

WHY WE NEED A SAVIOR

MAN

GOD

IN THE BEGINNING . . . The first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created by God and enjoyed perfect fellowship with Him. They were without sin and lived peacefully in a beautiful garden that supplied all their needs. God gave them only one rule, which was not to eat the fruit of a particular tree. However, Satan tempted them to eat the forbidden fruit by saying it would benefit them. They ate it, and that act of disobedience against God was the first sin. It severed Adam's and Eve's relationships with God because He is holy and cannot have fellowship with evil.

MAN

SIN

GOD

OUR CONDITION TODAY . . . Since we are all Adam's descendants, every child in the world has been born with his fallen nature. Instead of coming into the world desiring to do right, we are all born with an inclination toward sin and evil. Proof of this natural downward tendency is abundantly evident anywhere human beings are found. Our sin results in tremendous pain, sorrow, and suffering. The consequences of sin reach far beyond this life because those who reject God and die in a sinful state will go to Hell and be separated from God eternally.

MAN

JESUS

GOD

GOD'S PLAN . . . God wants to remove sin from our lives so that we can have a relationship with Him and spend eternity in Heaven. However, the penalty for sin is death, and that penalty must be paid. Out of His great love for us, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. Jesus lived as a man and died in our place for our sins. Because of that, if we follow the steps that God has laid out in the Bible, our sins can be forgiven. God will change our desires and give us power to live without sin so we can enjoy eternal life with Him in Heaven one day.

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RECRUITED FOR GOD'S OFFENSIVE LINE

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Lee had six university football teams interested in him, but God offered him something they could not.

By Lee Spakousky



My mother had a hunger for the things of God. Though she was raised in a church, she observed no difference between the people who attended and those who did not. The churchgoers smoked on the church steps before they went in and their conversations were tainted. When they came out of the church, they went back to smoking and their tainted conversations. She decided that if God was real, the religious system she was seeing was definitely not working.

She took her Bible and began to search the Scriptures for the truth. In time, she realized that she

needed to ask God to make a change in her life. She prayed at her bedside, asking God to make her the "new creature" she had read about. Right there, God miraculously saved her. From that time on, she was a devout Christian and began to raise her five boys in the ways of the Lord. She taught us every day about the goodness of God and that there was a Heaven to gain and a Hell to shun.

We lived in Roseburg, Oregon, and in 1964, we were invited to the Apostolic Faith Church. My mother studied the doctrines taught by the church and realized they were exactly what she understood of the Bible, so we began attending. As I was growing up, many of the people in the church were role models for me. When Sister Lois Allen was our pastor, she would ask us boys when we were going to give our lives to the Lord. That put conviction on my heart, so I would try to avoid her.

One day she stopped me on the stairway that led into the sanctuary and asked again, "Lee, when are you going to give your life to the Lord?" As I hesitated, she said, "You may not care where your eternal home will be, but you need to understand that you're going to be responsible for where these young people are going." I turned and saw the younger boys who were following me up the stairs. I said to her, "How is it my responsibility?" Immediately she said, "If you watch these children, they act just like you, so your actions may lead them away from God. Do you want to be responsible for that?"

Her words drove a dagger into my heart. I realized that my choices were going to affect others, and that I needed to make a decision. I was not considered a bad young man—I never smoked, drank alcohol, or did drugs. Yet I knew in my heart and from the Word of God that I

needed to have a change. I needed to ask God to come into my life and forgive me. There was no escaping that.

A DEFENSIVE ATTITUDE DESTROYED

When I was sixteen years old, my mother brought us to camp meeting in Portland, Oregon, but by then I had become bitter and wanted nothing to do with the Gospel. Although she insisted I attend at least one week, my plan was to just sit through the services that week and then go home.

Thankfully, God had a different plan. After arriving at the campground resentful and upset, I was walking by the tabernacle when a young lady said hello to me. God can use simple things to get our attention, and when she began a pleasant conversation with me, it completely destroyed my defensive attitude. God knew what I needed.

