of the truth found in His word. Faith is such an important part of a response to God's will because it physically expresses the servant's heart. He is fully convinced, committed, and reliant upon the unseen work of God as He fulfills His unseen promises. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen," because the work of God throughout the lifelong experience of salvation is spiritual and cannot be sensed (*Hebrews* 11:1).

If the work of God in salvation could be seen by one's senses then it would no longer be based upon His invisible promises. What is seen cannot substitute for what is not seen by faith. The unseen is believed because it is revealed through the words of Jesus. The Spirit inspired the writer of *Hebrews* to note: "And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him" (11:6).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Faith in God

When sight is asked for by the servant to confirm his belief and faith, he is unintentionally asking for God to nullify his belief and faith.

Faith is proven to God through the works of obedience. God tasked the apostles to truthfully teach the message of faith in the faith established by Jesus Christ. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Romans*: “Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, for His names sake” (1:4b-5). In *Acts* Peter mentioned “many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith” (6:7b).

A few chapters later, Paul wrote: “Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction” (*Romans* 3:22). Regardless of the servant’s background, God will always honor his belief and faith in Jesus Christ. He fulfills His word with His gift of reckoned righteousness as a result of the servant’s justification by the sacrificial blood of Christ when the Spirit unites him with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection. Once the servant is made holy again God is able to give him the promised gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

Paul also mentioned in his letter to the *Galatians*: “in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (3:14b). The spiritual course leading to the servant’s reception of the Spirit fulfills his faith resulting in salvation. The work of faith is the servant’s response to the Lord’s New Covenant faith.

In order to receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit a servant of sin must first receive forgiveness. The Lord clearly expressed His New Covenant will through Peter during his very first sermon of the New Covenant age, “Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (*Acts* 2:38). Jesus revealed this is the only way for the faithful to receive the Spirit. The only way faith is validated as true is by the presence of the indwelling presence of the Spirit. The blessing of the Spirit will continue in the life of a servant of the Lord Jesus for as long as he remains faithful to His Master.

Faith and belief prove the true intent of a seeker of God. Faith is fulfilled because the unseen promises given by God are always realized through His endless grace. Paul noted in his letter to the *Ephesians*, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God” (2:8). Just like its brother – belief, faith in God the Father according to the New Covenant in Christ cannot be realized through the self-righteousness of any type of work in order to earn the grace of righteousness.

Baptism is not a work because the spiritual work of God which takes place while the servant is submersed is completely based upon belief and faith.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Faith in God

Even though water is used to witness the spiritual events taking place, it cannot affect any part of the miracle taking place.

At first it may sound confusing, a servant of sin cannot be saved through works, yet belief and faith cannot be realized without works. The difference lies in what is motivating the work performed in His name: faith with human effort to appease and win His approval, or faith in the integrity of His word and promises to accomplish His will. The realization of the works of belief and faith are the result of God's grace of salvation through Jesus. God's grace made the focus of belief and faith possible – Jesus Christ. Outside of God's grace belief and faith do not mean anything. Grace saves by virtue of its gift Jesus Christ. The redeeming sacrifice of the Lord's physical life is what saves; redemption cannot be received outside of His grace. Grace is God's offer of salvation through Jesus Christ; faith is the required response to receive His grace.

Even though God's grace of redemption in Christ Jesus is proven and realized by works of belief and faith motivated obedience, just as Abraham demonstrated, God still looks at the heart. He is looking at what motivates the works of belief and faith to see whether the work is a response of submissive love towards the Lord and Master Jesus Christ or a self-righteous endeavor to appear pious before the Lord.

#### Questions

Faith and belief are inseparable and both develop from the Lord's word.  
Romans 10:17

- 1) Do you think faith is developed from other sources along with Scripture?
- 2) How are you working with God to develop you faith?
- 3) How do you know you have faith?
- 4) Do you ever try to test your faith level?
- 5) Is the practice of faith often as subtle and routine as everyday life?
- 6) Do you ever try to confirm your faith by doing things which you assume requires faith?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Faith in God

If a servant of sin refuses to respond to the Lord's word then he is not hearing the Lord with belief and faith.

- 1) Does it take faith to respond to the gospel?
- 2) Why is faith so important for those who desire to obey the gospel in order to receive salvation?
- 3) How does a servant of sin who is hostile against God express faith in Him?

To practice faith in Jesus is the same as practicing belief in Jesus.  
Galatians 3:22; Romans 3:22; John 6:28-29

- 1) Do you think there is a major difference in how a servant responds with either faith or belief?
- 2) Is faith true if the servant is not willing to obey Jesus as Master?
- 3) How do you know if you are obeying Jesus as Master?

Both belief and faith are works motivated by a desire to serve the will of the Lord.  
James 2:23b-24

- 1) If a servant feels he is obeying Jesus simply because he is told to do His will, how will his attitude affect his faith in Jesus?
- 2) What motivates your faith response to Jesus?

The practice of both faith and belief are physical expressions which originate from the heart.

- 1) Is a servant of sin able to express faith in Jesus without a physical response to His will?
- 2) How important is the content of a Christian's heart?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Faith in God

- 3) What are you putting in your heart?
- 4) What happens when what you put into your heart comes out, whether good or bad?
- 5) Do you ever take time to assess what is in your heart and how it develops into real life experiences?

The works of belief and faith will express a physical picture of a servant's true feelings towards the Lord.

