

*Why Haven't My
Loved Ones
Accepted
Jesus Christ?*

Jack Michael

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**by
Jack Michael**

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NOTE: Throughout this book, there are words or phrases enclosed in parenthesis within a quoted portion of scripture. Although these words and phrases are not an actual part of the scripture, they are, in fact, explanations or emphases derived from scriptural word studies.

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Introduction

“...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” (Acts 16:31 KJV).

Many Christians have been told to claim the above verse of scripture for the salvation of their unsaved loved ones.

Then, after claiming this scripture, don't worry about them anymore. No need to pray for them; don't waste your time witnessing to them; no need to live a godly lifestyle before them. Just claim this verse of scripture, and somehow, mysteriously, without any further effort on our part, our loved ones are just supposed to end up accepting Jesus Christ.

I am sorry to report that things are not quite as simple as we have been told. The truth of the matter is this:

- 1) If you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you will be saved.
- 2) If your loved ones believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, they will also be saved.
- 3) If your loved ones do not believe on the Lord Jesus, they will not be saved.

Our loved ones will not automatically get saved, just because we hastily claim a verse of scripture for them, and then go merrily on our way, depending upon God to knock them down, and force them to accept Jesus!

Our opening scripture is surrounded by the story of Paul and Silas being imprisoned in Philippi for delivering a slave girl, who was possessed by a spirit of divination.

After they were beaten and thrown into prison, at midnight, they were praying and singing hymns. All of a sudden, the power of God was manifested, and Acts 16:26 says:

“Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were loosed.”

Following this traumatic event, the jailer intended to kill himself, supposing that all the prisoners had escaped, but Paul called out with a loud voice, saying: *“...Do yourself no harm, for we are all here.”*

An astonished Philippian jailer ran in, fell down trembling before Paul and Silas, and asked: *“...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”* (see Acts 16:27-30).

Now, this may come as a great surprise, but when the Philippian jailer asked Paul and Silas this question, almost certainly, he was not inquiring about spiritual matters.

In those days, if you were a prison guard, and your prisoners somehow escaped, you paid for your failure with your life.

This Philippian jail keeper, assuming that his prisoners had escaped, intended to take his own life, rather than be put to death the next morning by the hands of other men. (For an example, see Acts 12:1-19).

So, when he fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas, TREMBLING, he was probably asking how he could explain this matter to his superiors the next morning, and hopefully avoid their wrath.

Paul and Silas, being good evangelists, took advantage of the circumstances, and explained to the man, AND TO HIS FAMILY, about the greater importance of spiritual matters:

“Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him, and TO ALL WHO WERE IN HIS HOUSE.” (Acts 16:32).

Subsequently, Acts 16:33-34 says of the Philippian jailer, AND HIS FAMILY:

“And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and ALL HIS FAMILY were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God WITH ALL HIS HOUSEHOLD.”

The Philippian jailer's family accepted the Lord Jesus, because they experienced:

- 1) A manifestation of God's power,
- 2) God's word was explained to them,
- 3) And, they believed.

They did not get saved because someone claimed a scripture for them!

Neither will our loved ones accept Christ just because we hastily claim a scripture for them! We should be praying for them on a consistent basis, and we should study God's word in order to be trained and prepared to share the gospel with them.

This then, is the purpose of this little book:

FIRST: To answer the question, and help you understand, *“Why haven't my loved ones accepted Jesus Christ?”*

SECOND: to teach you how to effectively pray for those lost loved ones and equip you to share the gospel with them.

Chapter One

People Love Darkness

“He who believes in Him (Jesus Christ) 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. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and MEN LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT because their deeds were evil.” (John 3:18-19).

Many Christians do not like to hear such words, especially if they apply to their lost loved ones. When it comes to someone they dearly love: husband, wife, children, parents, siblings, relatives, or just close friends, many Christians have difficulty facing the truth.

They prefer to believe their unsaved loved ones are just harmlessly “*sowing a few wild oats.*” Or, maybe they just don’t understand the gospel, because it hasn’t been properly explained to them. Or, the reason they don’t come to church is because they were hurt by a Christian.

It is not uncommon for Christians to make excuses for their lost loved ones, sometimes going to great lengths to justify their lifestyle, or cover up their sins.

Listen to me; if you truly want to help your loved ones, then it’s time to face the truth. The truth is, the world is full of people who have not accepted Jesus Christ because **THEY LOVE DARKNESS.**

They love to carouse, go to wild parties, get drunk on alcohol, get high on drugs, fight among themselves, use profane language, and gamble away their money.

In secret places, people love to commit fornication, commit adultery, and indulge in pornography.

Even so-called respectable folks love to lie, cheat, steal, gossip, and backbite.

I once knew a Navy chaplain, who was a godly man. He shared about challenging a young sailor on the issue of accepting Jesus Christ.

“Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God,” he asked this young man?

“Yes,” the young man replied, “I truly do believe that.”

“Do you believe Jesus Christ came into this world to die for your sins,” the chaplain further questioned him?

“Yes,” the young man replied a second time, “I have always believed that.”

“Well then,” the chaplain asked, “will you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior?”

“No,” the young man concluded, “there are some other things that I want to do with my life right now.”

Obviously, this young man loved darkness more than light. In John 3:19, Jesus tells us why people love darkness, rather than light. It's because: *“...their deeds were evil.”*

Interestingly, even the Apostle Paul had a similar problem with one of the members of his missionary team. In 2 Timothy 4:10, he explained:

“...Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world....”

Whether or not Demas had truly accepted Jesus Christ, I do not know, but evidently, he loved darkness more than he loved light!

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

The ultimate decision to accept or reject Jesus Christ is the responsibility of each individual, because God has given people a free will. However, there are specific ways that you can pray for your lost loved ones.

Do you remember the biblical story of the prodigal son? (Read Luke 15:11-24). After he had wasted his inheritance on darkness, the only job he could find was feeding pigs.

Eventually, his life became so low, that he became willing to eat what was offered to the pigs, but no one would even allow him to eat the pig's slop.

Then, the Bible says:

“WHEN HE CAME TO HIMSELF, he said, how many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.” (Luke 15:17-18).

The New International Version of the Bible says: *“...HE CAME TO HIS SENSES....”*

Suddenly, due to difficult circumstances, he had A DESIRE TO CHANGE. And, so it is with all those who love darkness; they must have a desire to change.

And, that time will come. The lifestyle of darkness may appear glamorous, and may be temporarily stimulating, but the day is fast approaching when the glitter will fade into hopelessness, because darkness is a dead end street.

