Two Primary “F” Words (Fear and Faith) of Christianity

***Fear and Faith***

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***Fear*** and ***Faith*** are two primary “F” words of Christianity, both of which are totally and inexorably linked together. Truthfully, one cannot have one without the other. Unfortunately, the relationship between the two is little understood by Christians. Worse yet, there are those who think these two concepts of the Christian Faith are somewhat opposed to each other.

Regarding “fear” within Scripture, translated primarily by/from the Hebrew word “*yare*” (Strong 3372/3373) in the Old Testament and by/from the Greek word “*phobeo*” (Strong 5399) in the New Testament, its essential meaning jointly embodies both the basic concept of “being afraid of something” and the advanced concept of “being reverential or respectful of something.”

Regarding “faith” within Scripture, translated by/from the words “*faith*” and “*believe*” from the Greek words (1) “*pisteuo*” (Strong 4100) – to have total confidence or trust in or upon something, often translated “*believe*” and (2) “*pistis*” (Strong 4102) – to embody total persuasion or credence in or upon something, often translated “*faith*,” its essential meaning is to simply believe/trust in what God has to say about a matter.

Scripture is quite clear that a proper relationship with God must include both the concept of (1) fearing Him and (2) having faith in Him. And to many Christians this seems almost somewhat contradictory. How can one have faith and fear at the same time? So, let’s think about it.

In life when one confronts a dangerous situation, e.g., a precipice (high cliff), one does not have to personally jump from it and fall to one’s death at its bottom in order to “believe” and “fear” the outcome of such an act. Indeed, if one did not have “faith” (a belief) in the result of such an action, one would have no genuine “fear” of taking such an action. Many other similar examples could be given pertaining to the inescapable link between “fear” and “faith” in God’s Word.

The word *faith*, as used in the Bible and particularly in the New Testament, is equivalent to the word *believe*. In fact, the primary Greek words used in the New Testament are translated (various tenses) as *faith* or *believe*. And when they apply to the doctrine of salvation, there is no difference in meaning between them.

The *primary meaning* of both *faith* and *believe* within the Bible is *a firm persuasion*, *conviction or confidence*. It is a deliberate action activated within a person’s will (the faculty of consciousness), which is one distinct aspect of the *image of God* embodied within every human being. Indeed, to place *faith in* or *believe* a person or concept, according to God’s Word, is more than mere mental assent to facts regarding that person or concept. It is a genuine and willful act of placing one’s *full confidence* or *trust in* that person or concept.

Bottom line, one cannot fear without faith, i.e., cannot fear the result of any situation without truly believing that the result of the situation would be harmful and damaging. And it was unfortunate that subsequent to the creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden that these two beautifully created beings apparently did not truly believe God when He specifically told them relative to the fruit of “*the tree of the knowledge of good and evil*” located “*in the midst of the garden*” that “*in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die*” (Genesis 2:17; 3:3). Indeed, Eve when confronted by Satan, embodied in a serpent (snake), chose rather to believe the serpent when it said, “*You will not surely die*” (Genesis 3:4). And believing this lie resulted in acting upon it, i.e., eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which brought about the death (both spiritual [immediate] and temporal [ensuing]) of the human race.

Scripture is absolutely clear that “*the wages of sin is death*” (Romans 6:23a) and that “*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). But by God’s grace and love for all mankind, “*the gift* (i.e., Gk: ‘*free gift*’) *of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (John 3:16; Romans 6:23b) who upon the cross of Calvary bore our sin – “*For He* (God the Father) *made Him* (God the Son) *who knew no sin to be sin for us*, *that we might become the righteousness of God* (Father) *in Him* (Son)” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Unfortunately, even though Christians are “*born again* (i.e., Gk: ‘*from above*’)” (John 3:3, 7), i.e., permanently given “*eternal* (*everlasting*) *life*” by “*believing in Jesus Christ*” (John 3:14-18) – the result of a one-time decision to place one’s trust alone in Jesus Christ alone for one’s eternal salvation – they retain their sin nature and can continue to sin. Such was the condition of the Christians in the Greek city of Corinth to whom the Apostle Paul said, “*And I brethren*, *could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal* (i.e., fleshly, subject to the sin nature), *as to babes in Christ*. . . . *for you are still carnal* (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).

And although a Christian’s sin cannot affect his/her eternal salvation, which was paid for once and for all by Christ on the cross, it most definitely will affect his/her degree of approval or disapproval at the Judgment Seat of Christ, a judgment that will affect his/her issuance of rewards and his/her placement during Christ’s coming Millennial (1,000 year) Kingdom upon the earth (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Revelation 20:4-6).

It is the immediate responsibility of a Christian, upon realizing he/she has sinned to sincerely and totally follow God’s resolution for the deed, as clearly expressed in 1 John 1:9.