Hebrews 11:1

- 1) Is your belief and faith in Jesus an honest reflection of what you feel in your heart?
- 2) Is your heart an honest reflection of what you confess—Jesus as Lord?
- 3) Are you willing to serve Jesus as your Master?
- 4) What does serving Jesus as Master mean to you?
- 5) Who is your true master: Jesus, your heart, or flesh?
- 6) How do you compromise the desires of your flesh and worldly circumstances with the Lord's will?
- 7) What is the Lord's will for His servant's in general?

If the servant does not express faith motivated worship then he cannot please or obey God.

Hebrews 11:6; Romans 1:4b-5, 6:7b

- 1) How would you describe faith motivated worship?
- 2) How does law, tradition, and ritual affect motivation?
- 3) Do you think that there are other ways in which a servant can please or obey God?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Faith in God

4) Why do you think God is so concerned about motivation – the reasons why you do what you do for Him?

The Lord only gives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit “through faith” which links faith with belief, confession, repentance, baptism, and a life of service to Jesus. Galatians 3:14b; Acts 2:38

1) Can a servant leave out faith, or belief, or confession, or repentance, or baptism, or a life of faith and still be considered as expressing faith in His will?

2) When does a servant receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit by faith?

3) Which must take place first: receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit or receiving the forgiveness of sins?

Both faith and salvation are gifts of God’s grace. Ephesians 2:8

1) How do you think God offers His grace of salvation in Jesus?

2) How do the faith motivated works required for a salvation response work with God’s grace which is a free and unearned?

3) How would you describe your motivation to respond to the Lord’s grace of salvation?

Without grace faith would be impossible to receive from the word and salvation an inconceivable dream.

1) Before learning from God’s word about sin did you ever think of yourself as a slave to sin and Satan?

2) Why is God’s grace so important?

3) How does His grace fit into your life?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Faith in God

- 4) Do you feel like a servant?
- 5) How do you act like the Lord's servant?
- 6) What does Jesus require of His servant?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Obedience to God

An innocent child loses his freedom and position as a child in God's family when he commits his first sin. He becomes enslaved by spiritual debt resulting in the curse of spiritual death which is spiritual separation from His personal presence. The moment a person sins, he is transferred from God's kingdom of holiness to Satan's domain of unrighteousness to begin his life as a slave of sin. In his gospel *John* quoted Jesus revealing: "everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin" (8:34b).

When a slave of sin is purchased by Christ, he is allowed to fellowship with God again, "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred to the kingdom of His beloved son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins" (*Colossians* 1:13-14). Jesus may have had this in mind when He stated, "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed" (*John* 8:36). For the sinner is freed from his debt to sin, the curse of death, the spiritual penalties of transgressing any law, and Satan's dominion.

There is nothing a slave of sin is able to do about his imprisonment in sin other than approaching Jesus to appeal to Him for redemption. In order for redemption to take place the slave must first hear the gospel message, believe in what he hears about His deity, life, death, burial, resurrection, and develop faith in God's promise of salvation through Jesus. The spiritual journey continues as he pledges in his heart to agree to His covenant of ownership and lifelong obedience to his new Master.

Paul wrote these final words to his brethren in his letter to the *Romans*: "Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, but now is manifested, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandments of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, leading to obedience of faith" (16:25-26).

A slave of sin must be willing to prove his newfound belief and faith through obedience to the will of Christ as documented in His covenant regardless of whether he fully understands it or not. This requires belief in His word and faith in the Lord's integrity to do what He has promised. The servant must be willing to place full trust in God's word. The promises in the Lord's covenant will truly take place despite his inability to sense redemption taking place. In this way obedience proves the sincerity of his belief, faith, confession, and commitment to repent. Jesus must become his Lord and Master.

His response must not imply he is trying to earn God's favor. Trying to gain God's favor through self-righteousness or piety cannot lead to salvation. He must be purchased by Jesus at the cost of and with His sacrificial death. A servant of sin has no other choice in his position.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Obedience to God

He is like a seed which must be planted before it is able to emerge into a new life. Otherwise it will remain separated from its intended life. He is either an obedient forced slave of sin or a freed and Spirit led obedient bond-servant to God through Jesus Christ. There are no other spiritual choices. There are no other spiritual solutions to a slave's sin problem.

Paul reminded his readers about choices in His letter to the *Romans*: "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves of obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness. 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, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness" (6:16-18). Just a few of the points which he brought up are:

- 1) Every person becomes a slave of sin the moment he chooses to obey sin.
- 2) Which master to serve is a matter of one's freedom of choice.
- 3) There are two masters to choose to serve, but only one or the other – "sin" or Jesus "resulting in righteousness".
- 4) By the grace of God every servant is offered the freedom to obey Scripture and receive freedom "from sin".
- 5) A servant of sin must first be freed from sin before he is able to become an obedient servant "of righteousness".

#### Questions

The moment an innocent child chooses to transgress against one internal moral law he becomes a servant of sin.

John 8:34b; Romans 2:14-16; Isaiah 24:5-6

- 1) How do you know you are guilty of transgressing against God's moral law of good and evil?
- 2) Are you able to feel sin?
- 3) Are you able to feel your spiritual slavery to sin?
- 4) Are you able to feel your service to Satan?
- 5) Are you able to feel your hostility towards God?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Obedience to God

- 6) Are you able to feel your evil deeds?
- 7) Do you feel guilty?
- 8) Do you feel your conscience and heart working together to condemn you?
- 9) Do you believe you are openly hostile against God by choice?

A servant of sin cannot live within the Lord's holy kingdom so he is immediately transferred to the worldly "domain of darkness" the first time he sins.

