

Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

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Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

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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

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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.

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Reconciliation with God

Before the initial blessings of salvation are received, a slave of sin is an enemy of God and openly hostile to His presence and reality. Hostility can occur even if the servant is very religious and tries to serve God. He could even try to serve God through Jesus Christ and yet be in sin. The servant is in bondage to sin and lives under the authority of Satan, he is a son "of disobedience" (*Ephesians* 2:2b). He lives in the worldwide family of the rebellious walking "according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air" (2:2a).

Paul also adds another shocking revelation, "of the spirit that is working in the sons of disobedience" (2:2b). This last statement may refer to a general likeness of lifestyle in common with everyone else held in the bondage of sin. But it could also indicate an even more alarming insight into the spiritual world in which sinful humanity finds itself intertwined; an actual evil spirit directly affecting every servant of sin.

In his letter to the *Romans*, Paul reminded his brethren of their past hostility towards God. Most of the Jewish people worshiped God with all of their heart and lived very religious lives. Despite their faith in God, He still considered them outside of His grace of salvation and this spiritual state included Paul before his conversion. He wrote: "For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation" (5:10-11).

Jesus came into His world to offer freedom and restored fellowship with God the Father. Paul revealed: "For it is the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross" (*Colossians* 1:19-20a). When someone exercises his freedom to approach Jesus for purchase he is responding to God's gospel call. After having developed enough belief and faith to lead him into obedience to God the Father through Jesus Christ he joins with Christ and is reconciled to God. He is no longer His enemy but a friend. In *Second Corinthians* Paul wrote: "now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (5:18-19a).

When a spirit is resurrected with Jesus, he becomes God's bond-servant and child. At this point in time the now former enemy is reconciled to God. Through Christ he is made holy and pure; and the hostility of rebellion and sin has ended. Upon his purchase by Jesus the new bond-servant is given the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, he is restored to direct fellowship with God, and he becomes His personal friend.

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Questions

Reconciliation with God

All servants of sin are disobedient to God.

Ephesians 2:1-3

- 1) While serving sin did you ever consider yourself as hostile to God?
- 2) Did you ever consider how you served the will of Satan?
- 3) Did you think you lived a good God approved lifestyle?

All servants of sin are enemies against God.

Romans 5:10-11; Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13, 21-22; Ephesians 2:1-3

- 1) Did you feel like an enemy who actively fought against God?
- 2) How did your awareness of spiritual reality affect your heart just as you thought about and decided to serve Jesus as Lord?

All servants of sin follow Satan's influence.

Ephesians 2:2a

- 1) How did it feel to serve Satan?
- 2) Did you enjoy your lifestyle and the freedom of expression offered?
- 3) Were you aware of your spiritual state of being?

All servants of sin have "the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience".

Ephesians 2:2b

- 1) Are you aware of the fact a very real evil spirit either existed to influence your thoughts and life or may have even indwelt your body while you served sin and Satan?
- 2) Did you ever consider yourself being led by the intent of the world or the possibility of being indwelt by a fallen spirit?

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Reconciliation with God

All servants of sin live with an overwhelming desire to fulfill the lust of their flesh and mind.

Ephesians 2:3; 1 John 2:15-16; James 1:12-15

- 1) How did your fleshly desires affect your life?
- 2) Did you enjoy life as you wished?

All servants of sin "walk, in the futility of their mind".

Ephesians 2:1-3, 4:17-19; Colossians 1:21; Romans 1:21-22; Proverbs 16:9, 17:20a; Ecclesiastes 7:4; Jeremiah 17:9-10; Romans 1:24, 26, 28, 8:5-7

- 1) Do you think servants of sin realize the true state of their being?

All servants of sin commit "evil deeds".

Colossians 1:21

- 1) What deed would you consider as evil?
- 2) How do you know what is evil in the sight of God?
- 3) Did you ever think of your lifestyle decisions as evil in the sight of God?

All servants of sin commit "idolatry".

Colossians 3:5; Genesis 8:21

- 1) Can an idol be more than a carved figure of something?
- 2) What are some of your priorities which are more important to you than being led by the Spirit?
- 3) Did you ever consider yourself as worshipping other god's.

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Reconciliation with God

All servants of sin have an "evil conscience".
Hebrews 10:22

- 1) Did you ever feel your conscience as evil?
- 2) Does your past experiences of evil ever affect you life in holiness?
- 3) Does evil in the Lord's eyes ever appear as evil in human eyes?

All servants of sin have a hard heart.
Ephesians 4:18; Romans 1:21-24

- 1) Did you ever come to realize on your own the degree of hardness of your heart?
- 2) Are you able to feel a hard heart on your own?
- 3) What are some major differences between your old hard heart and your newly recreated heart?

Jesus came to restore fellowship with God His Father.
Colossians 1:19-20a

- 1) What does fellowship with God mean to you?
- 2) What is fellowship with God?
- 3) How do you practice fellowship with God?
- 4) Do you see the difference reconciliation has brought into your lifestyle?
- 5) Do you believe you are reconciled with God despite all of the evil in your past life?
- 6) How does reconciliation connect with assurance?
- 7) What do you think about working with God to fulfill His will on earth?

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Reconciliation with God

- 8) Is fellowship based solely upon emotions?
- 9) Is fellowship with God the same as a relationship with Him? How do you define each term?

Reconciliation describes a spiritual state of being when sin is forgiven.
2 Corinthians 5:18-19

- 1) Can a servant who has not had his sins forgiven be a friend of God because he is a very good person and worships God and Jesus?
- 2) What is your "ministry of reconciliation"?
- 3) What ministry do you feel Jesus has committed you for?
- 4) Is ministry connected to purpose?

Reconciliation restores friendship and fellowship with God through Jesus Christ.
John 15:14-15, 14:21, 23-24, 15:9-10

- 1) What did Jesus say about the connection between friendship, obeying commandments, and love towards God through Jesus Christ?
- 2) Is friendship between God and His servant based upon how you choose to love Him?
- 3) Is love determined by how you feel towards God?
- 4) How would you describe the connection between friendship with God and expressing love according to His will?
- 5) How do you love God in your everyday routine life?
- 6) How do you practice friendship with God every day?

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Reconciliation with God

- 7) How is reconciliation connected with fellowship among the Lord's body of believers?
- 8) What is the connection between expressing love towards God and one another love?

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Justification

For as long as a person is indebted to sin he is also under God's righteous condemnation. After all, it's not God's fault he chose to sin in the first place. Nor, is it God's fault when he becomes established and comfortable enjoying his life in Satan's dominion. Sin is entirely the result of obedience to the lust of the flesh which in turn leads to the satisfaction of temptations, "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (*James* 1:14-15).

In his letter to the *Romans*, Paul wrote, "So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men" (5:18). He reminded his brethren how the spiritual force of sin entered into the world through Adam and Eve and spread to every person, Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (5:12). No one is ever compelled to sin or receives accountability to sin from others. Everyone freely chooses to sin once they are mature enough to understand the "knowledge of good and evil."

This basic moral knowledge is an instinct. One's lust of the flesh, moral instinct, and God's visible witness of His presence through His creation all combine as one force to assure accountability for lifestyle choices. Unfortunately, every person chooses to transgress at least one moral code written in his heart, leaving him guilty of sin against God because the standard of righteousness belongs to God.

God's standard of righteousness demands holiness, complete moral purity--innocence. This is a state of being first given at birth. Once the child grows to the point of understanding the difference between his instinctual feelings of good and evil he will choose to sin. Transgressing against God is in his nature, "by nature children of wrath" (*Ephesians* 2:3b). But as Jesus demonstrated, the nature is not overwhelming but one which can be controlled by faith in God's will. Once sin enters into the life of the child he is enslaved to sin. As a servant of sin he also serves Satan and is an enemy of God. Innocence and righteousness are lost and impossible to regain by any personal effort to live a good life.

Jesus had to come to His creation in order to provide a new choice for all of mankind, the choice of redemption and legal freedom from all transgressions against God. Paul wrote in *Romans*, "He who was delivered up because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification" (4:25). As a result of His sacrifice, Jesus is able to purchase ones debt of sin to God with His satisfactory payment, a perfect sinless death. The redemption payment is made by uniting the servant with His death, burial, and resurrection. Everyone is offered the same opportunity to enter into this spiritual experience.

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Justification

Upon redemption, the servant is justified before God the Father. The recreated, reborn spirit has regained his innocence and righteousness before God. This is why justification refers to someone who used to have a record of sin, but is now completely free of any debt of sin to God--complete innocence. Paul wrote: "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (*Romans 5:9-10*).

This is the reason why the blessing of justification is only available by the grace of God. God does not require any form of payment for the blessing of rebirth and freedom from sin's bondage. All a servant of sin is able to offer is himself in humble service to God his creator. He is only able to respond as a slave. It is impossible for him to earn anything. All the new bond-servant of Christ needs to do is to faithfully honor the conditions of purchase written within the new covenant until he physically dies.

When the servant of sin is spiritually united with Jesus in His death, burial, and resurrection, his history of transgression is separated from his new life. His new conscience no longer holds any memory of sin; he is no longer accountable to the curse of law, and hostility against God's righteousness ends. When he is raised with Christ he becomes a new person by the power of the Spirit. Everything associated with sin spiritually died with Christ, the old flesh, self, conscience, and heart. The new creation is completely separated from his old life. Justification is "a gift of His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (*Romans 3:24b*).

Even though a slave of sin cannot do anything to physically earn his justification he must respond to God's gospel call with belief, faith, confession of His Lordship, commit to repentance, faith motivated obedience, and baptism, in order to receive the gift of justification. His response proves his sincerity of service to Jesus. If the servant does not die with Jesus he cannot be separated by death from his old life and resurrected into a new life as a justified servant of the Lord. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Galatians*, "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" (*3:6b-7*).

If the servant is guided by faith in the unseen work of God, his work of obedience will not be motivated by the desire to gain God's favor. His response to God is spiritual and is an appeal through faith led obedience to His will rather than through the perceived goodness and piety of his own work. A spiritual response through belief and faith fulfills the Lord's new covenant expectations, "God is spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (*John 4:24*).

