

# GOOD NEWS

for the unsaved WORLD!

(#107)

What if we don't have the results of faith?

1

## When FAITH is genuine, EVERYTHING changes!

### The results of FAITH include:

**REVIEW**

- ✓ Other parts of the "process of salvation."
  - ⇒ Baptism, confession (admitting the truth).
- ✓ (in general) Salvation and eternal life.
  - ⇒ God is involved; it's fact-based, living and ongoing.
  - ⇒ It is a present reality, but there is also a future aspect.
- ✓ Changes in our relationship to God.
  - ⇒ We now belong to God's family; we have access to God, are loved by him, united with Christ.
  - ⇒ We have a changed attitude toward the things of life; the Holy Spirit is at work.

**REVIEW**

2

**REVIEW**

- ✓ Changes in our relationship to sin.
  - ⇒ We no longer pursue a life of sin; we have reconciliation, are justified, forgiven; we will not perish.
- ✓ Lives characterized by righteousness and obedience.
  - ⇒ Our righteousness is from God; it's not our nature.
  - ⇒ Our only hope is in Jesus Christ, by faith; we belong to the New Covenant.
  - ⇒ Our "flesh" (or "old self") continues to fight the Spirit (who is changing us); we must trust God and rely on the Spirit.
  - ⇒ Our response to the Law is guided into obedience, because God embeds his law in our hearts; but our obedience is made possible by God's righteousness at work in us (not by any personal righteousness of our own).

**REVIEW**

3

**REVIEW**

- ✓ Changes in our spiritual condition.
  - ⇒ We are blessed; our deepest needs are satisfied.
  - ⇒ We are recipients of God's promises – righteousness, life, peace; we look forward to an inheritance from God.
- ✓ Changes in our spiritual growth.
  - ⇒ We are increasingly characterized by holiness, wisdom, faith, joy.
  - ⇒ We can have assurance of eternal life; access to God.
- ✓ Changes in our interaction with people.
  - ⇒ Built on a foundation of faith that fights (sin and evil), and communicates (the Good News and God's Word).
  - ⇒ With saved people: caring for, and accepting each other.
  - ⇒ With the world: opposed because they hate the truth; our faith will be tested; we need perseverance and patience; we will ultimately have victory over the world.

**REVIEW**

4

## Today's question...

**What if these things are missing from my life?**

THESE THINGS SURE DON'T DESCRIBE ME!

DO YOU REALLY WANT THEM TO? IF SO ...

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You can choose to say ...

I DON'T CARE... IT DOESN'T MATTER TO ME!

BUT...

THERE WILL BE CONSEQUENCES THAT ARE BEYOND YOUR CONTROL.

- You can choose CHOICES... But you cannot choose CONSEQUENCES.

Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows.

Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.

Galatians 6:7-8 (NIV)

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### ★ The mark of a spiritual person... ★

(= The person who is Spirit-led, God-honoring, following Jesus.)

IT ISN'T THE ATTAINMENT OF  
PERFECTION, BUT A CRAVING FOR IT.

It's an awareness of one's failures and a hatred of them... and the pursuit of godliness.

⇒ The self-confident person is the one who ought to be concerned.

We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us.  
We put no confidence in human effort ...  
Philippians 3:3b (NLT)

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## SOME CONSIDERATIONS.

Related to sin and  
spiritual growth.

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⇒ THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN: ① DELIBERATE, WILLFUL, DEFIANT SIN, AND ② HIDDEN OR ACCIDENTAL SIN.

God's warning about ongoing, deliberate, willful sin.

Those who have been born into God's family do not make a practice of sinning, because God's life is in them. So they can't keep on sinning, because they are children of God.

So now we can tell who are children of God and who are children of the devil. Anyone who does not live righteously and does not love other believers does not belong to God.

1 John 3:9-10 (NLT)

Even though there are verses that tell us that "nobody is sinless," warnings such as these are also present, and shouldn't be ignored!

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How do I deal with hidden and accidental sin?

(It happens before we realize it... or we don't even know it happened.)

