

What Saith the Scripture?

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Do You Really Want to Be a Christian? Or, Warnings to Inquiring Sinners and New Converts

"What must I do to be saved?"

(Acts 16:30).

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Introduction

Confidence in Jesus as the ground and foundation of our Salvation and life is all-important to being a Christian. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1Corinthians 3:11). In fact, *whenever you are truly willing to obey Christ, you are a Christian*. "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21). Everyone who becomes a Christian, does so with their own unique circumstances; but, all must come by Jesus, Who is the "Way, the Truth, and the Life" (John 14:6). Though Jesus does not want any to "perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2Peter 3:9), He tells us plainly, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:14). By allowing the Spirit of God to direct you from His Scriptures, you have the surest way to be certain that you have entered through that Narrow Gate and have become the few that are truly Christian. "And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:13).

When Christ answered the Rich Young Ruler's question, "Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?" (Matthew 19:16), He responded, "If thou wilt enter into Life, keep the Commandments" (19:17), demonstrating that:

- (1) Obedience to the Law of Love *is* to "enter into Life" (19:17), i.e., "And the Law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Galatians 3:12), but
- (2) Man (including this Rich Young Ruler) has *not* truly kept the Royal Law of Love, and needs to understand this deficiency, i.e., "For whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10). When the young man asked Jesus, "Which [Commandments]?" (Matthew 19:18), Jesus summarized the second half of the Ten Commandments, i.e., "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (19:19). To this, the Rich Young Ruler replied that he had kept these Commandments since his youth, and wanted to know, "What lack I yet?" (19:20). Jesus answered, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come and follow Me" (19:21). Jesus demonstrated that the Rich Young Ruler had *not* kept the Commandments, since he valued his possessions more than he loved God or his neighbour. "But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions" (19:22). To value yourself more than is appropriate is selfishness. "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that

hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto Life Eternal" (John 12:25). Selfishness is to love yourself more than your neighbour; whereas, the Moral Law of Love requires that "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:39).

Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ

Often, when Anxious Sinners are directed by Christians on the vital question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), the reply is properly given, "Believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (16:31). Faith in Christ to save us, is always correct, because faith is the only work and obedience of which we are capable; and, faith alone is acceptable in response to the Grace of God. "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9). Faith is properly exercised by man, since it is trusting Jesus, i.e., "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (Hebrews 12:2). [Please read "[Faith is Looking to Jesus](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Faith.Is.Looking.to.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Jehovah/Faith.Is.Looking.to.Jesus.html> --, for a Scriptural perspective on believing.] But, faith is a work that *we* must perform to be saved, i.e., "Will *you* trust Jesus to save you?" "28 Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? 29 Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent" (John 6:28-29). Faith is likewise our obedience to God, for the Apostle Paul called it the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26). And, we are reminded that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6), which makes faith in Christ always a right answer to give to any who are concerned about the Salvation of their soul. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16). [See "[The Heart of the Gospel](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Heart.of.the.Gospel.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/The.Heart.of.the.Gospel.html> --, by [A. T. Pierson](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/A.T.Pierson.html> --, for a soul-winning exposition of John 3:16.]

Again, the "work of faith" (1Thessalonians 1:3; 2Thessalonians 1:11) is the only acceptable thing that we can do to please God. "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Hebrews 11:6). We must be careful that we do not stop short of True Faith with the intellect-only-faith of devils. "19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. 20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:19-20). Unless our faith "worketh by love" (Galatians 5:6), we do not have True Faith. Though the "obedience of faith" (Romans 16:26) is easy, i.e., "unto Thee shall all flesh come" (Psalm 65:2), yet sadly, in an unconverted state, we have not done what we know we ought. "19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do... 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:19, 24). But, God has ordained for us victory, that we should be trusting in Him to work in us "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). It should overjoy us to find that Christ not only died to save us from our sins, i.e., the "Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10); but, He came, suffered, died, resurrected, and ascended back into Heaven, in order that He might give us of His Spirit, i.e., "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you" (John 16:7). And, to **ensure our obedience** is the grand New Testament reason for Christ giving us His Spirit to dwell within us-- in addition to making us happy. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). [See our editorial, "[Is It Possible to Guarantee Our Obedience?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Guarantee.Obedience.html)" -- http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Guarantee.Obedience.html --, to explore how God can do exactly that!]