So, once again, how do we pray for these loved ones who love darkness?

FIRST: As in the case of the prodigal son, pray that your loved ones will come to their senses.

Now, while this process is taking place, when trouble comes, don't be too quick to rush in and rescue them, even if they appear to be sinking. Sometimes, darkness needs to run its course.

Stop being anxious about time that seems to be slipping away. God knows just the right time to jump into a person's life, and hold out a hand of deliverance.

SECOND: Pray that by the power of the Holy Spirit, a genuine desire to know God will be birthed in their heart.

Do you remember the words of the Old Testament prophet, Joel, as recorded in the second chapter of Acts? Verse 17 says:

“And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh....”

That scripture is not just referring to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Every genuine outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit will also result in an ingathering of souls.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days is upon the unbeliever as well as the believer. Joel’s prophecy concludes with the following:

“And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
(Acts 2:21).

Pray for the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon your unsaved loved ones. In time, their desires will change. Rather than desiring darkness, they will desire to know God.

THIRD: While you are waiting, do not pray for God to beat up your loved ones, so they will come to their senses quicker.

If such were the solution, God would be consistently beating up most of the people in the world on a daily basis.

Now, perhaps you are wondering about the scripture in 1 Corinthians 5:5:

“Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

That portion of scripture was not referring to those who are unsaved. It was speaking of Christians in the church at Corinth, who refused to repent of sin (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 for the entire account).

What we are talking about in this book is those who are lost. You don't have to turn them over to Satan; they are already serving him!

Instead, pray that the Lord will protect them from the devil's destruction until they come to their senses, and accept Christ.

Being more specific, declare the promises of Psalm 91:10-11 over their lives:

“No evil shall befall you, nor shall any plague come near your dwelling; for He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you (or guard you) in all your ways.”

Some of you may be questioning, *“Isn’t Psalm 91 for Christians; those who dwell in the secret place of the Most High?”*

Yes, Psalm 91 is definitely for Christians, and all the promises and provisions therein, but also listen to Hebrews 1:14 pertaining to the ministry of angels:

“Are not the angels all ministering spirits, (servants) sent out in the service [of God for the assistance] OF THOSE WHO ARE TO INHERIT SALVATION?” (AMP).

Have you ever heard a Christian testify: *“I was not serving God, I was living in sin. Yet, it seemed like someone was watching over me until I came to the Lord?”*

Ask God to give his angels charge over your loved ones, to guard them in all their ways. Yes, your loved ones still have a free will, and they will probably make some stupid choices, with appropriate consequences.

However, because of your prayers, the angels will protect your loved ones from being completely destroyed by the devil until such time as they come into the kingdom of God!

Chapter Two

At War With God

“For to be carnally minded (dwelling upon, and submitting to the flesh) is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is ENMITY AGAINST GOD; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.” (Romans 8:6-7).

Notice the word, ENMITY, in the above verses. It means hostility, or opposition. In other words, TO BE AT WAR.

The second reason some of our loved ones have not accepted Jesus Christ is because THEY ARE AT WAR WITH GOD.

The Apostle Paul, writing to immature Christians in the church at Corinth, gives us insight into the personality of people who are at war with God:

“For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal...?” (1 Corinthians 3:3).

Even though these, *“babes in Christ,”* as Paul called them, were no longer at war with God; yet, because of their immaturity, they were still at war with each other.

Similarly, these same symptoms: ENVY, STRIFE, and DIVISIONS, also characterize the unsaved person who is at war with God. In their heart, they are at war with God, but outwardly:

They are at war with their spouse,
They are at war with their children,
They are at war with their parents,
They are at war with their boss,
They are at war with their friends, if they have any left.

When this type of person goes out to a restaurant, they get into a confrontation with the waitress.

Even if they do something as simple as going to the Post Office, they get into a confrontation with the postal workers.

If they have a family gathering during the Christmas holidays, they get into a fight with the relatives, and don't speak to them again until the next Christmas.

This type of person is deceived. They see themselves as being in control. *“Nobody is going to push me around,”* they say!

The truth is, they are not in control at all. They are being controlled by a strong spirit of rebellion. Therefore, they refuse to submit to anyone’s authority, including God’s.

Not only is this type of person at war with God, but they also hate everything that is representative of God.

They hate Christians.

They hate the Bible.

They hate churches.

They hate nativity scenes at Christmas.

They are convinced that all preachers are crooks, out to make an easy dollar.

They do not yet realize that it is utter futility to be at war with God.

Once, the Jewish religious leaders were angry with the apostles for ministering in the name of Jesus. One of their own had some wise words of caution:

“...keep away from these men, and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it – lest you even be found to FIGHT AGAINST GOD.” (see Acts 5:34-39 for the entire account).

These same words of caution could also be applied to those who are currently fighting against God.

Well, it's quite obvious what the person who is at war with God needs: PEACE!

Peace can become a reality only when a person bows their knee to God, and accepts Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Romans 5:1 explains:

“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have PEACE WITH GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

After they have experienced peace with God, then, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, they can start working on being at peace with everyone else.

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

FIRST: You must engage in warfare on behalf of these loved ones.

I am not referring to warfare against your loved ones. For sure, you would not win in a confrontation against them.

I am referring to spiritual warfare on their behalf against Satan and his demons. Jesus said to his disciples, and to us:

“...I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke 10:19).

Did you notice? We Christians have been given authority over, “...**ALL THE POWER of the enemy...**!” Envy, strife, and divisions are definitely a part of the enemy’s power.

Therefore, by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ, you can command demons of envy, strife, and divisions to stop troubling your loved ones. You can command spirits of rebellion to be gone from them.

SECOND: Pray that your unsaved loved ones will experience a good dose of the **FEAR OF THE LORD**.

You see, the day is fast approaching when every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (see Philippians 2:9-11).

Right now, your loved ones still have time to bow their knee to Jesus, confess him as Lord, and experience him as their Savior.

On the Day of Judgment it will be too late. They will still bow their knee to Jesus, and they will still confess that he is Lord, but they will do so with Jesus as their judge!

THIRD: As stated in the last chapter, you could also pray that these loved ones will come to their senses. Being more specific, pray that they will come to recognize:

- THE BENEFITS OF PEACE,
as compared to...
- THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR.

You see, war always results in casualties, and I can assure you that GOD WILL NOT BE THE CASUALTY!