Colossians 1:13-14; John 8:34

- 1) If you are not saved how do you feel about spiritually living under the authority of Satan?
- 2) How do you feel about being a willing servant to Satan?

Freedom involves much more than the servant's forgiveness of sins.

- 1) What do you think happens when Jesus frees a servant from his bondage to sin?
- 2) What do you think spiritual freedom involves?

The manifestation of the mystery – Jesus Christ and universal salvation, is the message which will lead a servant of sin to obedience.

Romans 16:25-26; Ephesians 3:3-6

- 1) Do you think the mystery is fully revealed?
- 2) What is the revealed mystery?
- 3) How does this information and knowledge help your spiritual life?
- 4) How does spiritual insight from the Holy Spirit and the word of God help your ability to obey the Lord's will?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Obedience to God

Obedience is an expression of belief and faith.

- 1) How is obedience expressed?
- 2) Is a servant obedient to whomever he serves?
- 3) What is the connection between confessing Jesus as Lord and serving Him as Master?
- 4) Is obedience a work?
- 5) How do you think the works of obedience work with the Lord's gift of grace?
- 6) Why does grace demand a physical response?
- 7) Are you willing to express belief and faith in Jesus through obedience?
- 8) Does obedience mean Jesus is your Master?
- 9) Are you able to serve Jesus without obeying His will?

Every servant of sin has two spiritual choices: either continue to serve sin and Satan or serve obedience, righteousness and Jesus.

Romans 6:16-18

- 1) Does grace allow for a servant's freedom to choose whom to serve?
- 2) Why do you think God allows so much freedom to determine spiritual destiny?
- 3) Do you think God is being fair to you by offering you the freedom of choice?
- 4) How are you using your freedom of choice in your service?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Confessing the Lord God

A vital part of proving a servant's newfound belief and growing faith is a verbal acknowledgment recognizing his sincerity to serve Jesus Christ as Lord God and Master. This is so important because he is a slave and he must choose to serve one of two spiritual masters--sin and god Satan or God the Father through Jesus Christ. During His ministry, Jesus emphasized the importance of a personal confession of belief and faith. *Matthew* recorded Jesus speaking about the attitude of those who desire to serve Him as disciples. He mentioned the importance of confession: "Every one therefore who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven" (10:32).

Confession of belief in His deity is a critical response. He links this one expression of belief and faith with salvation itself because the confession is the servant's verbal commitment to serve Jesus as his spiritual Master. Confession is a work of belief, faith, and obedience, and it comes straight from the heart. In the next verse, Jesus mentioned what happens to those who refuse to confess His deity, "But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven" (10:33). In other words regardless of how godly a person may be, Jesus will tell God His Father He does not know him.

When a slave of sin chooses to confess Jesus as his Lord he is taking an essential step in his redemption and spiritual freedom. When he confesses his acknowledgment of the Lord's deity he is committing himself to serve Jesus as Master which in turn proves his belief and faith by obeying His will. A servant's confession exposes the true intentions of his heart. In *Romans*, Paul wrote: "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (10:9-10).

One's confession is an outward revelation of what is beginning to develop within his heart. And in turn, his heart will motivate his response to God's will through his obedience to the Lord's covenant. Even though a slave of sin cannot serve God as a saint until he is redeemed and recreated in the born again experience; confession signals his intent and desire to change masters and to renew his fellowship with God. When a servant verbally acknowledges Jesus as Lord and Master, he is demonstrating to God his spiritual insight and growing awareness of a personal understanding and acceptance of God's will in Christ Jesus.

This part of the process of salvation "results" in righteousness and salvation. Righteousness is only reckoned by God to those who are willing to express their belief and faith through obedience to the will of God as Abraham did. Righteousness becomes a reality in the servant's life when he is justified by Jesus.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Confessing the Lord God

Salvation is the result of obedience to the New Covenant gospel and stipulations. Overall, ones confession is an essential part of a chain of spiritual events leading up to redemption. Confession acknowledges Jesus as the servant's Master and his redemption by Jesus confirms his confession.

#### Questions

Jesus emphasized the importance of verbally confessing His identity – God.  
Matthew 10:32, 33

- 1) Why do you think it is so important to confess Jesus verbally?
- 2) How does your heart affect your confession?
- 3) When you confess Jesus, what are you confessing?

To confess Jesus as Lord, is to say Jesus is Master.

- 1) If you choose to confess Jesus as your God and Lord, does this mean you are saying He is your Master?
- 2) Does confessing Jesus as Master mean you are obligating your obedience to Him?
- 3) What does obedience to Jesus as Lord and Master mean to you?
- 4) If you are choosing to serve Jesus how do you continue to serve your flesh and its lust?

A valid confession requires obedient faith and belief to His will as Master.  
Romans 10:9-10

- 1) What happens to your confession if you are not willing to fulfill your confession to serve the Lord's will?
- 2) What is motivating your confession?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Confessing the Lord God

3) Is your confession a work of belief and faith?

A true confession will result in righteousness and salvation.

1) How does your confession of Jesus as Lord and Master lead you to repentance?

2) How is your confession connected to your everyday life of serving Jesus as Master?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Repentance

Another essential step a servant of sin must take in the process of redemption in Christ is a committed willingness to prove his belief, faith, obedience, and confession through a demonstrated desire to change his life. The servant's confession recognizes Jesus as Master and repentance proves the sincerity of his heart. He must express his newfound attitude towards sin and willingness to relearn how to live life according to the will of God the Father, instead of self, sin, and the world. This is not a confession even though it proves its honesty.