*If we confess* (Gk. Own up to or take the responsibly for) *our sin*s, *He* (God) *is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. (1 John 1:9)

Additionally, it is the responsibility of the Christian to increasingly avoid sinning by continuing in spiritual growth, a process directly related to the consumption of the spiritual diet, i.e., continual feasting upon and digestion of the Word of God. Within Scripture this is referred to as *soul salvation*, a salvation that eventually will affect one’s position during Christ’s millennial reign over the earth and which can only take place subsequent to *spirit salvation* (a person’s eternal salvation that is based solely upon Christ’s work on the cross and which is obtained solely by faith in Christ).

To properly understand the complete salvation plan of God for mankind, affecting each person’s triune composition (1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 4:12, 10:39; James 1:21; 1 Corinthians 1:18), the reader is advised to access and read Arlen Chitwood’s book, Salvation of the Soul, which may be reviewed at the following computer link: [Bible One - Salvation of the Soul by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/SOS.htm). And every reader is further advised to access and read Arlen Chitwood’s book, Judgment Seat of Christ, which may be reviewed at the following computer link: [Bible One - Judgment Seat of Christ by Arlen Chitwood](http://bibleone.net/JSC.htm).

As a newborn child faces life and may either remain immature or advance to maturity, enabling him/her to properly execute life’s challenges, so a newborn Christian may either remain spiritually immature or advance to spiritual maturity. In fact, the primary purpose of God’s written Word, reflecting the Living Word of God (Christ Jesus), is to bring the child of God from spiritual immaturity to spiritual maturity through regular and continuous digestion – the reading and study – of its contents.

And as one studies the Word of God, one gains the proper “fear of God” that will establish holy wisdom and understanding in all matters of life and the glorious future beyond temporal life. But such proper fear comes only as one follows or “walks in” the Word (Jesus Christ) in the same manner that he/she “received” the Word, uniquely expressed in Colossians 2:6-7.

*As you have therefore received* (by faith) *Christ Jesus the Lord*, *so* (in the same manner) *walk* (by faith) *in Him*, *rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith*, *as you have been taught*, *abounding in it with thanksgiving*. (Colossians 2:6-7)

As a Christian absorbs/digests God’s Word in faith, i.e., *believing what God has to say about a matter*, he/she will mature in the *fear of God*, which will bring him/her to spiritual maturity, enabling him/her to face all of life’s challenges to the glory of God.

The following (1) is a fairly comprehensive list of passages of Scripture depicting the expression the “fear of God” and (2) a study on the subject of “faith” in God’s Word.

**The Fear of the Lord**

[Exodus 20:20](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Exodus/20/20)

*And Moses said to the people*, “*Do not fear*; *for God has come to test you*, *and that His fear may be before you*, *so that you may not sin*.”

Deuteronomy 6:1, 2

*Now this is the commandment*, *and these are the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you*, *that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess*, (2) *that you may fear the LORD your God*, *to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you*, *you and your son and your grandson*, *all the days of your life*, *and that your days may be prolonged*.

Deuteronomy 6:24

*And the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes*, *to fear the LORD our God*, *for our good always*, *that He might preserve us alive*, *as it is this day*.

Deuteronomy 10:12, 13

*And now*, *Israel*, *what does the LORD your God require of you*, *but to fear the LORD your God*, *to walk in all His ways and to love Him*, *to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul*, (13) *and to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good*?

[Deuteronomy 14:23](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Deuteronomy/14/23)

*And you shall eat before the LORD your God*, *in the place where He chooses to make His name abide*, *the tithe of your grain and your new wine and your oil*, *of the firstborn of your herds and your flocks*, *that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always*.

1 Samuel 12:14, 24

*If you fear the LORD and serve Him and obey His voice*, *and do not rebel against the commandment of the LORD*, *then both you and the king who reigns over you will continue following the LORD your God*. . . . (24) *Only fear the LORD*, *and serve Him in truth with all your heart*; *for consider what great things He has done for you*.

[Job 28:](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Job/28/28)12, 15, 20, 23, 28

*But where can wisdom be found*? *And where is the place of understanding*? . . . (15) *It cannot be purchased for gold*, *nor can silver be weighed for its price*. . . . (20) *From where then does wisdom come*? *And where is the place of understanding*? . . . (23) *God understands its way*, *and He knows its place*. . . . (28) *And to man He said*, “*Behold*, *the fear of the Lord*, *that is wisdom*, *and to depart from evil is understanding*.”

[Psalm 19:9](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Psalm/19/9)

*The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever*; *the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether*.