The next day was Sunday morning, and during the whole morning service, I knew I needed to get right with God. At the invitation to pray, I went forward and asked God to come in and give me the peace that others talked about. Just as clearly as an audible conversation with someone across the altar bench would have been, the Lord's words came to me: "Lee, would you be willing to give up football to have this peace?"

Football was important to me. I loved it, and people said I was good at it. In my second year of high school, I was six feet two inches tall, weighed 235 pounds, and could run the forty-yard dash in nearly record time. And God wanted to know if I would give up football. I prayed, "Yes, Lord, I'll give up football. I'll give up everything to have this peace." As soon as I made that consecration, such a joy and peace came into my heart. It was a peace that truly passed all understanding. I felt as if I were walking six feet off the ground! That was a great camp meeting!

PRESSURE TO GO BACK ON MY WORD

When we returned home, it was soon time for football daily doubles to begin. Phone calls started coming to ask why I wasn't at the practices. When I told the coaches I'd given up football to serve the Lord, it became a very difficult time in our house.

My father was a moral man and taught us many good lessons in life, but he was not godly. One thing he enjoyed was seeing the names of his boys on the sports page of the newspaper, telling how they had scored touchdowns or made a winning kick or goal. Dad was proud of his boys! When he found out that I was no longer going to play football, he disowned me. For the next two years, he hardly spoke to me. He did not want anything to do with me because of the shame that he said I brought upon him. His coworkers began to tease him about his son giving up football for religion. He could not deal with the heckling and his frustrations were taken out on me.

Meanwhile, the head football coach researched how many professional football players professed to be Christians and came up with a list of ninety-six. He asked me, "If these people are Christians and they play football, why can't you?" God gave me the wisdom to say, "It may be fine for them, but this is what God asked me to do!"

The school athletic director called for me to come to his office. He pulled out a file and showed me six letters of intent from major colleges for football scholarships, even though I was only in my second year of high school. They believed I was that good. The athletic director could not comprehend that I was willing to give that up "to be religious." I replied, "It's not about being religious. It's about having this peace in my heart that God gave." Additionally, I told him my dad had

taught me to be a man of my word—if a promise was made, it needed to be kept. God helped me to hold fast to the promise I'd made to Him.

GOD CARRIED THE HEAVY END OF THE LOAD

God knew the future and was watching out for me. I kept in touch with the young lady who had talked with me at camp meeting. We wrote letters to each other, sometimes two or three per week, and she was an encouragement to me. We've now been married for over forty-eight years. My pastor also took me under his wing, treating me like a father would his son, and helped me realize that God did care.

In time, God restored me into favor with my dad and completely healed the breach that had come because I stopped playing sports. Years passed, and then when he was eighty-two years old, he attended a church service in Roseburg. As soon as an invitation to pray was given, he went forward, and God changed his heart.

Over the years, at times I wondered why God asked me to give up football. Nearly three decades after the fact, an old friend shared with me how much my decision to quit sports and serve the Lord had influenced him and some of our peers to be committed to God. That meant so much to me. While I never regretted the decision to obey God, it was so encouraging to know that it had a positive impact on others.

God has directed my wife and me in every step of our lives. He gave us a son and a daughter, and then grandchildren. We have had sickness, financial issues, and other events that come to many people, yet He has always been there to carry the heavy end of every load. God is good! I am so thankful for Him and what He's done.

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STEPS TO DELIVERANCE

ACKNOWLEDGE

Admit that you have sinned and need God's help.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23)

CONFESS AND REPENT

Be genuinely sorry for the sins you have committed and ask God to forgive you.

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)

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:3)

FORSAKE

Determine that with God's help you are going to turn away from all sin in your life.

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

When you have honestly and sincerely taken the steps above, then believe that God will hear your prayer and save you.

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)

RECEIVE

God will let you know that the work is done in your heart.

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. (Romans 8:16)