Repentance is a heart motivated commitment which a servant of sin must make in order to physically demonstrate to God the Father his desire to serve Him through Jesus Christ. It realizes the integrity of his belief, faith, confession, and commitment to obey the Lord's new covenant will. Repentance honors Jesus as Lord God, Savior, and Master. Belief, faith, repentance, and confession are all proven by the servant's willingness to respond to the Lord's New Covenant will by works of obedience.

In the last chapter of *Luke*, the author recorded some of the Lord's last words to His eleven disciples before He ascended back into heaven. Jesus "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (24:45b). After which He began to explain one of the reasons why He had to do what He did while on earth, "thus, it is written that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem" (24:45b, 47).

The importance of repentance cannot be understated. In order for Jesus to purchase a servant of sin, the servant must demonstrate a willingness to obey the will of Jesus as expressed within His new covenant. If he is not willing to do this, then he will not be willing to begin living the rest of his life serving Jesus. Repentance results from and is motivated by belief, faith, obedience, and confession. Active repentance proves to God a slave of sin is willing to stop serving sin, self, and Satan. He is ready to serve God the Father through Jesus.

Active repentance is manifested through Spirit led obedience. It begins within the life of a slave of sin and continues as he grows in spiritual maturity after his purchase and transfer into the Lord's kingdom. However, it cannot be initially fulfilled until the servant of sin is freed from his debt in order to serve Jesus as Lord. A servant of sin is not repentant if he does not respond to the stipulations of new covenant salvation. Repentance highlights how the word of God is performing its work within the heart, "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (*Hebrews 4:12*).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Repentance

Repentance is a decision. When a servant of sin hears the gospel message, God is offering two choices:

1) The first is continued hatred of the light, motivated by the servant's dread of exposure and his love of life as a slave of sin. Jesus spoke about this early in His ministry, "For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light lest his deeds should be exposed" (*John 3:20*). Repentance is a change of heart caused by the word of God as it exposes sin in all of its naked wickedness, revealing its evil deception. Repentance allows the Spirit to expose and treat open infected wounds containing unattended spiritual rot in order to heal the servant's life according to the standard of God's righteousness.

The requirement to repent involves the servant's willingness to accept self-revelation of his evil and a life lived for the fulfillment of personal lust and self. Most people do not want to accept this spiritual reality. Repentance demands recognition of what needs changed in life and a willingness to proceed according to the will of God by the Spirit's counsel. Most servants of sin are not ready to commit to such a radical lifestyle change and self revelation of evil. They are willing to mourn getting caught for committing sin but not for the sin itself, "the sorrow of the world produces death" (*2 Corinthians 7:10b*).

2) The second is belief and faith leading to repentance as a result of a heartfelt mourning for a life dead in sin, evil, and useless to God. This takes place as the servant begins to understand his true position before God's presence. The word of God is beginning to have an effect upon the servant's heart. Even though from a physical point of view his life may be perceived as saintly, perhaps he even worships God the Father through Jesus. But before God the Father he is a rebellious child who refuses to serve Him to His glory. In the next verse, Jesus noted, "But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God" (*John 3:21*). The truly repentant servant glorifies God through his Spirit led change of masters.

When a slave of sin begins to recognize the futility and vanity of life in Satan's dominion, he will become more and more aware of his freedom, ability, and desire to choose the right path of repentance. Repentance is a natural outcome of the merging forces of belief, faith, obedience, and confession. When a slave of sin is willing to accept Jesus as Lord and Master his response proves his repentance.

In his *second* letter to the *Corinthians*, Paul wrote: "I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God" (*7:9a*). The result of repentance is one's physical expression of a heart desire to serve Jesus. Repentance is a physical

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Repentance

confession of an indisputable heartfelt sorrow for a life of hatred and hostility towards God's righteousness.

When Jesus redeems a slave of sin, He expects His new bond-servant to serve Him with a convicted heart and mind, and express a willingness to allow the Spirit to lead him through a lifetime of repentance and renewal. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Romans*: "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (12:2). The servant must learn how to be righteous according to the righteous standard of God. Without continual repentance the learning process is hindered and the work of the Spirit is slowed down or even halted. He must embrace continual change in order to progress repentance and maturity in Christ.

Repentance is a vital part of one's sacrificial service to God. Even though God gives a resurrected spirit righteousness and considers him sanctified, the new bond-servant must still spend the rest of his physical life perfecting the righteous standard of God as a way of life in his holiness. Spiritually the servant is holy and separated from the world, but for the rest of his life he must learn how to replace the ways of his old unholy lifestyle and thoughts with the Spirit led values of righteousness. He does not become more holy or sanctified. He cannot be more spiritually separated from the world. But he is learning how to live according to God's standard of righteousness of holiness.

The Spirit's counsel is vital because the servant does not have any idea what righteous living is all about. The Spirit transferred him to the Lord's kingdom and everything is new. "Sorrow according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret" which motivates him to continually grow and mature his new life of righteousness (2 *Corinthians* 7:10a). Repentance after the servant's initial rebirth is essentially involves relearning how to live life. He knows how to live death. The hard part of repentance is unlearning the ways of death and replacing unholy lifestyle and worship decisions with righteous ones.

Thus, for the Spirit to work in the life of a redeemed bond-servant of Christ, he must be willing to prove his ongoing commitment to repentance by allowing the Spirit to lead his life, "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16-25). This is a spiritual fight which will last until physical death.