Your loved ones are not the first to fight against God:

“The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his army He has cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them; they sank to the bottom like a stone. Your right hand, O Lord, has become glorious in power; your right hand, O Lord, has dashed the enemy in pieces.”
(Exodus 15:3-6).

Chapter Three

Why Do I Need God?

“For [simply] consider your own call, brethren; not many [of you were considered to be] wise, according to human estimates and standards; not many influential and powerful; not many of high and noble birth.” (1 Corinthians 1:26 AMP).

Many people, possibly including some of your loved ones, have not accepted Jesus Christ, because they cannot see A NEED FOR GOD in their lives.

Conversely, to a lesser or greater degree, their lives can be described by one of the categories identified in the above verse of scripture...

According to human estimates, or human standards:

- 1) They are considered to be wise,
- 2) They are influential or powerful,
- 3) They are of high or noble birth.

First, let us consider those individuals who are considered to be wise. Such a group could include: scientists, college professors, anthropologists, and other highly intelligent people who have rejected Jesus Christ.

Such people are often so smart and self-sufficient, that they have progressed beyond a primitive need for God. Many consider the Bible an ancient, archaic book of myths.

These types of people often fall into the category of those described by the Psalmist, David:

“The fool has said in his heart, there is no God....” (Psalm 14:1).

Next, let us consider those who have somehow ascended to a place of influence or power. In this category, we are talking about: politicians, movie stars, super models, professional athletes, various artists, singers, musicians, etc.

Consider the following observations about such people:

- 1) They are often paid millions of dollars to do things that are totally worthless, as far as having any eternal value.
- 2) Because of their influence and power, people of lower standing cater to their every whim.
- 3) They have beautiful women hanging all over them, or vice versa, men at their beckoning call.

In their way of thinking, why would they need God?

Finally, there are those of high or noble birth. In this category, we are talking about those who were born into royalty, or born into high social standing. All too often, it can be said of such people:

“The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.” (Psalm 10:4).

The New International Version says it this way: *“...in all his thoughts there is no room for God.”*

Interestingly, there are also some regular, “*down to earth*” folks who see no need for God. They have worked hard to achieve a certain level of success. As a result, they have good jobs, live in beautiful homes, drive new automobiles, and send their children to private schools. During the summer they vacation at theme parks, and in the winter they go skiing. Why would they need God?

It has been accurately stated, that when revival occurs, it is primarily the marginal people who come to Christ.

By marginal, I am referring to those who are closer to the lower limit of qualification, or acceptability.

And, why is it primarily these types of people who come to Christ during revival?
THEY HAVE THE LEAST TO GIVE UP!

However, all is not as it seems...

Those who are considered to be wise by human estimates and standards approach the end of their lives with great frustration, because suddenly, they have no answers!

Their power to articulate, and gain control of situations with their words, will not stave off the inevitability of death.

Those who are influential and powerful come to the pinnacle of their success, and begin to lose their skills, their beauty, or their position, and eventually fall into oblivion.

Such people claim to have no need for God, yet they fill up their lives with an air of urgency and importance, living from event to event, from accolade to accolade.

Even those of high and noble birth are humbled, and brought to a place of equality by the inevitability of death.

Their false dignity, aloofness, and closely guarded privacy, which has set them apart from the common people on this earth, will not exclude them from the Day of Judgment.

From Revelation 20:11-12 the Bible says:

“Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, SMALL AND GREAT, standing before God, and books were opened....”

The truth is, all these people, who appear to have everything, will eventually come to a place of great need, because THEY HAVE NO PEACE IN THEIR HEARTS.

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

Let us take another look into the story of the prodigal son. In Luke 15:14, the Bible says:

“...when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want” (or in need).

Although the above scripture is primarily referring to physical need, you can be sure that the time is quickly approaching when a severe, SPIRITUAL FAMINE will arise in the hearts of those who supposedly have no need for God.

The time will come when wealth, fame, and shiny things will not produce the peace they need in their hearts.

So, how should we pray for this type of unsaved loved one?

FIRST: Pray that they will become acutely aware of the spiritual famine in their lives, and be honest enough to admit the lack of peace in their hearts.

SECOND: Pray that they will not be too proud, or too stubborn to consider Jesus Christ as a viable solution when that need for peace presses hard upon them.

THIRD: Be watchful over these loved ones. It may be necessary to engage in spiritual warfare on their behalf.

Quite often, when this type of individual becomes aware of spiritual famine in their life, they also become vulnerable to cults, psychic phenomenon, the New Age Move-ment, or other empty substitutes for the truth.

Just look around you at all the rich and famous people who have become involved in astrology, psychic phenomenon, or some other mystical religion.

But, remember the words of Jesus in Luke 10:19. He said:

“...I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.”

By the authority of the name of Jesus Christ, and by the authority of God’s word, you can command deceiving spirits to stop trying to influence your loved ones.

FOURTH: Watch your attitude. When the opportunity comes to reach out to these loved ones, be careful not to approach them with an, *"I told you so"* attitude.

Strong, deeply rooted pride can cause this type of person to retreat into their wealth and fame, and deny the existence of spiritual famine in their hearts.

When God provides the opportunity to reach out to them with the love of Jesus, do so with an attitude of HUMILITY.

Remember, this type of individual is not used to being humble. THEY ARE USED TO BEING SERVED.

However, because you are filled with the love and compassion of the Lord Jesus, you can humble yourself in order to reach that loved one.

Remember, it was Jesus who said:

"...he who is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew 23:11).

Chapter Four

Blinded Minds

“For the god of this world has blinded the unbelievers’ minds [that they should not discern the truth], preventing them from seeing the illuminating light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ (the Messiah), Who is the Image and Likeness of God.” (2 Corinthians 4:4 AMP).

I have often wondered, with amazement, how people, who are genuinely spiritually hungry, could end up committing their very souls to dangerous, deceptive cults?

I have also wondered, with equal amazement, why millions of people faithfully attend spiritually dead churches? I am talking about churches that are totally void of any genuine spiritual life!

The truth is, a lot of people, who seem to be looking for God, are searching in the wrong places.

The reason many such people have not yet discovered the true God, is because SATAN, THE GOD OF THIS WORLD, HAS BLINDED THEIR MINDS.

From Mark 4:14-15, in his teachings on the parable of the sower, Jesus revealed the aggressiveness of Satan in keeping people's minds blinded; thus, preventing them from seeing the truth:

“The sower sows the word (preaching of the gospel). And these are the ones by the way-side where the word is sown. When they hear, SATAN COMES IMMEDIATELY and TAKES AWAY THE WORD that was sown in their hearts.”