Psalm 25:12

*Who is the man that fears the LORD*? *Him shall He teach in the way He chooses*. (cf. Psalm 37:23)

Psalm 31:19

*Oh*, *how great is Your goodness*, *which You have laid up for those who fear You*, *which You have prepared for those who trust in You In the presence of the sons of men*! (cf. Psalm 19:7-11; Isaiah 64:5; 1 Corinthians 2:9)

[Psalm 33:8](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Psalm/33/8), 18, 19

*Let all the earth fear the LORD*; *let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him*. . . . (18) *Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him*, *on those who hope in His mercy*, (19) *to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine*. (cf. Psalm 34:15; 1 Peter 3:12)

Psalm 34:7, 9

*The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him*, *and delivers them. . . .* (9) *Oh*, *fear the LORD*, *you His saints*! *There is no want to those who fear Him*. (cf. Genesis 32:1, 2; 2 Kings 6:17; Daniel 6:22; Zechariah 9:8; Hebrews 1:14)

Psalm 60:4

*You have given a banner to those who fear You*, *that it may be displayed because of the truth*. *Selah*

Psalm 85:9

*Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him*, *that glory may dwell in our land*. (cf. John 1:14)

Psalm 103:11, 12, 17, 18

*For as the heavens are high above the earth*, *so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him*; (12) *as far as the east is from the west*, *so far has He removed our transgressions from us*. . . . (17) *But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him*, *and His righteousness to children*’*s* *children*, (18) *to such as keep His covenant*, *and to those who remember His commandments to do them*.

[Psalm 111:10](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Psalm/111/10)

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom* . . . .

[Psalm 112:1](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Psalm/112/1)

*Praise the LORD*! *Blessed is the man who fears the LORD*, *who delights greatly in His commandments*.

Psalm 115:11, 13

*You who fear the LORD*, *trust in the LORD*; *He is their help and their shield*. . . . (13) *He will bless those who fear the LORD*, *both small and great*.

[Psalm 128:1-4](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Psalm/128/4)

*Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD*, *who walks in His ways*. . . . (4) *Behold*, *thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD*.

Psalm 145:19

*He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him*; *He also will hear their cry and save them*.

Psalm 147:11

*The LORD takes pleasure in those who fear Him*, *in those who hope in His mercy.*

[Proverbs 1:7](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/1/7)

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge*, *but fools despise wisdom and instruction*.

Proverbs 2:1, 5, 6

*My son*, *if you receive my words*, *and treasure my commands within you* . . . (5) *then you will understand the fear of the LORD*, *and find the knowledge of God*. (6) *For the LORD gives wisdom*; *from His mouth come knowledge and understanding*. (cf. Proverbs 3)

[Proverbs 8:13](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/8/13)

*The fear of the LORD is to hate evil*; *pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate*.

[Proverbs 9:10](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/9/10)

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom*, *and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding*.

[Proverbs 10:27](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/10/27)

*The fear of the LORD prolongs days*, *but the years of the wicked will be shortened*.

[Proverbs 14:2](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/14/2), 26, 27

*He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD*, *but he who is perverse in his ways despises Him*. . . . (26) *In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence*, *and His children will have a place of refuge*. (27) *The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life*, *to turn one away from the snares of death*.

[Proverbs 15:16](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/15/16), 33

*Better is a little with the fear of the LORD*, *than great treasure with trouble*. . . . (33) *The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom*, *and before honor is humility*.

Proverbs 16:6b

. . . *And by the fear of the LORD one departs from evil*.

[Proverbs 19:23](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/19/23)

*The fear of the LORD leads to life*, *and he who has it will abide in satisfaction*; *he will not be visited with evil*.

Proverbs 22:4

*By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life.*

[Proverbs 23:17](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Proverbs/23/17), 18

*Do not let your heart envy sinners*, *but be zealous for the fear of the LORD all the day*; (18) *for surely there is a hereafter*, *and your hope will not be cut off*.

[Isaiah 33:6](https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/Isaiah/33/6)

*And He will be the stability of your times*, *a wealth of salvation*, *wisdom and knowledge*; *the fear of the LORD is his treasure*.

Ecclesiastes 7:18

*It is good that you grasp this*, *and also not remove your hand from the other*; *for he who fears God will escape them all.*

Ecclesiastes 8:12, 13

*Though a sinner does evil a hundred times*, *and his days are prolonged*, *yet I surely know that it will be well with those who fear God*, *who fear before Him*. (13) *But it will not be well with the wicked*; *nor will he prolong his days*, *which are as a shadow*, *because he does not fear before God*.

Ecclesiastes 12:13

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter*: *Fear God and keep His commandments*, *for this is man*’*s all*.

Isaiah 33:6

*Wisdom and knowledge will be the stability of your times*, *and the strength of salvation*; *the fear of the LORD is His treasure*.

Malachi 3:16

*Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another*, *and the LORD listened and heard them*; *so a book of remembrance was written before Him* *for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name*.

Malachi 4:2

*But to you who fear My name The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings*; *and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves*.

Luke 1:50

*And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation*.

Luke 12:4, 5

*And I say to you*, *My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body*, *and after that have no more that they can do*. (5) *But I will show you whom you should fear*: *Fear Him who*, *after He has killed*, *has power to cast into hell*; *yes*, *I say to you*, *fear Him*!

