



THE Apostolic Faith

EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH—JUDE 3

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2025

A restless heart finds

peace

WITNESS | BY ELLEN MORGAN

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THE **Apostolic Faith**

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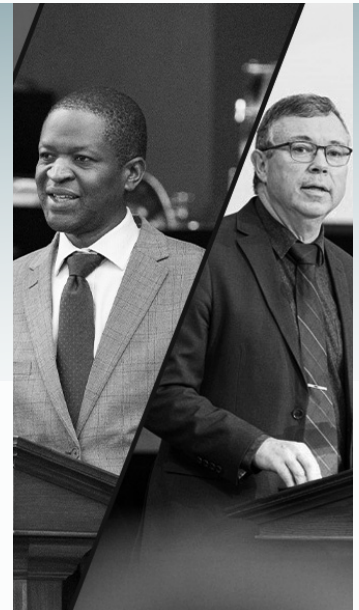
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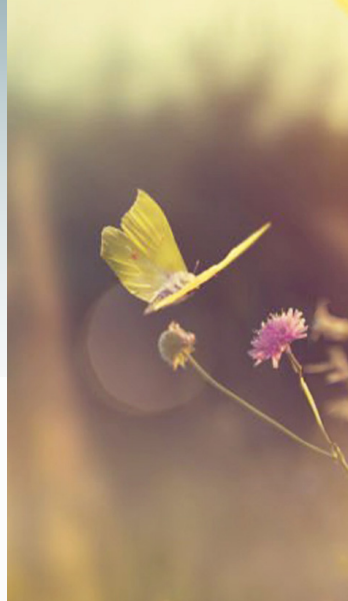
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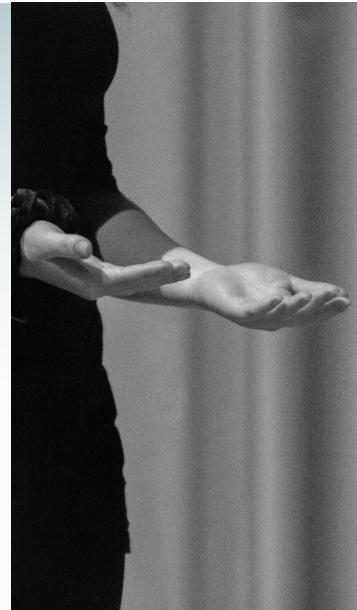
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VIEWPOINT

BY SOLA ADESOPE,
SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL

WONDERFUL PEACE IN THE STORMS OF LIFE



**TROUBLING CIRCUMSTANCES NEED
NOT TROUBLE OUR HEARTS.**

M


My wife and I first met Sister Ellen Morgan about twenty-four years ago at a Midwest camp. After we moved to the West Coast, we had more interactions with her and came to know and appreciate her quiet, peaceful spirit. We also noticed that she seemed to know everyone who comes to camp meeting! There is a reason for that: as the camp office manager, she meets nearly every guest who stays on the grounds.

One thing we did not know about Sister Ellen was the storms she has been through in life, which she shares in her testimony, “A Restless Heart Finds Peace” (see page 22). She tells that before she was saved, she was troubled inside, but when she gave her life to God, He put peace in her heart

that endured even through times of loss, grief, and sickness.

Sister Ellen’s experience is a reminder that trials come to Christians and non-Christians alike. We are not immune to hardship. At times, circumstances in life may feel as though relentless waves are crashing in, winds are howling, and the shoreline of hope is fading away. In those times, we long not merely for answers, but for *peace*—the kind of peace that surpasses understanding—and that is just what our Lord offers.

In John 14:27 Jesus said, “My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” Jesus did not speak these words in a moment of



calm, but on the eve of His betrayal and eventual crucifixion. The peace He offers is not the absence of trials. Rather, it is the assurance that God is in control of every detail of our situation, and that we will be held, loved, and guided by Him through even the fiercest storms of life.

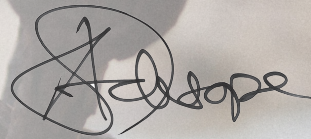
True peace isn't found in control or certainty. It is found in surrender—yielding to the One who walks on water, who speaks and the winds obey, and who sleeps peacefully in the midst of the tempest. He may not always calm the storm, but He will always calm our hearts with peace in the storm.

With God as our anchor, we have a quiet confidence that allows us to sing, “Through the love of God our Savior, all will be well. . . . We expect a bright tomorrow, all will be well. Faith can sing through days of sorrow, ‘All, all is well.’”¹

If you are in the midst of a storm today, don't just cry *for* peace—

cry *to* the Prince of Peace! The same Jesus who stood by Sister Ellen will stand by every believer in our times of trial. As you read this edition of *The Apostolic Faith*, may you be reminded of the blessing we have in casting all our cares on a God who can give us wonderful peace in the midst of a storm.

¹ “Through the Love of God Our Savior” by Mary B Peters, 1847.



FROM THE WORD

BY SOLA ADESOPE

OUR GREATEST NEED

A closer look
at humanity's
biggest problem
and God's
solution.



ome years ago, I bought a Christmas card that said, “If our greatest

need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.”¹ I love that message, it rings very true to me. While we have a number of needs in this life, at the root of them all and the greatest of them all is our need for salvation.

Salvation is the act of God's grace by which sinners receive forgiveness for their sins and stand before God as though



IF OUR GREATEST NEED HAD BEEN INFORMATION, GOD WOULD HAVE SENT US AN EDUCATOR... BUT OUR GREATEST NEED WAS FORGIVENESS, SO GOD SENT US A SAVIOR. — ROY LESSIN

they had never committed those misdeeds. *Sin* is the transgression of the law of God (see 1 John 3:4). In other words, when God says we should do one thing and we willfully do something else, that act of disobedience against God is sin.



WHAT IS SALVATION?

SALVATION: The act of God’s grace by which sinners receive forgiveness for their sins and stand before God as though they had never committed those misdeeds.

Sin is very dangerous. It destroys lives. We often hear people say, “Sin will take you further than you want to go.” Romans 6:23 tells us, “The wages of sin is death.” Because humanity went into sin, what we should receive at the end of our lives is eternal death. However, the rest of that verse says: “but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” God did not leave the human race to die—He sent Jesus to be our Savior!

The sole purpose of Jesus coming to earth was to deliver mankind from sin. This is the very foundation of the Gospel message and it is the news that every sinner needs to hear most. Today, let’s consider why salvation is necessary, why Jesus spoke of the experience as a “new birth,” and what evidence will be seen when a person has been saved.

The need for salvation

At one point in history, there was no sin in the world. In the very beginning, when God first created the earth and the first couple, Adam and Eve were without sin and they enjoyed perfect fellowship with God. We read in Genesis chapter 3 that God would come to them in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day and talk to them. He might have asked them, “Adam, how are you doing? Eve, how are you today?” This was the type of communion they shared.

God told Adam and Eve they could eat of everything in the Garden, except the fruit on the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. However, the devil came and tempted them to eat that fruit, and they gave in to the temptation. They ignored His warning and disobeyed God by eating from the forbidden tree.

That act of deliberate disobedience and rebellion against God was the first sin, and it separated Adam and Eve from God, breaking their fellowship. Today, we call that event the Fall of Man. Adam and Eve were driven from

the Garden and their actions brought a curse upon the whole earth.

When sin entered the world, death came with it. More than just *physical death*, where the body dies, but also *spiritual death*, which is when we become separated from God. Adam and Eve became spiritually dead when they sinned, and subsequently, all their descendants—including everyone today—were born in that same depraved condition. Without intervention, the end result of sin is *eternal death*, which is eternal separation from God with no hope of ever reconciling.

This principle is still true today: any sin in our lives—whether seemingly small or great, obvious or subtle—causes separation from God and spiritual death (see Isaiah 59:2). If we die physically while in a sinful condition, we will face eternal death.

Thank God that He loves mankind and He did not leave us in that state of dying with no hope! Instead, God sent a Savior to redeem us. Only a sinless, guiltless, perfect One could be the remedy for sin, and that One is Jesus Christ. His sacrificial death paid the penalty for sin, so that all who believe on Him and turn from sin to Him can be saved. He died for each of us in order to save us (Hebrews 2:9). What amazing love!

The new birth

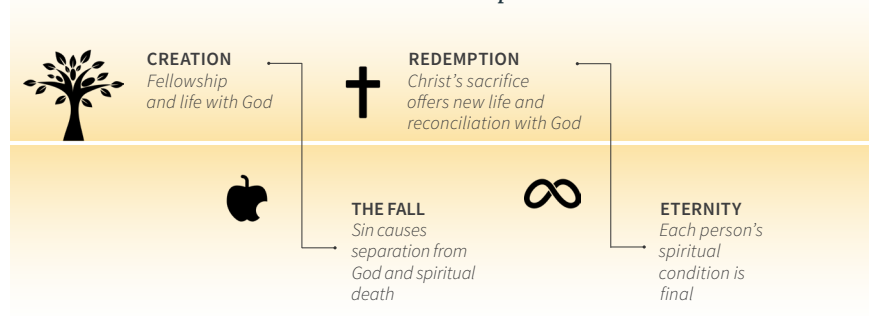
There are many aspects of salvation that we could analyze, but the one we want to consider today comes from a passage in the Book of John. In that account, we read about a Jewish man named Nicodemus who came to Jesus with questions. He was a leader in the religious community, and God did something wonderful for him. In John 3:7 Jesus told him, “Ye must be born again.” That is where we get the terminology of “new birth.”

In this passage, Jesus was explaining that no one will see the beauties of the Gospel or get to Heaven without experiencing a new birth, or second birth. Just as surely as we needed to be physically born to be alive in this world, we must have a spiritual birth to live in God’s Kingdom. That is what happens when we are saved.

By describing salvation as a “birth,” Jesus was giving us insight into what happens at salvation. Here are a few comparisons between physical birth and spiritual birth.

Physical birth is from parents, while spiritual birth is from God. A physical birth cannot happen without parents. I had the privilege to dedicate many babies while pastoring at our church in Pullman, Washington, and every single one of them

From Creation to Redemption





**PHYSICAL BIRTH VS.
→ SPIRITUAL BIRTH**

FROM EARTHLY PARENTS
→ FROM GOD

BORN INTO SIN
→ DELIVERED FROM SIN

REJOICING BY FAMILY
→ REJOICING IN HEAVEN

CARRIES PHYSICAL TRAITS
→ SHOWS SPIRITUAL
CHARACTERISTICS

came from parents. With a spiritual birth, we are born of God. That is why Jesus said, “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). Spiritual birth is from our Father in Heaven.

At physical birth we are born into sin; at spiritual birth we are delivered from sin. As mentioned before, because of the Fall, every person in this world was born *into* sin. But thank God for spiritual birth, which delivers us *from* sin! This contrast is echoed in other parts of Scripture. Psalm 51:5 says, “Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” In 1 John 3:9 we read, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” God delivers from sin, and it is wonderful.

There is rejoicing when a baby is born physically and there is rejoicing at spiritual birth. Anyone who has been around a newborn baby knows the joy that a child can bring—few experiences in life compare to that type of pure love and happiness. In Luke 15:7 Jesus said, “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.” A spiritual birth also brings joy! We do not read in the Bible about many things that cause rejoicing in Heaven, but a soul being reborn does.

Physical characteristics are in place at physical birth and spiritual characteristics are in place at spiritual birth. When people see my eldest daughter, they often ask, “Are you Brother Sola’s daughter?” They can see my traits in her and it is obvious that she is my child. In the same way, after we are born again, others can see that we are children of God. In fact, the label “Christian” was not first used by believers, but by others who recognized and identified the traits of Christ in His followers (see Acts 11:26). Likewise, anyone who knows about Christ will be able to recognize His characteristics in us.