I remember talking to a young man, who for many years was trapped in a cult group up in Oregon.

He said the young people caught up in this cult were very serious in searching for, and seeking after truth. They truly believed they were the enlightened ones on the earth, and they were absolutely convinced that their leader was the messiah.

How could those young people believe such things? Satan, the god of this world, had blinded their minds.

This young man shared that one day, it was just like HE WOKE UP, and came to his senses. He looked around, assessed his situation, and faced the following facts:

- 1) He had genital herpes, as did many of the people in the cult, from unsanitary sexual practices with multiple partners.
- 2) His girl friend had been taken by the cult leader, and she was now one of his many women.
- 3) He and his former girl friend had a small son, but he had no idea of his whereabouts.
- 4) Most days, he was “stoned” from doing absolutely nothing but lying around and smoking marijuana.

He said to himself, ***“THIS CANNOT BE ENLIGHTENMENT!”***

I wonder why he suddenly WOKE UP? Could it be that someone was praying for him?

Shortly thereafter, he accepted Jesus as his Messiah, and for the first time in his life, he could actually see what he had been looking for: *“...the illuminating light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ...”*

Now, he was truly enlightened. His mind was no longer blinded.

Often more difficult to wake up, are those religious folks who faithfully attend spiritually dead churches, and mistakenly believe they are Christians.

Just because Jesus is politely mentioned once in a while, and just because carefully selected scriptures are thrown in here and there, and just because the services include a few religious rituals, the people assume that they are Christians, and their church must also be Christian.

As in the days when Jesus walked the earth, the minds of many religious people are still blinded by the devil. Jesus once said to the Pharisees, the most religious people of his day:

“... You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also.” (John 8:19).

Jesus gave us further insight into these religious leaders known as the Pharisees:

“...They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.” (Matthew 15:14).

A further study reveals that the Pharisees' minds were blinded by the traditions of men, religious rituals, and legalism. Such is also the case with many religious people today.

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

Again, let us recall the portion of scripture from Luke, chapter 10, where Jesus sent out 70 additional disciples. The Bible says they returned with joy, saying:

“...Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name. And He said to them, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” (Luke 10:17-19).

I reemphasize; the Lord Jesus has given us authority over all the power of the enemy. That would obviously include authority over Satan's power to blind the minds of our loved ones!

Earlier in this chapter, we discovered the aggressiveness of Satan in keeping people's minds blinded. Now, I am reminding you that Jesus has given us authority to aggressively attack Satan on behalf of our loved ones! In the name of Jesus Christ, you can demand that Satan stop blinding their minds!

Then, with their minds no longer blinded, the light (or spiritual understanding) of the gospel of Jesus Christ will be unhindered to SHINE UNTO THEM.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2).

Of course, people still have a free will. Even after they have experienced the light of the glorious gospel, they still must make their own decision to accept Jesus as the Christ.

However, after the light from God has shined upon them, if they have any brains at all, they will choose to accept Jesus!

Chapter Five

The Fearful

“But THE FEARFUL, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” (Revelation 21:8 KJV).

There was a time when this scripture was a mystery to me. It did not seem right that the FEARFUL should be judged along with such people as the abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, and idolaters.

It seemed like God should have pity on the fearful. It seemed like the fearful were the very ones he should be rescuing.

Then, the Holy Spirit imparted spiritual understanding to me...

The word, FEARFUL, in our foundational scripture can also be accurately translated as COWARDLY.

Example #1

I have an oriental friend, whose mother is Buddhist. For many years, my friend has tried to lead her mother to Christ.

Her mother once told her, *“If I found out for sure that Jesus Christ was God, and if I found out for sure that he was the only way to heaven, I would still be a Buddhist!”*

Why would someone make such a foolish statement? FEAR.

Fear of losing one's friends; fear of being an outcast in your own family; fear of being ostracized from one's culture; fear of losing face in the community, and just fear of what people will think, and what they will say.

Example #2

There are people who say they belong to the Mormon religion. However, if you could closely examine their lives, you would find that they are Mormons only because, in the community where they reside, it would be fearful not to be a Mormon.

If they renounced Mormon doctrines, they would suffer economic ruin, because no one would do business with them. Likely, they would be cut off from their family, and be ostracized from their community.

It is much too fearful to investigate the possibility that Mormon doctrines are leading them to Hell.

Example #3

Almost everywhere I have lived, or visited in the world, I have noticed a congregating of young men.

In Hawaii, where I lived for a number of years, there's the surfing crowd. They hang out at the beach, talk story, drink beer, and catch a wave now and then.

In North Carolina, where I was born, there are the stock car racing fans. They hang out at the garage, talk about racecars, work on their own cars, and drink beer.

Similar scenes of congregating young men can be observed throughout the world, according to the local environment.

Even in the Polynesian islands, where I have traveled to minister, I have observed these same young men, hanging around, talking about fishing, and drinking beer.

It is often difficult to lead these young men to the Lord. Why? They are fearful of losing the camaraderie they experience in these groups.

ON THE JUDGMENT DAY, I AM SURE THAT WE WILL BE ASTONISHED AT THE LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE EXCLUDED FROM HEAVEN, BECAUSE THEY WERE FEARFUL.

Personally, I spent 10 years in the United States Marine Corps. During my last three years, I made a serious commitment to serve the Lord. Suddenly, I did not act like, nor talk like the stereotype Marine. I must admit, it was fearful making the transition.

It was fearful shedding the image of pride that had been instilled in me. It was fearful to think about losing the so-called respect of my peers.

When I left the Marine Corps to enter the ministry, I can remember the disbelief of my superiors. I can remember being ignored by those who were formerly courteous to me.

When someone accepts Jesus Christ and makes a serious commitment to serve God, they often have to change their entire circle of friends. God's word explains why:

“...For what partnership have right living and right standing with God, with iniquity and lawlessness? Or how can light have fellowship with darkness? What harmony can there be between Christ and Belial [the devil]? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-15 AMP).

Regardless of the likely loss of so-called friends and associates, seriously think about the following statement:

IT IS ABSURD FOR SOMEONE TO RISK THEIR ETERNAL DESTINY, FOR FEAR OF LOSING FAVOR WITH THOSE WHO ARE MAKING EQUALLY FOOLISH DECISIONS.