#### HIDDEN SIN

This includes habits, motivations, attitudes, etc. – things that we might not even realize are there – which try to influence what we do.

How can I know all the sins lurking in my heart?  
Cleanse me from these hidden faults.

Ps 19:12 (NLT)

- Only a renewed mind (Romans 12:2) can expose these sins.  
*But we must be willing to learn!*

O LORD, teach me how you want me to live!  
Then I will obey your commands.  
Make me wholeheartedly committed to you!

Psalms 86:11 (NET)

ACCIDENTAL SIN – SEE NEXT PAGE.

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⇒ TWO HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR THE PURSUIT OF GODLINESS.

① Repeated obedience to Christ can help us to develop habits that reinforce our attempts to follow him and to be like him.

In the long run, there will be a tendency for the flesh to become weaker (even though it will keep trying to fight us).

If it can't succeed in one area of life (where we have gained some victories), it may attack us in another area of life.

CAUTION: When we see spiritual growth and victory over sin, we must remember where the victory came from!

We may need to be on our guard, lest we become proud – forgetting that it wasn't accomplished by our own power.

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② Don't neglect the "group" aspect of spiritual growth!

God often uses the encouragement of people to reinforce godly conduct.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Heb 10:24-25 (NIV)

Therefore encourage one another and build each other up as you are already doing.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (CSB)

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⇒ **EVERY SINGLE GOD-HONORING THING WE DO REQUIRES US TO TRUST – RELY ON – GOD FOR IT TO HAPPEN.**

"Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."  
John 15:5 (NLT)

**This is us WITHOUT God's power:**

... foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.  
Titus 3:3b (CSB)

**This is us WITH God's power:**

For the grace of God ... trains us to reject godless ways and worldly desires and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ...  
Titus 2:11a, 12 (NET)

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**Without trust and dependence on God, NOTHING we do is inherently good – NOT EVEN OUR "GOOD" THINGS!!**

**GOD'S VERDICT:** There is no one righteous, not even one. ...  
There is no one who does what is good, not even one.  
Romans 3:10b, 12b (CSB)

- But GOD is **reliable, trustworthy, dependable**. He **empowers** his people to do his will.

**GOD'S POWER:** ... for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.  
Philippians 2:13 (NIV)

- Our **FAITH** is ① based on this **FACT**, and it ② expresses itself when we **do rely, trust, depend** on him.

**RESULT:** I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me.  
Philip. 4:13 (GW)

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**"Good" things done without God may look good to people, and may actually benefit them. [Atheists can do this!]**

- But God sees the full picture: the heart attitude, the motives, whether or not it was done for God's honor, etc.

Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.  
Matthew 23:28 (NLT)

Even though you're evil, you know how to give good gifts to your children.  
Matthew 7:11a (GW)

**THE PEOPLE SAW HIS GOOD DEEDS ... BUT HE SAW HIS SINFUL HEART:**

"[This man] is worthy for you to grant this [miracle], because he loves our nation and has built us a synagogue."

"Lord, ... I am not worthy to have you come under my roof."

Luke 7:4b-5, 6b (CSB)

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⇒ **AT THE JUDGMENT, WHEN WE STAND BEFORE THE THRONE OF GOD, WE WILL LAY OUR CROWNS DOWN AT JESUS' FEET.**

- This won't be some mere symbolic gesture...  
INSTEAD...
- We will be doing it because we are aware that HE truly deserves it... and WE truly don't.

**In the meantime...**

**It may be helpful to develop an attitude similar to this:**

- Any time we do something bad, we should say, "***That's me!***"
- Any time we do something good, we should say, "***That's God!***"

**(And pray that they see "God," and not "us"!)**

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**DON'T FORGET  
YOUR  
RESPONSIBILITY.**

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**GOD GUARANTEES THAT CHANGES WILL OCCUR, BUT...**

**HOW MUCH EFFORT ARE YOU WILLING TO PUT INTO FOLLOWING JESUS?**

(Don't try to use the "sovereignty" concept to cancel your responsibility!)

**When we have EXCUSES & LAZINESS, all we end up doing is showing our priorities.**

The priorities we choose will influence how we are judged.