Whom do you follow? Whom do you love? What do you talk about? —Loyce Carver

Evidence of the new birth

When a person experiences the new birth, his life is not the same as it was before. At the Portland camp meeting in 1964, Brother Loyce Carver gave a message on this topic. He said, “Ask yourself, *Am I a Christian? Am I saved? Have I been born of the Spirit of God?* You will know the answer when you are certain who leads you around. Whom do you follow? Whom do you love? What are your desires? What do you look for? How do you behave? How

do you go? What do you talk about? Old things, are they still in your life?” The spiritual transformation that happens on the inside will be seen in our actions, reactions, attitudes, priorities—it touches every aspect of our lives.

The evidence of salvation is foundational to our Christian living. Without it, we would not be called Christians. Following are a few of the critical signs that a person has been born again.

A sinless life. We read in 1 John 5:1 that if we are saved, we will not commit sin. We cannot over-emphasize this point: “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

A popular belief today is that salvation does not make one sinless, but only makes one “sin less.” Or put in other words, that Christians can sin a little. No way! That is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible says, “Whosoever is born of God sinneth not.” God gives us the power to live without sinning. A child of God does not sin and a sinner is not a child of God.

There is no such thing as a sinning Christian because at salvation, our sins are washed away by the Blood of Jesus (see Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19). We are free from sin and delivered from sinning. That is the evidence that we have been born again. There is a song I love to sing. It says, “You ask me why I’m happy, so I’ll just tell you why; Because my sins are gone.”² Praise God, our sins are gone!

Old things have passed away. The new birth makes us a “new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our outlook and lifestyle change. Wrong things that were once loved, are now hated. Right things that were once hated, are now loved. The old life of defeat is gone!



CHRISTIANITY

is often resisted in society, but at the same time, people love those who have the **fruit of the Spirit** in their lives.

In the 1990s, I was working for a company in Africa. One day, I was invited to the home of a co-worker. I went to his house and it was like a mansion—it had several floors. He told me, “Sola, come along with us and we’ll make you rich.” Yet, I knew that he and I were earning similar salaries. I asked, “Where did you get this from?” He told me he would teach me. However, I was not interested. I knew he was talking about the “old ways” from a life of sin that I did not want anything to do with. Some bosses in the office were also putting much pressure on me to join them. Because I was saved, I did not want to have anything to do with that way of life. Hence, one day, I went to the office and resigned. Do I regret taking a stand for God? No way! God has great blessings for us, but the old things must pass away.

The fruit of the Spirit. In Galatians 5:22-23 we read about the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. After we are saved, God will beautify our lives with these attributes, and others will see the glory of God in us. These qualities are what all employers would like to see in their workers, what teachers would like in their students, and the type of friend everyone would like to have. Christianity is often resisted in society, but at the same time, people love those who have the fruit of the Spirit in their lives. This is one way we can recognize when someone has been born again.

Fellowship with God and His people. We read in 1 John 1:3 that a saved soul enjoys fellowship, first with God and then with His people. When we come to church, we love to spend time on our knees in prayer, connecting with God in Heaven. As we do that, so often a song will rise up in our souls—praises to the King of kings! Then, we get up from our knees and see our brothers and sisters, and share this wonderful fellowship with them as well. Only those who are alive in Christ can experience this fellowship that we cherish so much.

EVIDENCE OF THE NEW BIRTH

- A SINLESS LIFE
- OLD THINGS HAVE PASSED AWAY
- THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT
- FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS PEOPLE
- LIFE IN ABUNDANCE

A saved soul will have life in abundance. Jesus said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). Throughout the Book of John, the word *life* appears forty-seven times. The writer was encouraging new believers to understand that the best life is in Christ. Some people think they will enjoy their lives by living in sin, but sin is what destroys a life. I am enjoying life in this Gospel! And one day, we will enjoy eternal life—life without end with Jesus. John wrote about this too, “Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

The greatest offer

Man’s greatest problem is sin, and God’s greatest solution is salvation. If you are not saved today, surrender your life to God and you will experience the new birth that Jesus spoke about. This great salvation and the evidence of it will be yours today!

¹ Roy Lessin, “God Sent Us a Savior: A Collection” (Chariot Victor Pub: 1998).

² N. B. Vandall, “My Sins Are Gone,” © 1934 Harry D. Clarke.

Reverend Sola Adesope is the Apostolic Faith Superintendent General.



BY JACK CHASTEEN

A LIFELONG COMMITMENT

A review of God's intention for marriage from the beginning.

God places great value upon marriage. At Creation, He did not establish kingdoms or laws or governments or authorities as the foundation for society. He established the family unit and ordained that it should be based upon marriage between one man and one woman.

After bringing the world and everything in it into existence, God provided a wife for Adam, the man He had created. We read in Genesis 2:18, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."



« *Jack and Wendy on their wedding day.*

» *Jack and Wendy fifty years later.*

a woman was God's intention for marriage from the beginning. For example, in Matthew's Gospel we read that Pharisees came to Jesus and asked, "Is



INSTITUTED FROM CREATION

"And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

— GENESIS 2:23-24

In verses 21-24, we learn how God addressed man's need for a suitable companion. "And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; and the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The term translated *cleave* in this Scripture means "to adhere or stick together." It describes the joining together of a man and woman, the two becoming "one flesh." Marriage was to be a union that excluded all others. That union is the basis for the stability of the family, society, and the nation.

There are many aspects of marriage that could be considered, but one vital aspect is that marriage is for life. Several Scriptures in the New Testament establish that the lifelong union between a man and

it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his

wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:3-6).¹

In Romans 7:1-2, Paul the Apostle wrote these words: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband." Like the Romans to whom Paul was writing, we know what God says about marriage: that it is a union only to be severed by death.

At the Portland camp meeting in 1974, after the evening service on July 10, on the back road behind the tabernacle, I asked my girlfriend, Wendy, if she would marry me. She said yes! When we were



At the Portland camp meeting in 1974, after the evening service on July 10, on the back road behind the tabernacle, I asked my girlfriend, Wendy, if she would marry me. She said yes! When we were married just over seven months later, we had no questions about how long we would stay married;

WE KNEW OUR MARRIAGE WAS FOR LIFE.



married just over seven months later, we had no questions about how long we would stay married; we knew our marriage was for life. We had grown up learning that divorce is not an option, and we thank God that the matter was settled in our hearts before we said, “I do.”

Challenges come to every marriage, and sometimes people say, “What if this happens in a marriage? Is divorce allowed?” or “What about that situation? Should the two stay together?” We find some answers in the Apostle Paul’s response to questions about marriage from the believers in Corinth. In the first nine verses of 1 Corinthians 7, Paul wrote to those who were unmarried and those who were contemplating marriage. Then in verse 10, he began to address married individuals and answer some questions that evidently had been presented to him. By looking at his responses, we can conclude what those questions were.

One question Paul apparently had been asked was, “What if one individual in a marriage wants to leave?

What should be done?” This still happens at times, and the same question arises. Paul wrote in response, “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from the husband.” The phrase, “Yet not I, but the Lord,” indicates that Paul was basing his reply on the instructions the Lord himself had given.² Paul went on to say, “But and if she [the wife] depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

Another question posed to Paul seems to have been what should take place if one in a marriage was a believer and the other was not. Many of the Corinthians had come to Christ from paganism. They seemingly felt that after being converted, they should break all ties with the unbelieving world, including the marriage bond. So the question was asked, “Should the marriage be severed?” Not by any means! Paul said, “If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.

GROWING UP, I ALWAYS wanted to be a Christian, as it was apparent to me that God blessed the lives of those who served Him. However, in my teenage years, the worldly lifestyle looked glamorous and appealing, and I made up my mind that I wanted to wait awhile before giving my life to the Lord. What an unwise decision that was! Those wasted years filled with sinful choices brought consequences.

In 1991, the Lord really started convicting my heart. There was tremendous fear in my heart that the Lord would return and I wouldn't be ready to meet Him. Part of me wanted to surrender to God, but by that time I was married in adultery. My first husband was still living, and I knew I couldn't be in a wrong marriage and be ready for Heaven.

Many times, I told God that I didn't know how I could get along



God Is My Husband

Dee Cummins tells how God helped her out of a wrong marriage in a miraculous way.



without my husband, but if He would help me out of my marriage, I would give Him my life. Then one day, the Lord spoke so clearly to me that He could come even while I was praying, and I was not ready to meet Him. Thoughts about what my husband might say or do paled in comparison to the thought of standing before God to give an account of my life. That day, I knelt beside my bed and poured out my heart to God, confessing my sins and asking His forgiveness. In a moment of time, He answered that prayer and forgave me. Peace and joy filled my heart!

I really didn't know what to do next, but I knew that God had given me an assurance that He would help me explain to my

husband what had happened. Amazingly, almost immediately after I was saved, my husband said he was so sorry, but he couldn't come near me; he felt like there was a barrier around me. I know now that was the power of God.

The Lord was there as I shared Scriptures with my husband and told him that God had saved me. God helped both of us through those next few months. We moved into separate bedrooms and he did not hinder me from going to church. In fact, he showed much respect as I did my devotions at home. Eventually, he found a nice house to buy and moved out.

His move meant that I became responsible for tasks he had always done, including yardwork.

The hedge along the front of the property presented a problem: it was over seventy feet long and towered above my head. Trimming it was a huge task, which became a big concern to me. Our homeowner's association required that properties be maintained or the association could hire out the needed work and send the bill to the homeowner. I could not cut back the hedge myself, but because I was on a limited budget, it was out of the question for me to hire someone to take care of it.

One day, as I read my Bible, the words of Isaiah 54:5 spoke to my heart, "For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name." I felt like I had found a treasure! I asked the Lord, "Does that mean

You'll be my husband? Will You help me with things like my hedge?"

A while later, as I looked out my dining room window on Christmas morning, I saw to my amazement that my hedge had been trimmed and shaped perfectly. It was a miracle! I asked people close to me if they had done it, but no one knew anything about it. I knew God had kept His promise to me and taken care of that task, just as a husband would have done.

Later, when it was time to sell the house, the hedge had grown tall again and I reminded God, "You are my husband." The next day, the hedge was cut back again. The Lord once again proved that there is nothing too difficult for Him.

God repaired my life and replaced sin's damage with blessings and beauty. He has been so good to me!

And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him" (1 Corinthians 7:12-13).

As in Paul's day, challenges come. However, as Christians we are children of peace and so we must make every effort to resolve differences and preserve the marriage. Paul went on to give the reason: "For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?" It may be that the godly and peaceable behavior of one individual in a marriage will lead that person's spouse to God. But whether or not that is the case, a vow was taken, and it is binding until death.

When Wendy and I stood before the minister who performed our wedding

ceremony, I made my vow before God and those present, and she made her vow before God and those present. Her vows were not mine, and my vows were not hers. My vows are not dependent upon Wendy fulfilling her vows, nor are her vows dependent upon me fulfilling my vows. We are individually responsible to God to keep the commitments we made.

We do not minimize the suffering that broken vows create. Wendy and I have friends and family who have dealt with this situation, and we know the sorrow and grief that comes with it. Yet, think of the privilege the one who stays true to his or her marriage vow has—he or she may be able to influence that one who has departed! Prayers can change



IT MAY BE that the godly and peaceable behavior of one individual in a marriage will lead that person's spouse to God. But whether or not that is the case, a vow was taken, and it is binding until death.

situations. And God will supply grace to those who stay true to the vows they have taken before God and to the principles regarding marriage that are found in the Word of God.