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The faith which motivates a response to obey the will of God is not in the method of salvation but in God's promises of what is taking place spiritually during the initial steps of salvation and afterwards. This is why the whole unseen progression of salvation depends upon faith. In his letter to the *Romans*, Paul wrote: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into His grace in which we stand" (5:1-2a). The response of the slave of sin is determined by his belief and faith motivated obedience, how salvation is realized is a gift of God's grace. Both His grace and the servant's response must come together in unity in order for salvation to take place.

God's children are considered as sinless before His presence, "And you know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin" (1 *John* 3:5). It is not because His servant's live a life of perfection. They continue to live in a hostile world dominated by the powers of darkness, influences of temptation, and personal lust from the dead flesh. A son of God has to faithfully rely upon the promise of continuous holiness in Jesus because of the hostile nature of his environment. His promises are the servant's assurance of continued justification even when he gives in and allows his flesh to sin.

Even though the servant is holy he still sins. However, he remains sinless because: "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins" (1 *John* 2:2). However, His propitiation only remains in effect for as long as the servant chooses to remain faithful to God in Christ and proves it with his life.

John also noted: "If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him" (1:8, 3:6). When Jesus defends His children before His Father when they sin He is not defending them from a legal sin debt. He is pleading on the behalf of a holy child of God. The legal aspect of spiritual debt does not take effect because he is no longer accountable to the curse of the instinctual moral law of "good and evil."

He may break the law but he is not guilty of transgressing against the law because he is no longer legally bound to its penalty. His death with Christ separated him from accountability to legal indebtedness from the law. But if he chooses to deny the deity of Christ then his sin will be counted against him, thus returning him to his former state of being of accountability and separation.

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Not only does death with Jesus initially justify the servant, his innocence will continue for as long as he strives to faithfully serve God until his natural death. This does not mean the servant becomes more holy or righteous, justified, or sanctified, as life in Christ progresses in maturity. It does mean he will grow in conformity to His standard of righteousness and learn how to separate his physical life from the world as the Spirit leads him through life; he progressively matures in the righteousness of life emulating Christ.

Paul illustrated the spiritual realities of the servant's new spiritual life by quoting prophecy written hundreds of years earlier, "Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Therefore come out of their midst and be separate,' says the Lord. 'and do not touch what is unclean; and I will welcome you. And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me,' says the Lord Almighty" (*2 Corinthians 6:16-18*).

Questions

Sin "brings forth death".

James 1:14-15; Romans 6:23; James 1:13-15

- 1) What dies when a person first sins?
- 2) What is spiritual death?
- 3) Did you experience spiritual death?
- 4) Are you able to physically sense spiritual death?
- 5) Outside of Scripture is anyone able to recognize his spiritual death?
- 6) Are you able to love God while spiritually dead?
- 7) Are you able to have friendship with God while spiritually dead?

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Justification

Sin is accountable to God.

Colossians 2:14; Acts 17:24-31; Romans 2:9-16, 1:18-22; Ecclesiastes 3:14, 3:11; Acts 17:24-31

- 1) Do you feel accountable to God?
- 2) Do you feel owned by God?
- 3) Why should you be accountable for sin?
- 4) Sin is a transgression, but what or who's will are you transgressing?
- 5) Is sin a free choice?

One sin by Adam and Eve began the universal destruction of sin. "One act of righteousness" by Jesus Christ allowed God to offer justification to all mankind.
Romans 5:18

- 1) Do you think sin has the power to destroy?
- 2) Is sin destroying you?
- 3) As a saved believer is sin dominating your life?
- 4) What do you think justification means to you?
- 5) What do you think of justification?
- 6) After a servant is justified does God still keep a record of his past sin life?
- 7) Why do you need justification?
- 8) How do you think God erases all record of sin and its associated debt?
- 9) Do you continually need God to justify you from sin against Him?

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Questions

Justification

The Lord's death, burial, and resurrection are the means by which justification is offered.

Romans 4:25, 5:9-10

- 1) What must take place in your life in order for your justification to take place?
- 2) Does Scripture describe how God justifies a servant of sin?
- 3) Do you feel free from sin?

A servant of sin is only considered by God as justified when his innocence is restored.

1 John 3:5; Romans 2:15-16; Matthew 18:3-4

- 1) What is so important about a clear conscience and innocence like a child?
- 2) What is so spiritually special about a child before he sins?
- 3) Why are saved believers compared to children?

Justification is only given as a gift of God's grace.

Romans 3:24b

- 1) Is motivation an important part of a servant's response to God?
- 2) If a servant of sin is trying to serve God's will in order to be perfect does he have the right attitude?
- 3) Which is more important serving the Lord's covenant for the sake of the covenant and spiritual perfection or serving His covenant for the sake of serving Jesus in order to glorify Him?
- 4) Belief, faith, repentance, confession, and obedience, all demand responsive works to fulfill the Lord's will. Is this type of unified response earning His grace?
- 5) If justification requires a belief and faith works response how is it by grace?

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Justification

6) Are you able to clear all record of sin on your own?

Justification and righteousness are dependent upon one another. No one is righteous unless he is justified of all sin and no one is justified if he is not considered righteous by God. Both require a physical response even though both are gifts of His grace.
Galatians 3:6b-7; Romans 5:1-2a

1) Does a working response to the Lord's will mean you are working to earn your salvation?

2) What type of attitude is God searching for in a servant who is trying to respond to His grace of salvation?

3) How do you think grace is linked to a working response?

4) Why do you think God required Abraham to obey His will by a working faith in order to receive the gift of righteousness?

5) Does God require a different type of response in the new covenant age?

Justification is a constant spiritual state of being despite sin because the Lord's servant is no longer accountable to law.

1 John 1:7-2:2, 3:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18; Romans 7:1-6, 6:20-7:2

1) How do you remain justified despite the fact you continue to sin?

2) What do you think John meant when he said all Christian's sin while at the same time all Christians are not sinners?

3) Are you still spiritually accountable to any type of law? In what ways?

4) What is the danger of being held accountable to law?

5) Does freedom from sin debt give you the freedom to sin any time for any reason?

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Justification

- 6) How do you live out your justification?
- 7) Is it very difficult to live a justified life for Jesus?
- 8) Are you trying to live a justified life?
- 9) How do you think your lifestyle choices glorify Jesus?
- 10) When a stranger sees your life does he glorify Jesus?

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Sanctification

When Jesus purchases a slave of sin, he becomes God's bond-servant and is transferred to His kingdom. The new creation in Christ is considered righteous by God, he is justified. He is holy, pure, and innocent of sin. He is spiritually circumcised from his old flesh and heart. His new self and spirit are sanctified, separated from his old self and flesh by death with Jesus. Because of his transfer to the kingdom belonging to Jesus he is separated from the world and the dominion of Satan.

He is holy before God. He is His servant, he belongs to Him. He is God's saint because he lives in spiritual perfection "clothed ... with Christ", even though he still lives in his old body of sin (*Galatians 3:27b*). He is not a saint because of what he has done or accomplished but as a result of God having considered his belief, faith, and obedience as righteousness because of his holiness and oneness with Jesus Christ. Outside of oneness with Christ righteousness is impossible to achieve or receive.

Sanctification is similar to righteousness and justification. All three refer to the holiness of a child of God, just different aspects of the same blessing. Once sin debt is forgiven it cannot be more forgiven, there is nothing left to forgive – the newborn servant is innocent. The newly created spirit of the servant cannot become a better and improved creation. He's perfect. He does not mature into a more purified innocence. He is a new creation sanctified and righteous in Christ.

Yet as a child of God he progresses to mature in the lifestyle of righteousness by gradually growing in his spiritual maturity by living ever more closely to the holy standards of God's righteousness while on earth. As he matures in life according to the Spirit's counsel he will progress to mature in the fruit of righteousness by taking on more and more of the true righteous nature of God as counseled by the Holy Spirit.

Even though he may mature in holy living he does not become more holy, he is already a new creation. He is pure; he does not become more pure than his original purity in Christ after his resurrection. And even though he learns how to separate his new life from the world in terms of spiritual maturity, he is not more separate in the sense he is progressively transferred farther and farther away from sin and the dominion of Satan by Jesus. From a spiritual point of view he cannot become more separate than he is already separated.

His transfer is complete; he is a citizen of the kingdom of God, "He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father" (*Revelation 1:6a*). He is either enslaved to sin or justified. He is either in one kingdom or the other. God has transferred the new born son from Satan's dominion into His kingdom and he does not progressively become more of a son of God in Christ. The faithful servant is a holy sanctified son of God regardless of his maturity level, piety, church office, or any other religious achievement.

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Sanctification

The writer of *Hebrews* had this to say about Jesus, "we have been sanctified through the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10b). Once a servant is freed he is considered righteousness. As a result of being holy the newly created saint is transferred over to the kingdom which Jesus both owns and rules. However, this does not mean the servant cannot freely choose to return to his old life, dominion, kingdom, and lord. He is righteous, separate from the world because he no longer serves sin under the dominion of Satan. He is a saint in God only because of his new birth in Christ.

In *Acts* Luke recorded Jesus revealing to Saul his upcoming mission to the Gentiles, "To open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me" (26:18). Jesus brought to light at least three vitally important aspects of sanctification:

- 1) Every sanctified servant is freed from all sin debt to God, which required his recreation in unity with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.
- 2) Those sanctified are included in the promise through Jesus Christ. They are co-heirs of the inheritance of the promise as a result of their oneness with the "seed"--Jesus Christ. In order for this to take place the servant must be recreated, spiritually circumcised by the Spirit, and "clothed ... with Christ".
- 3) Sanctification is a spiritual gift of God's grace and is only given to those who are considered as righteous by God.

In *Ephesians* Paul offered more insight: "For through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow-citizens with the saints, and are of God's household" (2:18-19). A saint is a servant of God, indwelt with the Spirit, and set apart from the world through Jesus Christ. While serving sin the servant is a stranger and an alien to the kingdom belonging to Jesus. As a saint he is a stranger and alien to the dominion of Satan. He is now "of God's household" which is built "upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the corner stone" (2:20).

