

Lesson #2

God's Plan After Salvation



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Grace Evangelistic Ministries, Inc.
Nashville, Tennessee, U.S.A.

Preparation for study

The only thing that prevents the Holy Spirit from teaching us is our personal sin(s). King David of the Old Testament clearly put it this way:

If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear; (Psalms 66:18).

Therefore, if the Lord cannot hear a believer's prayer due to unconfessed sin in his soul, it follows doctrinally that the Holy Spirit will not teach the individual.

Here is the solution:

If we confess [acknowledge] our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness [sins, known or forgotten] (1 John 1:9).

At this point, you may want to pause and acknowledge directly to God any sin that may hinder you from being fully blessed through the Word of God.

New Babies In The Family Of God

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word [sound, basic Bible doctrine], so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation (1 Peter 2:2).

God the Father has a great sense of humor. In His marvelous wisdom, He brings His Word to us in a manner that our human mind can comprehend.

When God the Holy Spirit directed the apostle Peter to use the word “babies” to describe our new position in God, He had a good reason. Every individual has at least some knowledge about newborn babies.

One does not have to be a biologist or a pediatrician (a doctor who cares for newborns) to know that a new baby is *totally helpless and relies completely on his parents to have his needs met*.

Imagine for a moment a bouncing baby boy playing happily in his crib. Picture the proud father entering the baby’s room with a pair of soccer shoes and a ball. He picks up his son and declares, “Son, I want you to play for the U.S.A. soccer team, and I want you to be the best player that ever set foot on a soccer field!”

This loud, enthusiastic speech makes the baby cry. Perplexed by his reaction, the father tries to calm the baby by telling him that it is not proper for him to be making such loud noises in the house.

The baby continues to scream. And he continues until his loving mother takes him from his father and feeds him milk.

Does the baby understand a single thing his father said? Of course he does not.

What is the baby capable of doing at this time? He is capable of drinking milk -- any milk, whether it is pure or contaminated.

When he is fed with pure and undiluted milk, the result is healthy growth. (It should be noted that if a baby is fed with contaminated milk, the result is unhealthy growth with the possibility of a fatal outcome.)

But even a healthy baby is still a baby. It does not make sense to start teaching a small child physics, chemistry and genetics before teaching him the basics of the alphabet and the number system. If this logic holds true in the human realm, then it certainly will hold true in the family of God.

For example, some churches fail to see this logic when they appoint new believers to hold positions of authority in their churches. Foreseeing the danger of such a practice, the apostle Paul, through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, issued a very drastic warning.

It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do ... and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil (1 Timothy 3:1, 6).

God’s Immediate Command After Salvation

Like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the Word [sound, basic Bible doctrine], so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation (1 Peter 2:2).

Notice, the immediate plan of God after salvation does not call for the believer to start doing so called “great things for God” but rather to have a strong desire for pure, undiluted spiritual milk (basic Bible doctrine).

Why is that?

The answer is very simple. In every aspect of life, knowledge must come before service, action or production. No coach can expect his players to work effectively as a team without first teaching them the basics of the game. The same is true with God’s plan.

Shortcuts will not do.

Some believers argue that the more new believers get involved in church activities, the more spiritual they will be. Does such an argument have Biblical support? No! It is humanistic. -- doing things man’s way, not God’s way. Attending church to learn is good. But it is knowledge that must come first - from knowledge will come service.

In essence, these believers who appoint new converts to serve in their local churches are claiming that their formula for Christian growth is better than God’s plan. At best this is ignorance at worse it is not only arrogance but also blasphemy (disrespect for God).

At this point in our study, we need to examine 1 Peter 2:2 very carefully. The verse begins by using an analogy of the human newborn.

As we know the New Testament was originally written in Greek. Here the phrase “Like newborn babies...” means “just born” and it is figuratively used to mean “new convert.” This definition comes from the Greek word *antigennetos*, which occurs only once and it is here in the book of Peter.

Another important Greek word, *brephos*, is also used in this verse and it means “a babe or newborn child.” This brings us to the following principles when comparing a “newborn baby” and a “new convert.”

Principle 1: A newborn baby and a new convert are totally incapable of providing for themselves.

Principle 2: A newborn baby depends on someone to feed, bathe and change his diapers whenever he is wet or dirty. This is also true of a new convert in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is totally dependent on the pastor and the adult believers to teach him things about God.

This new convert is also helpless in the sense that he does not have a spiritual frame of reference from which to discern the truth.

Some believers disagree on whether or not it is solely the responsibility of the Holy Spirit to assist and teach a new convert the Truth, sound Bible Truth. Such an argument can only be discerned if one understands the ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit does not and cannot convert false doctrine into Truth. This means that if a new convert is in a church where false doctrine is taught, then the ministry of the Holy Spirit is limited.

Has God the Holy Spirit failed?

Of course He has not! Christian pastors are responsible for teaching the Truth to their congregations. The Holy Spirit is totally responsible in helping believers understand Truth when it is accurately communicated.

To this effect, the Bible warns everyone, both new converts and mature believers, to be extremely careful about false teaching. The apostle Paul warned Timothy to be watchful of false teachers and their doctrines. He wrote:

As I urged you [Timothy] ... so that you may instruct certain men not to teach strange doctrines (1 Timothy 1:3).

The apostle Peter puts it this way:

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you [believers], who will secretly introduce destructive heresies [false doctrines] ... (2 Peter 2:1a).

It is the responsibility of the believer to have a desire for sound doctrine, sound Bible truth. Then God is under obligation to lead that person to the Truth. Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you (Matthew 7:7-8).

In light of this invitation by our Lord Himself, the prayer to know God and His Word is one that cannot go unanswered. Why am I so sure that God will answer such a prayer? The Bible is the only reliable source to provide the answer.

Next session we will delve into this matter. I leave you with this verse which we will examine in depth next time. May the Lord bless you and keep you till then.

This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him. (1 John 5:14-15).