Even among those who occupy places of prominence, the fear of men hinders people from accepting Jesus. From John 12:42-43, we discover the following:

“Nevertheless even among THE RULERS many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

FIRST: Pray that they will understand the worthlessness of being fearful about what people might think. To put it bluntly, pray that they will not be a coward.

Proverbs 29:25 provides us with God's wisdom on the matter:

"The fear of man brings a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord shall be safe."

SECOND: Pray that they will come to the startling reality of the importance of fearing God, rather than fearing man:

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9:10).

Of course, Jesus said it best:

"...do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28).

Chapter Six

Pride, The Destroyer Of Souls

*“PRIDE GOES BEFORE DESTRUCTION,
and a haughty spirit before a fall.” (Proverbs
16:18).*

The Bible contains several definitions for the word, PRIDE. You can probably imagine that pride means: *“To be high-minded, to be haughty, to be arrogant, and to inflate with self-conceit.”*

The definition that caught my eye was: *“To envelop with smoke.”*

Let me amplify that definition. Pride is to enfold or enclose completely, as with smoke, and thus to conceal. In other words, pride is not always an outward display.

You see, pride is often a great deception. It causes people to wear a mask, in order to hide the real person. It motivates people to work hard at maintaining a false image that, “ALL IS WELL,” when in reality, their life is racing toward destruction!

There are people in Hell right now, who held fast to their pride until their dying day, rather than humbling themselves, and crying out in need to a merciful God.

God despises pride. It keeps people from acknowledging their need for him, and from accepting his Son, Jesus Christ as their Savior. In Proverbs 6:16-19, the Bible says:

“These six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:

- 1) A PROUD LOOK,*
- 2) A lying tongue,*
- 3) Hands that shed innocent blood,*
- 4) A heart that devises wicked plans,*
- 5) Feet that are swift in running to evil,*
- 6) A false witness who speaks lies, and*
- 7) One who sows (seeds of) discord among brethren.”*

From the Lord’s vantage point, the proud are in company with some rather despicable, ungodly characters.

There is another reason why God hates pride. IT IS A DESTROYER. Our opening verse of scripture says, "*Pride goes before destruction....*"

Jesus did not come to destroy people's lives, but to save them (see Luke 9:51-56).

One of our loved ones was a full-fledged alcoholic. Slowly, but surely, she destroyed her life. Yet, even in the midst of obvious destruction, she strived to maintain her pride, and put forth an image that, "*ALL IS WELL.*"

There were numerous times when she was so drunk that she could not stand on her own feet. Several times, paramedics had to forcibly break into her house in order to carry her out on a stretcher.

Often, due to the effects of alcohol, she had no control over her bladder or bowels.

A number of times, while drinking heavily, she fell and cut open her head, or severely bruised her face.

Many times, she spent weeks in hospitals trying to "*Dry Out,*" and regain her capability to function like a normal person. During these periods of detoxification, she suffered the humiliation of needing assistance getting to and from the toilet.

Yet, during all this self-abuse, she still maintained her pride. Everyone who knew her, also knew she was an alcoholic, but she put forth a great effort of lies and hypocrisy in an attempt to cover her sin.

We shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with her as best we could. We shared the love of God, the fear of God, the mercy of God, the judgment of God, and everything in between.

Still, she maintained her pride.

Occasionally, when things became so bad that recovery seemed to be in doubt, she would pray with us. However, as soon as things began to improve, she was suddenly self-sufficient again, and God was no longer needed.

Periodically, she would go to church with us. Miraculous things would happen. The minister, without knowing the situation, would change his message by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and speak directly to her.

We were sure she would leap to her feet and run to the altar to accept Jesus as her Savior. Instead, she would put on her little act that, *"ALL IS WELL,"* and ignore the conviction of the Holy Spirit.

Sometimes, she would compliment the minister for his inspiring speech, as if the message was for someone other than her.

We hope she made it to Heaven. There were several times when she prayed what could be considered as, *“A Sinner’s Prayer.”* However, we could not determine if she was serious with God, or just needed to employ God’s mercy for a temporary rescue.

Perhaps you are wondering, *“Why didn’t God deliver her? Despite her motives, she did pray, and ask for help!”*

God is rather straightforward about the danger an individual faces when they strive to maintain their pride. The Bible says:

“...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6).

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

Here are the facts...

Our loved ones, who are unsaved, must HUMBLE THEMSELVES before God, if they want to receive of his mercy and grace.

Pride is deceptive. It creates a stronghold in people’s lives, and prevents them from humbling themselves before God.

In fact, pride is so powerfully deceptive, that it encompasses all the other hindrances we have previously discussed. For example:

- 1) Pride causes those who love darkness to think they are indestructible.
- 2) Pride causes those who are at war with God to think they are winning.
- 3) Pride causes those who have no need for God to think they are secure.
- 4) Pride causes those with blinded minds to think they see.
- 5) Pride even causes the fearful to think they are brave.

So, how do we pray for those loved ones who are bound by pride?

Pray for a mighty deliverance in their lives; a deliverance that will remove the shroud of deception, and expose pride in their lives; a deliverance that will enable our loved ones to see themselves as God sees them.

They still must make their own decision to humble themselves before God, but with the authority Jesus gave us over all the power of the enemy, we can help free them from the influences of deceiving spirits.

In concluding this chapter, here is a bit of wisdom you can share with your loved ones that will hopefully help them understand the foolishness of pride...

The images that people strive to maintain through pride have no enduring quality. They will all pass away. Things like:

- 1) Making a good impression,
- 2) Creating an image of self-sufficiency,
- 3) Striving for respect among peers, and
- 4) Keeping alive the remembrance of past accomplishments,

will all be forgotten once a person is dead. Psalm 37:10 says:

“For yet a little while and the wicked shall be no more; indeed, you will look carefully for his place, but it shall be no more.”

Even if someone becomes famous, and after their death, a statue of their likeness is fashioned, or a memorial is erected to keep alive the memory of their accomplishments, IT WON'T DO THEM ANY GOOD!

They will be dead, their remains will be in the graveyard, and the eternal destiny of their spirit and soul will be sealed. Pride is indeed the destroyer of souls!

Here are additional recommendations...

1) Do not help your loved ones maintain their pride...

Our loved one was a chronic liar. By her continual lies, which were usually ridiculous and porously transparent, she tried in vain to cover up her sin, and put forth a false image that, *"ALL IS WELL."*

When we would not participate in her lies and hypocrisy, she would become angry. In her deceived way of thinking, we were not respecting our elders. However, God's word gives us these instructions:

"Blessed is that man who makes the Lord his trust, and does not respect the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies." (Psalm 40:4).

