



"When we really love truth we love even the unpleasant truths."
—G.K. Chesterton

01-Nov-19

Is It Salvational? (Part Two)

As we saw in Part One, Adam and Eve fell for Satan's temptation by weighing only the penalties and the benefits of the fruit that appeared so pleasant to their eyes. They overlooked what their choice would do to their unique relationship with their Creator. When it is our turn to evaluate a course of action, rather than simply asking, "Is it salvational?" a wiser question is, "Is it relational?" That is, how will this decision affect the relationship with [God](#)?

In [John 17:3](#), we find the well-known definition scripture for eternal life: "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and [Jesus Christ](#) whom You have sent." Salvation and eternal life are not strictly the same things, but they overlap enough in meaning and application that they cannot truly be separated.

Here, Jesus defines eternal life as knowing the Father and the Son, of having experiential and intimate knowledge of Them. He thus describes eternal life in relational terms. Because of this, we may need to adjust our thinking away from just penalties and benefits, curses and blessings, sticks and carrots. We must learn to think about eternal life and salvation in terms of our relationship with the Father and the Son.

Scripture proclaims an unbreakable bond between the love of God—which is the relationship—and our obedience to Him. In Christ's essential words during His last night with the disciples, notice how often He binds love and obedience as inseparable:

» "If you love Me, keep My commandments." ([John 14:15](#))

» "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." ([John 14:21](#))

» "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me." ([John 14:23-24](#))

» "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love." ([John 15:10](#))

Jesus teaches that keeping His words is an act of love toward Him, so obedience to His instructions is at the core of the relationship. On the flipside, not keeping His words detracts from the relationship, demonstrating disdain for it.

To be clear, this in no way supports the popular notion that God's commandments are no longer binding and are to be kept (except for the [Sabbath](#), of course) *only* because we love God. The Bible does not teach this at all. Rather, if there were no binding law, [sin](#) would not exist, for the law defines what sin is ([Romans 3:20](#)). We know that sin still exists, however, because of all the biblical warnings against it, and therefore, a definition of right and wrong must still be binding on us. Consequently, the way we approach the whole counsel of God demonstrates the value we place on that relationship, which is eternal life and salvation.

To understand how this works, consider another relationship: marriage. Little things make a big difference in a marriage because actions speak volumes. As we come to know our spouse, we learn what will cause a problem and what will make for good times. We discover what will irritate and what will encourage and edify. In this vein, approaching God's instructions by focusing on whether something is salvational is like behaving in marriage with the idea, "I'm going to do this thing I want to do, as long as my spouse won't divorce me for it."

Granted, habitually squeezing the toothpaste tube in the "wrong" place or putting the toilet paper on the "wrong" way probably will not cause a divorce (though, given the state of marriage today, it is not entirely out of the question). However, if we know that the other person cannot stand something, and we do it anyway, that pattern of choosing our desires over the other person's is bound to spill over into more critical areas.

This corrosive approach is guided by what we can get away with rather than what is best for the other person and the relationship. It is a calculus of lines to avoid, often combined with the assumption that we can talk our way out of trouble later. This tactic might work for a while, yet little by little, the relationship disintegrates because, on some level, it registers with the other person that he or she does not mean as much to us as we mean to ourselves.

This same principle of cause-and-effect applies in our relationship with God. Simply watching out for the so-called "big sins" suggests that we are not genuinely interested in conforming to Him—just in not crossing a major red line. Only a handful of verses explicitly name categories of sinners who will not inherit the Kingdom, yet God's revelation contains thousands upon thousands of verses that teach us in some way how to live with Him. He has called us to much more than merely glancing over lists of "deal-breakers" and concluding we are in good spiritual shape. We may honor God with our lips and go through the motions, but if we believe we are right with God simply because we do not think we have sinned in a way *we* consider to be salvational, we may be shocked on Judgment Day, as we will see in Part Three.

On the other hand, if our greatest desire is to live *with* God and *like* God for eternity, we will do our utmost to live that way *right now*. We will still stumble along the way, but our guiding approach will be whether an action will detract from the relationship, not simply whether we can find a threat of eternal death associated with it in the Bible.

Truly, everything matters. Everything does not matter to the same degree, but each action, each word, each thought that we do or do not bring into captivity ([II Corinthians 10:5](#)) matters because it has some bearing on our relationship with God. Adam and Eve took their peaceful and abundant relationship with their Creator for granted, and separation from God has been the norm ever since.

