

Each One Teach One Discipleship Lessons

Part One:

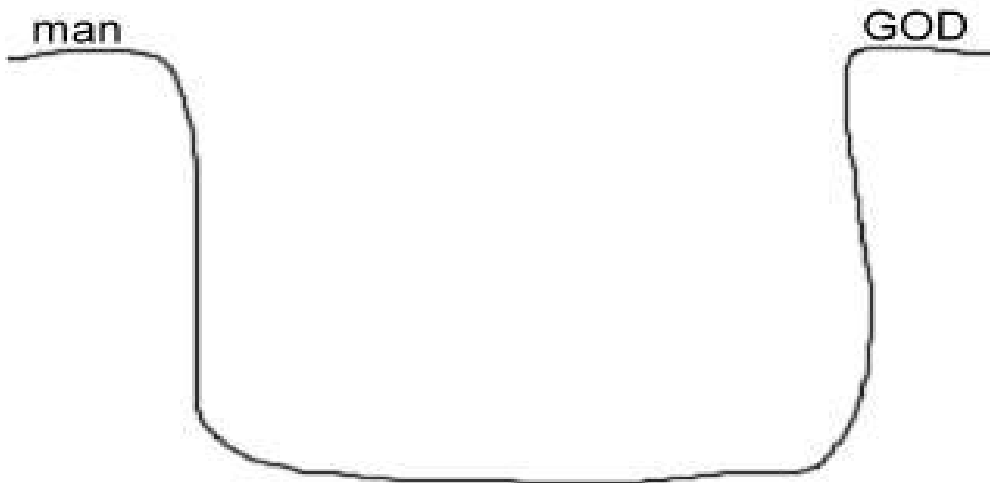
FAITH THAT LOOKS UP:

Establishing your Faith in God

LESSON ONE:

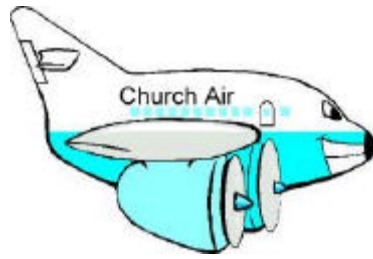
The WAY to SALVATION

"In the Beginning..." mankind was in **fellowship** with God. In the Bible, we read that Adam and Eve talked with Him in the Garden of Eden. But after their sin of rebellion, they were cast out of the Garden, and **cut off** from an intimate relationship with Him. Each generation thereafter continued to sin--as the scripture says, "ALL have sinned and come short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]. So **sin** has created a giant "chasm" between Man and God.



Yet in each generation, there have been those who earnestly desired to bridge that chasm in some way and be restored into fellowship with God. The Bible records their attempts, their successes and their failures. Are you one who earnestly desires that fellowship? If so, how have you been going about seeking it? Even today, and even among those who call themselves Christians, there are a wide variety of beliefs, opinions and theories on how Man can bridge that chasm.

The most widespread belief about solving this problem is probably the one that says, "I am a member of the (_____) Church. My church is accepted by God, therefore I am accepted by God." Many such people seldom attend services at "their church." But they were baptized there as an infant or a small child, and their family has been affiliated with that church for generations. So they are confident they are "in" with God. Others, who have not had a "religious" family background, may realize something is missing in their life, may fear stories they have heard about hell, and may become a member of some church as "insurance" against having to spend eternity in hell.



Is this an effective strategy? Is there a "package tour" available that assures anyone on board safe passage "back to God"?



No--There is **no church organization** with enough "power" to take its members to God. **At best**, such organizations can only **point the way** to God. Unfortunately, many of them are not even able to do that. If such an organization goes down, you may have to "bail out" to avoid going down with it!

