

Dynamic Christian Living

Dynamic Christian Living: Essentials for Believers

Written by Frank Hamrick

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Preface

Each of us began life with so many needs—nutrition, love, and care. It's easy to see why many New Testament Scriptures compare our spiritual growth with the physical. As Christians, we depend entirely on God to flourish and serve:

- In John 3, Christ describes the baptism of the Spirit as a second birth.
- In 1 Peter 2:2, the apostle encourages believers to seek God's grace and truth like a newborn seeks a mother's milk.
- In 1 Thessalonians 5:16–19, Paul challenges believers to abide continually in God's grace, praying and giving thanks without ceasing.
- In Mark 16:15, Christ commands His disciples to share His truth and love with others.
- And in 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul notes that God's grace should inform everything that we do. Even as we eat and drink, we can choose to reflect or reject God's light.

As you work through this study with your students, we pray that God would work in your heart as well as in the hearts of your students. Our faith does not rest on our ability to find facts or to do good works—however helpful that can be—but rather, we seek a close relationship with God. Through His grace, and His grace alone, we can explore and enjoy the new life we have in Him.

Features of This Study

As an academic curriculum and a devotional study, *Dynamic Christian Living* presents both factual content and personal application material. Students should complete this course with an introductory understanding of doctrine concerning salvation, the Scriptures, prayer, sharing the faith, and Spirit-filled living. Each topic will include discussions of higher theology, as well as a challenge to better reflect God's character.

» Teacher's Lectures

The lesson content in the Teacher's Manual can help you prepare and present the truths of this study to your students.

- **Target Truths**

These serve as learning objectives for each lesson.

- **Teaching Strategy**

Each lesson includes a short explanatory note for you, the teacher.

- **Teacher's Lesson**

The lecture material may be presented verbatim, but it's formatted with headings and bullets in case you prefer to teach from limited notes.

- **Teacher’s Lesson Notes**

Each lesson in the Student Manual contains a fill-in-the-blank outline of the corresponding teacher’s lesson. Students can use this outline as a foundation for their lecture notes, which will help them study for quizzes and tests. Answers for these blanks are underlined in the teacher’s lesson.

You can find digital presentations with these outlines on the *Dynamic Christian Living* product page at positiveaction.org.

- **Word Power**

Lessons also feature a “Word Power” section that defines key terms within the context of each lesson. Review these definitions with your students, but note that some terms may be defined differently in different lessons.

Each teacher’s lesson includes Scripture references to support the content framework, along with relevant explanations of the passages cited. You’ll also find illustrations and discussion questions throughout the core material—though you can greatly enhance your presentation by adding your own perspective and experience.

We encourage teachers to approach lessons not so much as a fact-finding process, but as a way to strengthen the students’ relationships with God. Perfect truth includes love, and perfect love includes truth, so please take care to present this material in a way that both encourages and challenges your students. Make time for discussion, and encourage your students to share their questions with the class.

» Student Exercises

Almost every lesson in the Student Manual includes exercises that students should complete outside of class. These exercises encourage students to seek God’s truth and love on their own, while also reviewing some of the principles from the teacher’s lesson.

» Testing and Evaluation

For classes that require a score or grade, the Teacher’s Manual includes weekly quizzes and unit tests. The course is divided into five units, each of which has its own test. Most chapters also include a weekly quiz, to be taken after students have heard the teacher’s lecture and completed the corresponding exercises. Quizzes and tests cover essential themes from both the Teacher’s Manual and the Student Manual, with question types including short answer, multiple choice, true/false, matching, and short essays.

Quizzes, tests, and answer keys are all at the back of this Teacher’s Manual. You can find editable versions of this testing material on the *Dynamic Christian Living* product page at positiveaction.org.

Some teachers also grade weekly Scripture memorization, as well as the completion of student exercises and extra activities.

Note that these materials can help you evaluate students’ mastery of factual content—not, of course, their spiritual growth.

» Completed Pages from the Student Manual

This Teacher’s Manual contains a complete copy of the Student Manual. In each lesson, you will find facsimiles of the Student Manual pages with suggested answers filled in.

A digital version of these facsimiles is available on the *Dynamic Christian Living* product page at positiveaction.org. If presented via projector or screen, these pages can help you review exercises with your students.

» Scripture Memorization

At the end of this introduction, you’ll find a Scripture memory program with an assignment for each lesson. You might want to use this optional component in one of the following ways:

1. Assign verses to be recited or written in a graded quiz, whether weekly, monthly, or once a semester.
2. Assign verses to be written on the back of regular lesson quizzes, perhaps as extra credit.
3. Evaluate the students’ understanding of the verses by offering a fill-in-the-blank verse test, or one that requires students to match the text of each passage with its reference.

You can find a reproducible verse list on page 9. Note that some weeks are marked “Review.” On these weeks, we suggest that you review or evaluate all of the verses in the latest unit.

You can find printable verse cards on the *Dynamic Christian Living* product page at positiveaction.org.

Format and Grade Level

Though teachers have successfully adapted and taught this study in grades seven through twelve, we recommend this content for the eighth and ninth grade.

As with any other Bible study, your students’ background, Scriptural literacy, and reading level will greatly impact their ability to approach this material. Some students may require additional teacher or parent involvement to understand and complete the exercises in the Student Manual.

Suggested Weekly Schedule

This study includes 35 lessons—one for each week in an average academic year. In general, teachers should present the lecture content from the Teacher’s Manual first, after which students can complete the exercises in the Student Manual, then take the appropriate quiz or unit test. Any optional Scripture memory or application activities can expand the students’ individual or group study.

Note that this study likely contains more content than you could cover in depth, especially in a three- or four-day-a-week class. Depending on the needs of your students—and depending on the time you spend in discussion or review—you may need to cover some minor points quickly or not at all.

• **Five-Day Option**

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
<p>Introduce target truths.</p> <p>Begin the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises.</p>	<p>Continue the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Review the student exercises.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Review the target truths.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions or personal application topics.</p>

• **Four-Day Option**

Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four
<p>Introduce target truths.</p> <p>Begin the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Review the student exercises.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Review the target truths.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions or personal application topics.</p>

• **Three-Day Option**

Day One	Day Two	Day Three
<p>Introduce target truths.</p> <p>Begin the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Introduce the Scripture memory verses.</p> <p>Assign the student exercises.</p>	<p>Finish the teacher's lesson.</p> <p>Review the student exercises.</p> <p>Review Scripture memory.</p>	<p>Administer the quiz or test.</p> <p>Check or quiz Scripture memory.</p> <p>Review the target truths.</p> <p>Discuss any student questions or personal application topics.</p>

Feedback

As a non-profit publishing ministry, we consider teachers our co-laborers in the faith. Each of our curricula remains a work in progress, and the people who teach these studies have a great impact on the scope and format of each new edition. If you have any comments, questions, or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us—we'd love to hear from you.

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A Final Word

It's our prayer that this study helps you and your students know God's glory, grow in that knowledge, and share it with others. To see the most from this study, we'd encourage you to do the following:

- Spend time each day in the Word. Use the material in this study to guide your devotional reading so that you can present God's truth and love from the heart. Spend time also marking and adjusting the lecture content to suit your students' needs. Note especially the comments in the Teaching Strategy section for each lesson.
- Pray for your students, and ask God to grow you, as well.
- Be vulnerable to your students, expressing questions and confidence in equal measure. Encourage them to explore Scripture with you.
- Be the love and truth you want to see from your students.
- Depend on God's strength and grace, even in your weakness.

Scripture Memorization Report Sheet

Name: _____ Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Week	Scripture	Due Date	Parent's Signature
1	John 3:18		
2	Ephesians 2:8-9		
3	Acts 16:30-31		
4	REVIEW		
5	2 Timothy 3:16-17		
6	2 Peter 1:21		
7	Hebrews 1:1-2		
8	REVIEW		
9	Psalms 119:9, 11		
10	Psalms 1:2		
11	Psalms 19:9-10		
12	REVIEW		
13	John 14:13		
14	1 John 1:9		
15	Ephesians 6:18		
16	REVIEW		
17	2 Chronicles 7:14		
18	Matthew 6:9-11		
19	Matthew 6:12-13		
20	REVIEW		
21	Romans 3:10-12, 23		
22	Romans 5:8; 6:23		
23	REVIEW		
24	John 3:16		
25	Romans 10:9		
26	1 Corinthians 15:3-4		
27	REVIEW		
28	2 Corinthians 3:18		
29	Titus 2:11-12		
30	Matthew 6:33		
31	REVIEW		
32	Proverbs 3:5-6		
33	1 Corinthians 13:4-8		
34	Ephesians 4:15-16		
35	REVIEW		

Birth

Salvation

Birth is the first step to growth. A baby leaves the familiar comfort of the womb where she is kept safe, warm, and fed, and rushes into a world full of strange sensations. Although unpleasant and disruptive, birth is necessary for every infant to flourish and to enjoy life to the fullest.