- David C. Grabbe

World News Highlights

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=Wqe2aOv>

CNBC 30-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=FvvHIYg>

Yahoo/AFP 25-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=nrgLRWB>

CNBC 31-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=vb2jFds>

MSN/Wall Street Journal 27-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=1aqs12f>

BBC News 29-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=0OzxNxn>

Fox News 28-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=WagoPqy>

The Los Angeles Times 28-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=PsaNQ10>

BBC Radio 4 30-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=cIxFQOL>

CNBC 11-Oct-19

<https://c.cgg.org/index.cfm/r/?s=xd1wa2l>

The Stamford Advocate 30-Oct-19

Church News & Special Announcements

The congregational photo of the Feast of Tabernacles in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, [has been posted](#).

31-Oct-19

Pictures from the 2019 Feast of Tabernacles in Hermanus, South Africa, have been posted.

31-Oct-19

Tiffany Schulte writes,

[**Gary Garrett**] was having trouble with respiration, mobility, and pain yesterday and asked Mom to have hospice make a visit. Upon discussion with his hospice nurse, he elected to go to the hospital to receive hospice care there. My mom stayed all night and three of my sisters stayed through various portions of the night with him. He passed away this morning. Thanks to all who have prayed. Dad was very blessed throughout this trial; his hospice nurse referred to him as her "medical miracle."

Cards may be sent to:
Deana Garrett
3205 Pheasant Run Trl.
Peru, IA 50273

Lucile Brown (Gary's mother)
415 N. 2nd St. #117
Winterset, IA 50273

28-Oct-19

New Transcripts

[FT19-01-AM: Deuteronomy and Holiness](#)

Given by John W. Ritenbaugh on 14-Oct-19

Prayer Requests

New prayer request updates have been posted for the following people:

[David Anglin](#)

[Gary Garrett](#)

[Gary Garrett](#)

[Jim McClure](#)

[Musonda Sakala](#)

[Tiffany Schulte](#)

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Genesis 3:20-24: Consequences for God and Man](#)

by Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Richard Ritenbaugh, reflecting that the greater church of God is different from nominal Christianity in that it embraces the 'Jewish' holy days and ignores Christmas, Halloween, and Easter, rejects the concepts of the Trinity, ever-burning hell, the immortal soul, and eternal security, asserts that many are afraid to associate with us because we appear as a weird and heretical cult. Even our concept of original sin is different from 'mainstream' Christianity. While Calvinists have depicted mankind as totally depraved, we believe that mankind is a mixture of good and evil. We have the ability to do some good. Even those without God's Law have some basic standards of human decency. Calvinists, straining at a handful of 'proof-texts,' believe that original sin is transmitted through blood and genes. Our human nature is neutral at birth, but inclined toward sin because we are born into a sinful environment and are driven by Satanic forces; it is not programmed into our genetic make-up. When Adam and Eve were given the death sentence by God, they also received hope that through the offspring of Eve a Savior (who would bring mankind abundant spiritual life) would be born to crush the head of the serpent, which had previously deceived her. God made coverings for Adam and Eve concealing their shame and guilt, prefiguring the covering for sins which would occur later, and adorned them with raiment, prefiguring the garment of righteous salvation. Our sins have put a barrier between us and God; He has provided a means of reconciliation through the blood of Christ. There is no possibility of a relationship with God where sin exists.

From the Archives: Featured Article

[Dead to the Law?](#)

by Earl L. Henn (1934-1997)

Romans 7, verse 4, says that we are 'dead to the law through the body of Christ.' What does this mean? Earl Henn explains the meaning in its context, showing that it refers to the 'old man' which perished at our baptism.

Featured Audio Schedule

Friday Night Bible Study

The next Bible Study will be **Matthew (Part 27)**, given by **John W. Ritenbaugh** on **Friday 01-Nov-19**. The Bible Study will be continuously available from **6:00 pm Friday** until **12:00 pm Saturday (EST)**.

Daily Audio Programs

Hear previous sermons, sermonettes, and Feast of Tabernacles messages, **Sunday through Friday**. [Available from the homepage.](#)

Date	Title
Sunday 03- Nov-19	Journey of the Monarch Butterfly
Monday 04-Nov-19	Perfect Through Suffering
Tuesday 05-Nov-19	The Fifth Commandment
Wednesday 06-Nov-19	On the Mend
Thursday 07-Nov-19	Metaphors of God's Word
Friday 08- Nov-19	The Tenth Commandment

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