

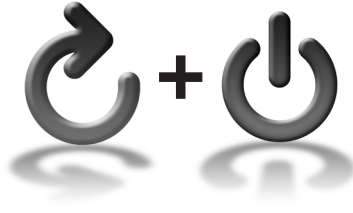
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1

Will the Real Gospel Please Stand Up?

2

Eternal Security... Why is it Vital?

3

The Trinity ... Who God Is

4

The Bible... What It's All About

5

True Spirituality ... The Key to Growth

6

Prayer... The 'Phone' Link to God

7

Community ... The Network of Believers

8

Evangelism ... The Outreach to Unbelievers

1

Will the Real Gospel Please Stand Up?

What is the gospel?

What is all the confusion about? Put simply, the gospel means “good news”- which it is! The gospel is good news because it is God-centered not people-centered. Salvation is a gift from God that is freely received purely by faith. If our eternal life was achieved by good works or obeying the Ten Commandments, it wouldn't be good news at all! Why? Because that's like someone offering a gift, then asking you to pay for it. Also, if we tried to get into heaven by our own good deeds, we all would fall short. The gospel is the message of freedom and salvation.

The basis of the gospel.

The basis of the gospel is the cross of Jesus Christ. Without His death there would be no good news! God the Father poured out His wrath for all of mankind's sin on His own Son. When Jesus died, the penalty of death for your sin and mine was paid completely. He died in our place. This fact is the foundation of Christianity. Because He died we will never die! Because He rose from the dead we will live forever! The only requirement for receiving this eternal life is complete faith in Christ.

What the Bible says about the gospel.

- Luke 19:10
- John 3:16
- Acts 13:39
- 1 John 5:13
- John 3:18
- John 6:47
- Galatians 3:26
- Romans 3:10-19
- 2 Corinthians 5:21
- Ephesians 2:4
- Ephesians 2:6
- Ephesians 2:8,9
- 1 John 5:10-13

Eternal Security ... Why it is Vital

What is eternal security?

It is eternal!

Eternal means forever. That means that there is no end to it. As soon as you trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior eternal life begins. No matter what happens, the Bible says you will never lose it! This is another reason why the gospel is good news! If you could get it and then lose it again then you would constantly live under a cloud of fear, guilt, and confusion. But because it is eternal we can serve God out of love and gratitude, knowing that once we have eternal life it can never be lost! Praise God for His awesome gift of eternal life!!

It is security!

Because God gives us eternal life we have everlasting security in Him. Some base their security on how they feel about themselves. Others base it on how others think about them. But we as believers in Jesus Christ can base our security on how God thinks about us! God tells us that we are now His children (John 1:12). He will never ever cast us out or lose us (John 6:37-39). We are now His children! We can't be unborn from His family! This is the reason that we as believers should be the happiest people in the world!

It is quality as well as quantity!

Not only does eternal life deal with the length of life we have in Christ but also with the quality of life we have in Christ. John 17:3 tells us, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent." The quality of eternal life is based on our personal relationship with God the Father through Christ. We have direct access to God through what Jesus did on the cross. We have the privilege of knowing the King of Kings and Lord of Lords personally.

Why is an understanding of eternal security vital?

It gives us confidence to live life joyfully! As we have already seen, because we know that we have eternal life we should be joyful and thankful in every aspect of our lives!! It gives us reasons to serve God willingly! Some think that eternal security gives Christians a license to sin. But it does not. Just because we are God's children and can never get kicked out of his family doesn't mean that He will not discipline His disobedient children. Eternal life is a reason to serve God. If someone came up to you and freely gave you \$1,000,000 you wouldn't spit in his face would you? Of course not! You would be thankful! Your most natural response would be gratefulness! In the same way our most natural response to God's gift of eternal life is thankfulness and willing service.

A verse to memorize!

"I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand." John 10:28

Study Questions:

- John 3:15,16 says that if we will believe, we will not _____
In your own words what does this mean?

- When we believe, we have everlasting life, and pass from _____
into _____(John 5:24)
- According to this same verse, if a person believes will he ever be condemned?

- John 6:35 clearly states that if we believe in Christ we will never
be _____ and never be_____.
- Briefly study John 6:39,40 and make at least two observations about the
“Father’s will”.
a. _____
b. _____
- After reading John 10:28, 29, explain one good reason why we can know that
we are saved forever:

- The “Counselor” is God’s Holy Spirit. How long did Christ say that the Counselor
would abide with us? _____(John 14:16).

- According to Ephesians 4:30 we have a guarantee. How should that phrase
encourage us about our eternal security?

- How many sacrifices did Christ make for the sins of the world? _____
(Hebrews 10:12).
- When you believe in Christ how does God look at your sins? (Heb. 10:17)

- According to Hebrews 7:25 those who come to God, Christ is able to save

3

The Trinity ... Who God Is

Who is the God of the Bible?