The Bible refers to salvation as the “new birth.” When we receive salvation, we begin a new, abundant spiritual life (John 10:10). We pass from eternal condemnation and spiritual death to the confident hope of eternal life (1 John 3:14). Our new life in Christ gives us a desire for God (Col. 3:1–2) and evidences itself in love and obedience to Him (1 John 3:7). Only in Christ can we escape sin’s bondage and flourish spiritually.

What's Salvation All About? (Part 1)

Target Truths

- The word *salvation* means “deliverance.”
- God provides salvation because He cares about our need and His glory.
- God offers salvation freely, but we must choose to accept it.
- Salvation frees us from sin and gives us the power to resist it.

Scripture Memory

John 3:18

What does it mean to be condemned? Have you ever heard of someone who has been condemned to death row? It means that person has been declared guilty of a terrible crime and must pay for that crime with his or her life.

In a similar way, all people are spiritually condemned. And though we are condemned spiritually, our sin affects every area of our lives—physical, emotional, and mental. Consequently, our spiritual death means eternal punishment and separation from a holy God.

But John 3:16 gives us hope—that is, the good news of God’s love seen in His son, Jesus. The next verse reveals that God did not send Jesus to condemn us, but to save us from our condemnation. Even though God justly condemns our sin, He chooses to offer us love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Jesus is the only way to pass from condemnation into life. John 3:18 states that those who do not believe in Jesus Christ are condemned, but those who do believe on Him are *not* condemned. God has provided salvation only through Christ, and He declares us innocent when we accept Christ’s sacrifice.

However, if we reject Christ, we cannot be delivered from condemnation (John 3:18). God the Father gave the greatest gift of all—His one and only, most beloved Son. If we reject Him by refusing to believe Him, we remain condemned in our sins and cannot be saved. Jesus Christ is the only way for us to know God’s forgiveness and salvation.

Teaching Strategy

This first lesson lays the foundation for understanding salvation. The first four lessons of this study cover basic truths about the gospel. As you teach, challenge your students not just to learn these truths, but also to apply them personally. Most importantly, urge them to trust Christ as their Savior if they have not done so.

This lesson answers some basic questions about salvation:

- What is it?
- Why do we need it?
- How do we receive it?
- What does God remove from us through salvation?
- What does God give us through salvation?

You could begin the lesson by posing these simple questions to your students and getting their responses before you present the teacher's lesson. This survey will encourage your students to think through this topic for themselves, and it will give you insight into your students' understanding of salvation.

The student's lesson begins with a study of seven terms associated with salvation. This lesson covers the first three, and the next student's lesson covers the remaining four. Don't assume that your students already understand the meanings of these terms. Sometimes we use terms without fully understanding what they mean or how they apply to our lives. Take time to discuss these terms and clearly communicate what they mean.

Word Power

- » **Salvation**—deliverance from the penalty and power of sin
- » **Incarnation**—Christ becoming fully human
- » **Regeneration**—the “new birth”; the act by which God gives us new, spiritual life
- » **Repentance**—the act of changing one's mind, thought, purpose, and views regarding a matter
- » **Faith**—belief; confident trust
- » **Condemnation**—a sentence to punishment for a crime
- » **Substitute**—one who takes the place of another

Teacher's Lesson

This lesson discusses the beginning of Christian life—salvation. Just as physical birth is the first step toward healthy maturity, salvation is the first step to growing in our relationship with God.

» What Is Salvation?

The word *salvation* means “deliverance.” *To save* means “to rescue, or set free.”

Q: What are some bad things might people need to be rescued from? Discuss.

A: People need deliverance from imprisonment, condemnation, and sickness.

All of these things are unpleasant, but they don't reveal our greatest need—that is, spiritual deliverance from sin.

» Why Does God Offer Salvation?

While it's true that God loves us and does not desire us to spend eternity in hell, there's more to the answer. The Bible reveals two main reasons why God offers us salvation.

• God Cares About Our Need

God is holy—that is, He is completely perfect and sinless (Ps. 5:4; Isa. 6:3). And because He is holy, He exercises justice by punishing sin (Isa. 30:18). But God is also love, and through His great love for us, He sent Jesus to save us from sin's dominion (John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).

In order to appreciate God's gift, we must first understand our problem. Let's look at three ways that we are ruled by sin.

◦ Prisoners of Sin

First, we are prisoners of sin.

Read John 8:31–34. Denying that they had ever been enslaved, the Pharisees failed to realize that they were actually captives of sin. They could not accept Christ as a solution until they recognized their problem and need for deliverance.

Each one of us is born with an inherited sin nature. The first people, Adam and Eve, disobeyed God and brought sin's curse upon themselves and all humans (Rom. 5:12). Sin is our master, and we have no choice but to obey it. Paul states that we are slaves to sin (Rom. 6:17). This doesn't mean we're entirely incapable of doing anything good, but it *does* mean that sin comes to us naturally and that we have no resistance to it. We can't escape this slavery on our own.

◦ Guilty and Condemned

All people are guilty of sin. Guilt isn't an emotion—that is, feeling ashamed for our wrong actions. The term *guilty* is a legal term, a state of being. God, our Judge, has determined that we have broken the law. He has passed the sentence of death upon us for breaking His law.

As a consequence of our sin, we are condemned to die spiritually (John 3:18; Eph. 2:1). While we are spiritually dead from the beginning of our existence, we will also experience a second spiritual death in the future. This occurs after our physical body dies, when our soul must spend eternity in hell without God.

As long as we remain in this condition, we cannot expect to enter heaven and enjoy God's glory for eternity.

◦ Sick, Blind, and Weak

Not only does sin control and condemn us, but it also deceives us.

Read Matthew 9:11–12, Romans 5:6, and 2 Corinthians 4:3–4. Though we might enjoy good physical health and perfect vision, sin leaves us spiritually sick and blind. We desperately need the Great Physician to heal us spiritually.

In addition to having a sin problem, we have a problem even *seeing* the problem. We don't realize how desperately we need salvation. We truly need a Savior who will set us free with His truth.

- **God Cares About His Glory**

The second major reason why God provides salvation is perhaps the most important. God offers us salvation for His own glory. 2 Corinthians 4:15 states that as grace—God’s undeserved goodness to us— extends to more and more people, it will inspire more praise for God.

God does everything above all for His glory, including His creation of people and the physical world (Isa. 43:6–7; Rev. 4:11). Salvation is a pivotal part of God’s plan to magnify His mercy and power.

Let’s look at three ways that Christ’s work of salvation brings glory to God.

- Christ’s Incarnation

Read John 1:14, 18, and 2 Corinthians 4:6. Christ revealed the glory of God in coming to Earth as a man. In doing so, He gave us knowledge of God’s glory. He is Immanuel, “God with us,” both fully God and fully human. He showed us God’s truth and love up close and in-person, demonstrating how to have an intimate, personal relationship with Him.

- Christ’s Death on the Cross

Read John 12:27–28, 32. Christ anticipates His coming death and cries out to the Father, asking Him to glorify the Father’s name. And in verse 32, Christ says that when He is lifted up from Earth, He will draw everyone to Himself. His death on the cross would be the means of bringing people to Himself.

The night before His crucifixion, Christ emphasized His desire for the Father’s glory in His prayer on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17). In verses 1, 5, and 24, Christ portrays His death as a means of bringing glory to the Father and to Himself. In verse 24, He asks the Father to use His death so that believers would be with Him and see Christ’s glory.

Christ’s sacrifice to pay for our sins was something that only God could plan and fulfill. Read and discuss the following passages.