2) Be straightforward; speak the truth...

If their sin is exposed, and their pride is toppled, let the truth be the truth. If they attack you with statements like: *"I have never been so humiliated in all my life,"* so be it.

Better for them to be embarrassed and go to Heaven, than to maintain their pride, and go to Hell!

Chapter Seven

Will The Real Christians Please Stand Up?

“...the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Many people in the world wear a mask, figuratively speaking. They put up a front, so you don't see the real person. This not only happens in the secular environment, it also happens in the church.

Consequently, there are many people in the church, who look like Christians, act like Christians, and even talk like Christians, but they have never truly accepted Jesus Christ.

For example, husbands who pretend to be Christians in order to please their wives, or children who act like Christians in order to please their parents.

I know of several situations where young men pretended to be Christians in order to marry certain young ladies. Then, shortly after the wedding, they dropped their little act. In such cases, the results are usually predictable: a failed marriage.

When I was in the Marine Corps, I knew people who faithfully attended the Catholic Church, and religiously practiced the various sacraments and rituals of their church, yet they were ungodly people.

I remember one such person who wore a Catholic emblem around his neck. When I asked about it, he said: *"Oh, I just do that to please my mother."*

I asked another Catholic if he confessed all of his sins to the priest. He said: *"No way! I don't tell the priest the worst ones."*

The Lord is not fooled by the fronts people erect. God does not see as man sees; God looks upon the heart.

Fortunately, through his word, God has also given us insight into penetrating the pretense. 2 Corinthians 5:17 gives us these guidelines:

“...if anyone is in Christ, he (or she) is a NEW CREATION; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

If this scripture is not a reality in the lives of your loved ones, chances are, they are only pretending to be a Christian.

This is the type of person Jesus called a HYPOCRITE. Listen to some rather harsh words from Jesus about the most religious people of his day:

“Woe to you, SCRIBES and PHARISEES, PRETENDERS (hypocrites)! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but within they are full of extortion (prey, spoil, plunder) and grasping self-indulgence...Just so, you also outwardly seem to people to be just and upright, but inside you are full of PRETENSE and lawlessness and iniquity.” (Matthew 23:25, 28 AMP).

There is a very good possibility that I once fell into the category of a hypocrite.

I said a prayer to receive Jesus Christ at a church camp when I was 10 years old, but I also remember why I said the prayer. One of the counselors sort of coerced me, and put his words in my mouth.

I was baptized in water when I was 13 years old, but I also remember why I was baptized. First, my mother wanted me to be baptized. Second, all the other teenagers were being baptized.

My wife, who lived with me, said I did not become a genuine Christian until I was 30 years old. She simply stated that old things had not passed away, and virtually nothing had become new.

Even though I had prayed a so-called "*Sinner's Prayer*," I have to admit that her observations were correct.

There is another way you can tell if a person is truly a born again Christian, or if they are only pretending.

When someone is under extreme duress, or intense pressure, you discover what is really in their heart. Under such conditions, the mask is removed, the real person will stand up, and they will speak what is really in their heart.

The teachings of Jesus verify this fact. In Matthew, chapter 12, verses 34-35, he was once again dealing with the Pharisees. The Pharisees, of course, were experts at putting up a front. Jesus said to them:

“You offspring of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil (wicked)? For out of the fullness (the overflow, the superabundance) of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man from his inner good treasure FLINGS FORTH good things, and the evil man out of his inner evil storehouse FLINGS FORTH evil things.” (AMP).

I remember hearing the testimony of a Christian man who survived the collision of two jet liners on the runway in the Canary Islands. At the time, it was the greatest disaster in the history of aviation.

He shared that as the two airplanes were literally exploding in flames, he heard the most foul language coming out of people's mouths that he had every heard in his life.

And, not just your usual variety of foul, four letter words, but especially blasphemous language against God.

At such a time, you would think people would be crying out to God, but remember, *“...the evil man out of his inner evil storehouse FLINGS FORTH (casts out) evil things.”*

During those times of extreme duress, or intense pressure, people don't have time to put on their mask. You discover what is really in their heart.

In the same manner, when those who are only pretending to be Christians are under extreme duress, or intense pressure, they are also likely to say things, or do things that are not very Christ-like.

Afterwards, people will attempt to explain, *“Well, they were under a lot of pressure; they were just not themselves!”* On the contrary, **THEY WERE THEMSELVES!**

Interestingly, the man who survived the collision of those jet liners also shared that he did not have time to get out his Bible, and look up a few, comforting Bible promises.

Because God’s word was already in his heart, it just automatically came flowing forth from his mouth. And, the word of God not only came forth from his mouth; the power of God’s word also delivered him!

How To Pray For These Loved Ones

FIRST: Pray that they will be delivered from deception.

Sometimes, this type of person has gone beyond deceiving others. Sometimes, they have actually deceived themselves.

Such people have been wearing a mask for so long, they have actually convinced themselves that they are Christians.

James 1:22 reveals how such a deception could take place:

“But be DOERS of the word, and not HEARERS ONLY, deceiving yourselves.”

SECOND: Pray that your loved ones will be bold enough, and have the courage to honestly examine themselves, and find out, for sure, if they are, or are not, genuine born again Christians.

As recorded in 2 Corinthians 13:5, the Apostle Paul challenged the people in the church at Corinth to examine themselves:

“EXAMINE YOURSELVES to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you – unless, of course, you fail the test?” (NIV).

Now remember, the Apostle Paul did not write these words to people in the world; he wrote them to people in the church.

Perhaps there were also people in the church at Corinth who were just pretending to be Christians?

THIRD: Do not be afraid to confront your loved ones on this issue.

I am thankful that my wife confronted me. For sure, I am now truly born again, and serving God with my life.

For those who are knowingly pretending, and purposely deceiving others, it is best that they be unmasked now, than on the Day of Judgment!

For those who have deceived themselves, it is better that they learn the truth now, even if their feelings get hurt, rather than wander through life in pretense, and be separated from God for eternity!

A Helpful Hint...

If you need a little assistance in the matter of EXAMINING YOURSELF, to determine whether or not you are in the faith, just move along to the next chapter...

Chapter Eight

Nobody Told Me!

Very possibly, some of your loved ones have not accepted Jesus Christ, because you have not explained to them, the way of salvation.

Some of them would accept Christ if they knew what to believe.