The "household" is a spiritual structure sitting upon a spiritual foundation and its cornerstone is Jesus. The spiritual structure is a living spiritual building, "growing into a holy temple in the Lord" (2:21b). This temple is a living "dwelling of God in the Spirit" (2:22b) made up of all the sanctified saints who "are of God's household" (2:19b) the living temple of Jesus Christ. All are as one living entity in God, for each one is a temple of God, "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you" (1 *Corinthians* 6:19a).

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Sanctification

In *Hebrews* the writer revealed: "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren ... I and the children whom God has given Me" (2:11, 13b). Only the sanctified are God's children and all of God's children are sanctified. Jesus sanctified His church through the bloody sacrifice of His body. The Lord sanctifies His church by cleansing "her by the washing of water with the word" (*Ephesians* 5:26b). The washing is His work of purification by which He makes His church of sanctified saints "holy and blameless," which in turn separates His church from the world (5:27b). The cleansing takes place when the slave of sin is united with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus in the water of baptism.

In 2 *Thessalonians* Paul offered more insight into the process of God sanctifying His church, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. And it was for this He called you through the gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2:13b-14). Sanctification is not a mysterious spiritual process or ritual. The servant of sin is miraculously recreated by the power of the Holy Spirit when he is united with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, "so is every one who is born of the Spirit" (*John* 3:8b).

The process leading to sanctification begins with hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ. When belief develops into faith, the desire to obey the gospel message will begin to take root. When a slave of sin submits to God's plan of redemption through Jesus, He promises to give him the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. He is now sealed by the Spirit, "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive", and belongs to God the Father through Jesus Christ, he is sanctified from his old self, body, sin and Satan's dominion in the world (*John* 14:17a).

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Questions

Sanctification

Sanctification means the servant is completely separated from his old life in sin, he is holy, he belongs to Christ.

Galatians 3:27b; 2 Corinthians 6:16b-18; John 15:18-20, 16:33, 17:6,11,13-23; Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31, 2:12, 3:18-20, 5:9-11, 6:2, 7:30-31; 2 Corinthians 1:12, 7:9-11; Galatians 6:14; Ephesians 2:1-5, 12-13; 6:10-18; Philippians 2:12-16; Colossians 2:8, 20-23; 1 Timothy 1:15, 3:3-6, 17-19; 2 Timothy 4:10; James 1:27, 4:1-10; 1 Peter 5:6-11; 2 Peter 1:4, 2:20-22; 1 John 2:15-17, 3:1, 13, 4:1-6,15-17, 5:4-5, 5:19; Acts 26:18; Colossians 1:13; 2 John 6-11; Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4

- 1) Why do you think it is so important to live separate from the world while living in the world?
- 2) All saved believers are holy – sanctified, and live a sanctified life – separated from the ways of sin. How do you live separated from the world?
- 3) Do you enjoy being separated from the world?
- 4) Which influence is the greatest in your life: the world influencing your lifestyle choices or your lifestyle choices and ministry influencing the lives of the lost?
- 5) Do you enjoy blending the unholiness of the world with the holiness of being God's child?
- 6) Why does God want His children separated from the world?
- 7) Is the world a spiritually dangerous place for a child of God? Why?
- 8) What parts of the world experience is God warning about?

Justification, righteousness, and sanctification are dependent upon one another.

- 1) How is your sanctification linked with your justification and righteousness?

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Sanctification

- 2) Do you feel separated from the world?
- 3) Are you trying to live separated from the world?
- 4) How do you think God wants you to live sanctified in an unholy and fallen world?
- 5) How do you connect with servants of sin while at the same time separating yourself from the sin which they consider as normal behavior standards?

Even though the Lord's servant is spiritually separated from sin, he still needs to learn how to live life separated from sin – in holiness.

Galatians 5:16-25; Romans 8:12-25; 1 John 2:15-17; Ephesians 4:17-5:21

- 1) What are you doing to learn how to live in a state of sanctification?
- 2) How do you learn how to live a sanctified life?
- 3) Who is your spiritual guide to a sanctified life?
- 4) Do you ever allow the flesh to dominate your thoughts and decisions?
- 5) How do you control your lust and thoughts of unrighteous behavior?
- 6) What do you do to take control over you worldly lust?
- 7) Is there such a thing as good righteous lust?
- 8) Are you able to identify your weakest areas of life?
- 9) Are you willing to allow a brother or sister help you control a lust motivated behavior

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Sanctification

Sanctification is a blessing from Jesus.

Hebrews 10:10b

- 1) How did Jesus separate you from slavery to sin and Satan?
- 2) How did you come to realize your true spiritual state of being?

Sanctification is a state of being belonging exclusively to a saint.

Ephesians 1:1, 13-14, 18

- 1) Are you a saint?
- 2) Is a saint the same as a sanctified child of God?
- 3) Do you feel like a saint?
- 4) Do you feel holy?
- 5) Do you live a holy life?
- 6) How do you live a holy life?

Since the spiritual state of sanctification is unseen it is received and practiced by faith in the Lord's word.

Acts 26:18

- 1) What did Jesus say to Paul about being sanctified?
- 2) Why is sanctification by faith?
- 3) What do faith motivated works have to do with holiness?
- 4) Do you understand the spiritual state from which you came?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Questions

Sanctification

A sanctified saint is one who has received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
Ephesians 2:18, 1:1

- 1) How do you feel about God living inside of your body?
- 2) Do you ever think about the Holy Spirit experiencing everything you experience and think?
- 3) Does the presence of God affect your standards of behavior and thought patterns?
- 4) Does God's presence affect your attitude towards continued repentance?
- 5) Does His presence help you develop the discipline for regular Bible study and fellowship?
- 6) Do you want to learn how the Spirit helps you make holy life decisions and choices?
- 7) How do you learn the counsel of the Spirit?

The Lord's sanctified saint belongs to God's "household".
Ephesians 2:19b

- 1) What is God's "household"?
- 2) Why is practicing sanctification so important for a saint living in God's house?
- 3) Who else is in His house?
- 4) What is His house?
- 5) Does God live in this house?

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Questions

Sanctification

The Lord's "household" is His ever growing temple.

Ephesians 2:21-22

- 1) How does insight about the "household" of God affect your lifestyle decisions?
- 2) How important are you in the temple of God?

Sanctification is a work of the Spirit; this is another reason why faith in God's word is so vital.

2 Thessalonians 2:13b-14; John 3:8b

- 1) Why do you think sanctification requires both the Holy Spirit and a working response from the saint?
- 2) What are you doing to work with the Spirit?
- 3) Do you ever need to call for the Spirit to help you?
- 4) Is the Spirit always with you?
- 5) If you feel a lack of Spirit who is really lacking?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Renewal

Renewal is the Spirit led life process in Christ of an active faithful bond-servant. A new life begins after being born again in Christ. From this beginning point, God must take a babe in Christ and teach him how to serve Him. The Spirit must counsel him to learn how to live life in restored fellowship, first experienced in the Garden of Eden and then lost. Paul spoke about the steady growth of spiritual maturity in his letter to the *Colossians*: "put on a new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the one who created him" (3:10). Paul offered at least three points of insight into what God accomplishes in the lives of His children as they progressively grow in spiritual maturity:

- 1) Renewal involves the gradual removal of the influences of the old self, heart, flesh, and lust, along with the worldly lifestyle they encourage.
- 2) Renewal involves filling the void left when spiritual death ended the servant's lifestyle of sin; replacing it with the new Spirit led lifestyle. The renewal process is focused upon replacing worldly knowledge and lifestyle with "true knowledge" and righteous lifestyle according to God's standard of righteousness and knowledge.
- 3) As a result of his continuing renewal the son of God becomes steadily more mature according to God's holy standard of righteousness. Through life he progressively becomes more like Jesus.

Paul also spoke of this in his letter to the *Romans* when he encouraged his brethren: "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). He offered insight concerning how to live a new life in Christ. Renewal is a critical factor in the lifelong process of transformation. The servant's renewed lifestyle is a witness of his new Spirit led life, God's will, and his service to glorify Him. In this sense the Lord's servant lives to glorify His Lord. This is his new purpose in life.

The renewal process taking place within the mind and heart of a new believer in Christ is directly reflected by learning the word of God, Spirit led thoughts, speech, lifestyle, worship, positive fellowship with brethren, and interrelationships with the lost. His new life witnesses the sincerity of his transformation according to the will of God. Renewal is a vital part of any believer's "holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" and is a critical facet of the servant's continual worship (12:1b).

Spiritual renewal is a slow lifelong process of training the newly born spirit and self to think and live as a child of God and fills his heart with the goodness of God. As a new babe in Christ he entered into a spiritual classroom led by the Spirit where all

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Renewal

previous lessons learned and remembered by his flesh must be left behind with his old dead self, flesh, and conscience. New spiritual lessons must be learned as he allows the Spirit to lead him into a physically unnatural but holy lifestyle and mindset. Sustained renewal must be led by the Spirit or it will fail God's test – proving "what the will of God is" (12:2b).

In his *second* letter to the *Corinthians*, Paul wrote: "Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" (4:16). The body dies a little bit every day as time marches on. However, time is a believer's friend because each new day brings forth new life experiences propelling spiritual growth and wisdom onward, enabling him to serve God better with each passing moment. The body will eventually die, and the recreated spirit and soul of God's child will return to his home in heaven with a lifetime of spiritual growth experiences, awaiting the eventual resurrection of his body.

Questions

Renewal is the lifelong process of learning and applying how to serve God the Father in holiness.

Colossians 3:9b-10; 1 Peter 2:1-3; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 5:11-14; 2 Timothy 3; Romans 10:17

- 1) What are you doing to lay "aside the old self"?
- 2) Who is responsible for the discipline of renewal, you, the Spirit, or both?
- 3) What is Jesus trying to tell His children about knowledge?
- 4) Do you think learning God's knowledge is important?
- 5) Do you want to mature in the word?

Is discernment between "good and evil" possible if you do not strive to learn what they are?

- 1) Why is it so important to be able to confidently discern the often subtle differences between good and evil?

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Renewal

- 2) Are there other ways to learn God's will outside of Scripture?
- 3) Do you think God is too narrow minded for a modern Christian to live a modern life?
- 4) How do you develop faith?