- A Demonstration of God’s Love (Eph. 3:16–19)

Christ’s death reveals God’s awe-inspiring love for us. We declared ourselves enemies of God, not only breaking His law but also enjoying our sin. Yet in spite of our sin, God chose to show love and mercy to us. To our limited, human understanding, this kind of response doesn’t make sense. We gave God no reason to love us. He chose to love us because of who He is, and therefore deserves praise.

- A Demonstration of God’s Grace (Eph. 2:4–9)

Christ’s death reveals the grace of God that exceeds our human efforts. Verse 8 says that God provides salvation solely out of His own goodness. We can’t earn the right to be saved, nor can we take any credit for our salvation. It is something that only God can provide. This exclusivity points to God’s greatness.

- Christ’s Resurrection

God made His glory apparent in Christ’s resurrection, as well. Romans 6:4 states that God, by His glory, raised Christ from the dead. Only God could do such a miracle. And just as He alone has the power to raise Christ, He alone has the power to give us new, spiritual life.

Everything about God’s plan of salvation—from the coming of Christ, to His death and resurrection—points to the greatness of God. Our focus is drawn to His power, wisdom, and love, bringing glory to Him.

» How Does God Provide Salvation?

God took the initiative to provide salvation to completely undeserving people. Only He can save us from sin's domination.

- **A Deliverer for the Prisoners of Sin**

Read Hebrews 2:14–15. When Jesus Christ came to Earth, He became a flesh-and-blood human, and died as a human.

Q: According to this passage, why did Christ die? Discuss.

A: Christ died in order to use death itself to destroy the hold that Satan had over all people.

Through Christ's sacrifice, people could be delivered from Satan's rule over them. He broke our chains of sin and led us out of spiritual slavery.

- **A Substitute for the Condemned**

Read 1 Peter 2:24. Christ became a substitute for those who were condemned. He took our place by putting our sins on Himself when He died on the cross. And through His pain and suffering, He gave us life and spiritual health.

By taking the place of the guilty and condemned, Jesus makes it possible for us to be declared “not guilty” by God. He accepted our punishment, even though He was perfectly innocent. By His sacrifice, those who were spiritually dead can now live in Him.

- **A Healer for the Sick**

Read Luke 4:18–21. Shortly after formally beginning His ministry, Christ read from the Old Testament prophet, Isaiah (Isa. 61:1–2) and explained that He was the fulfillment of Isaiah's words.

Jesus came with a message of good news of healing from God.

- **Our Response: Believe**

God desires every person to accept His salvation by believing that Jesus Christ is . . .

- The Deliverer from sin's rule
- The Substitute for the guilty sinner
- The Healer of the sin-sick soul

We have seen that each of us has a spiritual need we can't fix on our own, and that God has lovingly provided the solution to our needs. What remains is your response.

Q: How do you receive salvation—God's provision for your greatest need?

A: Read Acts 16:31. All you have to do is believe Christ. This doesn't mean merely acknowledging facts about Him; it means to accept them personally as truth. God freely offers us salvation out of His goodness. He does all the work. We simply choose to accept His gift.

» What Are the Results of Salvation?

Our lesson would not be complete without taking a glimpse at the glorious results of receiving salvation.

- **Freedom Instead of Imprisonment**

Once we are saved, we are free from the following three aspects of sin:

- Freedom from Sin's Penalty

There is no more fear of death and condemnation. Instead of eternal punishment and separation, God gives us eternal life with Him.

- Freedom from Sin's Power

Though we will still sin, we have a choice as to whether or not to sin. God graciously helps us resist the temptation to sin.

- Freedom from Sin's Dominion

Though our world still suffers under the consequences of sin, we have hope that one day we will be completely free from sin's presence, never having to see sin rear its ugly head again (Phil. 1:3–6; Rev. 21:4).

- **Power Instead of Weakness**

Whereas we were blind, sick, and weak before salvation, Christ makes us strong with His power in the following ways:

- Christ gives us power to live righteously, where previously we were helpless (2 Pet. 1:3). We have the Holy Spirit who lives within us, convicts us of sin, and helps us (Rom. 8:26).
- Christ gives us power to resist the temptation to sin (1 Cor. 10:13; James 4:7).
- Christ gives us power not to fear death and what comes after (1 Cor. 15:51–57).

» Conclusion

This lesson presents an excellent opportunity to challenge your students with the gospel. Perhaps your students have heard the truths of this lesson a hundred times, or maybe they already claim to have accepted Jesus as their Savior. Even if that is the case, tell them about salvation as if they have never heard it before. For those who are not saved, this may be the first time they really listen and apply the gospel personally.

To further personalize this message, consider sharing your own experience of how God drew you to Himself through salvation. Pray that the Holy Spirit will use this lesson to convict hearts and draw lost souls to Christ.

In the next lesson, we'll explore this topic further, emphasizing our great need for it, and learning several terms to help us better understand God's work of salvation.

Student Manual Pages

LESSON 1

What's Salvation All About? (Part 1)

Teacher's Lesson

» What Is Salvation?

- *To save* literally means “to **rescue** _____ or **set free** _____.”

» Why Does God Offer Salvation?

- God cares about our **need** _____
 - **Prisoners** _____ of sin
 - Guilty and **condemned** _____
 - Sick, **blind** _____, and weak
- God cares about His **glory** _____
 - Christ's incarnation
 - Christ's **death** _____ on the cross
 - » A demonstration of God's **love** _____
 - » A demonstration of God's **grace** _____
 - Christ's **resurrection** _____

» How Does God Provide Salvation?

- A **Deliverer** _____ for the prisoners of sin (Heb. 2:14–15)
- A **Substitute** _____ for the condemned (1 Pet. 2:24)
- A **Healer** _____ for the sick (Luke 4:18–21)
- Our response: **believe** _____ (Acts 16:31)

» What Are the Results of Salvation?

- **Freedom** _____ instead of imprisonment
 - Freedom from sin's **penalty** _____
 - Freedom from sin's **power** _____
 - Freedom from sin's **dominion** _____
- **Power** _____ instead of weakness
 - Power to live righteously
 - Power to resist the temptation to sin
 - Power not to fear death

Word Power

- » **Salvation**—deliverance from the penalty and power of sin
- » **Incarnation**—Christ becoming fully human
- » **Regeneration**—the “new birth”; the act by which God gives us new, spiritual life
- » **Repentance**—the act of changing one's mind, thought, purpose, and views regarding a matter
- » **Faith**—belief; confident trust
- » **Condemnation**—a sentence to punishment for a crime
- » **Substitute**—one who takes the place of another

Student Manual Pages

Student Work

To help us understand what salvation is all about, we will spend the first two lessons studying seven major terms that are associated with salvation—three in this lesson and four in the next lesson.

» Repentance

The word *repent* means to change one's mind, thought, purpose, and views regarding a matter. It means turning away from one direction so that you can begin to move in the opposite direction.

Read 1 Thessalonians 1:8–10. In his greeting to the Thessalonians, Paul commends these believers for their testimony. Their conversion was divided into a distinct *before* and *after*.

- To whom did the Thessalonians turn (v. 9)? God
- From what did they turn (v. 9)? Idols
- What activities did turning to Christ include (vv. 9–10)?
Serving God and waiting for Jesus' return
- Which came first, turning *to* or turning *from*?
They turned to Christ first.

Notice that turning *to* Christ is necessary in order to really turn *from* sin. A person may turn *from* sin without turning *to* the Lord. This isn't true repentance; it's reformation. Many people make an attempt to clean up their lives, but in doing so, never accept the Lord. They may seem to make some progress by modifying their behavior, but without Christ, their hearts are still locked in the grip of sin.

However, if a person turns *to* Christ, then he or she will turn *from* sin by necessity. Christ will not tolerate sin. We can't hold onto our sin while accepting Jesus. So the emphasis of biblical repentance is not on turning *from* sin as much as it is on turning *to* Christ.

Hymn writer Helen Lemmel reflects this idea in her hymn, "Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus."

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
look full in His wonderful face,
and the things of earth will grow strangely dim,
in the light of His glory and grace.*

When we see our sin the way God sees it and accept Christ, then we will stop pursuing sin.

Repentance Evokes Emotion

Repentance isn't just cold, intellectual assent to facts. It affects our whole person.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:9–10.