He is one God. Deuteronomy 6:4 tells us, "The LORD our God the LORD is one." This very simply means that God is indivisible. He cannot be subdivided into separate parts.

He is eternally self-existent. When Moses asked God, "What shall I say that your name is?" God replied, "I AM WHO I AM...Tell them I AM has sent you." This conveys that God is self-sufficient. He needs nobody and nothing. In and of Himself He is 100% complete. He did not create man because He felt somehow insufficient. He created man to show him the wealth of His mercy and grace (Ephesians 2:4-7).

He has many attributes (characteristics). Here are just a few:

He is omnipotent (All Powerful)...Genesis 18:14

He is omniscient (All Knowing)...Romans 11:33

He is omnipresent (Able to be anywhere and everywhere)...Ps.139:7,8

He is holy (Totally separate from sin). I Peter 1:16

He is love (unconditional in His desire for what's best for mankind). I John 4:16

He is immutable (He does not change His mind). I Samuel 15:29

He is perfect (incapable of sin). Matthew 5:48

He is sovereign (ruling the universe and everything in it)...Psalm 135:6

What is the "Trinity?"

"Trinity" is a word used to describe the belief that although there is one God He exists in the form of three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Each member is equally and fully God. (Matthew 3:16,17; John 1:1,14; 10:30; 14:9).

So how do we explain this seeming "contradiction?" To be honest there is no explanation. The Trinity is a mystery that no mortal can understand. Finite (you and I) cannot comprehend an infinite (God.) As the famous theologian C.H. Spurgeon said it's like "a gnat attempting to drink in the ocean."

A verse to memorize!

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....The Word became flesh and made His dwelling place among us." John 1:1,14a

Study Questions

- The question posed in Genesis 18:14 asks, “Is there anything _____ for the _____?”
Comment on how this applies to your life:

- Since, according to I Peter 1:16, God is _____ what should we also be? _____
- What do you feel that this means for you personally?

- According to Psalm 135:6 God is absolutely sovereign. How should this effect the way we look at our personal trials and struggles?

- John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was _____.”
- According to vs.14 who is the Word? _____.
- Deuteronomy 6:4 says that God is one. What does Matt.3:16,17 show us about the Trinity?

- In your own words explain the Trinity as best as you can:

4

The Bible... What It's All About

Some Basic Facts

- The Bible was written by over 40 different men from three different Continents
- The Bible was written over the period of 1500 years
- The Bible is one fourth prophecy
- The Bible is not a science, history, or archaeological book. But it comments on all of these in one way or another
- The Bible is completely without any errors whatsoever.

A few necessary definitions

Inspiration:

The Bible was written by men whose very writings (each word) were inspired by God. This means that each and every word of the original writings was authored by God Himself.

II Timothy 3:16: “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.”

Inspiration literally means, “breathed out”. In other words every word in Scripture was “breathed out” by God.

Inerrancy:

This is the fact that God’s word contains no errors in it whatsoever. This extends to scientific, historical, and archaeological areas as well as areas of “spirituality”.

“Every Word of God is flawless.” Proverbs 30:5

How should we study the Bible?

We must be sure to study the Bible prayerfully.

Remember that once you trust in Christ as your Savior the Holy Spirit comes to live inside you. This means that the Author of the book is in you to give you understanding. Ephesians 1:13,14.

Next, we must study the Bible faithfully.

We need to study the Bible on a regular basis. It is our guidebook for life!

We also need to study the Bible thoughtfully.

It is better to slowly read and reread a passage rather than just rush through it. Remember that the Word of God is just that...God's words to you and me today! We must take Him and His Word seriously.

We must study the Bible practically.

The Bible is for us to apply. Don't read it as a novel...to enjoy and put away. Read it as a map...to guide you on how to live life God's way.

A verse to memorize!

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work." 2 Timothy 3:16,17

Study Questions:

Read Psalm 119 and find 7 different titles used to describe the Word of God:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Find 10 insights from Psalm 119 into how we should we handle the Bible.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

5

True Spirituality ... The Key to Growth

Three essential truths

True Spirituality is very important to growing strong in the Christian life. So many Christians struggle for years in their walk with Christ because they haven't learned this essential truth. Put simply it is the fact that a Christian's growth is based on three essential truths of Scripture:

1. The Death of Christ (Romans 6)

It is easy to put the cross away, at least in our thinking, after we come to Christ for salvation. Once we have eternal life we often no longer see the need for Christ's cross. It has served its purpose completely...or has it? You see, the death of Christ on the cross did three things:

It paid the PENALTY of sin. According to scripture we all deserve death and hell because we are sinners. Christ's death paid that penalty that we all owed. This took place in the past. This aspect of Christ's crucifixion is what actually enables us to be delivered from sin and its penalty, which is hell. It will eradicate the PRESENCE of sin. This will take place in the future. When our bodies die our ability to sin will die with it. Because of the cross we are guaranteed someday to be free from the enslavement of sin forever. It breaks the POWER of sin. This takes place in the present. Guess what? Sin has no more power over you! The cross of Christ defeated sin and its power completely! Because Christ died FOR sin we are dead TO sin.