Repent and Turn From Your Sins

It is fruitless to contend that faith lays too much responsibility upon man, since the concept of granting forgiveness for sins, while upholding the sanctity of God's Broken Law, necessitates that either God will punish the Law Breaker or He will grant forgiveness to a Penitent Sinner, who repents and believes the Gospel. "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). God's Royal Law is the Law of Love. "If ye fulfil the Royal Law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (James 2:8). And, it is a fact that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23) in breaking that Law. God demands not only that we obey His Law, but He holds Himself accountable to that same Law, since *the King is never above the Law*. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39). The penalty of breaking that Law is Eternal Death. "For the wages of sin is Death; but the Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our LORD" (Romans 6:23). Our opportunity for repentance is and must be limited, i.e., "While it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation... Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (Hebrews 3:15; James 4:14); or, we would be able to repent whenever we chose, even in the next life. "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the Judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Neither can we repent, solely because we decided to repent; but, we can repent, only if God has granted us the privilege of repentance. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth" (2Timothy 2:25). How can we tell if God has granted us that privilege of repentance? If you obey His command to repent, i.e., "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15), then you have been granted a New Heart by God. "A New Heart also will I give you, and a New Spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26).

To the hypocritical and malicious Pharisees and Sadducees, John the Baptist proclaimed, "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:7-8), when they deceptively attempted to simulate conversion by submission to the baptism of John. It is far too easy to deceive ourselves and others that we have repented, when there has been no true change of heart. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to Salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2Corinthians 7:10). True Repentance means that we:

- (1) humble ourselves, i.e., "3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. 4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 18:3-4),
- (2) confess our sins to God and man-- if it is possible, where man has been offended, i.e., "If we confess our sins, He is Faithful and Just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1John 1:9),

- (3) cease our sinning, i.e., "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28), and
- (4) make restitution, where possible, e.g., "8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the LORD; Behold, LORD, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. 9 And Jesus said unto him, This day is Salvation come to this house, forso much as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:8-10).

Unless we make a thorough cleansing of our past, sinful actions, we will be continually wondering why we are plagued with seemingly inescapable, sinful choices that we will make in the future-- with little effort. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till He come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12). Read Chapter 3, "[How to Promote a Revival](#)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Revival.Lectures.html#LECTURE 3> --, of Charles G. Finney's classic "Revival Lectures" to see a lengthy discussion of the different sins of commission and omission that are committed by even those that name the Name of Christ, much less by those who are only presently anxious about coming to Christ. If we desire to be among those that give our LORD a manifold return on His investment in us, then we must cooperate in giving Him a ready heart, with the ground broken up from its past, sinful habits, to receive the influence of the Spirit working through the Good Word of God. "8 And other fell on Good Ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred... 20 And these are they which are sown on Good Ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred" (Mark 4:8,20). May our Worthy LORD receive a bountiful return from each of us, for He is worthy. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12).

Satisfy Yourself With the Mercy of God

Mercy is that attribute of Divine Love that seeks the repentance and pardon of Sinners (whenever it can wisely be done) in withholding justly deserved punishment for our sins. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). God, "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His Own Will" (Ephesians 1:11), is sovereign and must be a law unto Himself, such that, in His Omniscience, the Divine Reason must impose Law on the Divine Will. "For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15). Charles G. Finney wrote in his [Systematic Theology](#) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- that the "sovereignty of God is nothing else than infinite benevolence directed by infinite knowledge." "For His merciful kindness is great toward us: and the Truth of the LORD endureth for ever. Praise ye the LORD" (Psalm 117:2). But, be it forever remembered that *the Immutable God can never act arbitrarily or unreasonably* without being infinitely wicked. "He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2Timothy 2:13). The certainty that the Mighty Jehovah holds Himself forever accountable to His Law of Love, is our certainty that His mercy can save us. "The LORD taketh pleasure in them that fear Him, in those that hope in His

mercy" (Psalm 147:11). God magnifies Himself in the pardoning of Sinners. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He retaineth not His anger for ever, because He delighteth in mercy" (Micah 7:18). Satisfying ourselves with the mercy of God means that we submit with reverential love to the authority of God over us; or, as Charles G. Finney wrote, "Whatever point is taken hold of between God and the sinner, when the sinner YIELDS that, he is converted" (excerpted from "Revival Lectures.") "His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:50).

