The Remedy

for

Desperation



**There IS a way out of desperation.**

By

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**THE REMEDY FOR DESPERATION**

* Are you desperate?
* Do you know you WILL live forever?
* How to live forever in heaven.

**Are you desperate?** Friend, are you in a desperate place? Does your entire life, or something vitally important to you, seem hopeless? If despair has you ready to ask for help, you are in a good place. I was there. I know the way out. That is why I am writing this.

As the single parent of a cherished seven-year-old, with no material or emotional support, unable to stretch my secretary’s wage to cover the basics, fighting depression and compulsions, I finally asked for help. Desperation showed me I could no longer handle life alone. I needed the God I had heard about as a child in church. I needed Him to help me live this life on earth, and that is what He has done—wonderfully--for many, many years. I also needed God to avoid spending eternity in hell.

There IS a way out of your desperation.

**Do you know you WILL live forever?** God created you an eternal being. God created man in His own image or likeness (Genesis 1:27), and God is eternal. That means you will never die. You may believe that after life on earth there is nothing. No, when life on earth is done, you will live forever, either in heaven, which is real, or hell, which is also real.

Do you know where you will go when you die? You can go to heaven, and you can be sure about that. And you can have a good, good life here on earth. Let’s talk first about how to have this eternal life and go to heaven.

Dear one, I believe God has let you get desperate so that you can open your heart to Him. He adores you and wants to help you. It is no accident that you are reading this. God is reaching out to you.

So how do you receive this eternal life? You must be born of the spirit to enter heaven, as the Bible tells us in John 3:5.

If you are unfamiliar with the Bible, “John 3:5” is called a reference, or the precise place in the Bible where a quotation is found. The name of the book is given first, like “John” then the chapter (3) and verse (5). So, John 3:5 means go to the book of John, the third chapter and the fifth verse. The 66 books that make up the Bible are listed in the front.

**How to live forever in heaven.**So, what does it mean that you must be born of the spirit to enter heaven?

You are part body, part soul, and part spirit. The real you—your soul and spirit--is that which you are aware of when you close your eyes and get alone and quiet. It is the invisible, intangible you, your heart—your soul and spirit. (“There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.” I Corinthians 15:44b, NIV) The spirit of a person is *“that factor in human personality which proceeds immediately from God]”* (Proverbs 20:27, AMPC). This is the part that must be born again, not the body. Jesus told Nicodemus, a prominent religious leader of His day, that “No one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.” (John 3:3, NIV) When Nicodemus was amazed and asked how that could be because “a man cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb,” Jesus explained: “Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit.”

The spirit of a person is *“that factor in human personality which proceeds immediately from God]”* (Proverbs 20:27, AMPC)

Would you like to be *spiritually* born? Would you like to live with God in heaven when your earthly life is done? Would you like to have His supernatural help here on earth so you can have a far, far better life? You can—but there is an obstacle in your way.

**[2] THE OBSTACLE TO THE REMEDY**

* The obstacle to eternal life.
* The danger of the obstacle.

**The obstacle to eternal life**. *Why do I need to be born again, to be made new*? The obstacle on our path to eternal life in heaven and a good life on earth is sin. We have all sinned. *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Romans 3:23). As it is written, “There is none righteous, no not one” (Romans 3:10). We all fall short of God’s glory and His design and purpose for us. (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

You may think you are good enough and you may actually do good things. Friend, nothing a human being does could ever earn the right to be in God’s presence. In our own humanness, we always fall short. Part of God’s plan for us is to follow His rules for living, not to follow our own hearts. The Ten Commandments God gave us are part of His rules.

Have you ever told one lie? Or secretly wanted something someone else had? Then you have broken God’s laws, His commandments. The Bible says “*For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.*” (James 2:10).

**The danger of the obstacle.** If we accept God’s way to remove the obstacle of our sin, He will enable us to “*walk in the light, as He is in the light*.” Our life will change and “*the blood of Jesus, His Son, will purify us from all sin*.” God will help us keep growing. When we are right with God—which is called righteousness—the path of our life “. . *. is like the morning sun, shining every brighter till the full light of day.”* (Proverbs 4:18, NIV)

If we do not allow God to remove the obstacle of our sin—if we keep living in disobedience to His ways--we will keep following the path of darkness, our life will get worse and eventually we will experience eternal death in hell. Why? If God is good—and *He certainly is*—would He let anyone spend eternity in hell, a place of unceasing torment?

The reason is that God is holy and just and good. No good human judge would let the guilty go free and unpunished. So, because God is just, He must punish sin. Romans 6:23 says “*The wages of sin is death . .* .” Remember: you are an *eternal being*. That means your sin earns you not just death but *eternal* death.