Renewal involves the mind and heart and enables the servant to "prove what the will of God is" in his new life.

Romans 12:2

- 1) Why is renewal so important?
- 2) How would you identify renewal in your life?
- 3) If God gave you a new heart, conscience, self and spirit why is it so important to learn how to live in your new world?
- 4) Do you understand the new world in which you live?
- 5) Is living in righteousness and sanctification different than living in unholiness?
- 6) Does the dominion of Satan offer different standards of living than the Lord's kingdom?

Renewal is the gradual change of how a servant thinks and what he values as important.

- 1) How long does it take to complete the renewal process?
- 2) Bible study is a vitally important part of a sanctified life in Christ, do you study Scripture regularly?
- 3) Why do you think God wants you to learn about Him and how to serve Him?

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Renewal

Renewal witnesses the Spirit's work in the life of the Lord's servant.
2 Corinthians 12:7-10; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16

- 1) How does renewal witness the work of the Spirit?
- 2) How does renewal glorify Jesus?
- 3) Is growth in Scriptural knowledge aided by the Spirit?

Renewal is a vital part of a servant's "holy sacrifice" and "spiritual service of worship".
Romans 12:1

- 1) Are you able to offer yourself to the Lord's service if you do not know what He expects from you?
- 2) What do you think Jesus meant when He said your life is your worship?
- 3) Is your life a micro-theocracy?
- 4) Would you know how to worship Jesus if you chose to disregard the counsel of the Spirit?

Renewal will last into eternity.
2 Corinthians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

- 1) Do you think your spiritual knowledge will die with your physical body?
- 2) What will you take into eternity?
- 3) How do you think Scriptural knowledge will affect your eternal blessings?

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A Holy Spirit Seal

During the first gospel sermon of the New Covenant age, the Holy Spirit inspired Peter to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many in his audience asked in honest distress what they could do in response, "What shall we do" (*Acts 2:37b*). Peter demanded a simple two part response: "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" (*2:38*).

1) They needed to express repentance; choosing to demonstrate their commitment to change from the Law to salvation in Christ and His new covenant. In order to express repentance the servant needed to submit to baptism under the authority of Jesus Christ-God.

2) Those who responded proved their sincerity to the commitment they made to repent by submitting to baptism. This response to God fulfilled their initial submission to their newfound belief in Christ, commitment to repent, and faith in the integrity of God's word. Baptism and repentance cannot be separated from any other facet of salvation.

Peter also noted at least three vitally important facts about receiving the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit:

1) The people who responded confessed the Lordship of Jesus and His control over the spiritual blessings taking place within baptism. It is affected only by His authority and power. This acknowledgement required belief motivated faith in His authority to fulfill His promises.

2) Sin is forgiven only as a result of the servant's death, burial, and resurrection in unity with Christ, thus receiving his spiritual circumcision, while immersed within the water of baptism.

3) The recreated servant receives the promised "gift of the Holy Spirit" only after the Lord recreates his spirit, returning him to a state of innocent, sinless purity.

When the one being baptized receives the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, he is assured of his presence by faith in the integrity of the word of God. The Lord has transferred him from Satan's dominion to His kingdom of righteousness. In *Colossians* Paul reminded his brethren in Christ, "For He delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son" (*1:13*).

Many years earlier Jesus spoke of the Spirit when told His disciples, "if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him" (*John 14:23b*). With this statement Jesus revealed a vital condition for receiving the Spirit. The servant of sin must be willing to demonstrate his newfound belief and faith in the Lord according to His will, "he who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me" (*John 14:21a*).

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A Holy Spirit Seal

Jesus also disclosed the new covenant meaning of believing in Him as a condition for receiving the indwelling presence of the Spirit: "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (*John 7:38-39*). A servant is only considered a believer when he has received the "gift of the Holy Spirit". A believer is one who has received the indwelling presence of the Spirit. Before this he may believe in the Lord but he is not a forgiven believer.

Just before His death He told His disciples about the very exclusive nature of the gift of the Spirit: "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it does not behold Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides in you, and will be in you" (*John 14:16-17*). Jesus clearly foretold at least six very important spiritual facts:

- 1) The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is not given to any servant who is still of the world. This means only those who are cleansed by rebirth and transferred into His kingdom will receive the gift.
- 2) This experience is based entirely upon the confession of belief and faith in the integrity of His word and Lordship. He is fulfilling His promise and the servant will receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.
- 3) Only those who are willing to "keep" His word are considered by God the Father as loving Jesus.
- 4) A servant of sin must become a believer before God the Father will recognize him as loving Jesus.
- 5) The Spirit is only given to those who express love towards Jesus by obeying His will.
- 6) A servant must first receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit before God the Father will consider him as knowing Him. In order to know God the servant must be in fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ.

The promised presence of the Holy Spirit is God's seal and pledge of the servant's faith in the unseen fulfillment of God's redemptive promises in Christ. The indwelling presence of the Spirit is God's assurance he truly loves and knows Jesus. For only God knows his heart and the Spirit is God. The Lord only considered those who responded to Peter's sermon as having "received His word", "had believed", "added", or "saved" (2:41a, 41b, 44a, 47b). Thus these saints fulfilled the foretold of requirement of how to love God the Father through Jesus Christ.

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A Holy Spirit Seal

Later, in his letter to the *Ephesians* Paul wrote: "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (1:13). A saved believer is one who has responded to the Lord with faith, repentance, confession of His deity and Lordship, and baptism. He is a servant who follows up his confession and love with a continued service recognizing Him as Lord and Master.

The seal of the Holy Spirit is a mark of divine ownership. God now owns the former slave of sin. The servant has demonstrated his commitment to serve God the Father through Jesus Christ, his new Lord and Master. Paul revealed in his *second* letter to the *Corinthians*: "He who establishes us with you is Christ and anointed us is God, who also sealed and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (1:21-22).

The inner presence of the Holy Spirit also seals the believer "for the day of redemption" (*Ephesians* 4:30b). Paul tried to both warn and encourage his brethren as he revealed their need to treasure the inner presence of the Spirit by how they chose to live and think according to the Lord's standard of righteousness. If they remain holy in God until they died, then the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit assured their continued redemption. This is a never changing spiritual blessing from Jesus.

Questions

The gift of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is received within baptism.
Acts 2:38b

- 1) Who do you think is making this promise: Peter or the Holy Spirit?
- 2) Why do you think the Spirit is mentioned only after the servant receives forgiveness?
- 3) Did the Spirit really mean forgiveness is received sometime while immersed in the water of baptism?
- 4) Do you think there is more than one way to receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit, other than being immersed in the water of baptism?
- 5) Is the person receiving the Spirit able to feel His presence?
- 6) How is the invisible and unsensed presence of the Spirit linked with belief and faith?

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Questions

A Holy Spirit Seal

7) If you are able to feel the presence of the Spirit is He then present by faith?

The indwelling presence of the Spirit is only given to those who have received forgiveness by recreation.

1) When does a servant of sin receive forgiveness?

2) When does a servant receive the "gift of the Holy Spirit"?

The indwelling presence of the Spirit is dependent upon faith; He is unseen and cannot be physically experienced.

Hebrews 11:1, 6; Romans 8:25; 2 Corinthians 5:5-7

1) Are sight and faith compatible?

2) If you are able to feel the presence of the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, how do you know for certain it is God?

3) How do you know what the Holy Spirit feels like? What standard of measurement are you using to determine the accuracy of your feelings?

4) Why do you think it is so important to depend upon the integrity of God's word concerning the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?

The internal presence of the Spirit is only given to those who choose to express love towards God the Father through Jesus Christ.

John 14:23b, 21a

1) How does God define love towards Him?

2) What do you think commands have to do with receiving the indwelling presence of the Spirit?

3) How do belief, faith, confession, repentance, baptism, and a life of faith, connect with expressing love towards God?

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Questions

A Holy Spirit Seal

4) Is the Spirit received because of works performed in order to satisfy the requirement to love God as best as possible?

5) Is the Spirit received because His new covenant stipulations are obeyed because of belief, faith, confessing Jesus as Lord and Master, the desire to repent, and obediently serve His will?

6) In the last two questions what is the difference in motivation?

The presence of the Spirit is only given to those who have expressed belief in Jesus Christ.

John 7:38-39; Acts 2:44a

1) What do you think belief involves?

2) Can there be a difference between believing Jesus and "had believed" in Him?

The presence of the Spirit is only given to those whom God has transferred from the dominion of Satan (the world), to the Lord's kingdom (the church).

John 14:16-17; Ephesians 1:13-14; Galatians 3:26-27, 29; Colossians 1:13-14; Acts 26:18-20; Revelation 1:5-6

1) What must take place when a servant of sin is transferred to the Lord's kingdom?

2) How is he transferred?

3) When is he transferred?

The seal of the Spirit is a mark of divine witness; the servant belongs to God.

2 Corinthians 1:21-22

1) Are you completely confident the Spirit lives in you?

2) Are you assured of God's presence even though you cannot physically experience the indwelling presence of the Spirit?

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Questions

A Holy Spirit Seal

- 3) How do you know for sure if the Spirit lives in you?
- 4) How does knowing God lives in you affect your motivation to serve His will in everyday life?

The inner presence of the Spirit seals the servant "for the day of redemption".
Ephesians 4:30b

- 1) Do you ever doubt your promised eternal destiny?
- 2) If so what do you think motivates your doubt?
- 3) How do you develop the faith necessary to overwhelm feelings which may be coming from your old flesh and self?
- 4) What does assurance mean to you?
- 5) Are you completely assured of your eternal redemption?
- 6) How does assurance affect your daily life and its choices and decisions?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

A Holy Spirit Pledge

The Holy Spirit pledge is a blessing resulting from receiving God's gift of the Holy Spirit. His indwelling presence is a partial blessing of the servant's promised inheritance which he will receive because of his signature on the contractual agreement known as the New Covenant. The pledge assures His children they are presently receiving part of the blessings of God's presence, promise, and fulfillment of prophecy because of their redemption.

The pledge is God the Father's promise of the servant's inclusion into the flow of the promise, its spiritual blessings, and hope of eternal life. His presence means the servant is presently enjoying the blessing of eternal promises.