Circumstances do not change the sanctity of the marriage vow; the union that was established is permanent in God's sight. The world accepts almost any reason to dissolve a marriage, but marriage is not merely a social or civil institution. It is a God-ordained and sacred ordinance. The marriage bond was established by God himself. No man or woman, state or government, legislation or law, can break or change God's Word, and His Word says marriages are only to be dissolved by death.

The world has made a mockery out of the Word of God in our day and especially

concerning the institution of marriage. It is evident that when Biblical principles are ignored and it is left up to man to make decisions about marriages, there is chaos and shipwreck, and that affects the family. If the enemy can destroy the family unit, then cities, governments, and nations suffer as well.

God's commandments about marriage are being attacked more and more in our day. Civil and legal authorities look to their own "commandments" and ignore what God said in His Word. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for doing this. Some of them had come to Jesus asking why His disciples did not follow the traditions of the elders. He told them, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:6-9). The Pharisees were the Jewish religious leaders in Jesus' day, yet they failed to adhere to the commandments of God.

Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." That is very simple. God wants us to make it to Heaven, and even though at times His instructions prick our hearts, we want to be careful to follow. How many marriages would be saved and how many families would remain intact if people simply followed the Word of God? Those who refuse to obey will be judged for their disobedience. We read in 1 Peter 4:17-18, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" We do not want to be judged for failing to obey God's commandments, and that includes His commandments regarding marriage.

The enemy of our souls is against your marriage and your family! He is against your beliefs! You may suffer opposition for standing for the principles of God's Word, but if you are in the will of God, He will be there to help you through any suffering.

I am sixty-nine years old, and I was saved when I was thirteen. Not once in all those years has the Lord failed me, nor has He failed Wendy and me in over fifty years of marriage. I know He will not fail you either. His Word tells us, "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19). Through all the trials and tests, if we just commit our lives to Him and purpose to



Every marriage needs a shield, and God will be a shield to a marriage that is in accord with His instructions and has been committed to Him. God has the power to defeat the opposition and forces that come against a marriage and a family, and we need that shield!

MARRIAGE VOWS

MARRIAGE VOW:
a sacred promise made before God.

LIFELONG COMMITMENT:
Marriage vows are to be kept for life.

FOR HARD TIMES:
The vow can help preserve a marriage during challenging times.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY:
Husbands and wives are responsible for keeping their own vows before God, regardless of what their spouse chooses to do.

A LASTING IMPACT:
Faithfulness to marriage vows is a testimony to others.

obey His Word, He will be with us and sustain us.

We realize that perspectives and ideas and the "what ifs" abound in any consideration of marriage. But what does God's Word say? We read, "Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Proverbs 30:5-6). We want to follow the Word of God regarding our views of our marriages, our home lives, and our families. In good times, in sorrow, in gladness, the Word of God is our road map. We do not want to be guided by man's ideas; we want to know what God says.

Every marriage needs to be built on God's Word. There is no greater benefit in a marriage than to have the pure Word of God at its core. Every marriage needs a shield, and God will be a shield to a marriage that is in accord with His instructions and has been committed to Him. God has the power to defeat the opposition and forces that come against a marriage and a family, and we need that shield!

Let us purpose to pray for our families, that God will put a shield about them so the world's ideas and perspectives cannot enter in. Let us look to the Word of God and obey His instructions about our marriages and our homes, knowing that as we do so, we will thrive under His care and protection.

¹ The Gospel writer Mark described the same question and response in Mark 10:1-12.

² See Matthew 19:19; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18.

Reverend Jack Chasteen is pastor of the Apostolic Faith Church in Roseburg, Oregon.

SERMON EXCERPTS

Short messages that have a long-lasting impact.



WHO WILL GO?



BY MICHAEL ANTHONY

ALL WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED

God's saving grace have a responsibility to share the Gospel message with others. This is the highest calling there is in the world, because it involves people's eternal destinies. Once a person enters eternity, his position with God cannot change. Therefore, it is vital that we do our part to help others prepare to meet the Lord.

This will not always be easy. It might require stepping out of our comfort zones or giving of our time and resources.

However, the consequences and rewards are great, so whether introducing one to Christ or encouraging another along the way, we must commit ourselves to the cause.

For each of us who received salvation and has continued in the Gospel, somebody prayed, somebody fasted, somebody made a sacrifice, somebody was committed to the Gospel.

There were many who encouraged me. In May of 1997, when I was an usher in

our local church, Brother and Sister Clyde Penn invited me to attend my first Portland camp meeting with them. From that moment, I began consecrating, seeking for my sanctification and to be filled with the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

As an usher, I had keys to the building, so I would slip out of my house at midnight, walk to the church, and pray until five in the morning. I was preparing my heart to receive what God had for me—that is what we call consecration.

That year, on the first day of Portland camp meeting, Brother Dwight Baltzell gave the opening sermon that Sunday morning. His text was Matthew 5:6: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled."

On Tuesday night, after praying for two hours, I met Brother Duane Wilson for the first time. He noticed when I shifted positions, and as an altar worker, came alongside me and encouraged me in prayer. He was committed, he did his part, and I received my sanctification. Hallelujah!

On Thursday after the morning teaching, I prayed to be filled, and after a while moved from the altar benches to the chairs. I knelt in the third chair of the second row. At first, I didn't notice that Sister Cynthia White of Chicago was sitting in the next chair. Then she said, "Lord, this young man seems to want something from You." She didn't know who I was—just a soul seeking more of God—but she prayed for me because she was committed to the Gospel.

As I prayed, I too made a commitment to the Lord. I was praying about Isaiah, chapter 6, and

came to verse 8: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." There were not many ministers in the Caribbean, so I said to the Lord, "If You will fill me, I will go." The fire fell and I was filled with the Holy Spirit. Praise God!

Many people had a part in my receiving these blessings from God. The Penns brought me to camp meeting, Brother Dwight preached, Brother Duane and Sister White helped me pray. Beyond that, there were people who prepared the cabins and provided the meals. Because all these people were committed to the Gospel, I was encouraged and prayed through to God's blessings.

Somebody you know needs the Lord, and God is asking, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Make the commitment today to do your part. ♦ *Reverend Michael Anthony is the Eastern Caribbean District Superintendent.*



A BIG LESSON FROM A SMALL RABBIT



BY BONIFACE BANDA

A TESTIMONIAL ABOUT

an event or object can be helpful. However, most often, experiencing it personally is far more valuable.

When I was a teenager, I spent some time in a village on the outskirts of Lusaka, Zambia. A group of boys there said, "Let's go hunt for rabbits."

Being a city boy, I had never seen a rabbit. When we were hunting for the rabbits, one of the boys hit a shrub. A rabbit leaped out, and they started chasing after it. But alas, I ran the other direction because I was afraid. It was so embarrassing when I realized it was a small creature. The whole team asked me, "Why did you run away?" I told them, "I thought a rabbit was big," because the stories I had been told and the books I had read caused me to think it was a large animal.

Seeing a live rabbit gave me understanding.

The Book of John, chapter 4, records the encounter of Jesus with a Samaritan woman. Jesus asked her for water, and in the process of their conversation, Jesus revealed her true life. She came to the point where she started telling the Messiah about

the Messiah. She said that when the Messiah came, He would tell them all things. Jesus said, “I that speak unto thee am he” (John 4:26). I believe that was a blessed moment. Jesus did not tell the woman this to embarrass her. He wanted to bless her. He wanted to give her the Living Water.

The woman ran to the village and told everyone, “Come, see a man, which told me all things

that ever I did: is not this the Christ?” (John 4:29). Many believed what the woman said and came to see Jesus. They requested that He abide with them, and He stayed for two days. We read, “And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:41-42).

Each person needs to have a personal encounter with Jesus. It is not enough to hear testimonies of those who have been saved from their lives of sin; of people who have been

sanctified and baptized with the Holy Ghost and fire. Individual interaction with Jesus is necessary. The Spirit of God is faithful to reveal our sinfulness—not to embarrass us, but to give us Living Water.

An encounter with Jesus gives us a testimony. It will cause us to want to tell the world about this great salvation and the joy it brings. We will want others to experience Jesus for themselves. ♦ *Reverend Boniface Banda is the District Superintendent of Zambia.*

GOD CAN FILL OUR TANKS



BY DEIVYS PICHARDO

IN 1 KINGS, CHAPTER 17, WE read that the prophet Elijah heeded God’s instructions and was sustained during a time of drought and famine. First, the Lord directed him to go to the brook Cherith, telling him, “Thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee” (verse 4). Then, the brook dried up, and the Lord gave new instructions to “arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee” (verse 9). In



both instances, Elijah recognized God’s voice, and trusting fully in Him, obeyed.

When Elijah went to Zarephath, he found the widow and asked her to bring him bread and water. She replied, “As the LORD thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I

may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” This must have been a difficult situation for Elijah and a test of his faith. God had told him the widow would sustain him, but she had almost nothing.

Elijah did not react with discouragement, because His faith was in God. He confidently told the woman, “Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth” (verses 12-14).

The woman, though she did not hear directly from God, was also able to discern His voice and trusted in His direction. She “did according to the saying of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake by Elijah” (verses 15-16).

Whether we face a life-threatening situation as Elijah did or a common circumstance, we need to be able to hear and discern God’s voice and be willing to obey His instructions. When our trust is in Him, He will lead us through every challenging circumstance.

One time, in the Dominican Republic, I was traveling with my pastor and several others

to a church service. We were in the middle of our annual season when every church hosts special meetings. We were on our way from one church service to another in the capital, which was over an hour away, when our bus ran out of gas. It was 11:30 at night and the gas stations were closed. We waited for another vehicle to pass by so we could ask for gas, but none came. Finally, the pastor received inspiration from God. He had been listening and was ready to obey. He said, “Let’s pray.” We gathered around the bus, placing our hands on it and asking Jesus to help us. Then the pastor told the driver, “Let’s go.” Though the driver was not a believer, the command was confident enough that he got in the vehicle and started it. Then we drove to the capital, where we found a gas station open.

Just as God filled the cruse of oil and barrel of meal for Elijah and the widow, He filled up our tank! When we listen for His voice, trusting in His direction, He will sustain us through difficult and even impossible situations. ♦ *Reverend Deivys Pichardo is the District Superintendent of the Dominican Republic.*

ANCHOR TO THE ROCK!



BY LEROY TONNING

NOT LONG AGO, A FAMILY asked if I would accompany them on their search for a house to buy. They wanted help in assessing the technical

qualities of the houses. We looked at several, and I noticed that each had a nice outer appearance—the roofs, windows, and painted exteriors were all fine. Inside, the houses were styled with nice furniture, flowers in vases, and sometimes even

a fire in the fireplace. On the surface, everything looked appealing.

However, I’ve seen enough houses to know that surface



appearances can be deceiving. It is more important to know what is underneath, supporting the structure. One part of the building that most people don't even think about is the foundation. When people are looking for a house, they need to ask, "Is the foundation sure? Does it go deep enough? Is the structure properly anchored to it?"

When the foundation is not good, the whole house is affected, and this can prove disastrous when tested. This is true in a

spiritual sense as well. The one whose faith is built on a faulty foundation or anchored loosely will not be able to stand when the storms of life come.

The good news is that God has promised each of us a sure foundation for our faith. We read in Isaiah 28:16, "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Then in 1 Corinthians 3:11, we see the fulfillment of this promise: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Jesus is the Corner Stone! His sacrifice on the Cross for our sins laid the foundation for our faith, which is salvation through His shed Blood. By repenting of our sins, we can be forgiven and reconciled to God. On this solid Rock, we can begin to build a sturdy spiritual house—a life that is obedient to God's Word, surrendered to His will, and ready for Heaven.