Revelation 11:18

*The nations were angry*, *and Your wrath has come*, *and the time of the dead*, *that they should be judged*, *and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints*, *and those who*

*fear Your name*, *small and great*, *and should destroy those who destroy the earth*.

**Faith**

**Faith -**[**view here**](http://www.bibleone.net/faith.htm)

The word *faith*, as used in the Bible and particularly in the New Testament, is equivalent to the word *believe*. In fact, the primary Greek words used in the New Testament are translated (various tenses) as *faith* or *believe*. And when they apply to the doctrine of salvation, there is no difference in meaning between them.

The *primary meaning* of both *faith* and *believe* within the Bible is *a firm persuasion*, *conviction or confidence*. It is a deliberate action activated within a person’s will (the faculty of consciousness), which is one distinct aspect of the *image of God* embodied within every human being. Indeed, to place *faith in* or *believe* a person or concept, according to God’s Word, is more than mere mental assent to facts regarding that person or concept. It is a genuine and willful act of placing one’s *full confidence* or *trust in* that person or concept for a particular reason.

Various forms of the words *faith* and *believe* are used approximately 485 times in the New Testament. In relation to the concept of salvation, i.e., the granting of eternal life to an individual, there are approximately 150 applications of these words used exclusively as the means of personally apprehending (receiving) the salvation (eternal) state.

It is unfortunate that the generally accepted concept of religion, which is the antithesis (opposite) of Christianity, misses the truth of *faith* as evidenced throughout the Bible. Whereas the Church (Body of Christ) initially started out strong in faith, over time and due to man’s innate pride, with many it deteriorated into a system of works (self-effort) as the means of acquiring and maintaining eternal life.

Biblical Salvation by Faith

Recipient

Man (mankind) is the sole recipient of God’s comprehensive faith-based plan of salvation, a multi-faceted procedure that addresses all aspects of tripartite man. For just as the *One* *God*, who reveals Himself in and through three distinct Persons – the *Father*, the *Son* and the *Holy Spirit*, man, who is created in the image of God, is a triune being.

The composition of man (mankind) as a tripartite being is introduced in the very beginning of the Word when God declared that His creation of man was to be in His manifold (triune) image. Indeed, the Hebrew word translated “God” in the initial creation-passage of Scripture for man is “*Elohim*” – a plural noun, which is followed by plural pronouns.

*Then God* [*Elohim*] *said*, “*Let Us make man in Our image*, *according to Our likeness*; *let them have dominion over the fish of the sea*, *over the birds of the air*, *and over the cattle*, *over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth*.” *So God created man in His own image*; *in the image of God He created him*; *male and female He created them*. (Genesis 1:26, 27)

As the One (as to “nature”) Living God is a Triune Being, i.e., revealed in three distinct realities or personalities, so man is composed of three distinct realities, as clearly seen in the following passages of Scripture.

*Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely*; *and may your whole spirit*, *soul*, *and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

(1 Thessalonians 5:23)

*For the Word of God is living and powerful*, *and sharper than any two-edged sword*, *piercing even to the division of soul and spirit*, *and of joints and marrow* [body], *and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. (Hebrews 4:12)

(The Word of God is replete in passages revealing the triune nature of both God and man, as may be seen in the following link: [Bible One - Tripartite Scripture Passages by Charles Strong](http://bibleone.net/Tripartite-Scripture-Passages.htm).)

Granted, man, with his manifold but microscopic intelligence, may be unable to fully understand and delineate his own triune nature, but the following explanation is virtually credible.

The *spirit* of man, which in every person is dead at physical birth (the result of The Fall of Man in the Garden of Eden [Genesis 2:16, 17]), but which comes alive upon the “*birth from above*” (John 3:3, 7), i.e., upon one’s decision of faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:13). Man’s spirit is his link that makes it possible to have a personal spiritual association with the Living God. It represents man’s *relationship with the spiritual realm* – a relationship that when activated is *permanent*, unalterable by man or God. The spirit of man, once “saved” by grace through faith in Christ (Ephesians 2:8, 9), can never become “unsaved” (lost). This aspect of “salvation” relates to (affects) *eternal* issues.

The *soul* of man, evidenced through all his physical senses (the faculties of sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch) represents man’s *relationship with the physical*, *temporal realm* – a relationship that can both *progress* from an immature to a mature spiritual state as one digests the meat of God’s Word (James 1:21), but which also may spiritually *regress* based on the nature of one’s faith-based works (Galatians 5:16-25; Colossians 2:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Hebrews 10:38, 39). It should be understood that the revelation or verdict as to whether or not one has secured the salvation of the soul will be manifested at the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 2:6; 14:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11). This aspect of “salvation” only relates to (affects) *millennial* issues – the coming thousand year kingdom-reign of Christ upon the earth (Matthew 6:10; Revelation 20:4).