Now, I realize that you may not yet know how to explain God's plan of salvation, so I'm going to explain it to you, and then, you can explain it to them.

However, before we get started with the explanations, let's discuss a few common sense rules:

FIRST, Don't preach at them, damning them to Hell. Focus on the solution, not the problem.

SECOND: Don't try to trick your loved ones into accepting Christ; asking them to be your guest for dinner, and then showing up at a revival meeting.

THIRD: Don't employ sneaky methods of evangelism, like cleverly positioning gospel tracts by the toilet.

FOURTH: Don't try to be the Holy Spirit, and convict your loved ones of sin. Don't try to clean up their lives before they get saved. God's power is not yet available to them.

Instead, look them straight in the eye, be totally honest, and say: *"I would like to make an appointment with you, and tell you about my relationship with Jesus Christ, and how you can also have a relationship with him."*

If they say, "NO," then move on to the next loved one. When you find one who is willing to listen, here is what you tell them.

You Must Be Born Again

In the book of John, Chapter three, we find the story of a man named, Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, and a ruler of the Jews.

Nicodemus came to see Jesus secretly at night. He was afraid to be seen with Jesus, because the Pharisees were supposed to have all the answers pertaining to spiritual matters. He said to Jesus:

“...Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” (John 3:2).

Jesus could have focused on himself, and said, *“You are absolutely right, I definitely have come from God.”* Instead, he focused upon Nicodemus’ responsibility toward God, and said to him:

“...Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, HE CANNOT SEE (cannot perceive, understand, or be aware of) *the kingdom of God.”* (John 3:3).

Nicodemus was confused. He could only understand the concept of a natural, physical birth. He questioned Jesus:

“...How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” (John 3:4).

Jesus clarified the matter by explaining that every person who desires to enter the kingdom of God must have TWO BIRTHS – a natural, physical birth, and a spiritual birth:

“...Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is BORN OF WATER (natural birth) AND THE SPIRIT (spiritual birth), he cannot enter the kingdom of God.” (John 3:5).

There are certain people who insist that the phrase, “...BORN OF WATER...” in the previous verse is referring to water baptism. I disagree. Jesus was simply responding to the question asked by Nicodemus, rather than further confusing him.

Jesus continued to explain these matters to Nicodemus, and in the very next verse, he reemphasized the necessity to have two births:

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6).

Water baptism is indeed important. Jesus commanded us to be baptized. However, water baptism does not cause a person to be born again.

Water baptism comes AFTER a person is born again. One such biblical example is when Philip was preaching in Samaria:

“But WHEN THEY BELIEVED Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” (Acts 8:12).

Unfortunately, there are probably millions of people who mistakenly believe they are Christians, just because they were baptized.

When Jesus used the terminology, BORN AGAIN, be assured that he was not speaking symbolically. He was talking about A BIRTH.

Just as surely as a human being must be born physically in order to enter this world; they must also be born spiritually, if they want to enter the kingdom of God.

Now, for our next question; why must we be born again?

Sin Separates Us From God

Despite the exhaustive efforts of man to acquire spiritual enlightenment, and to attain to greater levels of spirituality, God says we fall short of meeting up to his standards:

“For all have sinned and FALL SHORT of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23).

“But your iniquities have separated you from your God; and YOUR SINS (violations of God’s laws) have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.” (Isaiah 59:2).

It is through the spiritual birth (being born again) that our sins, which have separated us from God, are erased.

With this understanding, we come to our next question. How is someone born again?

The Necessity To Repent

REPENTANCE means: To have a change of mind, to think differently, to have a change of purpose, and it involves both a turning to God, and a turning away from sin.

As I explained in the last chapter, there are many people who are only pretending to be Christians. One reason for the pretense is an unwillingness to repent.

People want to say a quick little prayer, supposedly to make things right between them and God, but they have no intention of turning away from sinful lifestyles.

Jesus once said to a group of people gathered around him, “...*unless you repent you will all likewise perish.*” (See Luke 13:1-5 for the entire account).

Do not misunderstand repentance. It is not an attempt to reform our lives by human efforts. God’s word clearly tells us:

“For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that NOT OF YOURSELVES (not by our efforts); it is the gift of God, NOT OF WORKS (not of human toil), lest any man should boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9 KJV).

Repentance is the WILLINGNESS to have a change of mind (or purpose), and turn away from the sins that are separating us from God. Then, when we accept Jesus Christ, the power of God enters into our lives, and frees us from the power of those sins.

Believe In The Name

“He who believes in Him (Jesus Christ) 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 3:18).

There are many names in the world with which people identify; names they follow, names to which they make commitments, even names that cause people to fall down and worship.

When it comes to being born again, the Lord Jesus Christ is the name in which we must believe.

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is NO OTHER NAME under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12).

Jesus is not just one of the names in which people can believe; he is the only name! Other religions may claim to know the way to God, but Jesus himself said:

“...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6).

The Only Begotten Son Of God

Only Jesus Christ was GOD INCARNATE (God becoming man). Any other human who claims to be God is a liar.

“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.” (John 3:16).

You must believe that Jesus alone was God incarnate. The Prophet Isaiah, referring to Jesus, said:

“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name IMMANUEL, which is translated, GOD WITH US.” (Matthew 1:23).

The Blood Of Jesus

“In Him (Jesus Christ) we have redemption THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Ephesians 1:7).

There are certain religious groups that call themselves Christian, but at the same time, they reject the necessity to trust in the sacrifice of Jesus, and his shed blood upon the cross for the forgiveness of sins.

As one such individual stated: *“We are not interested in a bloody religion!”*

However, apart from the shed blood of the Lord Jesus, the New Testament repeatedly emphasizes: there can be no forgiveness, no remission, no dismissal of sins.

To be born again, a person must trust in the blood of Jesus for the remission of their sins. Revelation 1:5 says:

“...To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

The Resurrection Of Jesus

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” (Romans 10:9).

Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our faith would be meaningless, or useless. 1 Corinthians 15:17 says:

“...if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!”

Without the resurrection of Jesus Christ, our faith would be in a lifeless philosophy, rather than a relationship with the living God.

Without the resurrection of Jesus, there would be no Christ to worship. Christians would be reduced to the worship of idols (ornate crosses, statues of saints, or other man-made religious items).

To be born again, one must believe that God, the Father, raised his son, Jesus Christ from the dead.

Literally, a person is born again when the Spirit of the LIVING CHRIST penetrates the human spirit, thereby causing a spiritual birth to take place.