Repentance is a very real spiritual struggle to remain alive in Christ as the flesh tries with all of its might to draw the spirit and mind back into its unholy lifestyle, "For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Repentance

Repentance is a gradual lifelong process in which the servant learns to change his lifestyles, thoughts, and behaviors, and idiosyncrasies to conform to the Spirit's work in his new life. Repentance is a work of regeneration throughout the life of the servant. Its work will enter into the perfection of eternal life in ways completely incomprehensible.

#### Questions

Repentance is essential in order for a servant to receive forgiveness.

Luke 24:45b

- 1) What is repentance?
- 2) Do you think repentance is the result of applied belief, faith, and confession?
- 3) Is repentance a physical work?
- 4) Is repentance a mental work?
- 5) Why do you think repentance is so important?
- 6) How is repentance connected with your confession?
- 7) How does faith work with repentance?
- 8) After serving sin and Satan for so long, do you think changing how your respond to your new Lord's will could be difficult?
- 9) Is the brotherhood of fellowship responsible to help a new infant Christian to grow and mature?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Repentance

Belief, faith, and confession of the Lord Jesus Christ can only be realized through obedience to the Lord's will. Repentance is confirmed through obedience to the Lord's will.

- 1) Can repentance be expressed any other way other than through the works of obedience?
- 2) What is motivating you to change your life?
- 3) How do you handle serious spiritual issues which may be beyond your spiritual maturity level to handle?
- 4) Is repentance working for your salvation since it is a work?

Repentance is a physical expression of how effective the word of God is in the heart.  
Hebrews 4:12; John 3:20

- 1) Do you feel God's word is important to follow as you learn how to repent?
- 2) How do you know how to repent according to the Lord's will?
- 3) How do you know if you have repented enough?
- 4) What does your willingness to repent indicate about the inner workings of your heart?

Repentance exposes a servant's true feelings towards sin and who he desires to serve or worship.

John 3:20; Romans 12:1-2

- 1) What do you think a sin is in the Lord's eye?
- 2) How do you truly feel about a transgression?
- 3) How do you know if you are transgressing against the Lord's will?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Repentance

Repentance expresses the servant's attitude towards sin.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10

- 1) Do you have a genuine desire to change behavior and motivations?
- 2) Do you still enjoy worldly activities which may conflict with Christian values?
- 3) How do your Christian values affect other Christians?
- 4) What motivates you to serve the Lord's will?
- 5) How do you consider the gray areas of good and evil?

Repentance is the practice of truth.

John 3:21

- 1) Is repentance a work?
- 2) What kind of work is repentance, one based upon faith and freedom or rules and commands?
- 3) Do you make a concerted effort to daily change behaviors which conflict with the Lord's will?
- 4) How do you know if your behavior decisions are in conflict with the Lord's will?
- 5) How do you know if your changes are according to His will?
- 6) How do you make decisions to repent: by your heart, Scripture, fellowship and its associated counsel, or a combination of the three? What are some other ways?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Repentance

Repentance is the servant's expression of belief, faith, confession, and obedience of Jesus as Lord.

- 1) How do these three major parts of the gospel response – belief, faith, and confession, play a part of your decisions to repent?
- 2) How does repentance help to fulfill your confession of Jesus as Lord and Master?
- 3) You are a servant of your Master Jesus Christ; does repentance help you serve Him better?

Repentance is an expression of spiritual change which begins in the heart and flows into everyday choices and decisions throughout the life of the Lord's servant.

Romans 12:2; Genesis 8:21; Numbers 15:39; Psalms 7:10, 14:1-3, 24:4-5, 51:10; Matthew 5:8; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 2 Chronicles 6:30-31, Psalm 7:9b, 33:13-15, 53:1-3, 69:32-33, 73; Ecclesiastes 8:11-13; Psalms 86:12, 90:8-12, 93:14-15, 119, 139:23-24; Proverbs 2:10-11, 3:1-8, 4:4-7, 13, 14:33a, 15:28a, 17:3, 21:2-3, 24:11-12, 27:19, 28:26; Ecclesiastes 3:11, 10:2; Matthew 12:34-35, 13:14-16, 15:17-18, 22:37; Mark 7:20-23, 12:30, 33; Luke 16:15, 12:34; Acts 1:24, 12:32, 8:34-38, 15:7-9; Romans 6:16-18, 8:26-27, 10:8-10; 2 Corinthians 3:12-18; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16; 1 Corinthians 4:4-5; Romans 2:12-16; Revelation 2:23b; Ephesians 1:18-23, 6:6; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; Hebrews 3:7-11, 4:12-13, 10:22; 1 Peter 3:13-15; 1 John 3:16-24; Jeremiah 17:5, 7, 9-10, 20:12, 24:6-7, 32:37-40; Ezekiel 11:17-20, 36:8-15, 22-29, 31-33; Hebrews 10:16-17, 22, 8:8-13

- 1) How does repentance reflect what is happening in your heart?
- 2) Do you desire to change but find it exceedingly difficult?
- 3) Are you ready to allow the Spirit to lead you life?
- 4) How do you allow the Spirit to lead your life before you become the Lord's servant?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Repentance

- 5) How does He lead your life after you become His servant?
- 6) Are you allowing the flesh to dominate your life in Christ?
- 7) What is more important: to allow the Spirit or your heart to guide your decisions?
- 8) How do you know your heart is correct?
- 9) The Spirit lives with you, do you ever consider the Spirit knowing all of your thoughts?

Repentance is an expression of the servant's willingness to allow the Spirit to lead his life.