The *body* of man needs minimal defining. It is generally apparent to all, i.e., its limitations and non-enduring qualities. It is composed of the dust of the earth, a conformation to which it will certainly return upon physical death (Genesis 2:7; 3:19; Psalm 103:14; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Job 34:15; 1 Corinthians 15:49). But eventually the body of a Christian, regardless of its stage (body or dust), will change to one like that of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 49; 51-55; Philippians 3:20, 21; 1 John 3:2).

(For additional study in God’s Word relative to the tripartite composition of man, the following link is recommended: [Bible One - Tripartite Scripture Passages by Charles Strong](http://bibleone.net/Tripartite-Scripture-Passages.htm).)

Salvation of the Spirit (Spiritual Conception – Immediate and Permanent)

Only by *faith alone* can a person be “*born again* [from above]” (John 3:3-7), i.e., united with and baptized (immersed) into the “*body of Christ*” (1 Corinthians 12:13, 27; Galatians 3:28) – eternally “*redeemed*” (Galatians 3:13) and “*justified*” (Acts 13:38, 39; Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; 3:11, 24) in the sight of God.

Without faith there can be no spiritual beginning, so faith is absolutely the only essential element in apprehending God’s life of grace. This is confirmed over and over again throughout the Word of God. Note the following passages of Scriptures:

*But as many as received Him*, *to them He gave the right to become children of God*, *to those who believe in His name*: *who were born*, *not of blood*, *nor of the will of the flesh*, *nor of the will of man*, *but of God*.(John 1:12, 13)

*And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up*, *that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son*, *that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life*. *For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world*, *but that the world through Him might be saved*. *He who believes in Him is not condemned*; *but he who does not believe is condemned already*, *because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God*.(John 3:14-18)

*He who believes in the Son has everlasting life*; *and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life*, *but the wrath of God abides on him*. (John 3:36)

*Most assuredly*, *I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life*, *and shall not come into judgment*, *but has passed from death into life*.(John 5:24)

*Then they said to Him*,“*What shall we do*, *that we may work the works of God?*” *Jesus answered and said to them*,“*This is the work of God*, *that you believe in Him whom He sent*.” (John 6:28, 29)

*Most assuredly*, *I say to you*, *he who believes in Me has everlasting life*. (John 6:47)

*On the last day*, *that great day of the feast*, *Jesus stood and cried out*, *saying*,“*If anyone thirsts*, *let him come to Me and drink*. *He who believes in Me*, *as the Scripture has said*, *out of his heart will flow rivers of living water*.”(John 7:37, 38)

*Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins*; *for if you do not believe that I am He*, *you will die in your sins*.(John 8:24)

*Jesus said to her*, “*I am the resurrection and the life*. *He who believes in Me*, *though he may die*, *he shall live*. *And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die*. *Do you believe this*?” *She said to Him*, “*Yes*, *Lord*, *I believe that You are the Christ*, *the Son of God*, *who is to come into the world*.” (John 11:25-27)

*I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness*. (John 12:46)

*Jesus said to him*, “*Thomas*, *because you have seen Me*, *you have believed*. *Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.*” *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples*, *which are not written in this book*; *but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ*, *the Son of God*, *and that believing you may have life in His name*. (John 20:29-31)

*And believers were increasingly added to the Lord*, *multitudes of both men and women*. (Acts 5:14)

*To Him all the prophets witness that*, *through His name*, *whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins*. (Acts 10:43)

*If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ*, *who was I that I could withstand God*? *When they heard these things they became silent*; *and they glorified God*, *saying*, “*Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life*.”(Acts 11:17, 18)

*Therefore let it be known to you*, *brethren*, *that through this Man is preached to you the forgiveness of sins*; *and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses*. (Acts 13:38, 39)

*Now when they had come and gathered the church together*, *they reported all that God had done with them*, *and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles*.

(Acts 14:27)

*Then he called for a light*, *ran in*, *and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas*. *And he brought them out and said*, “*Sirs*, *what must I do to be saved*?” *So they said*,“*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ*, *and you will be saved*, *you and your household*.” (Acts 16:29-31)

*Then Crispus*, *the ruler of the synagogue*, *believed on the Lord with all his household*. *And many of the Corinthians*, *hearing*, *believed and were baptized*. (Acts 18:8)

*I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance* [a change of mind or turning from believing in salvation by any other means] *and have faith in our Lord Jesus*. (Acts 20:21)

*I will deliver you from the Jewish people*, *as well as from the Gentiles*, *to whom I now send you*, *to open their eyes*, *in order to turn them from darkness to light*, *and from the power of Satan to God*, *that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me*. (Acts 26:17, 18)