- How does a realistic view of sin make us feel?
It produces grief or sorrow over our sin.
- But experiencing regret or feeling sorry about our sin doesn't necessarily mean that we have repented. What does God intend these feelings to prompt us toward?
Repentance that leads to salvation

Repentance Is God's Will

Read 2 Peter 3:8–10. God's timing is not our timing. Because He created time and controls it, He's not bound to it like we humans are. We may question why Christ has not yet returned to Earth, but the answer is that He has His own timing.

- What reason does Peter give for Christ waiting to return (v. 9)?
He desires all people to repent.
- What does God not desire (v. 9)?
He doesn't desire that anyone should perish.
- According to Acts 17:30, what does God command to all people?
Repent

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- In Luke 13:1–5, what does Christ say will happen to those who won't repent?
They will all perish.

Repentance Is Given by God

Read 2 Timothy 2:24–26. When we share the gospel, we shouldn't have an argumentative attitude. Instead, we should try to teach with love and gentleness.

- Who gives repentance? God
- To what does godly repentance lead?
It leads to knowledge of the truth.
- According to Romans 2:4, what is the purpose of God's goodness to us?
He intends His goodness to lead us to repentance.

» Faith

According to Acts 20:21, faith is required for repentance. God commands us to repent, and He leads us to repent. Yet we must respond by choosing to believe Him. Faith for repentance includes accepting the truth of Christ, and choosing to rely on Him completely. Without faith, there can be no true repentance.

Read the following verses and record the results of exercising faith.

- Acts 26:18, Romans 6:22—Sanctification
- Romans 5:1—Justification
- Galatians 3:26—Becoming children of God
- 1 Peter 1:5—Salvation

» Regeneration

Through regeneration, God gives us a new, divine life.

Read John 3:3. Christ tells Nicodemus that no one can see God's kingdom without regeneration.

- According to this verse, how is regeneration described?
It's described as being born again.

How is regeneration described in the following verses?

- John 5:24—Passed from death to life
- 2 Corinthians 5:17—The old life is gone; the new life has come.

Who regenerates us, according to the following verses?

- John 1:12–13—Regeneration is not done by human will or strength, but by God.
- John 3:6–7—The Holy Spirit

What does God use to regenerate us?

- James 1:18—He uses His will through the Word of God.
- 1 Peter 1:23—He uses the Word of God.

What's Salvation All About? (Part 2)

Target Truths

- Salvation is necessary because God cannot tolerate sin, but people are sinners.
- Salvation includes regeneration, redemption, remission, justification, and reconciliation.
- Regeneration is the new birth and means “to be born again.”
- Redemption means “to be set free by the payment of a ransom.”
- Remission means “a reduction; a cancellation of a debt.”
- Justification means “a declaration of righteousness.”
- Reconciliation means “to restore to friendship or harmony.”

Scripture Memory

Ephesians 2:8-9

These verses can be divided into three parts.

1. God's grace, the means by which He offers salvation
2. Faith, the means by which God's grace comes to us
3. Our inability to save ourselves through our own efforts

• How God Saves Us

Do we receive salvation by being kind to others and trying to obey God? No. Because we are sinners before a holy God, we can't do anything in our own power to save ourselves. We're incapable of fixing our sinful condition. Our only salvation comes through God's grace, by His initiative and intervention. Grace is the undeserved goodness that God gives freely to us. That's why salvation is called His gift—it isn't earned in any way. God doesn't reward us with salvation. He graciously and freely gives it to us though we don't deserve it.

• How We Receive Salvation

According to these verses, it comes to us by faith. Faith is not something we do to earn our salvation. Faith is trusting God and choosing to accept His truth personally. Another word for faith is *belief*. We believe that God will do as He says.

• Works Can't Save Us

Third, what are ways by which we cannot be saved? This was already implied by our answer to the first question, but Paul spells it out clearly for us so that there is no misunderstanding. We're incapable of saving ourselves. Why can't our "good" works save us? For one thing, if salvation were based on our good deeds, then we would brag about our actions and trust ourselves, not God, for deliverance. With God's plan, however, the only thing we can brag about is how gracious God is in giving us the free gift of salvation. As Paul stated in 1 Corinthians 1:26–29, God chose to save the foolish, weak, and despised people of this world—the nobodies of the world—so that no one could take credit for God's work. By depending entirely on God, instead of ourselves, we give all the glory to Him.

Word Power

- » **Righteousness**—holiness; God's moral standard
 - » **Regeneration**—rebirth; the act by which God gives us new, spiritual life
 - » **Redemption**—the act of buying back or regaining
 - » **Remission**—a reduction; a cancellation of a debt
 - » **Justification**—a declaration of righteousness
 - » **Imputation**—the act of crediting something to a person
 - » **Reconciliation**—restoration to friendship or harmony
-

Teaching Strategy

This lesson continues our study of the basics of salvation by looking at two main questions:

- Why is salvation necessary?
- What does salvation mean?

Salvation is necessary because God is holy, and therefore, He cannot tolerate sin. However, He loves each of us and desires to have a close relationship with us. And because all people are sinners who deserve eternal punishment, we can't have a relationship with God. We must understand the holiness of God and our own sinfulness in order to appreciate the necessity of salvation.

We can more fully understand the idea of salvation by studying terms related to it. The first of these terms, regeneration, was briefly introduced in the last student's lesson. We will examine the others in this week's student's lesson.

Present these terms clearly to make sure your students understand their meaning. These terms all have to do with God's work of salvation, but each highlights a different aspect of it. By studying these nuances of salvation, we see a fuller picture of the gospel.

Teacher's Lesson

In this lesson, we'll continue to learn about salvation by discussing our need for salvation and the definition of salvation.

» The Necessity of Salvation

To understand why salvation is necessary, we need to look at three truths.

- **God Is Holy, but People Are Sinners**

Let's break down this thought into two parts.

- God Is Holy

God's holiness entails two aspects. First, He is morally pure (Isa. 6:3; Matt. 5:48). There is no sin or darkness in Him at all (1 John 1:5). God is so holy that He cannot even look at sin (Hab. 1:13).

Second, God's holiness also means that He is separate and above everything (Isa. 57:15). He is exalted, lifted up on high over all of the earth. Our God is unique—there is no other like Him.

- People Are Sinners

Read Romans 5:12. Because Adam and Eve were the first man and woman, they represented the entire human race. Their choice affected every single person who came after them. Not only have we inherited a sin nature, but each of us also makes a choice to sin (Rom. 3:23).

The Book of Isaiah expresses the same truth.

Read Isaiah 64:6. God is holy, but people are sinners. God's holiness separates Him from sinners. If everyone is sinful, then God is separated from each person because of his or her sin.

So then, how can we be reunited with God? How can we have a personal, intimate relationship with Him? This is possible only through salvation.

- **God Lives in Heaven, but Sinners Must Go to Hell**

- God Lives in Heaven

In Matthew 6:9, Christ addressed His prayer to the Father in heaven. Psalm 11:4 also states that God dwells in heaven. Numerous other passages refer to God as "the God of heaven" (Ezra 1:2; Neh. 1:4; Dan. 2:37; Rev. 11:13).

God dwells in a place removed from the physical world. It is the place to which we go after death if we have trusted Christ as our Savior.

However, if we have not chosen to trust Christ, we are condemned to spend eternity in hell.

- Sinners Must Go to Hell

Read 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9.

Q: What do these verses teach about the destiny of those who reject Jesus? Discuss.

A: Those who don't accept the gospel will experience everlasting destruction and separation from God.

John 3:18 teaches us that sinners are born already condemned to hell. Because of our sin, we are condemned to live for eternity in hell, separated from the holy, spectacular God of heaven.

But God does not desire eternal punishment and separation for His people. He desires that we might fellowship with Him and behold His glory.

Read John 17:24. On the night before His death, Christ prays to the Father and reveals His motive for His sacrificial death. In verse 24, Jesus states that He desires His followers to be where He will be—in heaven—in order to gaze on His glory.

God desires us to be in heaven with Him and see His glory. Therefore, we need salvation in order to fulfill this purpose.

- **God Loves People, but People Naturally Hate God**

- God Loves People

Although God cannot tolerate our sin, He still loves us.

Read Romans 5:8. Our sin is an affront to God. When someone we know is unkind to us, it's difficult for us to show love to that person. When we sin, we make ourselves enemies of God. Yet He still loves us and desires good for us.

John 3:16 states that God loves the world even though it rebels against Him.