As we build, we will experience trials that test our faith, but Jesus can keep us. Some

buildings have anchors that fasten to the foundation and go all the way up to the eaves. These stabilize a structure during violent storms such as hurricanes, holding it in place and keeping it upright. We need to be anchored like that to Christ, especially in these modern times that seem to be so fluid. We do this by daily turning to God in prayer for guidance, spiritual strength, and help in applying His Word to our lives.

Many people are struggling today, not knowing where to find their footing. Thank God, we can anchor our lives to the solid Rock! ♦ *Reverend LeRoy Tinning is the District Superintendent of Scandinavia.*

ARE YOU A D.I.Y. CHRISTIAN?



BY MICHAEL IVANY

EACH VERSE IN THE BIBLE

has been put there for a purpose, and it is important for us to look at them in their entirety. Taking only a short phrase or applying the words out of context can be spiritually dangerous.

For example, Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." What would be the outcome if we were to take just the first five words, "I can do all things . . ." and apply them in our lives? Many motivational speakers emphasize that "the power is in you" to accomplish a task or achieve a certain goal. While we all need a measure of self-confidence, their message is, in effect, "You control your life! You can do anything you set your mind to!" Taking that message literally can cause problems.

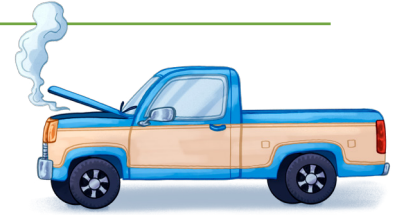
The acronym D.I.Y., which stands for "do it yourself," is commonplace in our society. Because costs are rising,

many people are resorting to figuring out how to accomplish projects or repair items on their own. However, disaster can result when people attempt something for which they have no experience or training.

For example, my dad, Sam, was a skilled mechanic. When I was a boy, I often would see an unfamiliar vehicle parked in our driveway. Someone would be there wanting my dad to look at it. They would start out by saying, "Sam, I have a problem with my car." They would explain what was happening and then say, "I tried to fix it myself, but . . ." My dad said his heart would sink when he heard those words, because he knew he would have to deal with their attempts to fix a problem before he could even start on the original problem!

I wonder if that is how God feels when we attempt to solve a troubling situation on our own. Perhaps when we are assailed by life's storms or experience some kind of struggle in our lives, we think, *What can I do about this? I must come up with a solution somehow.* I wonder if God doesn't look down and say, "Why don't you just give the situation to Me? If you would only come to Me, I could take care of that for you!"

The words in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things . . ." were purposefully connected with the second half of the verse, which reads, ". . . through Christ which strengtheneth me." When we try to do something *without* Christ,



our efforts may result in a disaster.

We want to give life's challenges over to God. We do not want to be "do-it-yourself" Christians, but among those who rely upon Him for His solutions. When we trust God, situations will go a lot smoother. It may be human nature for us to attempt to handle trials on our own, but when we get further down the road, we'll usually find the problem is still there. It may even be worse!

God has a solution for each challenge we face in life, so let's purpose to trust Him in every matter. He is well able to bring about the right results without our assistance! ♦ *Reverend Michael Ivany is the pastor in Roddickton, Newfoundland, Canada.*



BY JOSEPH AMFOFO ANSAH

OUT OF ISLAM

Jesus made the transformation that Joseph had not found in Islam.

“The God of the mountains is also the God of the valleys, and through everything He has been with my family.”

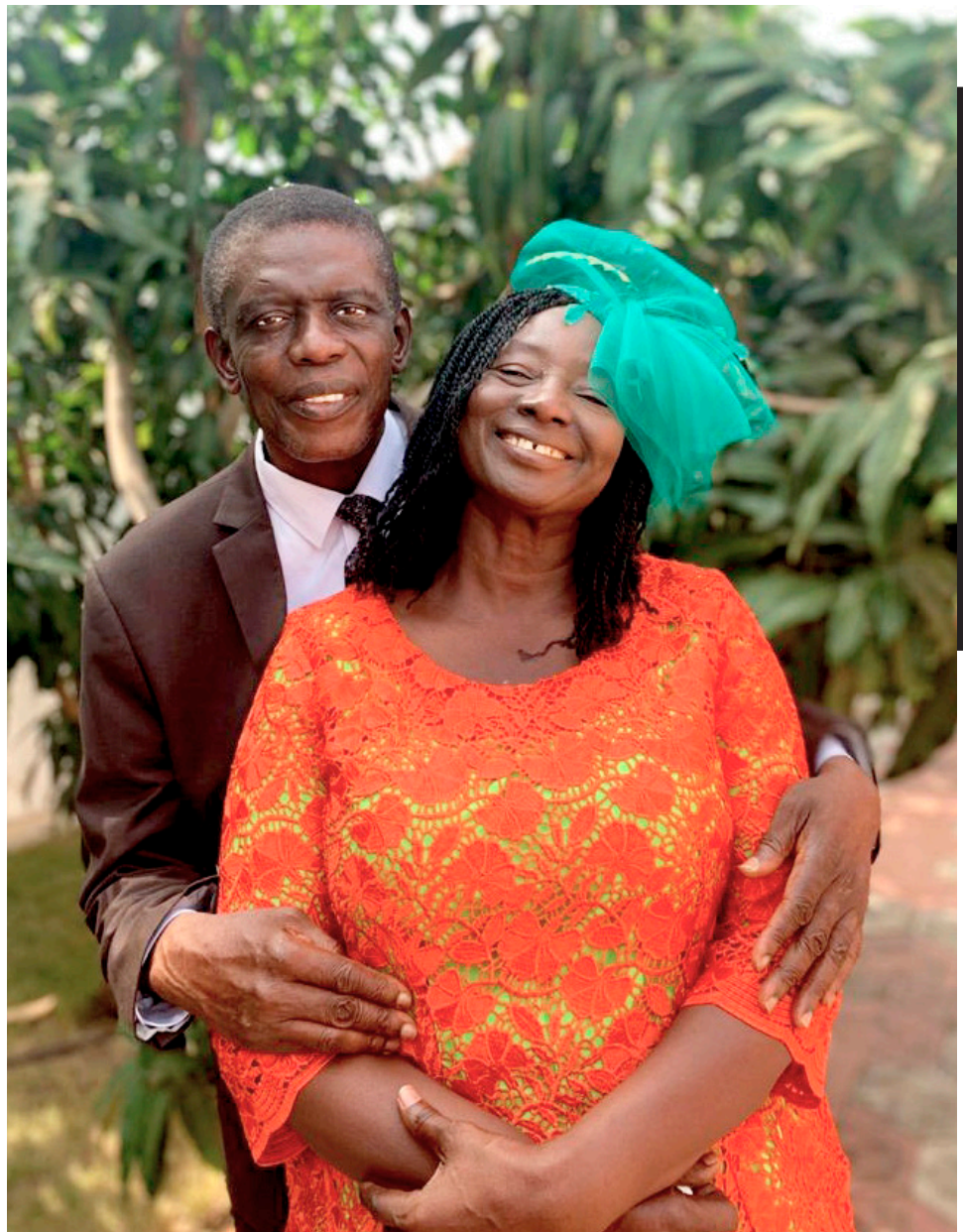


uring my teenage years, I had a desire to live a good, moral life, but I could never

do it. I was raised in a Muslim home with good values, but I couldn't seem to stop myself from joining my friends in doing things I knew were wrong. What bothered me the most was when my own friends would rebuke me for wrongdoing, which usually happened when I was caught in a lie.

In my last year before graduation from secondary school, I wondered if fasting would bring the change I felt I needed in my life. In all my years growing up, during the annual Muslim fasts our family would sometimes go into town and eat while pretending we hadn't broken the fast. That last year of school, I completed the entire fast. However, it was to no avail, which really upset me. I was left with many questions and one conclusion: the Islamic leaders had been deceiving me, because there was no transformation in that religion.

» *Joseph and his wife, Anna.*



A new prayer

I had lived my entire life in Ghana, and after graduation I planned to travel to Nigeria where they were having an economic boom. I hoped to make some money and then continue on to America for even greener pastures. However, God, in His own way, foiled those plans. I had given my savings to my elder siblings and they spent it, so there was no means to travel. Instead, while waiting for my school certificate results, I decided to visit an uncle. He attended the Apostolic Faith Church, and when I arrived, he started explaining the Gospel to me. He said that I should ask God to show me the right way to worship Him. Later on, my uncle's son came to our house and invited me to church. However, I was not ready to accept the invitation.

Soon, I started praying as my uncle had suggested. During the regular Islamic prayer times, instead of the usual recitations, I began asking God to direct me to the right way of worship. Around the same time, my elder sister started attending church. One day, when she was reading the Bible, I sat by her and listened to what she was reading. She read John 14:9 where Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?" I wondered why the Islamic religion referred to Jesus as a prophet, when He said He is the same as the Father. That verse was the tipping point for me in realizing that Islam was not the right way to worship God.

The transformation I longed for

Not long after that, I went to a motorcycle shop with two friends and we happened to pass the Apostolic Faith Church while they were holding revival meetings. I saw my uncle there so I went to greet him, and as usual, he invited



» A photo from the 1970s of Lawrence Kotei (the uncle who invited Joseph to church).

us to the meeting. This time, he asked when we would visit. Not having any good answer, I just told him I would go on Friday. But when that day came, I was very uncomfortable. Everywhere I went, I heard this question in my heart: "Are you not the one who promised your uncle to attend his church?"

Finally, I went to the church service in the evening, and it was a wonderful experience. I had been to other Christian churches as a child when visiting family during holidays, but I'd never been to a church like this one before. I enjoyed the songs, testimonies, and preaching so much that I decided to go back on Sunday morning and then again on Sunday evening. By then, I had heard the message of salvation and testimonies of young people whose lives were changed, including one of my cousins who was now sober and living a different life. That was the transformation I had been longing for.

Having never been taught how to pray directly to God, after my first services I just recited the Lord's Prayer and then went home. However, that Sunday evening, I was determined to get saved. I told God that He must save me that very night. As I prayed, the Spirit of God started revealing my sins to me, so I asked for forgiveness. Before I realized it, joy had come

» In 1995, Joseph was given a special opportunity to study in the Netherlands.

into my heart and I was praising God! A heavy burden lifted from me, and I felt so light. A minister there told me to press forward for sanctification, and I prayed and received it right then. My joy was even greater! Again, the minister encouraged me to press forward for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and while praying for it, I began speaking in a language unknown to me. I went home that evening full of joy and praising God!

Immediately after receiving the three basic Christian experiences, there was a remarkable change in my life. I became calm and stopped fighting with my sister, even telling her that God had saved me and I would not quarrel with her again. God also laid it on my heart to make restitutions to people before I even knew what that word meant. The Spirit of God began urging me to go and amend certain wrongs I had done in the past, and to pay back friends that I had defrauded. I prayed about each case, and the Lord helped me to make restitution for all of them. I also started attending church service whenever I was able—I couldn't stay away from the church premises. A few months later, I was invited to join one of the choirs at church, which helped me tremendously by keeping me close to Jesus. With each step I



took, I could feel the presence of my Savior with me.

My first trial

As these wonderful changes were happening in my life, I was experiencing a great trial at home. My parents had not known that I had started attending church, but after I was saved, they found out about it because they heard me praying at home. Previously, I had been praying there silently, but I could not stay silent anymore.

Right away, my parents asked me to stop attending church. They became antagonistic towards me, to the extent that when I returned from evening services, my mother would not give me dinner and I would have to sleep on an empty stomach. Eventually they realized that they could not persuade me to give up church, so I was summoned before a group of Muslim leaders to be convinced. They believed my life would be miserable outside of Islam and

At that moment, God gave me the courage to tell them that my only interest was to make Heaven my home, not to gain some earthly properties.

made several attempts to warn me about the risk I was taking.