*But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed*, *being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets*, *even the righteousness of God*, *through faith in Jesus Christ*, *to all and on all who believe*. *For there is no difference*; *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*, *being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*, *whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood*, *through faith*, *to demonstrate His righteousness*, *because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness*, *that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus*. *Where is boasting then*? *It is excluded*. *By what law* [principle]? *Of works*? *No*, *but by the law* [principle] *of faith*. *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law*.(Romans 3:21-28)

*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ*, *even we have believed in Christ Jesus*, *that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law*; *for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified*. (Galatians 2:16)

*In Him you also trusted*, *after you heard the Word of truth*, *the gospel of your salvation*; *in Whom also*, *having believed*, *you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*, *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*, *to the praise of His glory*. (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

*For by grace you have been saved through faith*, *and that not of yourselves*; *it is the gift of God*, *not of works*, *lest anyone should boast*. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

Of course, what one *believes* or that in which he places his *faith* is critical. One must truly understand that he can in no way through self-efforts (good works) obtain God’s approval and salvation. He/she must understand that only God incarnate (God in flesh) could do this for him/her – Jesus Christ upon the cross took upon Himself and paid the penalty-price for his/her sins, as his/her substitute (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Christ died both spiritually (became separated from God the Father) and physically on the cross (Matthew 27:45, 46, 50). After fulfilling God’s punishment for sin, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day and ascended to the right hand of God the Father where He now makes intercession for all who have received Him by faith (Romans 8:34).

Being “saved” is not “confessing your sins” to God. If that were so, then which sins would you confess? Would you even know all your sins? How long would it take for you to name them? If anything, the sincere acknowledgement that you are a sinner is all that must precede salvation. This comes by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit, who then through “Godly sorrow” brings you to Biblical repentance, i.e., the willingness to “change your mind” from any other means of achieving eternal life by “turning” *only to Jesus Christ* (John 16:7-11; 2 Corinthians 7:10).

Eternal life – the salvation of your spirit – is achieved by *faith alone in Christ alone*. Eternal life is based solely on the atoning, redeeming and reconciling sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross of Calvary, whereupon in man’s (all mankind) place He took man’s sins, became man’s sins, and died both spiritually and physically in order to pay the price required of a just God for sins of the human race (Isaiah 53:6; Matthew 8:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24; Hebrews 9:28).

*God made Him* [Jesus Christ] *who had no sin to be sin for us*, *so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God*.(2 Corinthians 5:21)

If anyone will turn from any attempt to work one’s way into heaven, i.e., any self-effort, or works, or church rituals, etc., and *by faith alone* accept *Christ alone* for one’s personal salvation (this is “Biblical repentance”), he/she will instantly and permanently (irreversibly) be eternally saved. To reiterate, the only means by which a person may apprehend salvation is by making a genuine decision to totally trust in or rely upon (place one’s full confidence in) the Person and sacrifice of Jesus Christ for his/her personal salvation. This is a one-time and permanent event, never to be retracted by God or man.

Salvation of the Soul (Sanctification – Progressive)

During our Christian life upon earth we will always be plagued by the sin nature that we inherited from Adam, only to be relieved of this plague when we receive our resurrected body. Within our genetic makeup, the sin nature continues to tempt us to sin. It cannot make us sin, but it can tempt us. When we volitionally choose to follow its influence, we then sin and enter into a state of “carnality.” Our choice makes us responsible for our sins. We sin in a number of different ways, e.g., mental attitudes, the spoken word and in overt acts (Proverbs 8:13; Mark 7:21-23; 1 John 2:11).

What is most unfortunate is that our sin nature is capable of producing “human good,” i.e., what appears to be “good works” – but not works that will qualify for future reward. It is “divine good” that alone is pleasing to God. Satan actively attempts to sidetrack Christians into “religion” or some form of “legalism,” thereby convincing them that they are good Christians because they are doing good deeds. Human good, which includes pride in one’s charity, altruism, philanthropy, is helpful to mankind, but it has no value to God. Unless a Christian produces “divine good” (acts emanating from one’s devotion to God), which stems from the principle of faith and the resulting motivation of the Holy Spirit, he/she will gain no spiritual value before God.

*But we are all like an unclean thing*, *and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags*; *we all fade as a leaf*, *and our iniquities*, *like the wind*, *have taken us away*. (Isaiah 64:6)

*Now if anyone builds on this foundation* [Jesus Christ] *with gold*, *silver*, *precious stones* [divine good], *wood*, *hay*, *straw* [human good], *each one*’*s work will become clear*; *for the Day will declare it*, *because it will be revealed by fire*; *and the fire will test each one*’*s work*, *of what sort it is*. *If anyone*’*s work which he has built on it endures*, *he will receive a reward*. *If anyone*’*s work is burned*, *he will suffer loss*; *but he himself will be saved*, *yet so as through fire*. (1 Corinthians 3:12-15)

After we are saved, Satan will always lead us toward “religion” and “legalism.” Satan is eager to encourage us in this direction, because this direction takes us away from the principle of faith, which is the basis for the control (fullness) of the Holy Spirit in our lives and the production of “divine good.” He will surely move in and convince us that it is “up to us” (under our own power) to keep the various laws outlined in God’s Word, and some that are not. We are quick to adopt various and sundry personal “convictions,” i.e., don’t do this, don’t wear that, don’t go there, don’t drink, don’t smoke, don’t, no, never, *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*.