- People Naturally Hate God

None of us enjoys being told we are wrong. We are most comfortable in our sin when we compare ourselves to other people who are “worse” than us. But when we view God in His holiness, we see our sin as repulsive.

Read John 3:19–20.

Q: According to these verses, why do people naturally hate God? Discuss.

A: The holiness of God illuminates their sin.

When people love sin, they necessarily hate God. And even as God shows His love through Jesus, people still reject Him. During Christ's ministry on Earth, He healed and blessed people. Yet they responded by crucifying Him as though He were a criminal.

» The Definition of Salvation

Perhaps the best way for us to define and understand salvation is to study five terms that describe what salvation is all about.

- **Regeneration (John 3:3)**

Regeneration means “rebirth.” We learned about salvation as a “new birth” in the previous lesson. Jesus talked about this concept with a man named Nicodemus in John 3.

Read John 3:1–8. Nicodemus was a Pharisee, a member of a Jewish religious sect known for their external piety. Pharisees took great measures to obey every letter of the Old Testament Law and, in doing so, missed the spirit of the law. However, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for misrepresenting God and missing the whole point—to highlight humanity's need for salvation.

Not all Pharisees were disingenuous, though. Nicodemus had honest questions, and so he came to talk to Jesus. Jesus opened the conversation by emphasizing the need for a “new birth,” stating that without it, people could not experience God's kingdom.

In response to Jesus' statement about the need for a new birth, Nicodemus poses an unusual question—“How can a person re-enter his mother's womb and be born again?” Obviously, Jesus wasn't talking about physical birth, but spiritual.

Look at John 3:5 again. “Born of water” refers to physical birth. Before each baby is born, he or she is surrounded by a sac of amniotic fluid in the womb. When it’s time for the baby to be born, that sac breaks.

Not only are we born with a physical body, but we’re born with an immaterial part as well—the soul. This is the part that will never die, even when our physical body dies. This is the part of us that needs a new birth. Our soul needs to be raised from the dead in sin to new life in God.

How does regeneration change us? It begins our transformation into people who are like Christ (2 Cor. 3:18). This means change in what we think, how we act, and what we desire. We’ll look at specific areas of transformation later in this study. Just as physical birth ushers us into a completely different way of life, so does spiritual birth.

- **Redemption (1 Pet. 1:18–19)**

To redeem means “to buy or regain something.” When a person purchases something, he or she makes an exchange—payment given for something gained. The word *redeemed* in 1 Peter 1:18–19 means “to set free by the payment of a ransom.” This term calls to mind a scene familiar to those living in the first century.

A person could become a slave in many different ways—through birth, war, or failing to pay a debt, to name a few. This person had no autonomy but had to do what his or her master dictated. However, a slave’s master could make the choice to set that slave free. The master would first purchase the slave by paying a certain amount. After assuming ownership of the slave, the master could then legally declare that person free, no longer a slave.

Jesus redeemed us—that is, He purchased us from sin’s dominion by paying for our freedom with His death.

- The Price of Redemption

What price did Christ pay for us? The answer to this question is found in 1 Peter 1:18–19.

Read 1 Peter 1:18–19.

Q: What price did Christ have to pay for your salvation?

A: Jesus Christ gave up His life to purchase sinners.

Jesus’ life was not taken from Him; He gave it up willingly to pay for our sins. He died in our place.

- The Result of Redemption

As a result of redemption, we are no longer slaves of sin.

Read Galatians 5:1. Here, Paul urges the Galatian believers not to live as though they were still slaves to sin, but instead to live in the freedom that Christ had given them. The Galatian Christians, though born again, believed that it was necessary to follow all the Old Testament Law to *really* be saved. Paul corrected them, emphasizing that we can’t do anything to earn our salvation.

Christ sets us free from our old master, sin. After salvation, we are free to live a life glorifying God. Before, we couldn’t obey God on our own, but now, we can obey Him by His grace. And after salvation, we can one day behold God’s glory in heaven, just as Jesus prayed in John 17:24.

- **Remission (Heb. 9:22)**

Remission means “a reduction; a cancellation of a debt.” When we speak of remission in salvation, we refer to God canceling, or forgiving, our sin debt. Because God desires a relationship with us, His first step is to eliminate the barrier of sin.

Read Isaiah 43:25. When God says He will do something, He will do it, because He always speaks truth. He has promised to remove our sin. The word *remember* in this verse means God will never call our sins to mind once He has forgiven them.

Psalm 103:12 states that God takes our sin away from us, as far as the east is from the west—which is to say, He completely obliterates it. That’s not to say we won’t have to endure any consequences of our actions. But it does mean that once we accept salvation, our former sin will no longer condemn us.

By sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for us, God dealt a deathblow to our sin. Jesus Christ paid your penalty for you. Therefore, He will lay aside your sin and punishment if you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior.

- **Justification (Acts 13:38–39)**

To justify means “to declare righteous.” This is a legal term that describes our standing before God. Through salvation, God declares the sinner righteous—that is, right with God. How can God do this? Can He change the fact that each person has sinned? Does God have to rewrite history in order to declare a sinner righteous? To answer these questions, let’s examine this word *justification*. Its definition contains two parts.

- The Forgiveness of Sin

This part of justification is similar to remission. Because Christ applied our sin debt to Himself and literally died in our place, He has “laid aside” our sins and forgiven them.

Read Acts 13:38–39. Only through Christ can we have hope of payment for our sin debt. Only Christ’s death could make this forgiveness possible.

Suppose a defendant stands before a judge and enters a plea of guilty. She is guilty as charged and says so. The judge asks her one simple question: “Are you sorry?”

“Yes, I am,” replies the defendant.

“Then, you are forgiven and free to go!” the judge proclaims.

Does that seem like justice to you, to declare someone “not guilty” just because she is sorry? Certainly not. A person’s crime is not pardoned unless there is some legal basis for doing so.

Q: On what basis can God forgive our sins?

A: He is the one whom we sin against. He has the authority and power to forgive our debt to Him. Because Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself to pay our debt, and God has accepted His sacrifice, then God has “legal” grounds for forgiving our sin.

Through Christ’s death, God fully punished our sin. Justice had been done, so now we can be declared “not guilty” because of Christ.

- The Imputation of Righteousness

To understand this phrase, we must understand the word *imputation*.

— Meaning—“to credit something to a person.”

Remission describes something—our sin—being taken away. *Impute* describes something—righteousness—being given to us.

Are we naturally righteous? No. We are naturally sinners. No one is inherently righteous. The best we can do—that is, our good deeds—are just like filthy, bloody rags in the sight of God (Isa. 64:6).

Any good in us is directly from God, by His grace. He chooses to impart Christ’s righteousness to us at salvation. When God looks at us, He sees us through the lens of Jesus’ righteousness.

- **Reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18)**

This word means “restoration to friendship or harmony.” For reconciliation, there must first be a break in relationship. Remember when we discussed that God loves people, but people naturally hate God? Because we are enemies of God, we need reconciliation. People hate God and need to be “restored to friendship or harmony with God” through Jesus Christ.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:18. Only when a person accepts Jesus Christ as Savior can he or she experience this restoration. Until a person decides to trust Christ’s sacrifice, he hates God and must bear the penalty of sin upon himself.

This is a key truth to understand. Salvation is more than “fire insurance”—that is, accepting salvation only to escape eternal punishment in hell. Gaining heaven is simply one aspect of a bigger gift—reconciliation with the One who created you to fellowship with Him. Heaven is wonderful because it’s filled with God’s glory and His presence. But heaven is not the main goal of reconciliation. The main goal is a restored personal relationship with God.

» Conclusion

We’ve looked at our need for salvation—that is, a way to restore the relationship between sinful people and a holy God. The terms *regeneration*, *redemption*, *remission*, *justification*, and *reconciliation* all describe what God does for us when we choose to accept Christ.

Have you accepted Christ’s sacrifice? Do you have new spiritual life? Have you recognized that Christ purchased you with His blood and removed your sin debt? Have you experienced the freedom and forgiveness of God? Do you have a personal relationship with Him? If not, make the decision to accept Christ today. Don’t wait.

In the next lesson, we’ll look at how to make the decision to trust Christ, and what we must believe about God and about ourselves.