Perhaps one of the best pictures of the reception of mercy in the New Testament, is that of the Penitent Publican. "9 And He spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. 12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. 13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:9-14). The greatest indication that the publican was a recipient of the Mercy of God, was that he humbled his heart before God, acknowledging his guilt before God. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1Timothy 1:15). A further indication that we have received the Mercy of God, is that we extend mercy to others. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

Likewise, one of the best pictures of how the unmerciful do *not* truly receive the Mercy of God, is that of the hypocritical case of the Unforgiving Servant. "23 Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. 24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. 25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. 26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. 28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. 31 So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. 32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. 35 So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (Matthew 18:23-35). Our merciful treatment of our fellow man indicates that we have truly received the Mercy of God. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). When we show our sinning neighbour merciful compassion, it is because we desire to see their repentance. "And of some have compassion, making a difference" (Jude 22). But still, God cannot (and we cannot) forgive the impenitent unless

they repent. "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him" (Luke 17:3).

Receive the Grace of God

Grace involves the unmerited favour of God in granting us the gift of Salvation. "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). Unlike mercy, where repentance is a condition of the exercise of mercy, the Great Grace of God flows unhindered upon the evil and the good, the just and the unjust, the undeserving and the ill-deserving. "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God's Grace is a vast ocean that seeks to everlastingly benefit all that an Almighty God can reach. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45). The world complains, "If there is a God, why does He allow all this suffering?" Suffering is graciously allowed by God to reform the ungodly and further sanctify the Godly, seeking to shower man with His goodness. "Despise thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4). Characterizing God as indifferent to the world's suffering, forgets that "it is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not" (Lamentations 3:22), and that His Grace is responsible for all the good that we presently possess. "Every Good Gift and every Perfect Gift is from Above, and cometh down from the Father of Lights, with Whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

To the thoughtful observer, who views all the misery and suffering rapidly increasing in the world:

- (1) Sin is the source and original cause of all suffering, i.e., "16 Unto the woman He said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. 17 And unto Adam He said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life" (Genesis 3:16-17),
- (2) Sin and suffering will increase in this world, i.e., "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13), and
- (3) Sin will reach its preeminence directly before the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, i.e., "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the Earth?" (Luke 18:8). *In opposition to the awful darkness of sin upon the Earth, the Magnificent Grace of God is the source of all the good, bounty, happiness, and success observed or unnoticed in the world.* "WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND" (Romans 5:20).

God's goodness and grace, flows from Him whose essence is Love. "God is love" (1John 4:16). His Matchless Grace is unheralded by the world; but, all have reaped its benefits, whether or not they have known the Source from whence it has sprung. It should be noted that:

- (1) God's grace is sovereign, but *not* arbitrary, i.e., "1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have

peace with God through our LORD Jesus Christ: 2 by Whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience... 6 For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. 7 For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. 8 But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:1-8),

- (2) God's grace is free, in that it is freely and voluntarily given by God, and not extorted from Him i.e., "31 What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? 32 He that spared not His Own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31-32), and
- (3) God's grace is in opposition to any conceivable works that man might perform, but never contrary to man's required work of faith. "5 Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. 6 And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work" (Romans 11:5-6).

What must we do to receive the grace of God? Do what a hungry baby bird does when its mother appears above with a worm. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10). C. H. Spurgeon tells a story that illustrates the freeness of God's grace.