Then there are the “must do” items, e.g., giving of money a certain way, attending every church service, praying in a certain manner, mimicking the antics of others we deem “spiritual,” etc. And without realizing it, we soon find we become judgmental of all others who fail to pattern our “dos and don’ts.” We drift ever so deeper into legalism, prioritizing minor issues and minimizing God’s priority issues, e.g., love of God and fellow Christians and keeping focused on Christ and bringing others to Him. We give because we are “expected” to do so. We attend church “to be seen.” We dress a certain way because of the “opinion of others.” We use phraseology such as “Amen,” “Praise the Lord,” “God willing,” etc. because we believe this will convey to others our “spirituality.” We substitute emotionalism (feeling good) for *true spirituality*, which is the *acceptance and application to our lives of Biblical doctrine by faith alone*.

The truth is that when we reside in “legalism,” our entire behavior is motivated by our sin nature. We are only doing “human good,” and this gains us no spiritual value. It’s not that many of the actions or inclinations mentioned in the previous paragraph are wrong in themselves, but God looks at the heart, i.e., your motivation. If your motivation is not influenced by the Holy Spirit, who is *enabled* to influence *by way of faith*, you cannot produce “divine good.” And “human good” will eventually rob you of the joy of your salvation and lead you into despair and, with some, a turning away from God. If this happens you will not lose your salvation, but you will exist in a life of misery and you will be under the disciplinary hand of God the Father until He either brings you back to Him or takes you out of this world.

Why do we so easily drift toward legalism? In addition to not applying the principle of faith, it is because we are lazy in studying, absorbing, and maturing in the Word of God.

We spend very little time actually studying the Word of God. *The principle of faith is the engine*, *but the Word of God is the fuel*. By faith we apply what we know. Without knowing Bible doctrine, our faith has little to apply to our Christian way of life. As we confront various issues and difficulties in life, without the understanding and application of Bible doctrine (truth), we will not understand how to act. The Word of God has countless promises and truths that God would have us know and believe. These we must take and make our own so that we will be able to properly exercise *faith*. *Faith must be anchored in Bible doctrine*. God has given us the written Word, which is able to intimately acquaint us with the Living Word even beyond that which was available to the original disciples when they walked with Him. Yet, we often do not take advantage of it.

Many churches place so little emphasis on learning Bible doctrine. Messages from the pulpits have the objective of creating emotionalism among the listeners, i.e., making the congregation “feel good.” There is little depth or “meat” being provided to Christians from Sunday school classes or the pulpits in this age. This must change. If we live properly by the principle of faith, we will hunger to study God’s Word. If we truly study God’s Word, we will learn doctrine that we will be able to claim by faith and our exercise of faith will be in truth. God has given us His promises in writing – promises we can take by faith and use, which will stabilize us and insure success (to the saving of our souls) in our earthly Christian journey.

*For the Word of God is living and powerful*, *and sharper than any two-edged sword*, *piercing even to the division of soul and spirit*, *and of joints and marrow*, *and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart*. (Hebrews 4:12)

*All Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, *and is profitable for doctrine*, *for reproof*, *for correction*, *for instruction in righteousness*, *that the man of God may be complete*, *thoroughly equipped for every good work*.(2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God*, *a worker who does not need to be ashamed*, *rightly dividing the Word of truth*.(2 Timothy 2:15)

*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness*, *and receive with meekness the implanted Word*, *which is able to save your souls*. (James 1:21)

How can we combat Satan and his hordes? How can we be assured that we will fulfill our ambassadorship for Jesus Christ? How can we know spiritual success? The answer is in the *principle of faith* and the *consumption of Bible doctrine*.

With faith we start the Christian life, and it is by faith we must live the Christian life if we are to do any spiritual (divine) good, for which later we will be rewarded. This principle for living the Christian life, i.e., by faith and not by works, is seen in Colossians 2:6, 7 as follows:

*As you have therefore received* [by faith] *Christ Jesus the Lord*, *so* [in the same manner] *walk* [by faith] *in Him*, *rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith*, *as you have been taught*, *abounding in it with thanksgiving*. (Colossians 2:6, 7)

This is the only spiritual “work” that God will recognize and honor. Just as you received your personal salvation by *faith alone in Christ alone*, you now need to claim by *faith alone* the truths and promises of God’s Word for your personal spiritual life.

*Then they said to Him*, “*What shall we do*, *that we may work the works of God?*” *Jesus answered and said to them*, “*This is the work of God*, *that you believe in Him whom He sent*.”(John 6:28, 29)

Only the works that emanate from doing the “*work of God*” (exercising faith in God’s promises and truths) will count with God.