Finally, my father told the panel that if I would not return to the Islamic religion, he would disinherit me so that I would have no share in his property in the future. At that moment, God gave me the courage to tell them that my only interest was to make Heaven my home, not to gain some earthly properties. Upon seeing that I was truly determined not to return to Islam, my father became furious and ended the



⤴ *Joseph and Anna in 2009 with Ramsey Kotei (left), the son of his uncle Lawrence.*

meeting. The persecution at home increased until I finally had to relocate to the mission house for an extended period of time.

Success with the Lord

Though my parents had rejected me and would no longer help me financially, I had God to sustain me. By His grace, I secured a job as a teacher to help pay my expenses. After a few years, I gained admission into a higher education program in surveying and mapping. After completing the program in 1987, I was employed by the Lands Commission of Ghana. Around that same time, I was privileged to become a Sunday school teacher and youth minister.

In 1992, I married my darling wife, Anna. Together, we have seen many victories along this pilgrim pathway. We were without children for eighteen years, but in His time, God gave us a set of twins, which brought much joy to our home.

God shaped the path of my career in ways that I did not expect. In 1995, I was given the opportunity to study for one year in the Netherlands. There, I acquired skills that enabled me to work on special projects in my department and gained a great deal of experience in the field of Mapping and Geographic Information Systems, which in turn opened more avenues for me to travel around the world. Later on, God made a way for me to complete a master's and then a doctorate program as well, and I continued working for the Lands Commission until my retirement.

By 1998, God had provided the means for my wife and me to build a house. My father was still alive at that time, and during the dedication of the house, he commented to the late Reverend Paul Akazue that he knew God had built this house for us because I had given my life to Him. This was a profound statement to the glory of God, and it refuted the threat that I would be disinherited unless I recanted my faith in Christ. My relationship with my father was fully reconciled, to the point that he considered me a

confidant and one of his best friends. Indeed, the devil has always been a liar.

Several years ago, God brought me through another major trial. In 2017, I became gravely sick. First, I developed a skin rash that prevented me from sleeping. Then, the lower part of my legs swelled to at least double in size, making life unbearable. When it seemed things could not get worse, I contracted typhoid and developed other issues too. During that difficult period, my dear wife supported me in every way. Her faith was a great encouragement to me. I am also grateful for the people of God who prayed for me. At my lowest point, I was in the hospital for more than two weeks and it looked like I would not survive. The enemy threatened me with fears of death, but to the glory of God, Jesus healed me. I have made a full recovery and am grateful to be serving in the Lord's work again.

It is so sweet to know the Lord! The God of the mountains is also the God of the valleys, and through everything He has been with my family. By His grace, I intend to give Him the rest of my life and make Heaven my home at last.

Reverend Joseph Ampofo Ansah is the Country Leader of the Apostolic Faith work in Ghana, and the pastor of the Ghana headquarters church in Aplaku.

JANELLE PARKER
Chehalis,
Washington

HELEN AKERE
Madison,
Wisconsin

Evidence

PERSONAL TESTIMONIES OF THE POWER OF GOD.



*That night I went to the altar and prayed,
“God, I have tried to be good, but I am sorry for
anything I have done wrong.”*

IF ANYONE COULD HAVE BEEN MADE TO BE A CHRISTIAN, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ME. I had every opportunity laid right out in front of me. My parents were saved not long before I was born, so I grew up in a Christian home.

Many, many nights before I went to bed, I saw my dad down on his knees in front of the sofa praying. Then during the night, I would wake up and hear my mom praying. In the morning, I would get up and there would be my dad again, down by the sofa praying.

I am so thankful that they showed me what I needed to do. They lived the Christian life in front of me. We were in church every time there was a service.

God gave me such a tender heart, and from the time I was a young girl, I wanted to serve Him. Actually, I do not remember a time that my heart ever longed for anything of the world. I went along saying I was a Christian and praying and doing everything I was supposed to, and I truly believed in my heart that I was a Christian.

However, when I was thirteen years old, I was sitting and thinking on the first Saturday night of Midwest camp meeting, and all of a sudden God spoke to my heart saying, “You need to know when I did something for you.” I could not point back to a time when I had prayed and the Lord had saved me. That night I went to the altar and prayed, “God, I have tried to be good, but I am sorry for anything I have done wrong.” When I finished praying, God came into my heart and made a

real change, and the next night, He sanctified me.

About a week later, I got up during the night unable to sleep because I was about to start high school. I knelt beside the sofa in the living room and started praying, and God came down and filled me with His Spirit. I am so thankful for that experience. I believe it is what kept me through my teenage years.

God has been so good to me. I have no hard luck story to tell at all. I love the Lord and want to serve Him with all of my heart. — Janelle Parker



*“... things
looked
impossible
again...”*

WHEN I WAS THIRTEEN YEARS OLD, I KNELT AT THE ALTAR AND PRAYED, AND JESUS SAVED MY SOUL. He also sanctified me and baptized me with the Holy Ghost. Since that very young age, God has been taking good care of me.

At age nineteen, I was in a terrible accident. Many people died in it, but God spared my life, and I thank Him for that. After the accident, I couldn't use my

left hand. I prayed about this for two years, and the people at church prayed too. Before the accident, I had started playing the violin, so I was telling God, “When You heal this hand, I am going to continue playing my violin.” It seemed impossible, but in a miraculous way, He healed my hand.

God planned my life. He gave me a good husband. Then, when I was pregnant with my first child, things

looked impossible again. The doctors said I wouldn't be able to deliver the baby. They said the baby and I would die. My husband and I prayed, and again in a miraculous way, God helped; I delivered the baby.

I thank God for the many things He has done for me. He has healed and provided for me, and I want to serve Him to the end of my life. — Helen Akere

BY ELLEN MORGAN

A RESTLESS HEART FINDS PEACE



Doing her own thing did not satisfy, but Ellen found what she sought in Jesus.

“A life free from condemnation is the most beautiful way to live here on earth.”



While I was growing up in Richland Center, Wisconsin, I did not appreciate the blessing of being raised in

a Christian home. I was taken to an Apostolic Faith Sunday school and church from my earliest memories, and though I did enjoy the Christian music and fellowship, I thought Christianity was too strict for me. I remember trying to believe that Heaven and Hell were not real so I would not have to worry about eternity. I decided that when I grew up, I would move away from home and wouldn't go to church or obey someone else's rules.

Despite my resistance, God had planted something in my young heart that I could never get away from. Even after I went away to college, God was always talking to me, and I had a restlessness inside that I could not calm. As I walked to and from classes, He reminded me of Sunday school songs I had learned as a child, such as “Heavenly Sunlight” and “Jesus Loves Me.”

» *Ellen and Larry in 1987 with their oldest daughters, Monica and Breanne.*



Peace for my restless heart

In 1978, after other vacation plans had fallen through, God made a way for me to go to the Midwest camp meeting in Murphysboro, Illinois. I had no intention of giving my heart to Him, so after every meeting, I immediately went back to my cabin to avoid the prayer time. However, several people, as well as the Lord, talked to me, and I could see that everyone was happy except me. Finally, I told God that if He would give me that happiness, I would give Christianity a try. I knelt, asked the Lord to forgive me, and gave everything I could think of to Him. He wonderfully saved me and replaced the restlessness and guilt in my heart with peace and joy.

A few months later in Minneapolis, Minnesota, I received a blessing that left me feeling so clean that I did not even want to talk to anyone. I just wanted to be alone with God. I realized later that this “blessing” was the experience of sanctification. Several months after that, at special meetings in Denver, Colorado, the Lord baptized me with the Holy Spirit. Again, the experience came as a surprise as I was not really seeking the baptism but simply to have more of God.

Life lessons

Time went by and I married Larry, a young Christian who had been raised in our church in Portland, Oregon. When our first child was born, we thought everything was “coming up roses” in our lives. However, when our daughter Monica was a little over a year old, we found out she had leukemia. Despite the devastating news, God was with us in a wonderful way during this time. Many prayers went up for our little girl, and we believed God could heal her. After a period of terrible sickness, she went into remission, but just when she was on the road to recovery, she took a turn for the worse, and the doctors said there was nothing more they could do.

God did not choose to heal Monica, but we were so thankful for the Comforter who wrapped us in His arms during those hours. God also blessed us with another baby girl just two months before Monica passed away. Only He could have known she would bring us the joy we needed. We were later blessed with two more daughters.

Comfort in pain is not the only lesson God has taught me in my years as a Christian. Before our youngest daughter was born, there was a time when I felt very confined in my life as a stay-at-home mom. Shopping became my escape from the house. Since my husband drove our only vehicle to work, I often carried our girls

“I knelt, asked the Lord to forgive me, and gave everything I could think of to Him. He wonderfully saved me and replaced the restlessness and guilt in my heart with peace and joy.”



and all of their necessary paraphernalia on the city bus. My main interests were harmless household furnishings and gadgets, but I did not really have the extra money to spend even on sale items. Plus, I did not need any of it. I was miserable in my “desire to acquire” and never really satisfied. Finally, one day I told the Lord of my troubles, and He showed me the riches of the love of my family, health of my children, and all we owned. He also showed me opportunities to keep occupied in my own home and helped me to be content with what I had.

More recently, the Lord has been showing me how near He is every day, ready to supply whatever help is necessary. When I need just a little more strength to do a task, He is there



« Ellen and Larry in 2025.

“After being saved for nearly forty-seven years, He is still teaching me in His gentle way. I am so grateful that our loving Heavenly Father has been patient with me.”

to help. When I go to Him in prayer with a heavy burden, He lifts the load. In traffic, He has protected me from accidents more than once. He gives me sweet peace, and gladdens my heart with His creation. He constantly gives me a song in my heart. I’m thankful each day that I can get out of bed and work. These non-stop blessings are because He really *is* with me. I cherish His presence.

After being saved for nearly forty-seven years, He is still teaching me in His gentle way. I am so grateful that our loving Heavenly Father has been patient with me. Sometimes He prompts me to say an encouraging word to my neighbor, or points out a need that I could help with. At other times, it seems He is just behind my shoulder, coaching me on how to be more gracious or advising me about laying down my will. He shows me people in need of prayer, and I am trying to be faithful. By His grace, I am endeavoring to learn.

God answers prayer

In July of 2024, my husband came into the camp office where I was working and said he had just received a diagnosis of a fast-growing cancerous tumor on one of his kidneys. The doctors recommended taking out that kidney entirely and adding a port for dialysis for immediate use following the surgery. They felt that was necessary because of his already low kidney function.

This was difficult news to hear, and we knew we needed God’s help. Since this was during the

Portland camp meeting, and there were many prayers going up, we added our request for his healing to the many other requests, and we know people were praying around the world.

His surgery was scheduled for six weeks after camp meeting.

During that period of time, the surgeon who had recommended taking out the entire kidney left the practice, and a different doctor took over. He thought he could carefully remove only the tumor portion and leave the rest of the kidney to continue functioning. In his discussion following the procedure, he reported that the tumor was smaller than the scans had shown, and that it was not cancerous. Added to this, Larry’s kidney function increased enough that he did not need dialysis. God had heard our request, and He performed a miracle. Praise be to God!

Larry continues to work every day. Because of that, his health has been a topic of conversation among his co-workers, even for people in the company he has never met. He tells them all that many people prayed for him, and God answered prayer.

Blessing upon blessing

God has been so good to me. A life free from condemnation is the most beautiful way to live here on earth. God who feeds the sparrows gives me everything I need. To top off all of this, our eternal future in Heaven with the Lord is wonderful beyond our imagination. The blessings just continue to accumulate. With His help, I want to be faithful and continue until I reach Heaven’s shore.

Ellen Morgan is Correspondence Supervisor at the Apostolic Faith World Headquarters office in Portland, Oregon. She also manages the camp office during camp meeting.