Galatians 5:16-25

- 1) To ask for a visible presence of the Spirit's work is counter to faith. Do you ever doubt the Spirit's leadership?
- 2) Jesus said the Spirit is leading all of His children. Is there a reason why you may be asking for the presence of the Spirit in order to change your thoughts, heart and life?
- 3) Who is at fault if your life lacks Spirit leadership?
- 4) What is lacking if you do not know you have the presence of the Spirit?
- 5) Did Jesus promise all of His children Spirit leadership?
- 6) Do you follow the Spirit's counsel?
- 7) How do you know what His counsel is for your life?
- 8) If you feel lacking in Spirit leadership, what is motivating your life and thought patterns?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Repentance

- 9) What does the Spirit have to do with repentance?
- 10) Can a Christian become rebellious to His Master?
- 11) How does rebellion affect the work of the Spirit?
- 12) How does rebellion affect the Spirit personally?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Baptism

Baptism is a word describing the process in which a dirty, bacteria laden, grimy unusable eating utensil is submerged in a wash basin with strong soap. It is scrubbed of its filth and sanitized in order for reuse. The utensil is renewed to its original purpose from a state of uselessness caused by filth. The word baptism used in Scripture does not mean sprinkling, nor is it pouring, these uses come from well intentioned rationalizations and purpose, but do not properly fulfill the meaning of the word. Neither alternate meaning, if applied to the cleansing process is able to completely clean anything other than loose surface grime. It is impossible to completely cleanse anything by sprinkling or pouring water on a part of the spoiled utensil.

A cooking pot cannot submerge itself, cleanse itself of filth, or self-emerge on its own. The dish or pot must be thoroughly washed of its filth by a person who has complete control over the cleansing process. What is being washed is essentially at the mercy of the grace of the one who is choosing to do the washing. He is not compelled to wash it; he could just as easily throw it away and replace it with a new one. But God prefers to wash the filth from what He has created – to restore a human being to his originally intended sparkling clean perfection.

Within the water of baptism a recreation of the spirit, self, and conscience take place by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is a vital step in the process of salvation. Up to this point in time the process of appealing to God for salvation involved belief in the deity of Jesus a growing faith, and a willingness to repent. Obedience motivated from the heart is how the appeal is acted out in life. All three develop from the servant's confession concerning the deity and Lordship of Jesus Christ. His confessed awareness of the deity of Jesus and desire to serve Him as Master will begin to mature an acute awareness of the importance of physically expressing his repentance from serving sin and Satan to Jesus.

In order for obedience to begin its fulfillment, the servant of sin must submit to being submerged in the water of baptism. All of the parts of his appeal are a physical and spiritual response to an unbreakable chain of spiritual stipulations leading to redemption and righteousness. Up to baptism the servant's response involves only his initial reaction to God's offer of salvation in Jesus. Within the water of baptism the Spirit responds with His miraculous work of uniting the servant's spirit with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Within the water the servant receives his spiritual circumcision and the gift of the indwelling presence of the Spirit. God's spiritual work of redeeming and sealing the submissive servant takes place within the water.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Baptism

*Matthew* recorded Jesus speaking to His disciples just before His ascension about the importance of baptism. While trying to make His disciples aware of its indispensability in the process of salvation He stated: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" (28:19). Jesus did not say discipleship comes before baptism. A servant of sin can be a learner or disciple of Jesus but he is not His saved disciple until he chooses to become His holy servant of righteousness. A saved disciple is a Christian. A servant of sin becomes the Lord's disciple as a result of completely fulfilling the spiritual process revealed by the new covenant which leads to his recreation.

The baptism Jesus demands is based upon belief and faith in the name of the One God, He alone has the authority and ability to accomplish what He is promising. Oneness with God involves baptism: "There is one body and one spirit, just as you were called in on hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all" (*Ephesians* 4:4-6).

The spiritual miracle taking place within the water of baptism is the unseen work of God as He fulfills His promises. The servant's belief in His description of what is taking place as well as his faith to submit to His will is his fulfillment of belief, faith, confession, repentance, and obedience. This is why redemption is according to the grace of God. He freely offers His miraculous work to the one who is willing to act upon his appeal for salvation according to His word, new covenant, promises, and grace. As a result God performs His work of giving new life to the dead servant. Without the grace of God life would be meaningless or even unknown.

In the water of baptism a rebirth experience takes place. Water is the medium within which God chose to recreate the spirit and self of a slave of sin who is spiritually dead. Redemption is fulfilled by recreation. Recreation is the method by which the Lord's purchases a dead servant. The cost of the recreation required the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. The water of baptism is God's birthing womb within which a new life is born into a new and wondrous spiritual world. Just as the water in a mother's womb is separate from the developing baby the water in baptism is separate from the servant. It has its purpose; it facilitates the creation of the new child.

The development of a human baby is a type of what takes place within the water of baptism. In order for the child to enter into existence a human effort must take place. But the development of the child is the work of God. *Job* once wrote: "Did not He who made me in the womb make him, and the same one fashion us in the womb" (31:15).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Baptism

Hundreds of years later *David* wrote concerning his formation in his mother's womb: "For Thou didst form my inward parts; Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb. I will give thanks to Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Thy works, and my soul knows it very well" (*Psalms* 139:13-14).

When a slave of sin is completely immersed in the water of baptism, he is much like a forming baby immersed in its mother's womb – a new creation. In the water of baptism, the Spirit recreates the dead spirit and self of a slave of sin into a completely new spiritual life form. His old spirit dies in with Christ, it is buried with Christ, it is resurrected into a new life with Christ, and it continues to live in Christ. This is why the new servant is spiritually holy--righteous and sanctified. In Christ he becomes one with God Himself. The physical water of baptism witnesses the miraculous work of the Spirit; a witness dependent upon belief and faith in the unseen work of God.