God “will judge everyone according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who keep on doing good, seeking after the glory and honor and immortality that God offers. But He will pour out His anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and instead live lives of wickedness. There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on doing what is evil. . . but there will be glory and honor and peace from God for all who do good. . . For God does not show favoritism.” (Romans 2:6-11, NLT)

What we earn, or deserve, for our sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through letting Jesus Christ be our Lord.

Fortunately, although the first part of Romans 6:23 says “*The wages of sin is death*”, the second half says, “. . . *BUT the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord*.” Let me repeat that: What we earn, or deserve, for our sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through letting Jesus Christ be our Lord. God gives us the gift of the chance to have eternal life.

**[3] HOW TO REMOVE THAT OBSTACLE**

* God longs to remove that obstacle for you.
* How to let God remove that obstacle.

**God longs to remove that obstacle for you.** God has already provided eternal life for us. It is ready and waiting. God’s provision to pay the penalty for our sin and give us eternal life is the substitutionary death of His Son Jesus on the cross. This is the gift. Romans 5:8 says “*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”* Think about that. God loved us so much that He gave us His Son to pay the penalty for our sins. This is what John 3:16 says: “*For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

You might ask how could a loving God let His Son die such a terrible death? Because *it was God Himself Who died on the cross* to pay sin’s penalty. God took our sins on Himself. *Jesus is God*. God is three Persons in One: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It is similar to H2O being able to take the form of ice, water or steam. You also have three aspects to your being—body, soul, and spirit. We are made in God’s image or His likeness. However, we can never be in more than one place at one time. God, however, can because He is God. God is present everywhere at once.

You do not have to understand it perfectly right now. God will make it clearer as you study His Word.

God promises that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Romans 10:13)

**How to let God remove that obstacle**. How do we get this eternal life? How do we let God remove that obstacle? We take three steps.

1. We admit we are a sinner, and ask God to forgive us and change our heart.
2. We believe that Jesus died to pay for our sins, and that God raised Him from the dead.
3. We make Jesus the Lord, or Ruler, of our life, by living for Him.

Carefully think about the following words from the Bible:

“Because if you acknowledge *and* confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and in your heart believe (adhere to, trust in, and rely on the truth) that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

For with the heart a person believes (adheres to, trusts in, and relies on Christ) and so is justified (declared righteous, acceptable to God), and with the mouth he confesses (declares openly and speaks out freely his faith) *and* confirms [his] salvation. (Romans 10:9-10, AMPC)

God promises us that *‘. . . everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” (Romans 10:13.)* That includes you.

***[4] STEPS TO TAKE***

* *[1] Admit to God that you have sinned, and ask for His forgiveness.*
* *[2] Believe that Jesus died for your sin and that God raised Him from the dead.*
  + *Why did Jesus die on the cross?*
* *[3] Make Jesus your Lord.*
  + *But I really cannot believe!*
* *Let’s review*
* *When you are ready*
* *Welcome to the family of God!*

***Step One: Admit to God that you have sinned, and ask for His forgiveness.***We covered this earlier in “The Obstacle to the Remedy”. Go back and re-read that section slowly. We have all sinned, and whoever breaks even one point of God’s law is guilty of sin (James 2:10). You must admit to God and to yourself that you are a sinner. Sure, it hurts to admit that and to say it, but God will wipe away any shame or embarrassment as you trust in Him.

**Step Two: Believe that Jesus died for your sin and that God raised Him from the dead.** Again, you do not have to have *perfect* belief or faith, but you do need to believe that Jesus died for your personal sins. God did raise Jesus from the dead. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit, through the virgin Mary. God—the very Creator and Sustainer of all that is---clothed Himself in human flesh, and lived the only perfect and sinless life there ever has been or will be. He chose to die on the cross, paying the penalty for the sins of all who accept Him. Then, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead.

God did, and still does, miracles. The virgin birth of Jesus was a miracle of God and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was a miracle. Jesus is the only way to heaven. “*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12, NIV).

**Why did Jesus die on the cross?** He told the religious leaders of the day that their ideas of being right with God were actually sinful and disgusting to God. They were using God’s laws about tithing to steal money from people who gave money to the synagogue (the church). They set up complicated rules for living—adding to God’s laws and putting burdens on people that God never intended. Then they said that if people did not follow their man-made rules and regulations, they could not continue as members of the synagogue. In those days, Jewish people needed to belong to the synagogue to be able to live.