Evidence

ESTHER IBIKUNLE
Nigeria



I never knew Christianity could change someone, and I desired what she had. I prayed, “Oh God, if this is true, I too want to experience the change.”

WHEN I WAS A CHILD, I ATTENDED A MISSION SECONDARY SCHOOL AND WAS CONFIRMED IN THAT CHURCH. I

also started taking the Holy Communion every Sunday, but these things did not take sin out of my life. I came to believe that the way to Heaven was to do all I could in the church, so that is what I tried to do.

I thank God that while I was still in secondary

for the holidays and was converted. She came back giving a remarkable testimony. She also lived according to the Bible, and this attracted me to what she was saying. I never knew Christianity could change someone, and I desired what she had. I prayed, “Oh God, if this is true, I too want to experience the change.”

One evening in my dormitory room, I prayed sincerely, and Jesus came into my heart. The joy of Heaven filled my soul, and the Spirit testified in my heart that this was salvation. It was so real. I thank God for that genuine experience.

After my secondary school days, I went to a teacher’s college in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. There, I was introduced to the Apostolic Faith Church. The first sermon that I heard there made such an impression on me that I decided to continue to serve God in the Apostolic Faith. My family was not happy

that I abandoned my father’s church, but God helped me stand by my decision, and they have seen Him work in my life.

God helped me continue in the Gospel. I’m so happy that He gave me the experiences of sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I thank Him for the way that He planned out my life and everything about me. He sent me to the university to get my degree and then to work. He also gave me a man of God for my husband, and He gave us children.

After about sixteen years of marriage, God called my husband home. It was a change of scene for me, and it was not easy. It seemed like the end of the road, but I thank God for His people who rallied around me and prayed for me. Even Sister Ruth Ashwell from the Portland headquarters encouraged me with letters, admonishing me to lean harder on God. That is what I have done, and God has taken care of me and my children. He has provided for all our needs.

I thank God that He brought me twice to Portland for camp meeting. I was there for the first time in 1986 with my husband and several others accompanying the then Africa Overseer, Josiah Soyinka. That was a wonderful experience. Many Gospel veterans were there at that time, and I enjoyed seeing them. I didn’t think I would ever be able to return, but God made it possible in 2015 and it was a blessing.

God did something else for me at the beginning of 2015 that I am especially thankful for. He spared my life, making me able to be present at the dedications of the churches at Calibar, Cross River State, and Ikot Enwang, Akwa Ibom State. These were two church projects that God used my husband to start when he was the district overseer for those states. It was a blessing to witness the completion of these projects.

I am most grateful to God for all He has done for me, and I want to continue to serve Him to the end of my life. — Esther Ibikunle



school, His love sought me and brought me into the Gospel. One of my schoolmates went home

BY KAREN BARRETT

OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

The answers to the age-old questions of “Who am I?” and “What is my purpose?” may be simpler than many would think.



A grasp of who we are as believers helps us develop a God-centered worldview.



Identity is a topic that has impact in multiple areas of our lives. As an

example, several months ago, my husband and I decided it was time to purchase a new vehicle to replace our twenty-year-old Toyota. He spent a fair amount of time researching options, considering factors such as make and model, cost, owner reviews, gas mileage, and availability. I am not particularly concerned about what I drive; I just want the car to get me where I need to go! So, I made only one request: I wanted whatever vehicle we bought to be red so I could find it among all the white, black, and silver cars in parking lots.

The Toyota Corolla Cross we ended up purchasing is red. However, the first night we drove it to church, I immediately noticed three other vehicles in the parking lot that were also red. In addition, they were approximately the same size and shape as ours, so my method of identifying our vehicle has not been totally

“O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.”

— PSALM 139:1-3

BIBLICAL TRUTHS ABOUT OUR IDENTITY

WE WERE:

- Planned by Him
- Created for a purpose

WE ARE:

- Beloved, treasured, and valued

successful. In fact, recently I tried to open the door of one of those “other” red vehicles parked outside the church office, thinking it was ours!

The identity of a vehicle is an insignificant matter. However, understanding who we are as children of God is *not* insignificant—it is vital! *Who am I?* is a question frequently pondered, and a right understanding of this will affect the way we look at life.

The only dependable way to gain that understanding is to learn what God says. He created us, and He knows us far better than anyone else does, including ourselves. The Psalmist acknowledged this in Psalm 139, saying, “O LORD, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways” (verses 1-3). God is fully aware of every detail about us.

Biblical truths about our identity

Some aspects of personal identity are true about every person on this earth. For

instance, God’s Word indicates that we were **planned by Him**. The acronym DNA stands for deoxyribonucleic acid. DNA is a molecule found in the cells of living organisms that carries information for the development and functioning of an organism. Geneticists say that each of us has 20,000 to 25,000 genes in our DNA. Think of the meticulous care it took to create your personal, unique design!

My husband and I have twelve grandchildren, and they are all very different from each other—even those in sibling groups are not alike. For example, God planned that our granddaughter, Evelyn, would be tall for her age and have light brown hair. He knew she would need braces to straighten her teeth, would love to cook, and would overcome dyslexia. She is very different from her big brother, Barrett, who is of average height, has dark brown hair, straight teeth, and loves to play his French horn.

“Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” – PSALM 139:16

At times we may lament some of our physical characteristics (or lack thereof). When I was a little girl, I wanted dimples like my aunt. Occasionally I would even stand in front of a mirror and try to poke dents into my cheeks—an attempt that failed. But God knew what He was doing when He made us, with or without dimples.

Psalm 139:16 says, “Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.” God knew Evelyn and Barrett before they were born, and He knew us before we were born. We were specifically planned by Him, with all our physical, mental, and emotional characteristics.

The Bible states that all of us were **created for a purpose**. We know that God created mankind to know Him (John 17:3), to love Him (Deuteronomy 6:5), and to give Him pleasure (Philippians 2:13). But He also has a unique plan for each individual. God told the prophet Jeremiah, “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Jeremiah 1:5). We are not all called to

OUR PURPOSE

- Know God
- Love God
- Give God Pleasure

be prophets, but God does have a predetermined purpose for every person. Ephesians 2:10 indicates that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” God has ordained—prepared beforehand—good works for each of us to do.

Scripture assures us that we are **beloved, treasured, and valued** by God. He proved His love for us by sending His Son to die in our place. Since the wages of sin is death, we all deserved to die because we all have sinned (see Romans 3:23 and 6:23). Christ took our punishment and died on the Cross so we could live eternally. The Word of God lets us know that “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). We can confidently view that act of supreme sacrifice as evidence of God’s great love for all mankind.

Our identity in Christ

The most important aspect of our personal identity, and what matters most to God, is that we are “in him.” We read in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” Notice the words, “in Christ.” When we come to God seeking forgiveness and are born again through the precious Blood of Jesus, God does not leave us as we once were. Our

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT HIS CHILDREN



WE ARE JOINT HEIRS
WITH JESUS



HE WILL PERFECT US



WE ARE HIS FRIENDS



WE ARE CITIZENS OF
HEAVEN

THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT OF OUR IDENTITY

“THEREFORE IF
ANY MAN BE IN
CHRIST, HE IS A NEW
CREATURE: OLD
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AWAY; BEHOLD, ALL
THINGS ARE BECOME
NEW.”

—2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

lives change: we experience a spiritual new birth. Our sins are blotted out, our desires and motives change, and we are empowered to live from that day forward without sinning.

After I started taking piano lessons around the age of eight, my grandmother would frequently ask me to play the old Gospel hymn “A Child of the King.” No matter how ineptly I performed that song, she loved it. Grandma had the right perspective about personal identity: As followers of Christ, we are children of the King of kings! We are assured in 1 John 3:1, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”

What God says about His children

We find many statements in God’s Word that apply specifically to those who are His children. For example, God says **we are joint heirs with Jesus**. In Romans 8:16-17, Paul the Apostle wrote, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The Greek term translated *heirs* in this verse refers to “those who receive their allotted possession by right of sonship.” As God’s children and joint heirs with Christ, we have full rights to receive “an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away” that is reserved in Heaven for us (see 1 Peter 1:4).

God’s Word says **we are His friends**. In John 15:15, we find these beautiful words of Jesus: “Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.”

If you were asked to note some of the blessings of friendship, you would probably mention benefits such as help in time of need, understanding, companionship, encouragement,

and support. However, the friendship of Jesus brings infinitely more blessings than any earthly friendship, no matter how precious it is. The words of another familiar hymn come to mind:

*No one understands
like Jesus:
Ev’ry woe He sees and
feels;
Tenderly He whispers
comfort,
And the broken heart
He heals.¹*

Isn’t it heart-warming to realize that we are personal friends of Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

God also says that **He will perfect us**. In Colossians 1:22, He promises that He will present us “holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight.” I find it comforting that God is so invested in me that He continues to work on me! Another promise I love is Philippians 1:6. It assures us, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” We may be very aware of our own weaknesses and limitations, but God is faithful, and He will complete the work He is doing in our lives.

As children of God, **we are citizens of Heaven**—that is part of our identity! Citizenship in an earthly country comes with rights, privileges, and guarantees of certain benefits. We are temporarily residing here on earth, but our guaranteed benefits as citizens of Heaven are beyond comprehension. We read in Psalm 16:11, “In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”



**SINCE OUR
IDENTITY
IS ROOTED
IN OUR
RELATIONSHIP
WITH CHRIST,
we need
to guard
against
measuring
ourselves
by others.**

Overcoming hindrances to believing

The enemy of our souls will do all he can to undermine our confidence and hinder us from fully and consistently believing what God says about our identity. His attacks may come in several forms, so let's briefly consider four of them.

External messages. It's no secret that we live in a sinful world. Rejection of God's Word as the ultimate authority is increasingly widespread. As Christians whose foundational beliefs are deeply rooted in the Word of God, we may be accused of being out of touch, narrow-minded, bigoted, hypocritical, or worse, but we must not let those negative assessments impact our reliance on what God says in His Word.

The comparison trap. Since our identity is rooted in our relationship with Christ, we need to guard against measuring ourselves by others. We can admire someone else's accomplishments or abilities, but we want to avoid envying them. I enjoy the beautiful music provided by the musicians who perform in our church services, but I am not distressed because I cannot sing or play an instrument like they do.

The Apostle Paul warned against comparing ourselves to others, saying, "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10:12). Let's embrace our individuality and walk confidently in who God made *us* to be!

The accusations of Satan. The enemy of our souls may seek to destabilize us by telling us that we are not good enough, that God is disappointed in us, or that we've failed Him in some way. Remember that the Bible says Satan is a liar, and the accuser of the brethren (see John 8:44 and Revelation 12:10-12). We must take care not to listen to him or be shaken by his insinuations. The Psalmist voiced his assurance by saying, "I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved" (Psalm 16:8). We too can stand fast.

Past negative experiences. To attack our "in Christ" identity, Satan may remind us of mistakes of judgment, unintentional missteps, incidents that occurred before we were saved, or situations that hurt or discouraged us. We can look again to the Apostle Paul for an example of how to deal with painful recollections. Paul had many reasons to grieve over his past: he had persecuted the members of the Early Church and even held the coats of those who stoned Stephen, the first Christian martyr. But he said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this

one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14).

Only God's viewpoint matters

A right understanding of our identity in Christ affects how we look at life. A grasp of who we are as believers helps us develop a God-centered worldview, guides us in making decisions aligned with our spiritual values, and helps us navigate the challenges of life in a manner pleasing to God.

The only viewpoint about our identity that really matters is God's viewpoint! If we make His Word the basis of how we view ourselves, we will be spiritually equipped to disregard the confusion and lies the enemy brings against us and stand firm as children of the King.