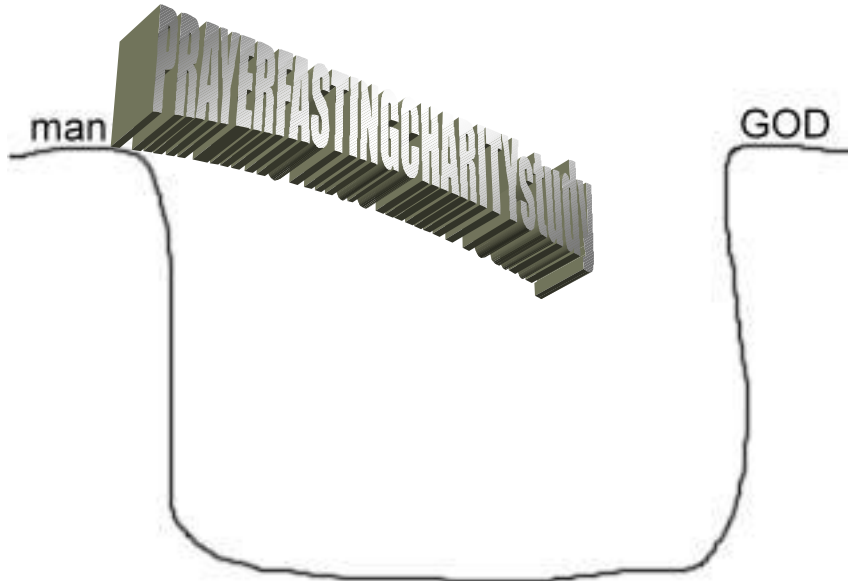
***** The Israelites in the prophet Jeremiah's time felt just like some modern Christians. They were confident of God's blessing just because they could go to His temple in Jerusalem. But Jeremiah warned them with the words below. Look up this passage, and fill in the missing words.

[Jeremiah 7:4,12,14]

Do not trust in deceptive words and say, 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!'... Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it [The Ark was taken captive and the glory departed from there]... Therefore what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears my Name, the temple you _____, the place I gave to you and your fathers.

Many people have come to realize that church membership by itself is no guarantee of "getting right with God." So another strategy has also had an enduring history. According to this belief, "I have been a good person. I do all the things expected of a good Christian--I study my Bible, go to church services every week, pray before every meal and at bedtime, am kind to elderly women and puppy dogs, put money in the offering plate at church every week. So God obviously **has** to accept me!"

Is **this** an effective strategy? Can you build a bridge "back to God" paved by your religious works?



No, this strategy is doomed to fail. There is nothing underneath to **support** the bridge--it will fall of its own weight as the worker tries to continue building.

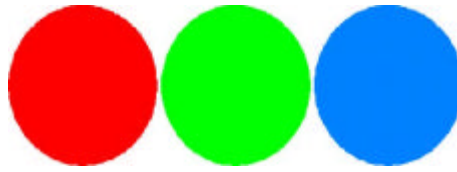
***** The Lord Jesus made it clear that religious works were not what justified a man.

[Luke 18:9-14]

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood up and prayed about himself: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men- robbers, evildoers, adulterers- or even like this tax collector. I _____ and give a _____ of all I get. But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat on his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God..."

Some people have come to realize that just regular "good works" don't "add up" to enough to earn salvation. They realize even "lukewarm" church-goers can go through the motions. So they have improved on this strategy by adding **zeal** to their works. They don't just "warm a pew." They are out on the front lines protesting at abortion clinics, they go to the inner cities to "street witness," they may even join a missionary effort to primitive areas of the world. They reason, "I am risking my personal safety, giving up the comforts of the easy life, tackling the impossible--surely God must accept me now. I've paid my dues!" Is **this** an effective strategy? Can you **earn** your way "back to God" by **zealous** works?

A person with this strategy is much like a motorcycle dare-devil who is sure he can soar longer and longer distances if only he gets enough zealous momentum. Can a believer propel himself "back to God" by accomplishing zealous works?



Street Witnessing Missionary Trips Abortion Marches

The problem with this strategy is that the **true** distance back to fellowship with God is **too far** no matter the human momentum we work up!



***** The Lord Jesus makes it clear that just doing zealous works that **look** mighty to the **world** does not "earn" His favor and bring the worker close to Him:

[Matthew 7:22-23]

*Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I _____
_____. Away from me you evildoers.'*

If doing **works** don't work, what **does** work?!

[Ephesians 2:8-9]

For it is by _____ that you have been saved, through _____. And this is not from _____ . It is the _____ ,not by _____ , so that no one can _____ .

[Hebrews 11:6]

And without _____ it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must _____ that He exists and that He rewards those who _____ .

[John 3:16]

For God so loved _____ that He gave His one and only Son, that whosoever _____ shall not perish, but have _____ .

[John 1:12]

Yet to all who _____, to those who _____ His name, He gave the right to become _____.

If we want to return to that intimate relationship with God that He intended in the beginning, if we want to be "righteous" before God, (back in a "right standing" with Him)--we need to travel the way that **He** provided ... through faith in his Son.

