

THE QUEST FOR SALVATION

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One of the issues of paramount importance in the Bible is salvation. In fact, if there is no salvation of the soul, nothing else matters. The quest for salvation is different from any other quest. Usually, quests are for things that can be perceived by the senses. In these kinds of quests, you can simply see or feel that you have attained what you are looking for. Such is not the case with salvation.



It is distressing that many people who are sincere in the quest for the salvation of their soul will be disappointed on the day of judgment (**Mathew 7:22-23**). Therefore, each one of us must make sure to obtain salvation.

Some people have relied on feelings as assurance that they have found salvation. According to the Bible, the heart is the center of feelings (**Proverbs 15:13**) as well as the source of human thoughts (**Proverbs 19:21**). Nevertheless, the Bible says emotions and thoughts of the heart may be misleading (**Jeremiah 17:9**) because emotions are not always a reflection of reality. A person can feel joy, sadness, or anger without having a significant reason for it. For example, one may feel immensely happy because he has received fake news about having won an award. On the other hand, a person may also be deeply saddened by false news about the death of a loved one. Similarly, people can be led by emotions to erroneous conclusions about having found salvation.

There are other people who regard signs and wonders as a way to be certain of salvation. Jesus says some people are going to argue they have done miracles to claim their entrance into heaven, but He will cast them away from Him (**Mathew 7:22-23**). Therefore, neither miracles nor wonders are reliable signs. What can we do to make sure we have found salvation? We need to search the Bible to find the answer.

The Bible teaches we are saved by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8**). The first of these requirements is grace. The Holy Scriptures say we must be clothed with humility in order to receive grace and its benefits (**1 Peter 5:5**). Jesus left us an example of grace when He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, according to the Apostle Paul (**Philippians 2:8**). It is of utmost importance that we come to realization that there is no greater manifestation of humility than obedience to the will of God.

The Bible says faith comes by hearing the word of God (**Romans 10:17**); but, again, the greatest manifestation of faith is in keeping and obeying what we hear (**James 1:22**). Therefore, God's word is what we need to follow to obtain salvation. What are these teachings from the scriptures?

Jesus says we need to believe and be baptized (**Mark 16:16**). The Apostle Peter says we need to repent and be baptized to receive the forgiveness of our sins (**Acts 2:38**). In his letter to the Romans, the Apostle Paul says we must confess the name of Jesus to be saved (**Romans 10:9-10**). Paul further teaches we are baptized into the death of Christ to walk in newness of life (**Romans 6:4**). Since sin is the cause of condemnation, receiving forgiveness of sins results in salvation. Lastly, Jesus says a believer must endure to the end to be saved (**Mathew 10:22; Revelation 2:10**). Therefore, every one of us can know for sure if we are saved, apart from signs, wonders, and feelings—we know we are saved when we submit to God's word and continue faithful until death.

Time is a major factor in our quest for salvation. Our lifetime is the only time we have to obtain salvation, and the amount of time we have is uncertain (**James 4:14**). The powerful message that rings through all of these scriptures is that we begin our quest now and determine that we shall remain true to that commitment.

Sundays at 6:30 AM



July Topics

7/4 Sermon #1312
Declaration of Independence

7/11 Sermon #1308
Rightly Dividing the Word

7/18 Sermon #1309
Original Sin

7/25 Sermon #1310
Infant Baptism

JULY 2021 NEWSLETTER

FAITH AND RESOLVING CONFLICT

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When conflict arises, it can be difficult to know how to approach a situation in a way that will please God and, at the same time, resolve the issue. Since God's ways are not our ways (**Isaiah 55:8**), we know that His way for resolving conflict will be different from ours. When our faith is solid and our ways please Him, only then do we truly have a foundation for resolving conflict with others. The writer James gives us instructions for pleasing Him:



*Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up (**James 4:7-10**).*

Three main ideas from this passage help ground our faith and, thus, put us into a position to resolve conflict scripturally: submit to God, resist the devil, and repent of our sins.

Submit to God

To submit means "to put yourself in rank under" someone, implying a hierarchy of authority. Submission can be difficult, and it's not a particularly popular subject today.

Unbelievers cannot submit to God because they are unwilling to do so. Paul teaches, "...the carnal mind is against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (**Romans 8:7**; see also **Romans 10:3**). Faith, then, is a requirement for submission to God.

Resist the Devil

The first step to resisting the devil is recognizing him so that we can know when we are being tempted by him. This step requires that we know what God expects of us.

In John 8:44, Jesus says the devil is the "father of lies." The devil always lies and deceives. In fact, we often miss seeing him. "Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (**2 Corinthians 11:14**). Sometimes, the devil doesn't tempt us with things that we can see are clearly designed to lead us away from God or to cause a conflict with a brother. Every lie or deception is designed to make us

doubt the truth of the scriptures, put our faith in anything other than God, or cause discord among God's people. And James here doesn't say to go out swinging at the devil, but simply resist him and rely on God, and the devil will flee from us.

Repent of Sin

In the section where James talks about cleansing hands and purifying hearts, he refers to true, heartfelt repentance. To repent means to feel sincere regret about sin, to determine to make a change in behavior, and, then, actually to make that change.