¹ John W. Peterson, "No One Understands Like Jesus," John W. Peterson Music Company, 1952.

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ONLY GOD'S VIEWPOINT MATTERS

Let's embrace our individuality and walk confidently in who God made *us* to be!

Evidence

MARIAN ANITOAIA
Radovan, Romania



IT WAS THE BEGINNING OF AUTUMN 2017 WHEN I FIRST FELT A SHARP

uncertainty drained my finances but yielded no results. Frustrated and disheartened, I decided to stop seeking medical help.

Less than a week later, I became completely paralyzed and bedridden. I couldn't turn to either side, trapped in a constant

use it at all. My wife fed me by spooning small amounts of soup into my mouth, which I could barely swallow. After eating, she would help me lie down again. Turning to my left or right side required her assistance, and even then, I could only

in less than two months. As my condition deteriorated, I felt increasingly certain that my life was nearing its end. I prepared myself to leave this world and began praying fervently to the Lord.

One night I prayed, "God, if only I could turn onto my left side for just five minutes." At that moment, I felt a hand touch my left hand, and the unbearable pain throughout my body decreased by half. I managed to turn onto my left side, and with a deep sigh, I felt an unexpected sense of vitality, as though I were eighteen years old again. I stayed in that position for five minutes before turning back onto my back, remaining paralyzed and unable to move further. Later, my wife helped me out of bed but I could barely walk and moved incredibly slowly.

News of my plight reached Brother Mitita and then my district superintendent, Brother Macovei. They, in turn, shared my condition with brethren in America. During a visit to Romania, two brothers from America came to my home in Radovan. They prayed with me and read from James 5:13-16. After the reading, one of them anointed me with oil in the Name of the Lord Jesus. The brothers then laid their hands on me and prayed fervently. As they prayed,



⤵ *Left to right: Debbie and Harlan Lee (Director of Romania work), Mara Negrila (pastor in Craiova), Marian and Mia Anatoaia, Rodica and John Musgrave (Director of Romania work from 2000-2024), and Gheorghe Macovei (Eastern Romania District Superintendent).*

PAIN IN MY BACK THAT RADIATED DOWN MY RIGHT LEG, CAUSING IMMENSE DISCOMFORT.

Concerned, I went to the doctor for a check-up and underwent an x-ray examination. The procedure itself didn't bother me, but over the course of a month, I visited several doctors without receiving a clear diagnosis or relief. This prolonged

state of immobility. Every day, I took a handful of medications, but instead of improving, my condition worsened. My wife had to lift me out of bed and help me sit on its edge, a position I could endure for no more than ten minutes due to the unbearable pressure enveloping my body. My right hand was immobile, stuck to my side. I couldn't

stay in that position for about ten minutes before returning to lying on my back.

For three years, I endured constant chills whether it was summer or winter time. Even the lightest touch caused me excruciating pain, and I often cried out in agony. My weight plummeted from 100 kilograms (220 lbs.) to a mere 35 kilograms (77 lbs.)



⤴ *Marian with Wayne Bulter (pastor in Port Angeles, Washington).*

I silently prayed, “Lord, now is the time for You to do Your work.” During the prayer, I felt a powerful current surge through my entire body, and I believed with all my heart that God had touched me. After the prayer, the brothers departed, leaving me with a newfound hope.

Two hours later, something miraculous happened—I felt an appetite I hadn’t experienced in three years. I asked my wife for food, and she was astonished by my request. She knew how much effort she had put into encouraging me to eat during my illness and how little I had been able to consume. The next day, I got out of bed by myself and walked with a strength and normalcy I hadn’t known for years. My wife and I laughed and cried, overwhelmed with joy and gratitude to God.

A week later, I began working in construction

again, starting with tasks in our yard. I still had a house to finish building. Holding a twenty-centimeter nail in my left hand, I picked up a hammer with my previously paralyzed right hand. As I hammered the nail, tears streamed down my face, not from pain but from overwhelming joy that the Lord had restored me. Over time, I regained my lost weight and returned to full health. Today, I work in construction and can undertake any kind of labor. Even the doctors who once saw no hope for me now regard me as a miracle of God.

By the grace of the Lord, a few years ago we established a house of prayer, an Apostolic Faith branch church, in my community of Radovan. It is a place where I humbly serve the Lord and care for those who come to worship. May the Lord be praised forever and ever!

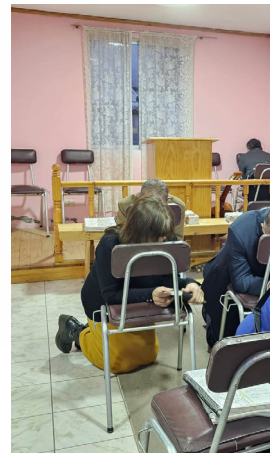
— Marian Anitoaia

“Holding a twenty-centimeter nail in my left hand, I picked up a hammer with my previously paralyzed right hand. As I hammered the nail, tears streamed down my face, not from pain but from overwhelming joy that the Lord had restored me.”



SOWING SEEDS IN SOUTH AMERICA

For the first time in several years, Director of South America Work Sam Ajayi was able to visit our churches in Chile, Argentina, Brazil, and Peru, as well as make his first-ever trip to Uruguay. During the trip, he met several new converts, arranged for some congregations to join combined online church services, met with individuals who are interested in becoming part of the Apostolic Faith, and distributed literature in new areas. Following is a brief report from each country he visited.



- 1 CHILE
- 2 URUGUAY
- 3 ARGENTINA
- 4 BRAZIL
- 5 PERU

Chile

REVEREND AJAYI ARRIVED IN CHILE ON APRIL 22.

That evening, he traveled with Israel Gajardo, the leader of our work there, and another brother to our Rauco location for a business meeting. After welcoming everyone and extending greetings from the Portland headquarters, Reverend Ajayi was glad to meet some new brethren who had been saved since his last visit. Then the group discussed ways to expand the work in Rauco through evangelism, and also decided to make that location a center for joining combined online services with our other churches in Chile.

After the business meeting, an evangelistic service was held. It began with traditional Chilean-style music featuring mandolins and guitars. As the congregation sang “Onward Christian Soldiers,” the Spirit of God was mightily present. The message was from Genesis 16:7-13, encouraging those present to experience the same transformation that Hagar did so they could also leave rejoicing. The sermon was followed by a good altar service and time of fellowship.

On Wednesday, a church service was held at the Chile headquarters location in Chimbarongo. As in Rauco, there were new people present who had been saved in recent years and added to the



⤴ *Left to right: Prayer before a service in Rauco, Chile; Distributing literature in Uruguay; Meeting with the Teves family in Argentina.*

congregation. One of these was a woman who said she had not stepped inside a church for thirty years, but in a miraculous way, God spoke to her heart. She came and was saved with her daughter, and now the two of them attend faithfully. Another woman testified that in the past year she had been diagnosed with cancer and was scheduled for surgery. However, just a week before this meeting, the hospital called to say she no longer had cancer. She thanked the Lord and everyone who had been praying for this great news.

The message was taken from Luke 24:13-35 and was about Jesus taking over as He walked the road to Emmaus with two disciples. The congregation was challenged to look to Jesus, because He wants to take over in their lives and give victory. God's presence was strongly felt throughout the service, and many went to the altars in tears afterward.

Uruguay

Reverend Ajayi said that for a few years now he has been praying for an opportunity to visit Uruguay, and finally that door opened during this trip. On April 26, he took a ferry from Buenos Aires, Argentina, to Montevideo, Uruguay. He

was accompanied by Walter Gabriel Teves, who is our contact person in Buenos Aires. For the entire day, they had the opportunity to distribute tracts in the business district and the city center. We pray that many will respond to the Gospel message and experience the salvation and holy living that is available through Christ.

Argentina

After leaving Uruguay, on April 27 Reverend Ajayi met with Walter and his family, including his wife, Fatima, and their four daughters. At the meeting, Fatima shared how she came to receive salvation through the serious sickness of her mother. She promised God that if He would heal her mother, she would leave her life of sin. God did heal her mother, and also helped her to keep her promise and get saved. In addition, He later gave her the deeper Christian experiences.

Reverend Ajayi has been in contact with Walter for many years, and at this meeting they established a plan for the Teves family to begin

⤴ *Services in (left) Fortaleza, Brazil, and (right) Chimbarongo, Chile.*





Top to bottom: A meeting in the Iquitos, Peru, church; Meeting with the Sao Paulo, Brazil, pastor and his wife; Sunday school in Iquitos.



holding Apostolic Faith meetings in their home in Buenos Aires. We pray the Lord will help them spread the Gospel in this location.

Brazil

In Brazil, Reverend Ajayi met first with the pastor of our Sao Paulo congregation, Josias Luiz do Carmo, and his wife, Maria, on April 29. They formulated plans to advance Sunday school and major outreach efforts in the coming year, and also arranged for participation in combined online church services in Brazil.

On May 1 and 2, services were held at our Brazil headquarters in Jurema, a suburb of Fortaleza. At the first meeting, the message was based on Job 35:3, and the congregation was reminded of the many earthly and heavenly advantages that come from having a relationship with God. A good prayer session followed, with many coming forward to be prayed over for healing. Reverend Ajayi said he left Brazil very encouraged that the leaders and brethren there are determined to press forward with zeal in the faith.

Peru

March through May are the wettest months in Iquitos, where an Apostolic Faith Sunday school is located on the Amazon River in the rainforests of northeastern Peru. Upon arrival, Reverend Ajayi was met by a heavy chorus of rain outside, but soon he was enjoying a hearty chorus of songs inside. Following the time of singing, classes were held, with the adult lesson on “Christian Maintenance” led by Modesto Aranda and the children’s lesson on “Honoring and Obeying Mothers” taught by the Iquitos pastor, Clara Aranda. At the close, the children were led in prayer and then served refreshments.

Following Sunday school, everyone reassembled for a brief exhortation from John 5:2-9. The listeners were encouraged that the same God who visited the man at the Pool of Bethesda had visited them in Iquitos to give them eternal life. A time of prayer followed.

Later in the day, a business meeting was held to discuss the challenges facing the Iquitos congregation. These include the need for improved infrastructure, evangelism, and Christian growth. The saints also expressed appreciation to the Portland headquarters for helping them remodel after flood damage and for providing new chairs.

On May 5, Reverend Ajayi traveled to Chiclayo, which is located on the western coast of Peru. He was expecting to visit the leader of our Peru work, Agustin Quiroz, on his sickbed, but the Lord had raised him up. At Reverend Quiroz’s house, the two met with some pastors who had expressed a desire to become part of the Apostolic Faith. They discussed Bible doctrines, church practices, and leadership structure, and later Reverend Ajayi visited one of their homes and another’s church. Following these visits, they agreed to remain in communication.

At the conclusion of his time in Peru, Reverend Ajayi said he was encouraged to see spiritual growth among all ages there and is praying that the Lord will continue to shine His Light throughout all of South America.

DEDICATED AND REDEDICATED IN ST. LOUIS

The St. Louis congregation rejoiced after God returned their church building through a miraculous series of events.

ON APRIL 6, 2025, A SPECIAL REDEDICATION SERVICE WAS HELD FOR OUR CHURCH BUILDING IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI. In attendance were Superintendent General Sola Adesope, Director of North America Work Bob Downey, and visitors from most of the Midwest branch churches.

The Apostolic Faith work first came to St. Louis in 1912. In the early days, meetings were held in abandoned buildings or rented spaces. The location changed often, in part because the leaders wanted to reach people in different parts of town.

By the 1950s, the congregation was able to purchase a permanent place of worship. They settled in a location on Grand Avenue, and after making renovations, the church was dedicated in 1957 by Reverend Raymond Crawford, who was General Overseer at that time. The saints worshiped in that building for almost forty years and then decided to move to a better location in the early 1990s. They purchased property and built their own church there, which was dedicated on September 3, 1995.