"I HEARD A STORY; I think it came from the North Country: A minister called upon a poor woman, intending to give her help; for he knew that she was very poor. With his money in his hand, he knocked at the door; but she did not answer. He concluded she was not at home, and went his way. A little after he met her at the church, and told her that he had remembered her need: 'I called at your house, and knocked several times, and I suppose you were not at home, for I had no answer.' 'At what hour did you call, sir?' 'It was about noon.' 'Oh, dear,' she said, 'I heard you, sir, and I am so sorry I did not answer; but I thought it was the man calling for the rent.' Many a poor woman knows what this meant. Now, it is my desire to be heard, and therefore I want to say that I am not calling for the rent; indeed, it is not the object of this book to ask anything of you, but to tell you that salvation is all of grace, which means, free, gratis, for nothing" (from Spurgeon's "All of Grace", which is an earnest word with those who are seeking Salvation by the LORD Jesus Christ.)

"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2Timothy 1:9).

Give Your Heart to Christ

Whether the Spirit of God stresses that you must "repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17), "believe the Gospel" (Mark 1:15), or "obey God" (Acts 5:29), *any attempt to be a Christian that does **not** include a Right Heart, leaves you "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity"* (Acts 8:23). Some may debate about the appropriate directions to give to one seeking the way of Salvation, but any direction that includes the necessity of a Right Heart, is always right. "My son, give

Me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe My ways" (Proverbs 23:26). Since it is the Spirit of God that customizes the most appropriate directions to each Anxious Sinner, a Right Heart for one may sound different from a Right Heart for another, but a Right Heart will always come by way of Jesus. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a New Heart and a New Spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 18:31). If we listen carefully to the LORD Jesus Christ in the Gospels, instruct His hearers in the Way of Life, we may see the variety of directions that may be correctly given to the Philippian jailer's anxious question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), and that many of His directions may as properly be given to New Converts.

- **1. *Ye Must Be Born Again.*** To Nicodemus-- a Pharisee, a member of the Sanhedrin, and a "master of Israel" (John 3:10)-- Jesus instructed him, "Ye must be born again" (3:7). A self-righteous, religionist must be brought low like a newborn baby before he will experience a Right Heart through the New Birth. "22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: 23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (1Peter 1:22-23). God's time for you to be humbled is now. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the LORD, and He shall lift you up" (James 4:10). *The secret of God's timing for your New Birth is to begin to obey His voice as soon as you realize He is talking to you.* "As the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His Voice" (Hebrews 3:7).
- **2. *Follow Christ.*** What is becoming a Christian, but beginning to follow Christ? "And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34). How can we honestly call ourselves Christian, if we do not follow Jesus, His example, and His Words. "And why call ye Me, LORD, LORD, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Some debate that being a Christian and being a disciple of Christ are two separate things, but how can one go to Heaven, if we do not follow our Master Home? "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26). The Road of Discipleship will be full of difficulty:
 - (1) Difficult places that give us no rest, i.e., "57 And it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, LORD, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. 58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head" (Luke 9:57-58),
 - (2) Difficult human relationships that force hard decisions, i.e., "59 And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, LORD, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God" (9:59-60), and
 - (3) Difficult actions that are contrary to strong emotions, i.e., "61 And another also said, LORD, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. 62 And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (9:61-62). Count the cost of following Jesus before you embark upon a false profession of Christ. "28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to

finish it? 29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, 30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:28-33).