Repentance is not just saying "I'm sorry that I offended you" or "I'm sorry that you're upset." Those words imply it's the other person's fault. It would be the same as praying to God and saying, "I'm sorry you didn't like the choice I made." Why would God forgive us if we show we don't have a genuine, repentant heart? When we are truly repentant, we accept full responsibility for that sin. We don't excuse it as a shortcoming or an oversight. We mourn over how we've offended God, disgraced His name, and hurt our brother or sister in Christ.

Conclusion

If we place ourselves in a positive position with God by following James' instruction, we are then in a position to deal properly with conflict or interpersonal issues that come up.

We are ready to carry out the principle Jesus teaches in Matthew's gospel:

*Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift (**Matthew 5:23-24**).*

When it comes to resolving conflict, we should never sit passively and wait for resolution to happen spontaneously. The saying, "Time heals all wounds" does not always apply. Rather, we should approach a brother or sister in the spirit of love, set an atmosphere for open discussion, and honestly discuss the issues until each understands the other.

In the four verses we have examined, James tells us that in order to resolve conflict, we must first have the foundation of submission to God, a strong resistance to the devil, and true repentance in our hearts for our sins before we have the possibility of resolving conflicts.



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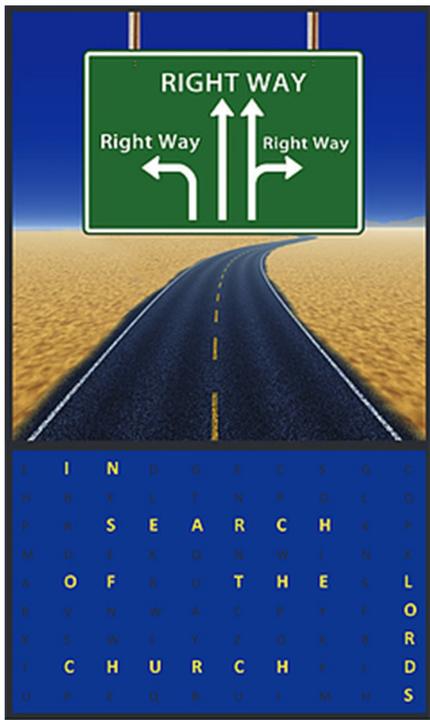
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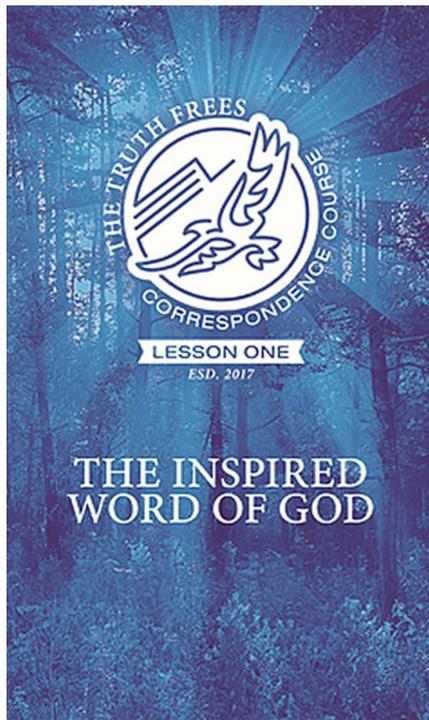
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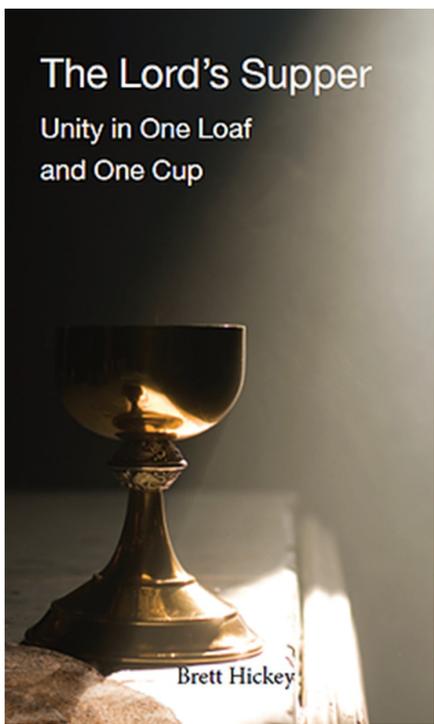
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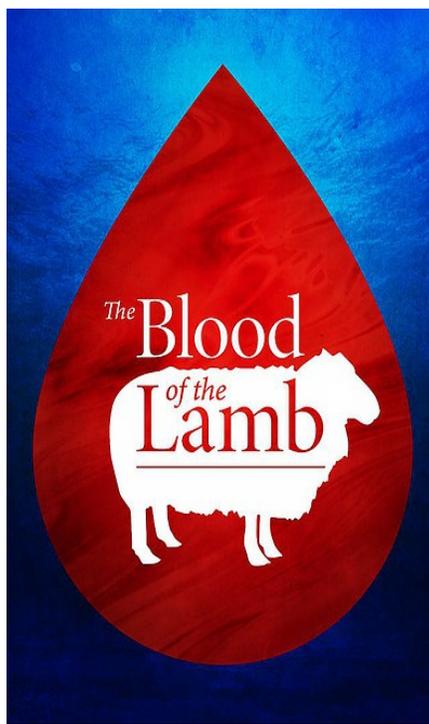
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