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LESSON 2

What's Salvation All About? (Part 2)

Teacher's Lesson

» The Necessity of Salvation

- God is holy _____, but people are sinners _____
- God lives in heaven _____, but sinners must go to hell _____
- God loves _____ people, but people naturally hate _____ God

» The Definition of Salvation

- Regeneration _____ (John 3:3)—“rebirth”
- Redemption _____ (1 Pet. 1:18–19)—“to buy back or regain something”
 - The price of redemption: Christ’s death
 - The result of redemption: no longer slaves to sin
- Remission _____ (Heb. 9:22)—“a reduction; a cancellation of a debt”
- Justification _____ (Acts 13:38–39)—“a declaration of righteousness”
 - The forgiveness of sin

- The imputation of righteousness

» *Impute* means “to credit _____ something to a person”

- Reconciliation _____ (2 Cor. 5:18)—“restoration to friendship or harmony”

Word Power

- » **Righteousness**—holiness; God’s moral standard
- » **Regeneration**—rebirth; the act by which God gives us new, spiritual life
- » **Redemption**—the act of buying back or regaining
- » **Remission**—a reduction; a cancellation of a debt
- » **Justification**—a declaration of righteousness
- » **Imputation**—the act of crediting something to a person
- » **Reconciliation**—restoration to friendship or harmony

Student Work

In our last lesson, we studied three terms associated with salvation. Using your own words, define them.

- Repentance: Answers will vary. _____

- Faith: Answers will vary. _____

- Regeneration: Answers will vary. _____

In this lesson, we will study four additional terms related to salvation.

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» Redemption

Redemption means “to purchase or buy back.” In 1 Peter 1:18–19, this word means “to set free by the payment of a ransom.” It calls to mind a person in the first century who might buy a slave and then set that slave free.

- According to Titus 2:13–14, from what did Christ redeem us? Sin
- Since Christ has bought us back from sin, should we continue to sin? No
- Why did He redeem us?
He redeemed us to purify us and make us His own.

Christ purchased us for Himself. We belong to Him. Because He owns us, sin no longer rules us.

Think About It

- Are you redeemed? Answers will vary.
- What did Christ do in order to redeem us?
He died on the cross and gave Himself for us.
- In what ways does your life reflect Christ’s ownership?
Answers will vary.

The Price of Redemption

- According to Galatians 3:13, from what are we redeemed?
We’re redeemed from the curse of the law—condemnation for sin.

Christ removed the curse by becoming a curse for us. He took our place.

The Result of Redemption

- According to 1 Corinthians 6:19–20, what do we become after redemption?
We become the temple of the Holy Spirit.
- Who owns your body? God
- Why does He own it?
He bought it.
- What should we do since we have been purchased by God?
We should honor and glorify God with our bodies.

» Remission

Remission means “to put away or to do away with.” In salvation, it means that God has canceled, or forgiven, our sin debt.

Read Luke 24:44–48. After Christ’s resurrection, He appeared to His disciples and gave them His final message before He ascended back into heaven. He was the living proof that He had fulfilled the prophetic words spoken before His death.

- Why can the message of forgiveness be preached?
It can be preached because Christ died and rose again.
- For whom is this message of repentance?
It’s for all nations.

Preaching repentance to all nations, however, is more than a “responsibility.” It is a great privilege! We should be so thrilled and excited about this glorious Savior that we would want the whole world to know about Him.

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How Is Our Sin Remitted?

In Acts 2:38, Peter preached to the Jews and explained how they might receive forgiveness for sin.

- What did Peter say they must do?
He said they needed to repent and be baptized.

And in Acts 10:43, Peter states that, in order to receive forgiveness, the Gentiles must believe in Christ.

- What does God's law require for remission (Heb. 9:22)?
It requires shed blood.
- Whose blood do you think this verse is talking about?
It refers to Jesus' blood.
- According to Hebrews 10:14, 17–18, how many times must a sacrifice be offered for our sin? Once

» Justification

To justify means “to declare one innocent or righteous.” Only a judge can legally declare someone just. Because it is God whom we sin against, only He can pardon us.

How Are We Justified?

How are we justified according to the following verses?

- Galatians 2:16—Faith or belief
- Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7—God's grace
- Romans 5:1—Faith
- Romans 5:9—Christ's blood

God makes justification possible through Christ's sacrifice, and we apply it to ourselves personally by accepting Christ through faith.

The Results of Justification

What are the blessed results of justification according to the following verses?

- Romans 5:1—We have peace with God.
- Titus 3:7—God makes us heirs of eternal life.

The Cost of Justification

- According to Romans 3:24, how much does justification cost us? Why?
It costs us nothing, because it is a gift.

» Reconciliation

Reconciliation means “to restore friendship and harmony.” To reconcile means to make peace with an enemy. Before salvation, we are enemies of God.

The Need for Reconciliation

- According to Romans 8:5–8, why are people at odds with God?
Their flesh—sin nature—rules them.

The Means of Reconciliation

Read Colossians 1:19–22. Christ is preeminent because He is God. As God, He is able to reconcile us to the Father through His sacrificial death.

- According to this passage, into what kind of people does God make us through reconciliation?
He makes us holy and without blame.

So we see that reconciliation—like justification and remission—is something that God does by His grace. We cannot do anything to change our state before God. The only way we can be saved is through faith in Christ, who died on the cross and shed His precious blood to redeem, justify, and reconcile us.

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» Summary

Complete the following.

- Through God's justification, I have been declared innocent or righteous.
- Through God's redemption, I have been purchased by His blood.
- Through God's regeneration, I have been born again.
- Through God's reconciliation, I have peace with Him.
- Through God's remission, my sins have been forgiven.

God does these things when I repent of my sin through faith.

- Have you trusted Christ alone to save you from your sins?
Answers will vary.

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Target Truths

- Salvation is important because it affects both our current and future conditions.
 - To receive salvation, I must believe that Jesus is God; I am a sinner; Jesus paid my sin debt by His death; and He rose from the dead.
-
-

Scripture Memory

Acts 16:30-31

This conversation occurred during Paul and Silas's imprisonment in Philippi (Acts 16:16-40). Read this entire account with your class and then lead them in the following discussion to help them understand the context of these verses.

Why were Paul and Silas brought before the city rulers (16:16-19)? Paul removed an evil spirit from a slave girl. This angered her masters who had been making money off her fortune telling. They accused Paul and Silas before the city leaders.

- What charge did these men make against Paul and Silas (16:20-21)? They said that Paul and Silas were Jews who caused trouble by teaching certain practices that were illegal for Romans to observe.
- How did the magistrates respond to this charge (16:22-23)? They beat Paul and Silas and threw them into prison.
- Who had the responsibility of keeping them secure in prison (16:23)? A jailer was given the responsibility to guard them.
- What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight in the Philippian prison (16:25)? They were praying and singing praises to God.
- What happened soon after midnight (16:26)? A strong earthquake shook the prison, opened the doors, and unfastened the prisoners' restraints.
- When the jailer saw what had happened, what did he try to do (16:27)? He tried to kill himself because if all the prisoners escaped, he would be punished.
- Who stopped the jailer from killing himself (16:28)? Paul stopped him by announcing that none of the prisoners had escaped.
- What question did this desperate man ask Paul and Silas (16:30)? The jailer asked, "What must I do to be saved?"

- What might have prompted him to ask this question of Paul and Silas? Perhaps he had heard them praying and singing, or maybe he had heard something about the message they had been proclaiming in his city.
- After answering the jailer, what did Paul and Silas say to him (16:32)? They spoke God’s Word to him.
- What did the jailer do for Paul and Silas (16:33)? He washed their wounds, and the jailer and his family were baptized.
- Where did Paul and Silas go after they were released from prison (16:40)? They went to Lydia’s house (see 16:13–15).

Teaching Strategy

This lesson begins with a suggested exercise to help you gauge your students’ understanding of salvation. As suggested, you can do this by instructing them to write a brief essay, or you could hold a small group discussion or class brainstorming session. Some students may immediately answer the question with the response, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.” Of course, that’s correct, but make sure they know what that really means.

The teacher’s lesson has two basic parts—the importance of the question and the answer to the question. The first part gives a description of the present condition of an unsaved person and then contrasts him or her with the saved person. The second part exposes some popular misconceptions of how a person is saved. (You may want to ask the class to add a few more of their own.) Finally, the question is answered not only by “believe,” but also by looking at what we must believe for salvation. This discussion should encourage your students to dig deep into Scripture and study it for themselves, rather than to simply repeat Scripture phrases for answers.