- **3. Exceed the "Righteousness" of Deceptive Teachers.** Negatively, you must be unlike the multitudes of Deceptive Teachers, who only use you to justify themselves in their evil ways. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:20). False Teachers are known by their trampling of the Law of Love through their traditions. "But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the Commandment of God by your tradition?" (15:3). These teachers depend upon your ignorance of the Scriptures to make you as hell bound as they are. "13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in... 15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of Hell than yourselves" (23:13, 15). [To counter the influence of False Teachers, read our article, "[How to Trust God: Or, Our Necessities Are Merely Opportunities to Trust God](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/How.To.Trust.God.html> --, and ask the Holy Spirit to prove to you the truth of what you read.]
- **4. Be Perfect.** Perfection is simply a Right Heart, which seeks to imitate Christ. "3 Because I will publish the Name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His Ways are Judgment: a God of Truth and without iniquity, Just and Right is He" (Deuteronomy 32:3-4). *To be perfect as our Father in Heaven is to give 100% of our finite, as God gives 100% of His infinite.* "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Christian perfectibility humbly submits to God to be no more or less than what God demands. "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before Me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). Moral uprightness is not a superhuman quality, and is expected of all. "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered My servant Job, that there is none like him in the Earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8). Christian Perfection is simply to be like Christ. "The disciple is not above his master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his master" (Luke 6:40). Can you honestly say that your heart is right with Christ? Then, demonstrate the moral uprightness and perfection of your heart by your actions. "I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt Thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart" (Psalm 101:2). [See our article, "[An Urgent Call to Christian Perfection: An Exposition of the Doctrine of Christian Perfection](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> --, to see that Christian Perfection is synonymous with a Right Heart.]
- **5. Persevere to the End.** After an Anxious Sinner has changed his heart and mind toward Christ, he is a Saint of God's own choosing, and must persevere in righteousness to the end, if he will finally be saved. "But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13). "It is astonishing how people talk about perseverance. As if the doctrine of

perseverance is: 'Once in grace, always in grace'; or, 'Once converted, sure to go to heaven.' This is not the idea of perseverance. The true idea is, that if a man is truly converted, he will CONTINUE to obey God; and as a consequence, he will surely go to heaven. But if a person gets the idea that because he is 'converted,' therefore he will assuredly go to heaven, that man will almost assuredly go to hell" (excerpted from Charles G. Finney's "Revival Lectures".) True, we have already been saved, as soon as we have truly called upon the Name of the LORD, i.e., "For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13); but, understanding that our Faith must be cooperating with the Grace of God, i.e., "8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9), we must persevere in faith and righteousness with God's Grace until the end of our earthly sojourn. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14). But, only those Saints mature who comprehend the greatness of our need of the Spirit of God to cause us to walk obediently. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). [See our article, "[He That Endureth to the End Shall Be Saved: Or, The Biblical Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints; Or, Endurance is Necessary for Eternal Salvation](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/He.That.Endureth.to.the.En.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/He.That.Endureth.to.the.En.html> --.]

- **6. Be Holy.** The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman caught in adultery-- neglecting to bring with her the adulterous man-- and, they demanded that she be stoned according to the Law of Moses. "This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not" (John 8:6). Infinitely wise, Jesus turned the table on the accusers and masterfully convicted them of their own hypocrisy. "7 So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. 8 And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (8:7-9). The Son of God mercifully refused to condemn the woman caught in adultery to the just sentence of the Mosaic Law; but still, He knew that the Law of Love demanded that she cease her sinning and walk in holiness, if she would be saved. "10 When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:10-11). [See our series of articles, "[The Beauty of Holiness](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The.Beauty.of.Holiness.html)" (Part 1) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The.Beauty.of.Holiness.html> -- and (Part 2) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/The.Beauty.of.Holiness.2.html> --, to see how to promote holiness.]

Since holiness is separating yourself from sinful practices unto the LORD, then any who would separate himself from the world to Christ, is a Christian. "But as He which hath called you is Holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (1Peter 1:15). Certainly, you can see the hypocrisy of anyone claiming to call himself a Christian, while abiding in a sinful walk. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (1John 3:6). Neither the Holy Spirit nor the writers of Scripture could envision any man entering into Heaven without Practical Holiness. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD" (Hebrews 12:14). Also, since it is impossible to be both sinful and holy at the same time, either you will

end your sojourn in holiness or "ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). The secret of abiding in holiness is trusting in the power of the Holy Spirit to accomplish it in us. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6). [See our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, for a Scriptural development of understanding that refutes the common notion that even the Saints are still only sinners.]