The inner presence of the Holy Spirit directly links the new servant with the promised divine inheritance. The pledge of the Spirit's presence is a down payment of the inheritance promised to the Lord's children. He will receive the blessings of the promise in the future; however he is presently enjoying spiritual blessings from the promise during his physical life as well.

Paul wrote in his *second* letter to the *Corinthians*: "Now He who established us with you in Christ and anointed us is God, who sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge" (1:21-22). If the covenant is not broken by the new bond-servant/son, then all of the future blessings and promises of the eternal inheritance in Christ will be received in part during life and in full after physical life ends with death. Paul repeated this assurance of God's promise in (5:5): "Now He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge." The ultimate purpose God prepares His children for is eternal glory in the spiritual promised land of the promise--eternal fellowship with God restored to its original intent, which will never end.

Questions

The indwelling presence of the Spirit is a partial and present blessing of the promised eternal inheritance which every servant will receive upon death.
Romans 8:13-17

- 1) Have you ever thought about the fact you have received a part of your promised inheritance?
- 2) Does the inheritance affect your degree of assurance in any way?

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Questions

A Holy Spirit Pledge

3) Do you think you lifestyle attitudes, motivations, and choices in this life will affect life in heaven? How about right now?

The pledge of the Spirit comes directly from God the Father.
2 Corinthians 1:21-22, 5:1-7; Ephesians 1:13-14, (Galatians 3:27-29)

- 1) If you cannot feel the Spirit's presence do you ever doubt His work in your life?
- 2) If you do not feel you are being Spirit led who is at fault?
- 3) If you do not feel the Church is not Spirit led who is at fault?
- 4) What is the special purpose reserved only for those who have the indwelling presence of the Spirit?
- 5) How does the pledge affect you life in Christ?
- 6) How must the gospel be believed in order to receive God's pledge?
- 7) What do you think the inheritance have to do with being an "heir" and "offspring" of Abraham?
- 8) How is the Lord's servant a relative of Abraham?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Children of God

With all of the different religions in the world today many people are led to believe in numerous ways leading to adoption into the Lord's family. Unfortunately the belief is a deception. A servant of sin must be willing to submit to redemption by Jesus according to His new covenant before God the Father will adopt him back into His family of righteous saints. He must be born again in unity with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, and considered by God the Father as spiritually circumcised. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Galatians*, "for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For you all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (3:26-27, 29).

Paul reminded his fellow believers of their spiritual roots in Christ Jesus. Jesus ended faith in all law or any form of traditional religion when He unified faith in God with faith in Himself. God's sons are only those who have demonstrated their "faith in Christ Jesus."

His sons are those who are obedient to the Lord's will through the gospel. They submitted to baptism and allowed their immersion within the water. As a dirty vessel the servant enters into the spiritual cleansing power of God. The faith realized in God is in His power to recreate a dead servant of sin into a living and fruitful new born child of the Lord Jesus.

Entering into Christ is also accompanied with entering into the promise by becoming a spiritual son of Abraham through Jesus; the anticipated seed heir of Abraham. Since Jesus is the fulfillment of the promise of the seed those who "belong to Christ" are enabled to share with Him the promised blessings to the seed, "'your seed,' that is, Christ" (3:29a, 3:16b).

Paul wrote in his letter to the *Romans*: "That is, it is not the children of the flesh who are children of God, but the children of the promise are regarded as descendants" (9:8). No one, regardless of whether he is able to claim verifiable physical descendancy back to Abraham, a servant of the Law, or physically circumcised, is able to enter into the promise any other way than through faith in Jesus.

He also noted: "the Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ" (8:16-17). Only those who are united with Christ are allowed to enter into the spiritual promise, made exclusively to the faithful saints of old and to the seed of the promise-- Jesus Christ. Only the faithful saints in Christ are given the right to inherit the blessings of the promise as children of God the Father.

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Children of God

In *Hebrews*, the author reminded his readers of the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy: "behold, I and the children whom God has given to Me" (2:13b). Just a few verses earlier he said this prophecy is continually being fulfilled in the spiritual lives of anyone sanctified in Christ, "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren" (2:11). Only those who are sanctified, set apart from their old flesh and the world, and righteous through faith in Christ, are considered by God the Father as His children. No one else is considered.

In *2 Corinthians*, Paul quoted prophecy revealing the connection between a child of God and the true temple of God. He wrote: "for we are the temple of the living God, just as God said, 'I will dwell in them and walk among them; I will be their God, and they shall be my people ... And I will be a Father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to Me'" (6:16-18). God's children are individually, as well as collectively, a temple of God.

They are recognized as His children as a result of their recreation, spiritual circumcision, and having received the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Thus, all of God's children are individually a temple of God, while at the same time collectively a greater temple--the body of Christ, one in Christ, one with the Holy Spirit, and one with God the Father, "Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building being fitted together is growing into a holy temple in the Lord" (*Ephesians* 2:20b-21). God's children are the fulfillment of many prophetic visions concerning the complete restoration of the kingdom of David, Israel, Jerusalem, and the temple.

Questions

A servant is only able to become a child of God by "faith in Christ Jesus".
Galatians 3:26

- 1) Why do you think Paul mentions baptism as such an important part of fulfilling faith in order to receive salvation?
- 2) How does baptism and being a child of God connect?
- 3) Are you able to sense any of the spiritual promises taking place?
- 4) How do you know if God is doing what He said He will do in baptism?

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Questions

Children of God

- 5) How do you know for sure you are a child of God?
- 6) By what standard are you secure in your assurance?
- 7) How is a servant a child?
- 8) Why is a child His servant?
- 9) Are you a child of God before baptism?

Only the "sons of God" receive the indwelling presence of the Spirit.
Galatians 4:3-7; Romans 8:14-17

- 1) Who are the exclusive people who receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit?
- 2) What does being a child of God mean to you?
- 3) If you are a son of God what does your identity mean to you?
- 4) Who is offered a spiritual inheritance from God?
- 5) Who "bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God"?
- 6) If a person does not have this witness where does he stand spiritually?

All "sons of God" are legally adopted back into His family.
Galatians 4:5

- 1) Why must a child of God be adopted back into His family?
- 2) Does this mean he once belonged to His family?
- 3) How could a child be born a sinner and still be in God's family?

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Questions

Children of God

- 3) If God had to orphan a child due to sin does this mean the child inherited his sin or chose to sin?
- 4) If a very young child dies before he is able to choose to commit a sin does he go to heaven as a child of God?
- 5) Do you think it is cruel for God to separate Himself from children who choose to sin?
- 6) Can you think of a parable by Jesus which refers to just such a separation and return?
- 7) How does Israel's repeated cycles of sin and repentance connect with being born in innocence, choosing to sin, and God's offer to redeem His wayward child back into His family of saints?

Only the Lord's children are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ".
Romans 8:16-17

- 1) Do you think God is being a bit too restrictive about His promise?
- 2) Do His restrictions bother you?
- 3) Do you feel God has made exceptions to His word in the case of your loved ones who have died?
- 4) Do you think God is hard hearted if only His children are heirs?
- 5) Do you think God accepts alternate ways to receive redemption? For example: conversions before baptism, deathbed conversions without baptism, good moral people who have not had the opportunity to hear the gospel.
- 6) Is God fair and loving concerning who His children are? Are your perceptions of fairness and love accurate? What standard of fairness and love are you using?

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Questions

Children of God

7) Who has the last word concerning what God has the right to do, God or you?

Only the Lord's children are "children of the promise".

Romans 9:8a; Genesis 3:15

1) What about all of the other religions in the world who worship God?

2) What does "children of promise" mean to you?

3) When, where, and why did this statement about the promised restoration of mankind originate?

Only the Lord's children are "regarded as descendants" of Abraham.

Romans 9:8b; Galatians 3:16, 29

1) How can a child of God who is not physically related to Abraham be considered His descendant?

2) How is God considering His Child a descendant?

3) Do you think there is a difference between the physical nation of Israel and the Lord's spiritual nation of Israel – His saints?

4) Is the heir-line spiritual rather than physical?

The children of God are the Lord's "brethren".

Hebrews 11b-13; Acts 9:4-6

1) What does the term "brethren" mean to you?

2) In spiritual terms which is more important: your physical brethren (relatives) in the world or spiritual brethren in the Lord?

3) How do you practice love towards your brother in Christ?

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Children of God

- 4) Are you unified with your brother in Christ despite differences?
- 5) If a fellow servant is also considered by God as your brother does this affect your attitude towards him? How do your feelings of family transfer to the church?
- 6) If every servant is united with Christ does this mean every servant is united with each other as well?
- 7) Do you believe this statement: How you treat your brother in Christ is how you treat Christ?
- 7) Do you determine your relationship with Christ by your relationships with fellow Christians?

The children of God are "the temple of the living God".
2 Corinthians 6:16b-18; 1 Corinthians 6:17, 18-19

- 1) How did God make you a temple?
- 2) What are Christian temples of?
- 3) Do you ever think about being a holy temple of God when doing everyday activities? How about what you put into your heart, your thoughts, attitudes, and motivations?
- 4) What does being a temple mean to you?
- 5) Is your body a sacred place for God?
- 6) What kind of message do you think God is trying to send to His children regarding what He thinks of them?
- 7) Does knowing you are a temple affect your attitude and motivation to serve Jesus?

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His Chosen People

All of God's children are His chosen people. John wrote in his *Revelation*: "He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful" (17:14b). These are the remnant from the world who heard the gospel, believed, developed faith, and chose to respond with obedience to the will of God just as Abraham did during his life. These are the chosen. Not because they are irresistibly chosen regardless of free will, but simply as a result of free will. They are the new covenant remnant of Israel who is included in the promise, because they are adopted into the family of the seed--Christ Jesus. They are the chosen of God as a result of their willingness to allow Jesus to purchase their lives from slavery to sin and its curse of death.

Paul wrote in his letter to the *Ephesians*: "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before Him ... He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself ... in Him we have redemption" (1:4a, 5a, 7a). All servants of sin are free to choose whom to serve, no one is predetermined outside of his own will to accept or reject the Lord's offer of redemption. The freedom to choose adoption "through Jesus Christ" is what God predetermined to take place within the human experience.