The student’s lesson looks at other verses that tell us what does and does not save a person. Using these verses, the lesson teaches that we cannot earn salvation by our activities (e.g., fearing God, giving to charity, praying, or baptism). We merely accept it by believing in our hearts that Jesus is God and that He paid for our sins. It also discusses God’s part and people’s part in salvation.

Word Power

- » **Saved**—the state of having accepted and believed Jesus Christ
- » **Unsaved**—the state of not having accepted and believed Jesus Christ
- » **Baptism**—a visual aid that signifies identification as Christ’s follower; commanded by Christ
- » **Belief**—faith; confident trust in something or someone

Teacher’s Lesson

We have learned many truths about salvation in the last two lessons. It’s possible to know these truths without believing them for yourself. Now that we know them, we’ll answer the question, “How do I receive salvation?”

The main purpose of this lesson is to encourage your students to apply their knowledge of salvation personally and to accept God's salvation if they have not yet done so. To determine how well your students understand salvation, instruct them to write a short essay in class which answers the question, "How do I receive salvation?" Give the class fifteen minutes to answer this question. Allow them to use their Bibles and ask them to support their answer. Collect these papers and examine the students' answers after class. This will help you tailor your teaching of this lesson in a way that will meet their needs.

» The Importance of the Question

"How do I receive salvation?" is an extremely important question with eternal consequences. First, we'll examine the importance of this question.

Q: Why is this an important question? What's at stake? Discuss.

To understand its importance, let's examine how salvation impacts our present and future lives.

• **The Present Condition of Humanity**

◦ The Unsaved

— No Joy or Understanding

Proverbs and Ecclesiastes show us that Solomon, a famous king of Israel, received great wisdom from God. In Solomon's writing, we see his observations of people who did not know God.

Read Proverbs 13:15. The present condition of unsaved people is that nothing truly makes them happy or satisfied. Solomon says that the road of life for a sinner is difficult and full of pain.

Sin separates people from the true joy, peace, and satisfaction found only in God. Without God, we have only empty echoes of these things.

Q: How does Ephesians 4:18 describe the mindset of an unsaved person?

A: Because of sin, unsaved people don't understand God or His Word.

First Corinthians 2:14 points out that the unsaved cannot receive or understand the things of the Spirit of God. They have no understanding, viewing the things of God as foolishness. Without the Spirit of God to guide their understanding, the unsaved simply can't understand spiritual things.

— Corrupt and Contaminated

Sin saturates the life of the unsaved. Before salvation, we are thoroughly corrupted and contaminated by it.

Read Titus 1:15. Sin not only prevents understanding and causes unhappiness, but it also corrupts and contaminates.

The unsaved live in a spiritual winter. They can't experience the sunshine of God's glory or the warmth of His presence. Their future is a barren landscape, ending ultimately with eternal separation from God in hell. Even here they will endure unending corruption (Mark 9:48).

- The Saved

- Joyful

Despite worldly success, the unsaved can't experience true joy because sin separates them from the only source of joy—God. The saved, however, are quite different. They rejoice even during times of trouble because they trust God and experience His comfort.

Read Psalm 21:6–7. In this psalm, David speaks of the great blessings on the king who depends on God. God's glory shines out even more brightly as we depend on Him.

Q: What makes the saved able to rejoice—especially in times of difficulty?

A: The saved can rejoice because they trust in God. We know that God ultimately desires good for us, and we can trust that everything He allows in our life is working to make us more like Him. Because God is in control, we know He carefully plans everything we experience.

The saved can rejoice because they know God personally. Satan's blinding power has been removed, and now they see the light and glory of Christ and the gospel (2 Cor. 4:4).

- Understand Spiritual Things

Christ opened the way to the Father for us so that we might know Him (1 John 5:20). Not only do we know God, but we also begin to understand spiritual matters because God, the Holy Spirit, dwells in us and teaches us.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:9–14. We can't understand God's thoughts before salvation because we are spiritually dead. But after salvation, the Holy Spirit lives in us and helps us to understand God's words.

The unsaved can read God's Word and understand it on a superficial level, but their comprehension stops there.

- Pure

The Bible teaches that Jesus Christ came to Earth to redeem us and cleanse us to be His own special people (Titus 2:14). Peter draws our attention to the same truth in 1 Peter 1:22. The unsaved are corrupted and contaminated, but Christians have been purified and cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Salvation makes all the difference in the present between joy and hopelessness, and between spiritual understanding and ignorance. But it makes an enormous difference in our future lives, as well.

- **The Eternal Condition of Humanity**

The answer to the question, "How do I receive salvation?" determines the eternal condition of each person. Because all of us have an immortal soul, all people will live forever in either heaven or hell.

- The Unsaved Spend Eternity in Torment

- Eternally

Read Mark 9:45–48. In this passage, Christ warns about the serious consequences of sin. Christ isn't saying that mutilating ourselves will somehow make us holy. His point is that hell is such an awful place of torment that we must do whatever it takes to avoid sin. Sin is a heart issue that must be addressed on a spiritual level.

Christ speaks of hell as a place of unimaginable horror, filled with darkness (Jude 6). The fire burns forever, and the inhabitants of hell never die. They experience eternal pain and torment. Jude 6 and 13 also emphasize that this terrible place endures forever. The agony of hell will never end.

— Physically

Though it's the immaterial part of us that continues to live on after death, the Bible indicates that we still retain our senses. Christ relates some of the aspects of hell in Luke 16.

Read Luke 16:19–31. Unlike Jesus' parables, this story includes specific details and names. It's a sobering account of a man who rejected God's truth and suffers eternal consequences. While on Earth, he lived in luxury and comfort, and likely did not see His need for God.

After death, this man fully experienced the pain and suffering of hell.

- He Has Ears

He could hear the reply of Abraham denying his requests for comfort (16:25).

- He Has Eyes

The man could see all around him. The flames engulfed him. Yet through this torment, he could see the comfort of Lazarus (16:23).

- He Has a Tongue

He wanted Lazarus to bring water to cool his tongue. The rich man was able to speak (16:24).

- He Has a Mind

This man in hell clearly understood his torment. He realized the implications of his situation and desired to warn his family. His mind was awake and fully aware of reality. Detailed memories of his former life were still in his mind. At this point, he understood the need for salvation before physical death.

- He Feels Pain

He feels the torment of the flames. The heat is all around him, and he cries out for deliverance.

Make no mistake. When people are condemned to hell, they do not merely cease to exist. They dwell eternally—forever—in a body that is as real as the physical body. They dwell in a real place of fiery torment.

◦ The Saved Spend Eternity in Heaven

In contrast, the saved have a place reserved for them in heaven and will go there after death.

Read John 14:2–3. When Jesus Christ returned to heaven, He began preparing for Christians to dwell there. This glorious eternal dwelling place of the saved is described in Revelation 21–22.

The world to come is as real as the world we now live in. This is the wonderfully real, eternal home of the saved.

While sinners remain forever separated from the glory and majesty of heaven, believers will be dazzled with the love, kindness, amazing power, and beauties of God as He continually reveals His glory to them forever and ever. Note Ephesians 2:7. We don't know the extent of God's riches that He will show to us one day, but believers will one day find out. However, the unsaved will never know them or see them.

» The Answer to the Question

We've seen the implications of this important question. Now, let's look at the answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Review briefly Acts 16:12–34. The Philippian jailer, trembling at the power of God displayed in the earthquake and the wisdom of God manifested in the apostle Paul, fell down at Paul's feet and asked this question.

There are some interesting things about Paul's answer—notably, what he *didn't* say.

• Wrong Answers

Paul mentioned none of the following things in his answer about salvation.

- Be Baptized

Paul didn't tell this man that he must be baptized. Baptism came later—after salvation. Baptism does not give us eternal life.

- Join the Church

Paul did not tell this man to join a church, or even attend one, in order to be saved.

- Do Good Deeds

Paul did not tell the jailer to start doing good deeds. In his letter to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul explicitly teaches that our good works can't save us (Eph. 2:8–9). Remember from our discussion of justification that none of us can do good in our own power.

- Clean Up Your Life

Neither did Paul instruct the Philippian jailer to clean up his life before receiving Christ. While our lives certainly change by God's power after salvation, we don't have the ability to change ourselves on our own.