II Co. 5:18-19

All this is from God, who *reconciled* us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

Gal. 3:26

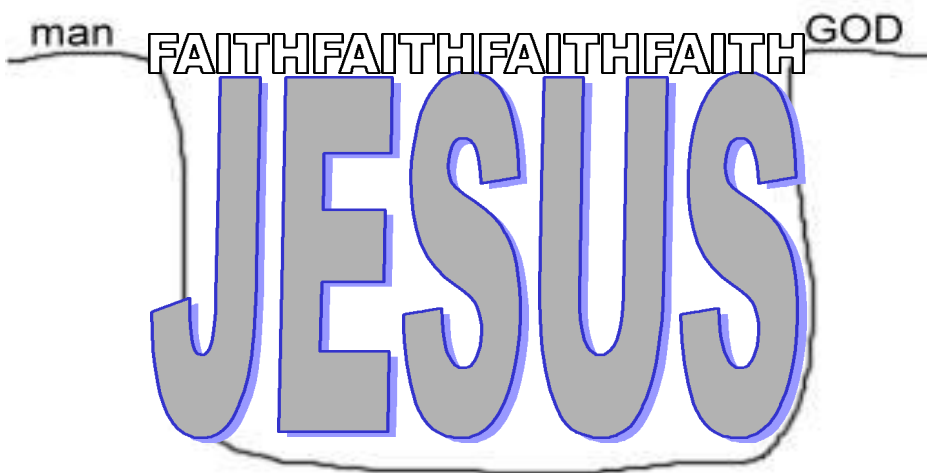
You are all sons of God *through faith in Christ Jesus.*

The central message of the Bible is often called the **Gospel**. That is a word that means "good news." The **Good News** is:

[Romans 1:17]

In the Gospel a righteousness FROM GOD is revealed, a righteousness that is by _____ from first to last, just as it is written, 'The _____ shall live by _____.'

There is nothing you can do to **earn** salvation. The price is too high for any man or woman! But Jesus paid that price you owed. He "redeemed you" by His blood, just as a man in ancient times could pay a debt owed by a slave and "redeem" him from slavery. Your only "job" in this is to receive that redemption **by faith**. You can return to an intimate relationship with God, bridging the chasm caused by sin, through faith in Jesus.



But perhaps you are not quite sure what *faith* is. Christians have a way sometimes of "tossing around" words without really clarifying what they mean.

[Hebrews 11:1]

Now faith is being _____ of what we _____ and certain of what we _____.

The word *faith* implies a **belief, trust** and **confidence** that does not require physical proof or evidence. How do you get that kind of faith? The Bible says that it is a **gift** of God. It isn't something you "work up" inside yourself, or something someone can "talk you into" with persuasive words. The *initial* faith you need to accept the Gospel comes **from God**. It is, as the scripture says, a "measure" of faith. [Romans 12:3] You DO have a responsibility if that faith is to remain in you, and is to grow. Your part is to "act on" that faith by believing, confessing and receiving Jesus as **Savior and Lord**.

[Romans 10:8-9]

... the word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you _____ with your mouth "Jesus is Lord," and believe _____ that God raised Him from the dead, you will be _____.

But it doesn't stop there. You are "saved through faith," but you then must go on to LIVE by faith.

In our next lesson, we will consider how you can know you have

LIVING FAITH.

REVIEW:

1. Salvation comes by *faith*--not *religion*.
2. Salvation comes by *faith*--not *works*.
3. Salvation comes by *faith*--not *zeal*.
4. *Faith* comes from **God**.
5. *Faith* is a **free gift** of **God**.
6. After you are *saved* by *faith*, you must *live* by *faith*.

MEMORY VERSES:

Ephesians 2:8-9

**For it is by grace that you have been saved,
through faith--
and this is not from yourselves,
it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast.**

Hebrew 11:6

**And without faith it is impossible to please God,
because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists
and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.**

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of righteousness is revealed in the Bible?

2. Write a definition of faith.

3. Why is faith so important for salvation?

4. Write Ephesians 2:8-9 here from memory.

For it is by _____

5. Write Hebrews 11:6 here from memory.

And without faith _____

6. How could it be possible that someone could do great, zealous works in the name of Jesus but not really have faith in God?

7. How does faith grow? _____