We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.  
Heb 6:12 (NIV)

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### ⇒ ARE YOU WILLING ...

#### → To PURSUE a "renewed mind"?

You won't hate your old ways until you do.  
You might not even know they should be hated!

Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.  
Romans 12:2 (CSB)

#### → To ADD godly character to your faith?

Those who have a genuine living, fact-based faith will do so!

... make every effort to add to your faith excellence, to excellence, knowledge; to knowledge, self-control; to self-control, perseverance; to perseverance, godliness; to godliness, brotherly affection; to brotherly affection, unselfish love.  
2 Peter 1:5b-7 (NET)

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### ⇒ ABOUT THOSE COMMANDS AND INSTRUCTIONS FOUND IN SCRIPTURE... THEY ARE THERE FOR A PURPOSE!

And that purpose isn't to give people an excuse to sin!

IF THEY HAD ALL THOSE SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS, AND PAUL STILL CALLED THEM "CHRISTIANS"...

... THEN I CAN SIN ALL I WANT, AND STILL CONSIDER MYSELF "SAVED"!

**YOU TOTALLY, COMPLETELY MISSED THE POINT!**

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Much of the New Testament was written to people who were spiritually weak.

1. "Newborn" Christians, who were still learning what it meant to follow Jesus.

#### ↳ THEY WERE TOLD:

They could not choose to remain slaves to sin, but were to pursue the freedom of righteousness.

>> AND <<

2. People who were being lied to by false teachers (who looked like messengers of truth – 2 Corinthians 11:12-13).

#### ↳ THEY WERE TOLD:

They had to reject what was false and hold on to what was true.

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These instructions to the spiritually weak can give us hope, when we are weak!

★ IF we are willing to pay attention to them ★  
and do what they say!

- When we see our imperfections, we do not need to give up ...

↳ IF WE ARE NOT CONTENT TO STAY THAT WAY!

[Those who are content to remain in disobedience are the ones who should be concerned ... and should repent.]

[In the past] you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient ...

God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

Eph 2:2b; 5:6b (NIV)

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### ⇒ FOLLOWING JESUS ISN'T EASY. On your own, you can't do it.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone wants to become my follower, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me."  
Matthew 16:24 (NET)

**I DON'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DENY MYSELF!**

- But as you trust God for his power, you will succeed because it will be him succeeding through you.

"Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take up my yoke and learn from me, because I am lowly and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 11:28-30 (CSB)

**"NOT I, BUT CHRIST!"**

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### ⇒ WHEN YOU ARE DOING WHAT IS RIGHT, YOUR OLD "SELF" WILL BE TRYING TO GET YOU TO STOP. **BUT YOU DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN!**

**I WANT TO FOLLOW JESUS!**

**YOU KNOW YOU'D RATHER BE SINNING! SO GO AHEAD AND DO IT!!**

It may take time, but:

**IF YOU ARE FOLLOWING JESUS, God will help you get to where you need to be. The devil won't be able to stop it!**

... Indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Ro 8:39b (NLT)

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## WHAT ABOUT "THEM"?

Other people.

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⇒ WHAT ABOUT ALL THOSE PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH WHO CLAIM TO BE SAVED, BUT WHO LACK THE FRUIT OF SALVATION?

- We need to affirm what Scripture says.
- But remember this: WE will be judged for what WE do, not for what THEY do.

Scripture warns us that in the end times, many will depart from the truth.

- Some may utterly reject the truth, and lose the ability to be saved.
- But for the others... as long as they are alive, we shouldn't give up on them. *Maybe they will someday change!*

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⇒ OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO TEST OURSELVES!

What good is it for us, if we FAIL the test ... while warning others to NOT FAIL the test?

Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.  
2 Corinthians 13:5 (CSB)

★ We need a realistic evaluation of ourselves. ★

- NOT to pat ourselves on the back, if we think we are doing well.
- But to get an understanding of where we are, so that we can pursue changes where needed.

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## OUR MISSION:

- Consider these things.
- Respond properly to them.

A GOOD WAY to pray:

"God, let people see you working through me, instead of the old me doing as it pleases!"

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