Jesus lived like God wants us to live, giving us an example, and He taught others how to live. And that did not include the rules the religious leaders had made up. Jesus had many followers, and the religious leaders were afraid they would lose their own followers. The leaders did not want to lose their source of money or their position and power, so they falsely accused Jesus and had Him crucified on the cross. Death by crucifixion was terrible beyond words and was a disgrace. Jesus was fully human as well as being fully God, so He felt the physical, emotional and spiritual agony. Jesus chose to do that – for you and for me personally. Jesus could have stopped His enemies with one word (Matthew 26:53).

The unjust death of Jesus was so terrible that God declared the debt of sin was paid for all of us, for all time. We can have our sins forgiven if we confess them, believe that God raised Jesus from the dead and then choose to make Him the ruler of our life.

**Step 3: Make Jesus your Lord.** What does saying “Jesus is Lord” mean? Being saved from sin and into eternal life is far, far, far more than just praying one prayer. Being saved from sin means making Him the ruler of your heart from now on. That means repenting, or turning away, from the sinful life you now live and obeying God’s laws. To repent means to “change your mind and inner man to accept God’s will” (Romans 2:4, AMPC). It means living like Jesus lived.

Being saved from sin means making Him the ruler of your heart from now on. That means repenting, or turning away, from the sinful life you now live and obeying God’s laws.

You might say “But I could never do that.” No, none of us can ever be just like Jesus and no human effort can ever make us good enough to be in the presence of God in heaven even for an instant, much less eternity. But God does not demand perfection, just our whole-hearted effort and obedience. That is what “belief” means – to “adhere to, trust in, and rely on God”. If we do that we are justified, or “*declared righteous and acceptable to God*.” Proverbs 12:26 tells us, “*In the way of righteousness [which means right-standing with God) there is life; along that path is immortality.”*

**But I really cannot believe!** Here is a story that will help. Jesus encountered a young boy who was demon-possessed and often fell on the ground in convulsions. It had gone on so long the boy was being worn down. The father begged Jesus to help and then said “*if you can do anything for us*.” Jesus replied.

God does not demand perfection, just our whole-hearted effort and obedience.

*“If You can do anything? [Why,] all things can be (are possible) to him who believes! At once the father of the boy gave [an eager, piercing, inarticulate] cry with tears, and he said, Lord, I believe! [Constantly] help my weakness of faith!”*

Notice how emotional the father was. He desperately wanted to believe. And Jesus healed the boy. If you cry out sincerely to God, *He will help you believe.* And He will help you do what you need to do to be saved from eternal death: to believe in Him and obey Him, which means to make Him your Lord.

If you simply cannot “believe,” try with all your heart and cry out to Jesus, like the man who could not quite believe Jesus could heal his son. That man said, *“Lord, I believe! Help my unbelief*!” God included this beautiful story in the Bible so we would know we all sometimes struggle to believe Him but that He will help our unbelief if we ask.

**Let’s review:**

1. Humans are eternal beings who will, after life on earth is finished, spend the rest of eternity either in heaven or hell.
2. We all have sinned and we all deserve death.
3. God has already paid the price for our sin through Jesus’ substituting death on the cross.
4. We can have eternal life if we confess and turn from our sins, believe in Jesus and make Jesus the Lord of our life, which means obeying Him.

**When you are ready.** How do you receive Jesus as your Lord and Savior? You talk to God—which is called prayer. You tell God you want to believe in Him and commit your life to Him and then you live the rest of your life for Him.

There are no specific words but the essence of what you want to say to God is:

* Dear Father in heaven, I admit I am a sinner and I deserve eternal death for my sins. I am so sorry for all my sins.
* I want to start living for You, God. I turn away from the way I used to live.
* I believe in You and I believe You sent Jesus to die on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins. I believe that You raised Him from the dead, even though I do not completely understand it.
* I ask You to teach me and help me keep growing closer to You.
* Thank You, Father, that Your Word says, “*Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun*.” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT). Thank you that I am a new person.
* I trust You to guide me. I want to please You, Father. Amen.

You can pray this prayer right now, just you and God. You do not have to go through a pastor or anyone else. God is right there with you. That is why you are reading these words. He is speaking to your heart. Will you say yes to Him and the eternal life He died to give you? If so, pause and think about it, then pray the above prayer.

**Welcome to the family of God!** If you prayed that prayer and sincerely meant it, welcome to the family of God! You have been saved from sin and given eternal life. You are “born again.” God has given you a new heart! Sounds too good to be true, doesn’t it? Keep reading. You want to keep this new life and the peace you feel in your heart.

**[5] KEEPING YOUR NEW LIFE**

* How to be sure you are saved.
* Share what happened
* You have to stay changed!
* How God will help you stay changed

**How to be sure you are saved**. God knows the human heart. He knows that once we glimpse of how good HE is and how wicked WE are, it will seem too good to be true that He has really forgiven us and will take us to heaven with Him when we die. He knows the tempter will try to make you believe lies like “Nothing happened” or “I did too much really bad stuff for God to forgive me”. That is one reason the little book of First John is in the Bible – to reassure us that we are saved.