2. The Resurrection of Christ (Romans 6)

While the death of Christ guaranteed our death to sin the resurrection of Christ guarantees our life to God. Here's the way Romans 6:11 puts it, "In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus." When we trust in Jesus Christ as our savior we are identified with Him. We are identified with His death, burial and resurrection. It is as though we have died, been buried and risen with Christ so that, "we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:4).

A very important aspect of the Christian life is understanding this and living it out on a daily basis. We need to "Practice our Position" in Christ. We need to fully believe that Christ's death, burial and resurrection guarantee us victory over sin. Then we must live it out!!

3. The Spirit of Christ (Romans 8)

As we begin to understand these basic truths we must realize that Christ dwells in us through His Holy Spirit to enable us to live the victory that is already ours. Romans 8:12 & 13 puts it this way, “Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation - but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; BUT IF BY THE SPIRIT YOU PUT TO DEATH THE MISDEEDS OF THE BODY you will live.” In other words, the power of the Holy Spirit is in us to give us systematic victory over sin. This victory is based on Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. This victory is guaranteed to each and every Christian. All we must do is believe in it and act upon it.

One Basic Definition

True Spirituality takes place when we understand our identification with Christ’s death, burial and resurrection and then live out our victory in Christ by allowing the Holy Spirit to take full control of our lives.

Some helpful hints.

1. Read Romans 6-8.

- These three chapters explain in detail our position in Christ and our victory over sin. Chapter 6 explains our POSITION IN CHRIST. Chapter 7 reveals our CONDITION APART FROM CHRIST. Chapter 8 reveals our VICTORY THROUGH THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST.

- These passages will be a tremendous help to you as a new believer. They give us insights into the Apostle Paul’s secret of victorious living. They also show us that Paul still struggled with living out this victory over sin (7:14-25). So take courage fellow believer! Though you may struggle with sin God has given you the victory! Live in it!!!

2. Practice these truths on a daily basis.

- All of us, no matter how spiritual or mature we may seem to be, will fall and fail in our Christian walk. But it is very important that as soon as you do fall, get right back up and start again. Proverbs tells us, “The wise man falls seven times yet rises again.” Stay persistent! The Christian life is not a 100-yard dash. It is a life long marathon!

3. Dedicate yourself to rededicate yourself on a daily basis!

- This means that everyday is a new opportunity to serve God. The Christian life is not a one-time dedication but a day by day, moment by moment decision.

A verse to memorize!

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, Who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20

Study Questions

• According to Ephesians 1:13 when does the Holy Spirit come to live inside us?

• What does the Holy Spirit give us according to Acts 1:8? _____

• 2 Peter 1:3 promises us that “His _____
has given us everything we need for _____ a _____
In your own words try to explain what this means:

• In John 15:5 Jesus tells us that He is the _____ and that we are the _____.
Then He tells us that apart from Him we _____
_____.

• What does Romans 6:2 tell us about our new relationship to sin?

• Colossians 1:29 tells us about Paul’s personal power source, “That’s why I work and struggle so _____, depending on Christ’s mighty power that _____ within me. “

• What was Paul’s power source? _____

We have learned that the cross of Christ, the resurrection of Christ and the Spirit of Christ all guarantee us spiritual victory. What are some ways that you can put these three principles into practice on a daily basis?

6

Prayer... The 'Phone' Link to God

What is prayer?

Prayer is simply communication with God. He has given us the tremendous privilege to come directly before His throne and talk to Him like a child communicates to his father. He is the infinite, almighty God of the Universe. But He still has time to listen to His children! As a matter of fact, He loves to hear from us!

Some scriptures about prayer.

“Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Hebrews 4:16

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.”

Philippians 4:6

“The end of all things is near. Therefore be clear minded and self-controlled so that you can pray.”

1 Peter 4:7

How to pray effectively

1. Pray for things that will bring glory to God not yourself!

“And I will do whatever you ask in my name so that the Son may bring glory to the Father.” *John 14:13*

2. Pray in faith, completely trusting in God's promises to hear and answer our prayers.

“This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, He answers us. And if we know that He hears us whatever we ask we know that we have what we asked Him”

1 John 5:14,15

3. Pray knowing that God is on your side!

“How much more then will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask Him.” *Matthew 7:11*

More helpful hints

Realize that God will always answer but that doesn't mean the answer will always be a “yes”. Even when He answers “no,” it is in our best interest! Remember that we need to constantly be in an attitude of prayer. At

the same time however, it is essential that we set aside a time just to communicate with Him. It is helpful to have a specific place and time where we can pray to God unhindered by distractions.