Q: What are some other things that people believe will send them to heaven or make them a "good person"? Discuss.

• The Right Answer

- Believe

The word *belief* is synonymous with the word *faith*. As we learned in Lesson 1, to believe means to confidently trust something or someone.

To receive salvation, we must believe what God says about Himself and about our need for Him. This belief is more than just intellectual assent that something is true. It means to accept this information as true for myself—that is, to apply it personally. We make a conscious choice to believe something, and as a result, it changes us inwardly and outwardly.

Our faith is only as good as the object of our faith. It doesn't matter how sincere or earnest we are because the strength of our faith isn't what saves us. It's the object of our faith—Jesus Christ alone—who saves us.

- What I Must Believe About Jesus

What must we believe about Jesus to be saved? In Acts 16, Paul and Silas pointed the Philippian jailer to Jesus Christ, noting several important aspects of who He is.

— Lord—Christ is our Master

The word *Lord* is a title of respect and whole-hearted commitment. It means that Christ is our Master and Ruler. Before salvation, sin was our master, and we had no choice but to obey it. After salvation, Christ becomes our new Master. And as such, He requires obedience and full dependence from us (Rom. 6:17–18).

— Jesus—“Jehovah Saves”

The name *Jesus* means “Jehovah saves.” Jesus is the only way to salvation (John 14:6), and His name points to His exclusivity. Only He lived a sinless life and obeyed God perfectly. Only He provided the necessary sacrifice to pay for our sins.

— Christ—“Anointed One”

Christ means “Anointed One.” The word denotes someone who is specially chosen by God. Again, this emphasizes Jesus as our exclusive Savior. Christ alone has the power to offer true salvation because He alone is God.

When we see who Jesus is—our Master, God, and Savior—we begin to see our own need for Him, as well.

— Jesus Rose Again (1 Cor. 15:17–22).

If Jesus had not risen from the dead, our faith would be useless. But just as Christ fulfilled His words about His resurrection, so He fulfills His promise about our salvation and sanctification. We can rest confidently in the truth that we will live eternally with Him.

◦ What I Must Believe About Myself

— I am a sinner (Rom. 5:18).

I am a prisoner of sin, and I can do nothing to save myself. While Jesus lived without any sin whatsoever, I sin constantly. I am doomed to spend an eternity in hell as a just punishment for my sin.

— I can live because Jesus died (Rom. 5:20–21).

Jesus willingly laid down His life to pay my sin debt to God. I can do nothing to remove this sin debt. Jesus must do it all for me. If I accept this salvation, God gives me the gracious gift of eternal life.

» Conclusion

In this lesson, we examined the question, “What must I do to be saved?” and the way it impacts our life, both in the present and in the future. This question determines our eternal destiny. Will you believe Jesus today and receive salvation, or will you reject Christ and suffer in hell forever? This question must not be taken lightly or ignored. It’s too important.

In the next lesson, we’ll look at ways that we can know for sure that we have salvation and eternal life.

Student Manual Pages

LESSON 3

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

Teacher's Lesson

» The Importance of the Question

- The **present** _____ condition of humanity
 - The unsaved
 - » No **joy** _____ or understanding
 - » **Corrupt** _____ and contaminated
 - The saved
 - » **Joyful** _____
 - » Understand **spiritual** _____ things
 - » **Pure** _____
- The **eternal** _____ condition of humanity
 - The unsaved spend eternity in **torment** _____
(Mark 9:46)
 - » Eternally
 - » Physically

Luke 16:19-31—The man in hell has . . .
eyes; ears; a tongue; a mind; pain

- The saved spend eternity in **heaven** _____ (John 14:2)

» The Answer to the Question

- Wrong answers
 - Be **baptized** _____
 - **Join** _____ the church
 - Do good **deeds** _____
 - **Clean up** _____ your life
- The right answer
 - Believe** _____ (Acts 16:31)—“to confidently trust”
 - » About Jesus
 - Lord—Christ is our **Master** _____
 - Jesus—means, “Jehovah **saves** _____”
 - Christ—means, “**Anointed** _____ One”
 - Jesus **rose** _____ again (1 Cor. 15:17-22)
 - » About myself
 - I am a **sinner** _____ (Rom. 5:18)
 - I can **live** _____ because Jesus died and rose again
(Rom. 5:20-21)

Word Power

- » **Saved**—the state of having accepted and believed Jesus Christ
- » **Unsaved**—the state of not having accepted and believed Jesus Christ
- » **Baptism**—a visual aid that signifies identification as Christ’s follower; commanded by Christ
- » **Belief**—faith; confident trust in something or someone

Student Manual Pages

Student Work

Read Acts 16:25–31. Paul cast a demon out of a girl, and as a result, her owners accused Paul and Silas of disturbing the peace and had them thrown into prison. Despite their unjust imprisonment, they worshiped God and shared the gospel. Their actions and words sparked the interest of the jailer.

- In verse 30, the jailer asked Paul and Silas, “What must I do to be saved?”
- How did they answer?
Believe in the Lord Jesus.

» What Does Not Save a Person?

- According to Ephesians 2:8–9, by what means does salvation come to us?
It is given by the grace of God.
- Salvation is not by works (v. 9).
- What is the reason that we can’t earn our own salvation (v. 9)?
If we could earn it, we could take the credit for it.
- Because we can do nothing but depend wholly on Christ, who gets the credit for our salvation? God

So ultimately, salvation is not about our benefit, but about God’s glory.

But what about doing good things? Can’t we glorify God *and* receive salvation by being a good person?

Read Acts 10:1–2, 34–43. Up to this point, Peter and the apostles had focused on preaching the gospel exclusively to the Jews. But God sent a message to Peter to emphasize that the gospel is for Jew and Gentile alike (v. 28). Afterward, Peter paid a visit to Cornelius, a Gentile, and preached the gospel to him and his household. God used his visit to prompt the inclusion of the Gentiles into the church.

- What was Cornelius’ rank? Centurion

A *centurion* was a Roman army officer in charge of about one hundred soldiers.

- How does verse 2 describe this man’s attitude toward God?
He was devout and feared God.
- Despite his piety, what did Cornelius still need to do to be saved (see Peter’s words in Acts 10:43)?
Believe on Jesus

Even though Cornelius had a reputation for fearing God—a good attitude to have—he still needed to accept Christ by faith for salvation.

» What Does Save a Person?

Read Romans 10:9. This verse fleshes out what we are doing when we place our faith in Christ.

- We believe—that is, accept as truth and apply personally—that Jesus died for our sin and rose again for our justification. This isn’t merely intellectual acknowledgement. Belief in this truth will change us, thereby creating a personal impact on our lives.
- In addition, we are willing to communicate to others that Jesus is Lord—that is, our new Master. He has the ultimate authority over our life, and we are ultimately accountable to Him.
- Both belief and declaration of that belief need to be present in our faith. If we believe, then we will have a desire to publicly demonstrate that we now belong to Christ.
- The last phrase of Romans 10:9 promises what happens when we trust Christ as our Lord and Savior. What does it say will happen when you confess and believe? You will be saved.

Think About It

- Have you done this? Answers will vary.

Student Manual Pages

- Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

» The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

In Luke 18, Jesus relates a story with an important truth.

Read Luke 18:9–17. In this passage, Jesus contrasts two people.

A *Pharisee* was a member of a Jewish religious sect. In Jesus' time, Pharisees had a reputation for their displays of piety. Some, like Nicodemus, had genuine interest in Christ's message.

Tax collectors, or *publicans*, collected tribute for the Roman government, who occupied Israel during this time. They were despised by the Romans for being Jewish, and they were detested by the Jews for serving Rome. They were known for their dishonesty, greed, and immoral lifestyle. Matthew, one of the Twelve Apostles, was a tax collector before he followed Jesus.

- What were these two men doing in the Temple?
They were praying.
- What was the Pharisee's attitude toward himself?
He was self-righteous.
- How did the tax collector describe himself?
As a sinner
- Which one did Jesus say was justified by God?
The tax collector

Faith for salvation requires that we view ourselves realistically—as sinners in dire need of salvation. Not only do we come to God empty-handed, but we also approach Him as a defeated rebel seeking His mercy. We must entirely depend on His grace for our salvation. If we do, He promises to save us.