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart*, *and lean not on your own understanding*; *in all your ways acknowledge Him*, *and He shall direct your paths.* (Proverbs 3:5, 6)

*Delight yourself also in the LORD*, *and He shall give you the desires of your heart*. *Commit your way to the LORD*, *trust also in Him*, *and He shall bring it to pass*.

(Psalm 37:4, 5)

*He* [Abraham] *did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief*, *but was strengthened in faith*, *giving glory to God*, *and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform*. (Romans 4:20, 21)

Over and over again throughout the Word of God the principle of faith is presented to us as the only means whereby we can please God. *Faith alone* can bring us to Christ, and *faith alone* will permit us to live properly in Him. This is clearly seen in chapter 11 of the book of Hebrews. The entire chapter strongly emphasizes the principle of faith, approximately twenty times. It confirms that the mighty men and women of God revealed throughout God’s Word could only do acts that were pleasing to God by utilizing one principle – the principle of faith. The key expression in this chapter and probably in the entire book of Hebrews follows:

*But without faith it is impossible to please Him* [God] . . . . (Hebrews 11:6a)

The Bible teaches that there is only one way whereby we may be saved – by faith. It further teaches that there is only one way we may live the spiritual life – by faith. You say that the Bible teaches that we are to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit in order to live the spiritual life. You are correct; for it is “Christ living through us” by means of the Holy Spirit that divine good is accomplished.

*And do not be drunk with wine*, *in which is dissipation*; *but be filled with the Spirit*, *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs*, *singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord*, *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*, *submitting to one another in the fear of God*. (Ephesians 5:18-12)

The word “fill” or “full” as used in regards to the Holy Spirit within us only means “control.” It’s not like we have part of the Holy Spirit sometimes, and more of Him at other times. At our salvation experience the Holy Spirit indwells us and seals us (Ephesians 1:13, 14).

*In Him* (Christ) *you also trusted*, *after you heard the Word of truth*, *the gospel of your salvation*; *in whom also*, *having believed*, *you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,* *who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*, *to the praise of His glory*. (Ephesians 1:13, 14)

At that moment we are “full” of (controlled by) the Holy Spirit. But in time and because of our spiritual immaturity (due to lack of Bible doctrine resident within our mind) we fail to exercise faith and we choose to sin and thereby “quench” (limit the control of) the Holy Spirit.

So how do we turn it around and maintain the fullness of the Holy Spirit in our lives? The steps are simple, yet quite profound.

First, we must confess (acknowledge) any “known sins” in our life, i.e., admit to God and take responsibility for the sins we know we have committed. By doing so, God will automatically forgive us our known sins and, in addition, the sins that we are unaware of or have forgotten within our life. He then automatically restores within us the “fullness” (control) of the Spirit of God.

*If we confess our* [known] *sins*, *he is faithful and just and will forgive us our* [known] *sins and purify us from all unrighteousness* [unknown and forgotten sins]. (1 John 1:9)

Second, we must accept by *faith alone* God’s promise that we are filled with (controlled by) the Holy Spirit and that Christ is not only able but will live through us by means of the Holy Spirit. Accept this as matter of fact. Don’t trust your feelings, for you may or may not have feelings in the matter. Simply trust God’s promise – His Word. Continue to study God’s Word, so that you will have no end of truth (Bible doctrine) in which to place and by which to exercise your faith. Make this a daily event. You will then see how God directs your life. Don’t get ahead of Him. Don’t attempt to lead or direct Him. By *faith alone* allow God to lead and do His work through you.

*For we are His workmanship*, *created in Christ Jesus for good works*, *which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them*. (Ephesians 2:10)

*As you have therefore received* [by faith] *Christ Jesus the Lord*, *so* [in the same manner] *walk in Him*. (Colossians 2:6)

*. . . for the battle is the LORD*’*s . . .* (1 Samuel 17:47)

*Delight yourself in the LORD and He will give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the LORD*; *trust in Him and He will do this*: *He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn*, *the justice of your cause like the noonday sun*. (Psalm 37:4-6)

*So do not fear*, *for I am with you*; *do not be dismayed*, *for I am your God*. *I will strengthen you and help you*; *I will uphold you with my righteous right hand*.

(Isaiah 41:10)

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding*; *in all your ways acknowledge Him*, *and He shall direct your paths*.(Proverbs 3:5, 6)

*For we walk by faith*, *not by sight*. (2 Corinthians 5:7)

(Further study of God’s comprehensive plan of salvation may be made at the following link: [Bible One - Salvation – Gift of Grace and/or Reward for Works by Charles Strong](http://bibleone.net/Salvation_G-G-R-W.htm).)

ALWAYS REMEMBER:

*The just shall live by faith*

(Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38)