- **7. *Abide in Christ.*** If our lost and sinful life is selfishness, then a New Life in Christ is one in the same as the Christ-centered selflessness originally demanded by the Law of Love, that has always been known to be the requirement of our very existence from the beginning. "4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. 5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. 6 If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (John 15:4-6). To be burned in the fire is a picture of Everlasting Destruction, *not* simply the loss of rewards. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the Second Death" (Revelation 21:8). Only those who do not walk in faith and love, should fear that they will not abide in Christ until the end. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1John 2:19). But, positively, abiding in Christ is to trust Him in all of His offices, relations, names, and capacities to fulfill all His Word and promises in us, that we might abide in His Divine Nature. "2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our LORD, 3 According as His Divine Power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our LORD Jesus Christ" (2Peter 1:2-8). [Read two excellent studies on abiding in Christ, "[The Relations of Christ to the Believer](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Relations.Christ.Believer.html> -- by [Charles G. Finney](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> --, and "[In Christ Jesus](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/In.Christ.Jesus.html> -- by A. T. Pierson, that develop the reality of this immensely important subject for the sanctification of the Believer.]

Conclusion

The result of your obedience to any of the directions, e.g., believe on the LORD Jesus Christ, repent and turn from your sins, satisfy yourself with the mercy of God, receive the grace of God, and give your heart to Christ, of your question, "What must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30), is the Salvation of your soul. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2Corinthians 5:17). But, the True Knowledge that you have actually been converted to Christ does *not* exist in human records, or even in your mental recollection of the event, but from the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God to your heart. "3 And

hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His Commandments. 4 He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. 6 He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked" (1John 2:3-6). As you can see, the Holy Spirit cuts off His testimony that we know Him, when we walk in known sin. In fact, the Spirit inspired words of Scripture will testify that we have *never* known Him. "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him" (3:6). [See our article, "[That Ye May Know That Ye Have Eternal Life, Or, The Biblical Doctrine of the Assurance of Salvation, Or, Only Those Who Abide in Christ May Know That They Have Eternal Life](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/That.Ye.May.Know.That.Ye.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/That.Ye.May.Know.That.Ye.html> --.] Thus, the True Christian Walk is a careful walk; but, the Promises of God ensure that it is a certain and joyful walk. "Who are kept by the Power of God through faith unto Salvation ready to be revealed in the Last Time" (1Peter 1:5). A Promise from God is the certainty that something will be done-- and, is dependent only upon our believing it-- with the wonderful effect of sanctifying us. "Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2Peter 1:4). [See our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, to see how God uses His promises upon us to great advantage.]

In summary, for those who truly want to be a Christian, a Willing Heart is a Right Heart and will always manifest itself in obedience to Christ, when given the opportunity. "If ye love Me, keep My Commandments" (John 14:15). It is better to be advised of the difficulty of the path of becoming a Christian, *before* embarking upon it, rather than arriving at the Judgment Seat of Christ with a False Hope, only to be given the fearful Words, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). A False Hope will only harden you and cause your Final Judgment to be more severe. "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the Holy Commandment delivered unto them" (2Peter 2:21). But, you need not fear that God in His Infinite Wisdom did not already make ample provision to secure to Himself every honest hearted soul, who has despaired of his own righteousness and flung himself at the Almighty Mercy of the Living God. "27 My sheep hear My Voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: 28 And I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. 29 My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are One" (John 10:27-30).

If the Spirit of Christ has worked the Miracle of the New Birth in you, then "continue in the grace of God" (Acts 13:43) through faith, love, and obedience. Live "by every Word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). "Let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6) in prayer about all things. Be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit, for He is your Mentor and Advocate to "cause you to walk in [His] Statutes" (Ezekiel 36:27). Perhaps, one of the finest series of sermons to establish your understanding of the New Life is the series of lectures by Charles G. Finney in the [Oberlin Evangelist \(1839\)](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1839.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Oberlin.Evangelist.1839.html> --. And "[The New Life: Words of God for Young Disciples of Christ](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Murray.For.Young.Disciples.html)" -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Voice/Murray.For.Young.Disciples.html> -- by [Andrew Murray](http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Andrew.Murray.html) -- <http://WhatSaithTheScripture.com/Fellowship/Andrew.Murray.html> --, is a fine series of Scriptural instructions on specific matters of interest for every Believer.

May we meet Christ and one another in Heaven "with exceeding joy" (Jude 24)!

"Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my Salvation: my God will hear me"
(Micah 7:7).

Maranatha!