Paul revealed in his letter to the *Romans*, "For if we become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (6:5). When Jesus died on the cross, His death destroyed His human body. His burial for the next three days witnessed the reality of His death, and God gave Him a new spiritual body when the Spirit resurrected Him back into life. His resurrection witnessed the power of God over death and His ability to give life to any servant dead in sin.

The newly created spirit is now cleansed by virtue of its resurrection, into a new life. The former servant of sin re-enters life in God's presence with a cleansed new conscience and self by virtue of a new spirit. His new spirit, self, and conscience are separated by death from the old self, corrupted conscience, and the physical body – a spiritual circumcision has taken place.

The bloody sacrifice of Jesus is able to redeem any spirit dead in sin. His redemption effectively ends any record of sin debt owed to God. The newly reborn servant of Jesus re-emerges from the water a new spiritual creation. He is innocent, holy, righteous, sanctified, justified, and a servant of the Lord.

His death with Christ effectively ends his accountability to the moral law from which his transgressions led to his debt of sin – the law of "good and evil". Thus he will no longer be spiritually accountable to the binding force of any law creating sin debt and the curse of breaking a law – spiritual death. This is why the Lord's servant can sin and yet remain sinless. As long as he remains in Christ he is not spiritually accountable to the legal forces of law.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Baptism

Baptism is strictly a faith response to God's will. Paul stated in *Galatians*, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus" (3:26). What happens within the water of baptism takes place as a result of belief and faith in the integrity of God's word concerning what is taking place. Or in other words, if the servant believes he is already redeemed before he enters the water of baptism, he cannot believe nor have faith in the process of redemption taking place while he is submerged under the water. It is either one belief or the other; it cannot be both at the same time. A servant cannot be baptized for re-creation if he considers himself already recreated. Any other reason besides the servant's rebirth in unity with Jesus will render the response as a faithless ritual.

Faith is the expectation of the fulfillment of God's will by the unseen work of the Holy Spirit. Faith is the assurance of His ability to fulfill what He has promised. If the process of salvation taking place within baptism could be sensed, then it would not be based upon belief and faith.

If salvation is believed to have already taken place there isn't anything in which to place faith. If the servant believes he is already forgiven before baptism then he cannot experience death, burial, and resurrection in unity with Jesus within the water of baptism. For only a recreated spirit is free from sin. If he believes he is recreated before baptism it is impossible to believe or have faith in what is promised to take place within the water. The power of the spiritual miracle is lost and Jesus does not get the glory associated with the servant's rebirth. If the servant believes he is saved from sin before he is united with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection within the water of baptism then belief and faith in the miracle of rebirth with Jesus is nonexistent.

In *Colossians* Paul wrote: "Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead" (2:12). He revealed the importance of faith in the spiritual death, burial, and resurrection taking place within the water of baptism. The work of the Spirit within baptism is not only a unifying experience with Christ; His work is the focus of belief and faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Denying the death, burial, and resurrection experience with Christ in baptism denies the power of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ in the process of salvation.

Within the water of baptism the slave of sin is redeemed by Jesus in an integrated spiritual experience. It cannot be explained in any other terms other than it is a spiritual miracle taking place. When a slave of sin dies and is reborn he enters into the body of Christ because he is in complete oneness with Christ as Jesus is with God the Father, and the Holy Spirit. He is made righteous because the re-creation of redemption left him justified of all sin debt to God.

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Baptism

There is no longer any record of sin because the spirit, self, and conscience are new and innocent. In Christ the newly created spirit is holy, righteous, innocent, and sinless even though he must live in a body corrupted by sin.

Baptism is a unified physical-spiritual expression of belief, faith, confession, repentance, and obedience to the will of God through Jesus Christ. The person being baptized is completely dependent upon the integrity of the word of God. He only knows what is taking place as a result of his belief in His word. He is willingly immersed into the water as a result of his faith in the word of God. He is utterly dependent upon what God promised to take place in the water regardless of physical perception. Within the water of baptism God returns a dead servant to life.

#### Questions

Baptism is a word which describes the process involved with cleaning a filthy container or utensil – which includes the spiritual side of the human body

- 1) Do you think the baptism related to salvation refers to either sprinkling or pouring water on a person?
- 2) Is the baptism described in Scripture sprinkling or pouring?
- 3) Is baptism immersion only?
- 4) Is it okay with God to compromise immersion with sprinkling or pouring?
- 5) Do you think a person of faith who received baptism by sprinkling, pouring, or as a baby, has received salvation?
- 6) Do you think God will change His word for the sake of human convenience or theology?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Baptism

Belief, faith, confession, obedience, baptism, and repentance are all physical expressions which a servant must demonstrate before God.

Acts 2:38, 22:16; Galatians 3:22-29; Colossians 2:9-14; Romans 6

- 1) Do you think God allows servants of sin to omit baptism in their conversion to become the Lord's servants?
- 2) Is baptism any more of a work than belief, faith, repentance, or confession?
- 3) How is baptism a work if it must be submitted to in faith?
- 4) Why is baptism a work of faith?
- 5) Are you working for your salvation when baptized?
- 6) Is what takes place within the water of baptism a work of God's grace or your work?
- 7) Are you able to perform any of the spiritual miracles promised in baptism in order to work the work of baptism?
- 8) What is the focus of belief, faith, and baptism: the work of being immersed or the promises of the Lord concerning what is taking place during the baptism?

The servant of sin must be baptized before he is able to serve Jesus as His disciple.