Sadly, by 2016 the St. Louis congregation was financially unable to maintain that building. After much prayer, in 2017 the decision was made to sell it and meet in a rented

facility instead. Though this was a difficult transition, they were grateful to find a shared church building where they could maintain their usual service schedule.

Over the following years, the congregation grew, and owning a church building became a possibility once again. As the congregation began to prayerfully look for one to purchase, several properties seemed like good possibilities but none of them worked out. Then in early 2025, they became aware that their former church building was going back on the market. After negotiations, a sale price was determined that was lower than the sale price in 2017, even though the new owners had spent about \$100,000 on maintenance and repairs! Truly, only God could write such a story.

At the rededication service, the St. Louis congregation was thrilled to gather again in their own building, joined by friends and loved ones as they gave thanks to God for His provision and for the blessing of rededicating their building as an Apostolic Faith Church. The meeting opened with the orchestra playing “Grace Greater than Our Sin.” The middle special



⤴ *Top to bottom: The St. Louis church; The choir sings during the rededication service.*

was a duet by Donald Fittin, pastor at Van Buren, and Joel McCarville, also of Van Buren. Then Jeff Downey, the St. Louis pastor, read 2 Chronicles 6:40-42 and 7:1-3 for the Scripture reading.

The last special was sung by Ben and Stephanie Luebert of Richland Center, Wisconsin. Then Reverend Adesope delivered the dedication message from 2 Chronicles 6:20-21. He began by declaring, “This is a morning of recovery!” He encouraged the congregation that God has power to recover anything the devil had taken from them. He dedicated the St. Louis church as a “house of recovery and outreach” and a “solution center.” Following the message, Boniface Uzendu of St. Louis gave the dedicatory prayer.

The Spirit of the Lord was felt strongly throughout the dedication service, and an amazing prayer meeting followed. Those who attended returned to their homes dedicated, rededicated, refreshed, and revived.

BY FLORENCE CRAWFORD

CONSECRATION —A VITAL NEED

Our commitment to God must be complete and continual.

FROM A SERMON GIVEN ON JULY 16, 1926.



A perfect consecration will give you a holy influence. How much the world needs that influence!

Consecration means “to offer, to devote, to yield ourselves; to set ourselves apart for some holy purpose.” It is only through the mercy of God that we can offer or devote ourselves to God. It is only through the Spirit of God that conviction can rest upon the heart. The Spirit goes out into the world and calls, or draws, men and women unto God; and it is His mercy to our souls that this conviction rests upon us. It all goes back to the goodness of God, His grace and power.

Romans 12:1 says, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” The Apostle Paul said, “A living sacrifice.” It is not a dead sacrifice. When we present our bodies as a living sacrifice it means that we dedicate, or separate, ourselves to God. Let come what will, we are to continue to keep ourselves devoted, separated unto God. If we could only realize what that really means!





WHEN WE PRESENT OUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE IT MEANS THAT WE DEDICATE, OR SEPARATE, OURSELVES TO GOD.

Doing the Father's will

Christ was willing to submit Himself to the Father's will. His utmost desire was to do the will of the Father. He might have looked ahead to the Millennial Kingdom, when He is going to reign as the King of kings with those whom He has redeemed from this earth. He might have looked ahead to the time when He was going to sit in Glory at the right hand of God the Father. But it was not so. His delight was to do the will of His Father who is in

That desire in His heart, that perfect willingness to obey the will of God, took Him through the Garden of Gethsemane, through Pilate's judgment hall, and to the Cross to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Heaven, and that purpose led Him to His death on the Cross. That desire in His heart, that perfect willingness to obey the will of God, took Him through the Garden of Gethsemane, through Pilate's judgment hall, and to the Cross to make the ultimate sacrifice.

Continual consecration

In John 17:19 we read that Jesus said: "I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified." There was something marvelous in that perfect offering of Christ, when God sent Him to this earth and He took on the form of flesh that He might be a Redeemer and a Savior. There was something in His heart and in His life that made Him a perfect example for us. Some may think, *Well, I have made my consecration, and now I am saved. God will take me through some way.* But our consecration must be complete; our consecration must be continual. We must give God our lives as living sacrifices. We are not our own; we are bought with a price. We have been redeemed by the Blood of Jesus, not with "corruptible things."

After we are born again, we must consecrate our lives more fully to be sanctified wholly. To be baptized with the Holy Ghost, we must consecrate still more deeply. At times, we must consecrate to be healed by the Blood of Jesus Christ. After all those experiences of consecration, there yet remains a constant consecration that must go on as long as we live.

Separation

Luke 14:25-26 says, "And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." Many people would say: "You people testify that God has united homes and that there is love existing in the home. Then you turn around and say that Jesus says unless a man hates his father and his mother, his wife, his children, his brother, his sisters, yea, even his own life also, he cannot be a disciple." This is a part of the mystery of Christ. The natural heart cannot understand the spiritual things concerning the Word of God. The natural man would say, "That is a contradiction." However, it is no contradiction at all. The hate which Christ speaks of is not a carnal hate; it is that determination to not allow any living soul to stand between oneself and God. The follower of Christ will hate anything that separates from God.

In Deuteronomy 13:6-8 we read: "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the

earth; Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him."

That is the "hate" that is to exist in you—a resolve in your heart to withstand even those of your own household if they hinder you or cause you to serve other gods or, in other words, would cause you to draw back from fully following the Lord. At times, people will look




Our consecration must be complete; Our consecration must be continual.

We must give God our lives as living sacrifices.

back spiritually and then try to get somebody else to look back with them. It is not for any of us to look back because somebody else does. The thing for us to do is to press on in spite of everything.

We can be kind, we can be tender, we can be loving, and faithful to everyone in our household, and yet never compromise with them on spiritual matters for a moment. And that is the way God wants it done. Because of our loyalty and our standing true to God, many times they will be brought to the Lord. So there is a double blessing in standing true to God and not compromising with one's people.

Let us look at Luke 14:27, "And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build



a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him.” Those who will not present their bodies a living sacrifice to God, who do not consecrate and go on through with God, sooner or later they are going to fall by the wayside and be a reproach to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Inner consecration

There was a time when Abraham was called to make a consecration—not the consecration of something that God had given him, but a deep, inner consecration. God had called him to leave the land of Ur of the Chaldees and go to Canaan. The time had come when God would strengthen his faith by sacrifice. He had to have it planted in his heart to believe God. God spoke to this man and he obeyed: he brought his sacrifice as God told him to, placed it on the altar, and waited there for the fire of God to come down and witness to the sacrifice. (We read about it in Genesis 15:7-21.)

The fowls came down and would have taken the consecration off the altar, but Abraham stood there watching it and drove the fowls away—which is typical of our consecration to God. When we put something on the altar, we must keep it there. After we have made our consecration, the enemy of our souls may come and say: “It isn’t necessary to consecrate this. You don’t have to consecrate that. Other people have received things from God without having to make such consecrations.” That is the “fowls” trying to take your consecration off the altar. It might be possible that God *did* require the other people to make the consecration, and if they had made it and had given all to God, He would have rewarded them and given them much more than they have received.

The fowls of the air came down on Abraham’s sacrifice and he drove them away, until his heart was so burdened that darkness settled down upon him and he fell asleep. Many people have consecrated and agonized with God, and poured their souls out unto God until they just felt helpless. They are, as Abraham was, ready to fall prostrate under the load of the extreme agony of their consecration. It is at such a time that God will let the smoking fire come down and consume the sacrifice that is given, and the witness is there that the work is done.

Oh, that God would give us in our innermost souls that lesson on consecration that will bring forth the fruit! We look so much to what others do and say, and what God permits others to have—but you don’t know how God has dealt with others. It is not for you to look at others. Jesus said to Peter, when he was

so much concerned about John: “If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me” (John 21:22). Let us get our eyes on God; let us make our own consecrations.

I have wondered many times if we realize what it means to make a sacrifice unto God, a consecration that will cost us something. If we only would go down before God in consecration, in presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God! If the love of God could be perfected in every heart, I believe the whole world would feel the influence of that love. Your influence is felt. You never can tell how far your influence may be felt. A perfect consecration will give you a holy influence. How much the world needs that influence! It is that which will help to build up Christ’s Kingdom on earth.

Reverend Florence Crawford founded the Apostolic Faith Church of Portland, Oregon, and led the work from 1906 until her passing in 1936.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

ACKNOWLEDGE

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” *Romans 3:23* “God be merciful to me a sinner.” *Luke 18:13*

CONFESS

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” *1 John 1:9*

REPENT

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” *Luke 13:3*

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” *Acts 3:19*

FORSAKE

“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him...for he will abundantly pardon.” *Isaiah 55:7*

BELIEVE

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” *John 3:16*

If you are a new Christian, contact us and request the tract entitled “Starting Out.”

A STATEMENT OF BIBLE DOCTRINE

We believe in the divine inspiration of the Bible, and endorse all the teachings contained in it. Following is a summary of our basic doctrines.

THE DIVINE TRINITY consists of three Persons: God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Ghost, perfectly united as one. *Matthew 3:16-17; 1 John 5:7.*

REPENTANCE is a godly sorrow for and a renouncing of all sin. *Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 4:17.*

JUSTIFICATION (or salvation) is the act of God's grace through which we receive forgiveness for sins and stand before God as though we had never sinned. *Romans 5:1; 2 Corinthians 5:17.*

ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION, the act of God's grace whereby we are made holy, is the second definite work and is subsequent to justification. *John 17:15-21; Hebrews 13:12.*

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST is the enduement of power upon the sanctified life, and is evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. *John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4.*

DIVINE HEALING of sickness is provided through the atonement. *James 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:24.*

THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS will be as literal and visible as His going away (*Acts 1:9-11*) and will consist of two appearances. First, He comes to catch away His waiting Bride. *Matthew 24:40-44; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.* Second, He comes to execute judgment upon the ungodly. *2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Jude 14-15.*

THE TRIBULATION will occur between Christ's coming for His Bride and His return in judgment. *Isaiah 26:20-21; Revelation 9 and 16.*

CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN is the 1000 years of peaceful reign by Jesus on earth. *Isaiah 11 and 35; Revelation 20:1-6.*

THE GREAT WHITE THRONE JUDGMENT is the final judgment when all the wicked dead will stand before God. *Revelation 20:11-15.*

THE NEW HEAVEN AND THE NEW EARTH will replace the present heaven and earth, which will be destroyed after the Great White Throne Judgment. *2 Peter 3:12-13; Revelation 21:1-3.*

ETERNAL HEAVEN AND ETERNAL HELL are literal places of final and eternal destiny. *Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:22-28.*

MARRIAGE is a covenant between one man and one woman that is binding before God for life. Neither person has a right to marry again while the first companion lives. *Mark 10:6-12; Romans 7:1-3.*

RESTITUTION is necessary, wherein wrongs against others are righted. *Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24.*

WATER BAPTISM is by one immersion "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." *Matthew 3:16; 28:19.*

THE LORD'S SUPPER is an institution ordained by Jesus so that we might remember His death until He returns. *Matthew 26:26-29; 1 Corinthians 11:23, 26.*

FOOT WASHING is practiced according to the example and commandment Jesus gave. *John 13:14-15.*

You may obtain additional information about these doctrines and learn about our other publications in both English and foreign languages by writing to the Apostolic Faith Church at 5414 SE Duke Street, Portland, Oregon 97206, U.S.A. or visiting our website at www.apostolicfaith.org. Before these magazines are sent out, they are always prayed over for the healing of the sick and the salvation of souls.

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Jesus
THE LIGHT *of* THE WORLD