All are free to choose to appeal to God for redemption through Jesus Christ when they are blessed with the opportunity to hear the gospel message. God chose all of His faithful in Christ beforehand because He had predetermined redemption through Jesus Christ from before creation. God knew before creation whose belief, faith, and obedience through Jesus would be considered as righteousness. He knew before man ever stepped foot on the ground who would choose to die in faith before the death of Jesus. He knew who would be qualified to enter into the spiritual flow of the promise and when. He easily predetermined from before creation who would fellowship with Him in eternity. He witnessed their lives as saints before the Lord's death and after His resurrection until His second coming.

When a servant of sin becomes a bond-servant of Christ he has freely joined with Him in His predestined destiny strictly as a result of having heard the preplanned gospel and responded to it according to God's predetermined covenant in Christ. In Christ the servant is united with His predestined destiny making his destiny predestined. God revealed His plan for the promised restoration of mankind soon after Adam and Eve first sinned. Speaking to the serpent God foretold: "He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel" (*Genesis 3:15b*). Thousands of years later the seed of the promise—Jesus Christ, fulfilled the prophecy of the promise. Thus God predestined the prophecy as well as its fulfillment.

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In 2 *Thessalonians*, Paul offered more insight into what chosen referred to when he described the process of becoming chosen. Salvation is freely offered by God through the gospel of Christ, "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth" (2:13b). One becomes sanctified by the work of the Spirit in unity with Jesus. A slave of sin can only be restored to holiness when God considers his belief and faith as righteous.

The servant's conversion process is initiated by the response offered to God when he expresses "faith in the truth" (2:13b). Paul goes on to explain what he means by the truth: "He called you through our gospel" (2:14a). This is not a spiritual calling and response which is independent from free will, an irresistible feeling placed within the heart of a servant of sin. It is the direct result of a rational understanding of the gospel message of Jesus Christ. And if a servant desires freedom in Christ the gospel reveals how to receive his liberty.

Any servant chosen by God has first chosen to respond to God's predestined will through His predestined Son, Jesus Christ. He has received the predestined indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. He is included in the predestined flow of the promise. He immediately receives a part of his predestined blessings of the promise. He will receive after his death his predestined body in the likeness of Jesus. He will receive his predestined reward. He will receive a place in his predestined eternal future in heaven. It's all predestined because God has already seen how our physical future proceeds into eternity.

"Faith in the truth" describes the spiritual changes taking place within a slave's heart (2:13b). Upon hearing the word of God, if it is truly believed, he will begin to develop "assurance" and "conviction" in the unseen promises of the word of God (*Hebrews* 11:1). However, neither belief nor faith will save if they are not worked out as a response accepting God's grace according to the new covenant will of Jesus Christ. The slave of sin must be willing to exercise the freedom of belief and faith through obedience to what God the Father is asking of him through Jesus. He must be willing to confess Jesus as Lord and Master. He must be willing to commit his life to continued repentance by allowing the Spirit to lead him along the unseen path of God's grace to his final salvation upon death in faith.

The offer of redemption is within a covenant between the servant and Jesus. Jesus promises to purchase him from his slavery to sin and place him in service to Himself. Thus he chooses to covenant with God who in turn chooses him to serve Him through Jesus Christ. When a slave of sin practices "faith in the truth" his faith is realized through his obedience of love (2:13b).

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This places his spiritual signature on a covenant contract with God the Father, promising he will serve Him only, and only through Jesus Christ. The servant is depending upon belief and faith in the truth of God's word because he is not able to physically experience any of the salvation promises. He is only able to witness his own response.

His physical response is in turn God's witness to the world. His children are able to glorify Him through their response to His will through Jesus Christ. John quoted Jesus praying towards the end of His ministry, he stated the importance of the believer's response to His will when He said: "I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father are in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me. And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and didst love them, even as Thou didst love Me" (*John 17:20-23*).

A short time earlier as His last supper with His disciples began to unfold He stressed the vital importance of love, unity, witness to the world, and working together to glorify God through Himself. He told the twelve disciples, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (*John 13:34-35*). His chosen are distinguished from the world by their response to the Lord's commandment – expressing love towards one another which in turn expresses love towards Jesus because one another is the body of Christ. His chosen glorify God the Father through Jesus by obeying this commandment. Love according to the Lord's will is the binding force of unity.

Through the witnessing power of love the body of Christ – the chosen remnant are able to fulfill His will to deliver the message of Christ to the world. In *Ephesians* Paul explained how the mystery of Christ is being revealed to both the world and the spiritual realm. To the world the gospel is still hidden by misunderstanding and spiritual blindness. The gospel must be revealed by the chosen who are purposed by Jesus to fulfill His will. The chosen are the only ones who are able to understand His will because they are Spirit led, "But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised" (*1 Corinthians 2:14*).

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The body of Christ – the chosen, are to imitate Paul's mission to the world which in turn witnesses the mystery of salvation to spiritual beings belonging to Satan and to Jesus, "To me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ, and to bring to light what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God, who created all things; in order that the manifold wisdom of God might be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the eternal purpose which He carried out in Christ Jesus Our lord, in whom we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him" (3:8-12). God's chosen people are immensely important to His eternal plan for His creation. His predestined plan for mankind fulfills His predestined purpose for His entire creation. The witness with which the chosen enlighten the world fulfills "His predestined purpose" for all of His creation both physical and spiritual.

In his *first* letter *Peter* described the chosen in Christ who have responded with "faith in the truth," as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession ... a people of God" (2:9a, 10a). When a slave of sin is purchased by Jesus he becomes His servant. He is born again, he is given a new position in life with a new life, he is placed in a new nation foreign to the world, and he becomes God's personal possession and witness of His purpose for His creation and glory. He is a slave who has rationally regained his senses through the truth of God's word and chose to accept His offer of grace through Jesus Christ for his redemption.

Questions

Any servant who is united with Jesus is one of His "chosen and faithful".
Revelation 17:14b

- 1) Do you feel special?
- 2) Are you special in God's eyes?
- 3) What do you think God is talking about when He refers to His chosen?
- 4) Who are His chosen?
- 5) Does chosen mean He predetermined your salvation or you accepted His predetermined plan for your salvation?

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Questions

His Chosen People

6) How does being chosen by God affect your interrelationships with fellow chosen servants of the Lord?

God knew who His chosen would be from before the creation of the world.
Ephesians 1:4

1) How did God know this?

2) Did His knowledge somehow predetermine a servant's choice to serve Jesus rather than sin?

The chosen are those whom God has adopted through Jesus Christ.
Ephesians 1:4-5

1) How is a servant of sin adopted into God's family?

2) Are you adapting to your new family environment?

The adopted are predestined because God only predestined the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
No Jesus – no predestination.
Ephesians 1:5

1) Do you feel as if fate predetermined your decision to serve Jesus?

2) Do you believe God may have sent people and circumstances into your life experience to help lead you to Jesus for salvation?

3) What is the fundamental difference between predetermined salvation and salvation by choice?

4) Is God's offer to give salvation the same as predetermining salvation?

5) Do you think God honors freedom of choice more than choosing your destiny in an unnoticed way?

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- 6) Why do you think God honors freedom of choice so highly?
- 7) How do you think freedom of choice affected your decision to serve Jesus rather than continuing to serve sin?

The chosen are only those who "have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses".

Ephesians 1:7

- 1) How is a servant of sin chosen?
- 2) Is freedom of choice involved?
- 3) Is a physical response required?
- 4) What must every servant of sin do in response to the Lord's offer of salvation and His new covenant stipulations for salvation in order to receive salvation?
- 5) Is a physical response the same as trying to earn salvation?

The chosen are those whom God has given "salvation through sanctification by the Spirit".

2 Thessalonians 2:13b

- 1) Why does a servant need sanctification?
- 2) What is sanctification?
- 3) What does the Spirit do to give sanctification?
- 4) What is the connection between sanctification and holiness?
- 5) What is the connection between sanctification and being separate from the world?
- 6) How does a sanctified servant serve Jesus?

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Questions

His Chosen People

The chosen are those who have expressed "faith in the truth".

2 Thessalonians 2:13b

- 1) How do you express "faith in the truth"?
- 2) How do you know what the truth is about salvation with so many different approaches to God available?
- 3) Is working out faith the same as working for salvation?
- 4) What is the difference?
- 5) How do you know if you are responding according to God's will?
- 6) Who leads your work: the Spirit or your heart? Which can you trust?

The chosen are those whom God has "called ... through our gospel".

2 Thessalonians 2:14a

- 1) What is the Gospel?
- 2) How is a servant of sin called by the gospel?
- 3) Does this require a free thought out choice?
- 4) What is the choice based upon?
- 5) How are faith and the gospel connected?
- 6) There are many variations of how to respond to the gospel available, how do you know which to trust?

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Questions

His Chosen People

The Lord's chosen are "a chosen race, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession ... a people of God".

1 Peter 2:9a, 10a

- 1) Sanctification means God's people are holy and separate from the people who chose to serve sin and Satan. Do you feel as if you are part of a newly created race of people?
- 2) What race of people are you in Christ?
- 3) What nation are you?
- 4) What kind of spiritual place is God referring to?
- 5) Is God revealing a present blessing or about something which will take place in the future?
- 6) Do you live life as a special possession of God--His person?
- 7) Are you getting a better sense of who you are in Christ?
- 8) Is your new awareness affecting your attitude towards your fellow servant, how you choose to serve Jesus, and your interrelationships in the world?

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A Holy People

The people God chose before He even created the world are those He knew would be faithful until they die. Paul wrote in his letter to the *Ephesians*, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him, in love" (1:4).

Since the dawn of creation God has had a plan for His mankind, offering His wayward children a way to return to Him. A servant of sin is made "holy and blameless" by the power of Jesus to purchase him from the bondage of his debt of sin to God and the curse of law – both have the power to enslave the transgressor (1:4b). Upon his recreation in Christ he is freed from his bondage to sin and the binding effects of law. He is holy, as a result of the unseen promises of God. The Lord considers his belief and faith as righteous because he is holy.