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11-13

- 1) Do you believe a servant of sin must be baptized in order to become united with Christ?
- 2) How does a servant of sin become united with Christ?
- 3) What is the difference between learning about Jesus and learning about Him as His disciple?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Baptism

4) If the Lord saved you before your immersion why is baptism required in order to become united with Jesus, forgiveness, the reception of the Holy Spirit, and spiritual circumcision? When do you become the Lord's disciple?

What takes place within the water of baptism is by divine authority.

Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 10:13; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 1 John 3:23

- 1) Do you think Jesus has the authority to recreate you spirit?
- 2) Does a servant of sin have the ability to recreate his spirit into a new life?
- 3) Why must baptism be submitted too under the authority of the name of Jesus Christ?
- 4) What does Jesus have to do with baptism?

There is but one type of baptism involved in salvation.

Ephesians 4:4-6

- 1) Do you think there are many different baptisms for different reasons today?
- 2) Which baptism is the Spirit speaking about concerning redemption:
  - a) "let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38b).
  - b) "John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16b).
  - c) "into what then were you baptized? And they said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance" ... And when they hear this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 19:3-5).
  - d) "He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the one who baptizes in the Holy Spirit". (John 1:33b)
  - e) "for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body" (1 Corinthians 12:13).

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Baptism

There is one type of baptism related with the gift's given by the Holy Spirit which only occurred during the first century.

Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-13, 17-21; John 15:26-27, 16:5-11; Acts 10:44-48, 11:4-18

- 1) Do you think the gifts which the Spirit gave during the first century redeemed anyone from their sins?
- 2) Are you able to name at least one other type of baptism related to salvation?
- 3) Did both servants of sin and servants of the Lord receive gifts from the Holy Spirit?

What takes place within the water is strictly by the grace of God and is dependent upon belief and faith in the integrity of His word.

Galatians 3:26; Acts 2:37-47

- 1) How is baptism connected with repentance?
- 2) How is baptism connected with confessing Jesus as Lord?
- 3) How is baptism connected with forgiveness?
- 4) How is baptism connected with believing in Jesus?
- 5) How is baptism connected with faith?
- 6) How is baptism connected to grace?
- 7) Is God's grace dependent upon faith?
- 8) Are you able to see or feel His grace at work?
- 9) If you could see or feel grace would grace be by faith?
- 10) Why is the integrity of Scripture so important?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Baptism

A baby forming in the womb is a physical example of what is taking place within the water of baptism. It demands the unity of physical effort with the grace of God's miraculous work.

Job 31:15; Psalms 139:13-14

- 1) Do you think God's grace is involved with the development of a baby in his mothers' womb?
- 2) Is a baby a new and separate life from his mother?

God also likens the rebirth of a servant to a seed planted and emerging into a new and separate life.

John 12:24-26

- 1) Is the new birth which takes place within the water of baptism similar to a planted seed? If so how?
- 2) Have you ever thought of yourself as a growing seed with a new and different life?
- 3) What type of new fruit are you producing?
- 4) Is the seed of your fruit suitable for planting?

The recreation experienced when the Lord redeems a servant of sin is likened to the recreation of a dead servant's physical body.

1 Corinthians 15:35:44

- 1) Do you believe God is able to recreate a body?
- 2) Do you think God is able to recreate a spirit from death?
- 3) Is your theology restricting God in your life?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

##### Baptism

A servant of sin must spiritually die and be resurrected with Christ in order for God to consider him righteous.

Romans 6:5; Revelation 20:6

- 1) Why do you think God places such importance to a servant's death, burial, and resurrection in order to become His servant?
- 2) Do you feel like you have died?
- 3) Do you feel resurrected?
- 4) Do you feel like a newly born creation?
- 5) If you could how would faith be affected?
- 6) How do you know for certain God has recreated your spirit and life?

If a servant believes he is saved before he experiences baptism then the baptism is merely a ritual, regardless how it is rationalized.

Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:6-11; Colossians 2:9-14

- 1) Do you believe you received salvation before you received baptism?
- 2) When does Scripture reveal forgiveness of sins taking place?
- 3) If you are saved before baptism why do you need to experience baptism?
- 4) Does requirement of baptism make you angry and defensive?
- 5) What do you believe the spiritual purpose of baptism is: joining the church, how a sinner receives his new life, a confirmation of salvation and faith which has already taken place, any other reason?

## Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

### Section Four: Appealing to God for Redemption

#### Questions

#### Baptism

Within the water of baptism a servant of sin receives the forgiveness of his sins.  
Acts 2:38, 22:16; Romans 6:6-11; Colossians 2; 9-14

- 1) If you are saved before baptism how did God forgive you of your sins?
- 2) Are you able to feel the forgiveness of your sins?
- 3) If you are not able to feel forgiveness, how do you know you are forgiven?
- 4) If you are able to feel forgiveness is forgiveness by faith in the work of God?
- 5) How do you receive spiritual circumcision before baptism?
- 7) Are you able to feel your spiritual circumcision?
- 8) If you are promised forgiveness of your sins before baptism are there two different ways to receive salvation?
- 9) How are you able to become united with Christ in baptism again if you are already united with Him?
- 7) Is belief, faith, repentance and confession the means of forgiveness or the foundation of what takes place within baptism?

Baptism is a choice of how belief and faith is practiced.  
Colossians 2:12;

- 1) Does God force anyone to receive baptism?
- 2) Do you feel forced to receive baptism as a work to earn salvation?
- 3) Do you think baptism is a command or part of the Lord's instruction concerning how to receive redemption?
- 4) How do you distinguish the difference of motivations to observe a command?