



"The character of a life is not set in two or three dramatic moments, but in 10,000 little moments."

—Paul Tripp

06-Feb-15

## Salvation: The Path to God's Kingdom (Part Two)

In [Philippians 2:12](#), the apostle Paul encourages us to work out our "salvation with fear and trembling," and Peter tells us to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior [Jesus Christ](#)" ([II Peter 3:18](#)). This is practical, not just theoretical, knowledge. During this period of our salvation, called sanctification, we are admonished that we need to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh" ([Romans 13:14](#)). This is when we need to focus on the process and not just the outcome.

In the church, we are in an institute for higher learning. When we started out as kids in grade school, the teachers began small and with the basics, but as we matured, we were presented with larger and more challenging problems to solve. Being justified and brought into legal conformity with God's law does not mean that we are ready to give our doctoral dissertation. We are not yet perfect or spiritually complete, but [God](#) is patient with us. He gives us time to learn and grow.

The apostle John writes in [I John 1:7](#), 9; 2:1-2:

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all [sin](#). . . . If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. . . . [I]f anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the [propitiation for our sins](#). . . .

As we continue in our relationship with Him, God is examining us as if He were proofreading a book, and certainly, our lives are an open book to Him. *Proofreading*, according to *Webster's American Dictionary*, is "to read in order to detect and mark errors to be corrected." Using this metaphor, God is checking to see if we are "grammatically" correct. He is making corrections, deleting errors, writing in improvements—all to produce a polished and complete work.

Notice [II Corinthians 6:2](#) from the International Standard Version, where Paul is speaking to a Christian congregation: "At the right time I heard you, and on a day of salvation I helped you. Listen,

*now* is really the 'right time!' *Now* is the 'day of salvation'" (emphasis ours throughout). In our day of salvation—now—God is working with us, helping us, to improve our characters so that we reflect His own. Now is that time of sanctification for us.

The English word "salvation" is from the Latin *salvare*, which means "to save, rescue, and deliver." As we saw in Part One, we have been saved, we are saved, and we are being saved, but there is yet more to come. After we were baptized into the name of God, we became living members of His Family, sons and daughters of God. Eternal life, which is far more than endless life, began when we first started to obey God and live as He lives. At the [return of Jesus Christ](#), our salvation will be complete, and we will be composed of immortal Spirit, transformed into the very image of our Savior, from glory to glory ([II Corinthians 3:18](#)).

This final step in the process is called glorification. Paul, in [I Corinthians 15:40](#), speaks of "celestial [heavenly] bodies" and "terrestrial [earthly] bodies," and each has its own glory. Of all of the creatures of the earth, we alone have the privilege—or glory—of being fashioned in our Creator's image ([Genesis 1:26](#)). Yet, even as God is far more glorious, in time we will also be similarly glorious! The apostle writes a few verses later, "And as we *have borne* the image of the man of dust, we *shall also bear* the image of the heavenly Man" ([I Corinthians 15:49](#)). He explains further in [I Corinthians 15:52-54](#):

[W]e shall be changed. . . . For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

This is when our true change comes. [I John 3:2](#) says that when we are changed, we shall be like the heavenly Man, Jesus Christ, for "we shall see Him as He is." We will be completely in God's Family, as His sons and daughters. The process that was begun in [Genesis 1:26](#) will be complete, and we will be in the image and likeness of *Elohim*, body and mind. We will bear our Father's name, and as kings and priests, reign with and under Christ for eternity ([Revelation 5:10](#))! Both the Father and the Son are workers ([John 5:17](#)), and we will work with them in their great project of salvation for all humanity. Think about it. *Everything* that exists in the universe does so because of this project, and it is a full-time job.

In summary, we have seen that salvation is a process that begins when a person accepts the sacrifice of Christ, is baptized, and has his sins forgiven. At that point, he is considered to "have been saved." Through Christ's sacrifice, he is justified or brought into alignment with the righteous standard of our Savior.

Then, a Christian enters another part of the process of salvation, sanctification. It is a period of consecration and completion, when God is transforming a Christian from new convert to the very image and stature of Jesus Christ. Throughout this period, he is "being saved" from his own human nature, this world's allurements and distractions, and Satan's wiles and temptations.

The final step in the process is glorification, when the Christian "will be saved" for good. God will change him from physical to spiritual at the resurrection of the just, and he will become a full-fledged member of the God Family. From that time forward, he will live as God and Christ now live, working and ruling in righteousness forever and ever.

This is God's precious gift to us: His magnificent plan of salvation!

- John Reiss

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by John W. Ritenbaugh

We are manufactured goods designed specifically to glorify God. We have been summoned or separated from the rest of the world for the specific purpose of having God reproduced in ourselves — becoming clean and pure, transformed into God's image. As God's royal priesthood, we have a responsibility to draw near to God, keeping His commandments, witnessing to the world that God is God. Chipping away at the living stones, fitting them into their proper places, God works continually shaping and fashioning His new creation.

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[How You Can Glorify God!](#)**

by Martin G. Collins

The Bible commands us to glorify God in all we do, but sometimes we are not sure just how we can do that as sinful human beings. Martin Collins shows that the key is righteous character.

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