A simple formula to remember on how to pray is this: ACTS. It stands for Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (requests). We need a time to worship (adoration), a time to purify our lives before God (confession), a time to praise God for the things He's done (thanksgiving), and a time to ask God for the things we need (supplication).

A verse to memorize!

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.” *Matthew 7:7*

Study Questions

- According to I Thessalonians 5:17 how should we pray?

- According to Colossians 4:12 Epaphras prayed for the Colossian believers. What did he pray for specifically in their lives? _____
- Read 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 and then answer these questions:
 - Did Paul always get his prayers answered? _____
 - What was God's response to Paul's prayer? _____
 - How does this apply to our personal prayer life? Discuss.
- Read Daniel 9:1-23 and then answer these questions:
 - According to verse 3 as soon as Daniel understood the plight of Jerusalem what did he do? _____
 - According to verse 5 did Daniel include himself among those who sinned against God? _____.
 - In verse 7 Daniel calls the Lord _____.
 - According to verse 18 Daniel asks God to hear his prayers not because of his righteousness but because of God's _____.
 - Verse 23 informs us that as soon as he began to pray an answer was given to him. What was the reason given to Daniel of why the answer was sent so quickly?

Community & Fellowship ... The Network of Believers

Fellowship. What is it?

The word “fellowship” comes from the Greek word “Koinonia”. It means “commonship”. Bowlers have bowling in common. Fishermen have fishing in common. Christians have Christ in common. He is our “commonship”. He is the tie that binds us together. Therefore, fellowship is the unity that we as believers share in Jesus Christ.

Why is community and fellowship important?

1. It keeps us encouraged.

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching.” *Hebrews 10:25*

2. It keeps us unified.

“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins.” *1 Peter 4:8*

3. It keeps us excited.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe....” *Acts 2:42,43*

How do we experience community and fellowship?

1. We focus on the person of Jesus Christ and not ourselves!

“For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.” *2 Corinthians 4:5*

2. We encourage fellow believers to grow in Christ!

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.” *Hebrews 10:24*

A verse to memorize!

“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another and all the more as you see the day approaching.” *Hebrews 10:25*

Study Questions

Read Acts 2:42-47 and 4:32-35 and write down what you imagine the early New Testament church to be like:

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 and write down at least 10 characteristics of the **love** we should have for one another:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

I Peter 4:10-11 tells us about two of the different types of gifts that a believer can have. What are they and how should they be used?

8

Evangelism ... The Outreach to Unbelievers

Evangelism...What is it?

Evangelism is the art of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with someone who doesn't know Him. It focuses on the fact that when Jesus died on the cross, He did so to pay for the sin of the world. When a person trusts in Him they have eternal life.

Some scriptures about evangelism.

- “We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

Colossians 1:28

- “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

Matthew 28:19

Why is evangelism important?

Because God commands it. Sharing Christ is not an option! The last command that Jesus gave to His disciples was to share the message with the world.

Because of the world's destiny. People that die without Christ will spend an eternity in a real place called hell. We have the tremendous privilege of sharing the good news of the Gospel with those who don't know it. The people are perishing and we must let them know!

How is evangelism done?

It takes boldness.

Let's face it. To share the message of Christ takes boldness. Even the Apostle Paul prayed for boldness to share the message of Christ.

“Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.”

Ephesians 6:19

It takes clarity.

The message of Christ is simple. Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. If we simply trust in what He did on the cross, then we receive the free gift of eternal life.

It takes follow-up.

Once a person trusts in Jesus Christ as their Savior they need to be “discipled”. This means that we help them grow in their knowledge of God and His Word. A simple way to disciple them is to guide them through this 8-week booklet. Just like someone is guiding you through it!

A verse to memorize!

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” *Matthew 28:19,20*

Study Questions

Read I Corinthians 9:23-27 and answer the following questions?

- According to verse 23 why did Paul do all these things?

- Paul compares sharing the gospel with two sports. What are they?

How do they relate to sharing the gospel?

- Paul tells us in Colossians 4:6 that we should, “Let your _____ be _____ and _____, so that you will have the right _____ for everyone.”

- Romans 1:16 tells us that we should not be _____ of the gospel.

- How does this verse apply to you personally as you seek to share Christ with your friends? _____

- Write down the names of three people that don’t know Jesus Christ as their Savior that you desire to tell:

- Begin by praying for them! Then seek opportunities to share the message!

Then share it!