"In love" (1:4b) describes how a servant of sin appeals to God for his salvation as well as maintains it in Christ. A servant's expression of love to God is a contemplated response to the will of God the Father motivated by his desire to become one with God the Father through Jesus. As a result he is one body in Christ with all of the Lord's other servants. The Spirit unifies the servant with Jesus, God the Father, and one another. Since all saints are the body of Jesus, all saints are one in Christ. Godly love is based upon the word of truth rather than the heart even though the heart is involved. It is Spirit led, not heart led.

In his gospel *John* quoted Jesus stating, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to Him" (14:21). The love response required by God is a decision based upon belief in the words of Jesus Christ and faith motivated obedience to His will. Love towards God fulfills the servant's freedom to pursue and appeal for his destiny in Christ.

John wrote in *Revelation*: "Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with Him for a thousand years" (20:6). His holy people are righteous and sanctified by the power of the Holy Spirit. Their recreation in Christ is their "first resurrection." They will live with Him forever as promised.

God's holy people are completely pure and righteous while their physical life is slowly restored from the shattered ruins of sin. The holy chosen of God are honored by God the Father to have personal fellowship with Him, they are His friends, and know Him. His holy people are one in Christ Jesus by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. They are spiritually pure, righteous, sanctified, and only serve God their creator. The holy ones in Christ Jesus are, according to the writer of *Hebrews*, "the general

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A Holy People

assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven ... righteous men made perfect" (*Hebrews 12:23*).

Questions

Every chosen child of God is "holy and blameless".
Ephesians 1:4

- 1) What does holiness mean to you?
- 2) How do you live life as the Lord's holy servant?
- 3) Do you feel holy?
- 4) How do you know for sure you are holy?

Every servant who has experienced "the first resurrection" is holy.
Revelation 20:6

- 1) How do you know if you experienced "the first resurrection"?
- 2) What is the "first resurrection"?
- 3) Why is it so important?
- 4) Does it make a difference in your life to have this knowledge?

Every servant who is holy will not experience eternal separation from God.
Revelation 20:6

- 1) How do you explain eternal separation from God?
- 2) Why is knowing about your holiness important to you?
- 3) How does holiness connect with assurance?

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Questions

A Holy People

4) Does this understanding of assurance affect your everyday life?

Every servant who is holy is a priest "of God and of Christ".
Revelation 20:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9

1) Do you feel like a priest?

2) Do you act like a priest?

3) How do you think a new covenant priest should act?

4) What do you learn from pre-Christian priests about how to serve Jesus as one of His priests?

5) Do you think the Lord's is expecting His children to serve Him as priests?

6) Is a new covenant priest only on duty during church on Sunday?

7) How do you interrelate, practice fellowship, and one another love, with your fellow priests?

8) Is the service of one priest more important than another?

Every servant who is holy "will reign with Him" forever.
Revelation 20:6; Romans 5:17; 2 Timothy 2:10-13; Revelation 5:9-10

1) Do you feel like a ruler?

2) What do think you rule over?

3) Do you believe you are a ruler with Christ?

4) Do you act like a ruler?

5) Are you confident in Christ?

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A Holy People

- 6) Who is the looser in the battle between Satan and Jesus?
- 7) If you are a ruler, do you ever lower yourself to the ways of the ruled?
- 8) If you are a ruler, who do you allow to influence your service to Jesus: the world or the Spirit?
- 9) Does this knowledge affect you interrelationships amongst other brethren who are fellow rulers?

The holy people of God are the church – “holy and blameless”.
Ephesians 5:25-27

- 1) What is the Lord's church?
- 2) Who is His church? How do you determine who is His body of believers? Is it important to know who is who?
- 3) Do you feel connected with a brother and sister as one body in Christ?
- 4) How does this connection affect you interrelationships with fellow members of the church – the Lord's body of believers?
- 5) Does your relationship with fellow brethren determine your relationship with Jesus?
- 6) What does fellowship with Jesus and His body mean to you? How do they connect?
- 7) Even though different assemblies of brethren are physically administratively separated, they are still united as one in the body of Christ. Do you fellowship and practice one another love towards fellow believers in another assembly as if they are in your chosen assembly?
- 8) How do you recognize a fellow holy person?
- 9) Is everyone who worships God through Jesus Christ holy?

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Questions

A Holy People

10) Are all churches united as one in Christ?

The holy people of God are "holy brethren".
Hebrews 3:1a

- 1) What does the word "brethren" mean to you?
- 2) Do you think your position as a holy brother or sister obligates you to reconsider how you may feel towards a fellow member in the Lord's body?
- 3) Is there a connection between neighbor and brother?
- 4) Are you any better than any other member of the Lord's body?
- 5) Do you feel your position of service places you above fellow servants? Why do you think of yourself as more special?
- 6) Do you think hypocrisy in the Lord's body involves voicing love for Jesus while expressing dislike for one of His body members?
- 7) How do you distinguish the difference between perceived hypocrisy and immaturity in Christ? How do you define hypocrisy?
- 8) What does the Lord require of you if you recognize what you may consider hypocrisy in another brother or sister in Christ?
- 9) What does the identity of brethren have to do with unity and love?

Even though the people of God are holy, they must learn how to think and live holy, looking to Jesus as their ultimate role model of holiness.
1 Peter 1:14-16

- 1) Do you allow the world to define your holiness or do you try to influence the world with your holiness?

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Questions

A Holy People

- 2) How do you live holy?
- 3) Do you have a guide other than Jesus?
- 4) What is your standard for holiness?
- 5) How is God's standard of holiness and righteousness communicated to you?
- 6) Who is God's counselor of holiness?
- 7) Why is living holiness so important?
- 8) How does your holiness glorify Jesus?

The people of God are a "holy priesthood" in the temple of God – His "spiritual house".
1 Peter 2:5

- 1) Do you think a holy life within the spiritual conflict of the world and your own self will affect your ability to serve as the Lord's priest?
- 2) What is the Lord's house?
- 3) What is His temple?

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Servant's of God

Even though all of God's children are freed from their bondage to sin when Jesus redeemed them, they are still servants, only now to God through Jesus. All of God's children are covenanted bond-servants. In *Acts* Luke recorded the brethren praying: "grant that thy bond-servants may speak Thy word with confidence" (4:29). A bond-servant is a former slave of sin who purposefully sought God to redeem him from his old master, sin. He freely chose to covenant with God the Father for his freedom through Jesus Christ. Once redeemed the purchased servant changes ownership from sin to Jesus.

Bond-slavery is quite different from slavery to sin. It is a desired service and one which can be reversed, if the slave desires to return to his old life serving sin. God freely allows him to break his covenant with Him, but only if he alone chooses to, based upon his lifestyle, heart, and attitude towards his confession – Jesus God his Master.

The conditions and blessings of service to God are written in the New Covenant and must be agreed upon by the servant's continuance of his confession to continue service in faith. In his *second* letter, *Peter* warned his fellow-bond-servants of the ease of returning to sin: "For if they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state is worse than the first" (2:20).

Paul noted in his *first* letter to the *Corinthians*: "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (4:1). Even though he spoke of himself and his fellow apostles, the reference applies to all of God's children. A bond-servant of God serves with no expectation of payment for his services other than his basic life needs. The humility involved in his service to God through Jesus Christ is reflected in a parable spoken by Jesus, "So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, 'we are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done'" (*Luke* 17:10).

His life of service to Christ is recorded in his own heart and will determine his future inheritance in heaven, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (*2 Corinthians* 5:10). Serving God through Jesus may be difficult at times, but its spiritual rewards, both present and in eternity, far outweigh any physical hardships.

Stepping Stones to Salvation Success

Section Six: In God's Presence

Questions

Servant's of God

All of God's children are bond-servants.

Acts 4:29

- 1) What is a bond-servant?
- 2) How does a slave of sin become a bond-servant belonging to Jesus?
- 3) How does a bond-servant serve his master?
- 4) What does Lord mean to you?
- 5) Are all servants equal to Jesus? Are some more holy and sanctified than others?
- 6) Do you think Jesus favors some servants over others because of what they accomplish?
- 7) Why is it so important for the Lord's flock to remain united in love?
- 8) How are the Lord's bond-servants connected to each other?
- 9) Why are one another love and unity so important within the lord's body and as a witness to the world?

All bond-servant's of Christ are "servants of Christ", He is their lord and Master.

1 Corinthians 4:1

- 1) Does Master have anything to do with Jesus being Lord?
- 2) How is a child of God still a servant of the Lord Jesus?
- 3) Do you serve Jesus more on Sunday then on the rest of the week?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

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Servant's of God

The Lord's bond-servant does not expect wages for what he does, even though he is greatly blessed and rewarded.

Luke 17:10; 1 Corinthians 3:12-15

- 1) Do you think Jesus owes you anything for what you do for Him?
- 2) What motivates your service to Jesus?
- 3) Is your service to Jesus connected to serving one another?
- 4) Do you expect spiritual blessings in return for your service?
- 5) How do you think Jesus blesses you for your service?
- 6) Do you think your works of service will affect your eternal inheritance?
- 7) What motivates the work you do for the Lord?
- 8) What motivates your compromises with the world?

Every servant will be eventually rewarded for all of his service.

2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:6-9, 3:14, 9:16-18; Colossians 3:18-25; Hebrews 10:35-38, 11:24-28; 2 John 1:6-8; Revelation 22:12

- 1) Do you think God will judge your service fairly?
- 2) Even though the labor of one brother or sister may affect the labor of a fellow saint, does every saint receive rewards for his personal labor?
- 3) If a servant chooses to minimize his service how does this affect his eternal reward.
- 4) How did Paul feel rewarded for preaching the gospel from free will?

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Servant's of God

- 5) How does God reward His saints for their work in and among the people of the world, and family interrelationships?
- 6) What does your reward have to do with you promised inheritance?
- 7) How does spiritual confidence and endurance connect with a reward?
- 8) Is a saint able to lose his reward by deigning the deity of Jesus?
- 9) When will the Lord's saints receive their full reward?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

The People of God

A bond-servant of God is joined to a body of people who are all bond-servants in one body--Christ. The body of Christ is not a human institution or organized group of people worshipping God. Even though the body of Christ may appear as a worldly organization it is not. They are not a religion even though they may practice religion through servant service to one another, witnessing to the world, and when assembling together. Together they serve Jesus according to His New Covenant, yet His covenant is not obeyed as a legal requirement for salvation, but through faith in the grace of His covenant.

