

My dad pointed me to a promise in the Bible that changed my life. God said, "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. 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 36:26, 27). My dad encouraged me to pray to God and ask Him to give me a new heart, and invite Jesus into my life. He told me that I would not feel anything happen, but that if I continued to believe that God would honor His promise, after a few days I would notice that there was a change. It happened exactly as my dad had described. That was the beginning of my new life in Christ.

Different drugs give you differing degrees of feeling "high," but none of them can compare to the "high" I feel from knowing that my sins are forgiven and there is no barrier between me and God. I finally had power in my life, and I have never taken drugs again.

I was nineteen years old when that happened, and it has now been nineteen years since that experience. I am so thankful for the new life that God has given me, and I am confident that He can do the same for you.

Requirements for Salvation

What does God require of you to be saved? Do you have to make a pilgrimage, or do penance? Do you have to prove you are good enough to be accepted? Certainly not! God will accept you just as you are. Jesus has promised, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Jesus "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25). This means that Jesus is willing and able to save you no matter what you have done, no matter how evil or worthless you think you are. God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). He says, "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die...?" (Ezekiel 33:11).

Some have mistakenly thought that God will not accept them unless they are good. They try to reform

their lives to make themselves good so that God will accept them. Friends, that can never happen. You cannot change yourself and make yourself good. The Bible says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil" (Jeremiah 13:23). The Bible also says, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one" (Job 14:4). Jesus said, "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:43-45).

A Parable

God spoke a parable about us saying, "When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live... Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil" (Ezekiel 16:6-9).

The blood in this parable represents our sins (Isaiah 1:18). When God saw us we were polluted in our own sinful lives. He said unto us, while we were still polluted in our own sins, "Live." This is God offering us eternal life; this is salvation. This comes to us while we are still polluted in our own sins. Then God says that we became His. He calls us His children, we are part of the family of God. Keep in mind that this is still while we are polluted in our own blood. Afterwards, He washes away our sins from us. When I accepted Christ, He accepted me as I was, and I was immediately forgiven of my sins, but there were a lot of things in my life (most of which were unknown to me at the time) that still needed to be cleaned.

Friends, we can never make ourselves clean. God is the only one who can do this. If we wait to come to God until we think we are good enough, we will wait forever. We must come to Him while we are still polluted and filthy. God accepts us as we are, and then He begins the cleansing process. We receive salvation just as we are.

Salvation is a Free Gift

The Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). Salvation is called a gift. If you give your child a gift, and he says, "I would like to pay for it," how would you feel? The moment a person pays for a gift, it is no longer a gift. A gift cannot be purchased. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

Salvation cannot be earned, it is freely given. We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). "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). "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 8:32). God gave all of this for you! He loves you personally, so fully that if you were the only one alive on earth, He would have sent His Son to die for you even while you were a rebel. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). God says, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3).

One night, Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into a prison. "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway” (Acts 16:25-33).

When this jailor was at the end of his rope, he cried out to Paul asking him, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul replied, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...” There is no list of requirements for salvation, but simply one thing is required, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. When I asked Jesus into my life and God to create in me a clean heart, all I had to do is believe that He did it, and I received the free gift.

Paul wrote, “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:9, 10).

When you accept this free gift of salvation things will certainly change in your life. The Bible says, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God...” (2 Corinthians 5:17). When I accepted Christ my whole attitude toward life changed. The things I once loved, I now hated, and the things I once hated I now loved. You may not want to give your life to God now because you think that you will have to give up everything you enjoy, and life will be miserable. I used to think this way. What I didn't realize is that God changes your desires, so that the evil things you like will become distasteful to you, and the good things you despise will become a delight.

Jesus said, through the Psalmist, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Psalms 40:8). The New Covenant that God promises to make with you is, “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:16, 17). When God's law is in your heart, you, too,

will delight to do God's will; God's law will be fulfilled in you. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:2, 4).

Good works will naturally come as a result of receiving Jesus Christ into your life, but those works do not save you, they are a result of your salvation. Paul wrote, “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; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour... These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men” (Titus 3:5-8).

My friends, God dearly loves you, and He earnestly wants to spend eternity with you. Please accept His free gift of salvation, and ask Him to live in your heart. It is the best decision you will ever make!



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What Must I Do to be Saved?

by Lynnford Beachy

Have you ever felt like you are at the end of your rope? I have been there! I was addicted to drugs and living for sin. I thought that nobody cared for me and that my life was worthless. I expected to die and go to hell, and I really didn't care. I figured that God didn't care about me, so why should I care about Him? I planned to waste the rest of my life on drugs and sin and I didn't care what happened after that.

God, in His love for me, didn't want to leave me in that condition. He longed to make His love for me known on a personal level. One day, when I was holding a drug party at my apartment, out of the blue, God revealed His love for me and His desire for me to live with Him forever. This took me by surprise because I had no desire to turn to God, and I was not contemplating it. I was struck with the realization that God cares for me personally, that this world is coming to an end, and that if I didn't turn around I was going to hell.

This all hit me in an instant with tremendous urgency. I was in my bedroom at the time, and I came out to the living room and began preaching to my friends that we needed to stop doing drugs, stop listening to satanic music, and turn our lives over to God because the Lord is coming soon, and He doesn't want us to go to hell. I did not have a Bible and did not know much about it, but I shared what I knew. My friends thought I had gone off the deep end, that I had lost my mind. One of them told me that he worshiped the devil and that he was going to kill me. I laughed at him, saying, “What good is that going to do for you? Are you going to get a higher rank in hell?”

From that night on I determined to give my life to God and serve Him. I had some very difficult experiences to endure in the transition from serving the devil to serving God, but the Lord carried me through them all, and I have never regretted the decision to serve Him. I tried to reform my life. I told all my friends that I had quit drugs and drinking, but I found myself doing them again even though I didn't want to do them. Each failure gave me a terrible sense of guilt. I wanted to do good, but I had no power to do it.