Receiving Jesus Christ

Now that you understand...

- 1) The need to be born again,
- 2) The necessity to repent,
- 3) The name in which to believe,
- 4) That Jesus alone is God incarnate,
- 5) That Jesus is the only way to God,
- 6) His blood cleanses us from sin, and
- 7) The significance of the resurrection,

...the next step is to lead that loved one in a prayer of acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. John 1:12 says:

“But as many as RECEIVED (or accepted) Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.”

To be born again, a person must willingly, and personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ into their life.

We are talking about getting serious with God. Every individual must personally invite Jesus Christ to take up residence in their life, and to do so without coercion from outside sources.

These words of Jesus are often employed as a means of explaining this invitation:

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20).

If someone came to your house, and knocked on your door, basically, there are two things you would have to do in order to get them inside.

FIRST: You would have to open your door. When accepting Jesus Christ, opening the door is a person's WILLINGNESS.

SECOND: You would have to open your mouth, and invite the person to come in. When accepting the Lord Jesus Christ, this is a person's INVITATION.

Well, are you ready to lead that loved one in prayer? There is one more thing you need to know; then, on the next page is a prayer you can use to help your loved one enter into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Confession Of Jesus As Lord

"That if you CONFESS (openly declare) with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9).

There are no closet (or secret) Christians. Jesus said in Matthew 10:32-33:

"...whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven"

Prayer on the following page ⇒

A Prayer To Receive Jesus

Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus Christ into this world to die for my sins. I understand that Jesus is the only way to you, Father. Jesus is your only begotten Son, and the name in which I must believe.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for sacrificing your life upon the cross, and shedding your blood for the remission of my sins.

I repent of my sins. With your help, Heavenly Father, I turn away from the sins that have separated me from you.

Heavenly Father, I believe you raised Jesus from the dead. He is alive now, and his Spirit can come to dwell within me, causing a spiritual birth to take place.

Lord Jesus, I accept you; I receive you right now. I personally invite you into my life, to forgive my sins, to wash away my sins with your blood, and clothe me with the righteousness of God.

Thank you, Lord. I am now born again, and from this time forth in my life, I will openly confess that Jesus Christ is my Lord. Amen.

Chapter Nine

Send Forth A Laborer

“Then He said to His disciples, the harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” (Matthew 9:37-38).

Did you notice what Jesus told us to do? He instructed us to pray! *“...PRAY the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*

Normally, when we read these verses, we just think about sending out missionaries to foreign countries. But, the truth is, you may need for God to send out laborers to your lost loved ones.

Sometimes, our loved ones know us too well. They are unwilling to listen to us. They are not open to considering what we have to offer.

Such is frequently the case in parent-child relationships. The parent looks at the child, regardless of how old they are, and says, *“Who do you think you are, preaching to me? I brought you into this world; I reared you; you can’t tell me nothing!”*

Also, in any circle of loved ones, there are those who are more successful, and those who are less successful.

We are talking about worldly standards here, but nonetheless, those who are less successful often have difficulty sharing Jesus with those who are more successful.

Consequently, you may need God to send forth specific Christian laborers to your lost loved ones. God knows those laborers with whom your loved ones can relate, someone who is on their level.

Without question, the Apostle Paul was one of the most effective witnesses for the gospel of Jesus Christ who ever walked this earth. Yet, when he stood before the Roman rulers, Festus and King Agrippa, his witness was not effective. (See the entire account in Acts, chapters 25-26).

Festus was especially sarcastic. He said with a loud voice:

“Paul, you are beside yourself! Much learning is driving you mad!” (Acts 26:24).

King Agrippa was apparently convicted by the Holy Spirit, but his response still revealed that he was unwilling to seriously consider Paul's testimony. He said:

“...You almost persuade me to become a Christian.” (Acts 26:28).

Being rulers, they were unwilling to listen to someone of lower standing.

I have a missionary friend, who formerly was an affluent businessman. Once, he was invited to a luncheon to speak to a group of prominent businessmen.

When he arrived at the luncheon, he placed his Bible on the table. Immediately, he sensed a chill in the room, spiritually speaking.

He tried to engage in conversation with some of the men, but discovered a rather strained atmosphere.

Then, the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart,
“Put your Bible on the floor.”

At first, he was hesitant, not wanting to be ashamed of the gospel, but God spoke to him again, *“Put your Bible on the floor.”*

He obeyed the Holy Spirit’s direction, and almost immediately, the social atmosphere in the room changed.

When the time came for him to speak, he tried to share his testimony about accepting Jesus Christ, but these businessmen were clearly uncomfortable, and unresponsive.

Then, the Lord spoke to his heart again,
“Tell them how many thousands of dollars your business made last year.”

All of a sudden, these businessmen were all ears. They listened carefully to every word my friend had to say.

At the end of the meeting, one of these businessmen approached my friend. He had serious marital problems, as well as a severe spiritual famine in his life.

Interestingly, he was now willing to listen to scriptural counsel, and open to prayer. The Lord of the harvest had sent forth a laborer of equal standing, and the person in need was willing to listen.

Similarly, you may need God to send forth specific laborers to your unsaved loved ones.

Perhaps God will even send someone of superior standing; someone they look up to!

Now, notice again, the instruction given to us by Jesus in the opening scriptures of this chapter:

“...PRAY the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”

So, pray! Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out specific laborers to your unsaved loved ones.

Oh, by the way, don't get the idea that this let's you off the hook. Because of someone else's prayers, God may choose to send you forth as a laborer to someone else's unsaved loved ones!

So, if necessary, go back to chapter nine, and PREPARE YOURSELF.

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"Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!" (Romans 5:7-9 NIV).

With God's love and mercy leaping from the pages of the Bible through the above verses, and multiple other verses in the New Testament, one has to wonder why the world is not racing to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior?

How could anyone not desire forgiveness and cleansing of sin, and deliverance from the wrath of God? Why would anyone not desire to be clothed with the righteousness of God? How could anyone not desire to walk in harmony and fellowship with their creator?

It often seems like a great mystery, but actually, the Bible provides us with very clear answers as to why much of the world refuses to accept Jesus Christ.



Jack Michael is a Foundation Builder. As such, his teaching ministry can best be described by 1 Corinthians 3:10 *"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. . . ."*

Jack Michael is also a Watchman on the Walls in the body of Christ. As such, this prophetic aspect of his ministry often requires him to speak about controversial issues that affect the body of Christ, and warn God's people of impending deception.

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