Spiritually, all of God's children regardless of who, what, or where they live, are all one in Christ the very same way as Jesus is in His Father, or a man and wife are one. The unity is not a relationship but a collective fellowship with Jesus, which includes His body of saints, in which personal relationships develop and grow. Together all of His people are in partnership with the one God, they are one with God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and with Jesus Christ. Their work is to glorify Him through their service and witness to one another and the world.

In his *gospel* letter, *John* quoted Jesus proclaiming: "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice; and they shall become one flock with one shepherd" (10:16). Jesus foretold to the Jewish people of the soon to come joining of Gentiles with Jewish believers as one body in Christ. For the first time since before the fall of Adam and Eve when sin began to separate mankind from each other and from God's presence, direct fellowship with God is restored in Christ and His united body of believers.

Paul wrote in his letter to the *Ephesians*: "for He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall ... and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross" (2:14, 16a). He spoke of restored peace amongst greatly differing peoples resulting from the oneness of the Lord's body. Within His body all unique ethnic identities such as Jew and Greek are meaningless. Boundaries which cause division are broken down and peace is restored.

Paul boldly proclaimed to his Jewish brethren, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (*Galatians* 3:28). The power of recreation and unity in Christ utterly defeat the forces of the world with its death, division, and hatred. God is the great equalizer of all people. He lifted up a woman as a person equally as important and purposeful as a man and declared a slave is just as important to Him as a king. Nationality is of no concern, skin color, and other unique features are irrelevant. He loudly affirmed how Jesus fulfilled the promise enabling all peoples to equally share in the blessings of God.

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His gospel levels mountains separating humanity from God and fills in deep valleys of division caused by sin.

Despite the physical diversity among God's children, on a spiritual level every servant is an intricate part of one perfect body whose head is Jesus Christ. All have chosen to believe, grow in faith, and serve the same God through one Lord--Jesus Christ. All worship God through Jesus Christ in a singular way and for a singular reason: "God is Spirit; and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" -- to glorify Him (*John 4:24*).

All are in Christ by the power of one Spirit: "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit" (*1 Corinthians 12:13*). All live by the same word of God: "beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (*Jude 3*). All of His people are led by the same indwelling presence and counsel of the Holy Spirit: "If we live by the Spirit, let us walk by the Spirit" (*Galatians 5:25*). And all are a part of the promise and waiting for their complete inheritance in heaven: "And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise" (*Galatians 3:29*).

The body of Christ is not a fellowship of hundreds of differing and often conflicting faiths. Regardless of how or what people believe about God and the body of Christ, their opinions and worship will never be powerful enough to influence the predestined plan of God through Jesus Christ. His body of believers all belong together in a marriage contract of love with Jesus. His body of believers is His bride. They are as one entity.

When a slave of sin is purchased by Jesus and transferred into His kingdom he becomes part of a body of believers who are physically wildly varied worldwide. But spiritually they are a body of one, bound in a covenant with Jesus, similar to a marriage covenant which binds a man and woman together as a single entity, "we are members of His body" (*Ephesians 5:30b*). The body of Christ and personal identity in Christ is just as much a spiritual miracle as the redemption making it possible.

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Section Six: In God's Presence

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The People of God

All of the Lord's children are "one flock with one shepherd".

John 10:16

- 1) In relation to the body of Christ what does "one" mean to you?
- 2) How do interrelationships among brethren connect to "one"?
- 3) If every servant is one in Christ, what happens if you treat a fellow servant with disrespect?
- 4) Do you think there are different degrees of one another love?
- 5) Do you love one brother or sister in Christ better than another?
- 6) Do you find yourself expressing favoritism among brothers and sisters in Christ?
- 7) Are you critical to the point of denying fellowship with saints who do not think as you do?
- 8) How do you love Jesus?
- 9) Do you express favoritism amongst the Lord's saints??
- 10) Do you practice cliquishness by only fellowshipping with select brethren who think like you do?

The "one flock" is "one body" of individuals from all over the world.

Ephesians 2:14

- 1) Do you believe racial or ethnic differences add or subtract to a fellow saint?
- 2) Do you feel prejudice towards a fellow saint because of differences? Since all saints are one with Christ, does this mean you feel prejudice against Jesus as well and with the same intensity?

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The People of God

- 3) Are you equal with any other saint?
- 4) How do you think Jesus views you as one of His sheep?
- 5) Are all assemblies of the Lord's saints one in Christ?
- 6) How do you know the difference between true sheep and false sheep who may believe they are serving Jesus?
- 7) How do you know the difference between true sheep and sheep who are still serving sin?
- 8) How does your congregation practice one another love and unity with fellow congregations of the Lord's saints?

People in Christ are not identified as His servant's by race, nationality, social status, gender, or anything else. All are "one in Christ".

Galatians 3:28; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Colossians 3:11

- 1) Do you identify yourself and your relationships with different brethren differently according to worldly standards? What is the Lord's standard for one another love and unity?
- 2) How do you think worldly standards for interrelationships help or hinder your Christian witness of one another love and unity within your fellowship?
- 3) What are some of the Lord's standard's for interrelationships among all of the differing people in His universal body of saints?

In Christ every individual is equally important regardless of what they do for the Lord.
Romans 12:1-16

- 1) Do you feel better because of what you do for Jesus through your Christian interrelationships?

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The People of God

- 2) Is your work more important to Jesus than His other laborers?
- 3) Do you differentiate yourself from fellow brethren concerning service rank or work?

In Christ every individual worships God the same way even though cultural differences may vary style.

John 4:24

- 1) Do cultural traditions adversely affect worship and service to Jesus and one another?
- 2) What cultural traditions connect best with your service of one another love, unity, and evangelism?
- 3) Could you list the cultural values which aid your service to Jesus?
- 4) Could you list the cultural values which hinder you service to Jesus?
- 5) Which do you practice?
- 6) What causes you to compromise your service to Jesus?
- 7) Are you doing anything about your compromises?

All of the people of God are of "one body" and are indwelled with "one Spirit".

1 Corinthians 12:13-27

- 1) Do you believe you are equal with every fellow saint in your local body of believers as well as in other assemblies?
- 2) Are you practicing what you believe?
- 3) How do you offer service to fellow saints whom you do not like or do not like you?

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The People of God

- 4) Do these statements concerning fellow brethren: "I do not like so and so", "he or she is just a mean person", "that person is weird", "I do not like his race", he is too much of a Bible thumper for me", or "God will take care of his illness or problem without my personal help", compromise your service to Jesus?
- 5) Do you realize your judgments of one another are judgments of Jesus, for all saints are His body members?
- 6) Do you think God answers prayer about illness and other important personal concerns through His children?
- 7) If a brother or sister offers to help you do you treat the person and counsel as if Jesus sent him to you?
- 8) Do the vast interpersonal differences God arranges in His countless assemblies of saints have a purpose?

All of the people of God share in the "common salvation" of one faith.

Jude 3

- 1) What is the Lord's common faith?
- 2) What is the Lord's "common salvation"?
- 3) Does this mean there are many acceptable ways to receive salvation?
- 4) Does this mean there are a few acceptable ways to receive salvation?
- 5) Does this mean there are only two acceptable ways to receive salvation?
- 6) Does this mean there is but one way acceptable way to receive salvation?
- 7) Does faith in God and the way to salvation differ in different cultures and races?

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The People of God

All of the people of God are led by the same Spirit for the same ultimate purpose – to glorify Jesus Christ.

Galatians 5:25; 1 Corinthians 6:12, 14, 17-20

- 1) What are your thoughts about purpose?
- 2) What is purpose?
- 3) What is your personal purpose as a servant?
- 4) Do you feel your purpose is lost?
- 5) As you serve what has purpose?
- 6) How does fellowship with Jesus have purpose in your life?
- 7) How is fellowship with Jesus expressed in your life?
- 8) Do all interrelationships among brethren have purpose?
- 9) Is one another love considered as a purpose?
- 10) Is body unity purpose?
- 11) Is evangelism purpose?
- 12) Is a life of faith in Christ purpose?
- 13) Is body service purpose?
- 14) Is faith led and faith motivated lifestyle choices in life purpose?
- 15) How do you identify purpose in your life?

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The People of God

- 16) You are the Lord's servant or slave, how does this spiritual knowledge affect your purpose?
- 17) Do your attitude and lifestyle decisions glorify God the Father through Jesus?
- 18) Are you making a determined effort to follow the counsel of the Spirit to guide your repentance?
- 19) Does purpose require lifestyle and attitude changes?

All of the people of God are "Abraham's offspring".
Galatians 3:29; Romans 4:13, 16

- 1) How do you think you are related to Abraham?
- 2) Does being related to Abraham mean anything to you?
- 3) What relationship do you have with fellow saints who are also related to Abraham?
- 4) Does being spiritually related to Abraham mean all saints are spiritual brothers and sisters?

All of the people of God are "heirs according to promise".
Galatians 3:29; Genesis 3:15

- 1) What is the promise?
- 2) Who fulfilled the promise?
- 3) What does being an heir mean to you?

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Section Six: In God's Presence

Questions

The People of God

All of the people of God are His body – the church.
Ephesians 5:30, 32

- 1) Do all saints serve Jesus equally even though their service may be different?
- 2) Is His body the same as the church?
- 3) Do you feel married to Christ?
- 4) What kind of spouse are you?
- 5) Do you ever have thoughts of spiritual adultery?
- 6) What is spiritual adultery against Jesus?
- 7) Are you helping your marriage or hindering it one way or another?
- 8) How do you contribute to the marriage?
- 9) Are you able to build the marriage if you do not fellowship and build interrelationships with the rest of His bride?
- 10) Is building a relationship with a brother or sister in Christ how a saint practices a relationship with Jesus?
- 11) What do you think Jesus thinks when one brother or sister dislikes or refuses to fellowship a fellow brother or sister?
- 12) Do you ever consider your practice of love towards a brother or sister as how you are treating Jesus?