I strongly urge that you read this small book of only five chapters. It is towards the end of the Bible. The Bible is a collection of 66 books that tell us how to live with God. There is another book called ‘John” or the “Gospel of John” but the first book you need to read is “First John,” so-called because it is the first of three letters John wrote to believers. John was one of the disciples of Jesus. This book is so important that I urge you to read it seven times. It will strengthen your faith in God.

As you read, you will see four proofs, or evidences, in 1 John that reassure us we have eternal life.

[1] When we believe in Jesus, we have the proof in our heart. The believing itself is proof that God has given us eternal life. (1 John 5:10-11)

[2] We have a new spirit. God gives us a new attitude. “*This is how we know that He lives in us: we know it by the Spirit He gives us.” (I* John 3:24 and 4:13)

[3] We obey Him. *“We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands* (1 John 2:3; 3:7) We do not deliberately and on purpose keep sinning. (I John 5:18a)

[4] We love other believers. “*We know that we have passed from death to life because we love other believers.” (I J*ohn 3:14)

Besides reading 1 John seven times, also review what we just covered. These new truths should be written on the “tablet of your heart.”

**Share what happened!** Another essential step in following God is to tell someone else about your new life. God says we must confess, or acknowledge Him, in front of others. Jesus said “*Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven.*” (Matthew 10:32-32, NIV) Just tell someone simply and plainly what happened. Who knows? The person you tell may be as desperate for help as you were. If so, share what you have learned and then pray with them.

**You have to stay changed!** *Please pay attention:* Merely praying the above prayer will not save you from sin and give you eternal life if you go back to the way you used to live. It is continuing on with God and living a changed life—for the rest of your days here on earth---that gets you into heaven and a blessed life here on earth. You do not have to be perfect but you do have to live for God. “*Faith without works is dead.”* (James 4:17) One thing that verse means that it is not enough just to believe in God; you must also *act* *like you believe in Him*. Another way to say that is “*faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless.”* (NLT) This is called “working out your salvation.”

Loving God and living for God—for the rest of your days here on earth---that is what gets you into heaven and a blessed life here on earth.

After you make Jesus your Lord and Savior you must continue living for Him. As Philippians 2:12 says you must “*continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.”* (NIV)The Amplified translation of the Bible explains it like this:

“Work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence *and* awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ) (Philippians 2:12, AMPC).

Do not worry! You will not have to do this in your own strength! Philippians 2:13 reassures us that God will be at work in us.

[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure *and* satisfaction *and* delight. (Philippians 2:13, AMPC)

**How God will help you stay changed.** Notice that it is God who will be working in your heart – all the while—giving you the desire and the power to live for Him. So do not fret about your ability to live for God! God has already started working in you, giving you new desires. Just the fact that you are reading this shows that your heart now wants to learn about God and please Him. That is part of this new life He gives us. Your spirit is now alive to God, and you have “spiritual ears” to hear Him.

God will work in your heart, giving you the desire and the power to live for Him. Do not fret about your ability to live for God!

Do not be worry about being “good enough” in this new life with God. He will teach you every step of the way and He will enable you to obey Him, if you keep your heart on Him and keep doing your best.

Do not allow any doubts to stay in your mind. Replace doubts with truths like that in John 3:15-16 “. . *. that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”* Did you notice the whoevers? That includes you and me, dear friend and fellow pilgrim. We will talk about how to get more of God’s truth into your heart in the section titled “How to be sure you stay saved.”

**[6] GOD IS A GOOD, GOOD, GOOD GOD!**

* God is a good, good, good God and it is a good, good, good life with Jesus as your Lord.
* The devil is real---but God is FAR FAR greater!
* How to be sure you stay saved

**God is a good, good, good God and it is a good, good, good life with Jesus as your Lord.** This life with God is so much better than you can imagine!

*“What eye has not seen, and ear has not heard, and has not entered into the heart of man, [all that] God has prepared –made and keeps ready—for those who love Him [that is, for those who hold Him in affectionate reverence, promptly obeying Him and gratefully recognizing the benefits He has bestowed.”* (I Corinthians 2:9, AMPC)

Life with God while on earth will not be perfect but you can have constant peace, joy, and love. These are some of the qualities that will grow in your life as you grow with God. You can be content in whatever situation you find yourself because God Himself has said, to you if you follow Him:

*“I will not in any way fail you nor give you up nor leave you without support. [I will] not, [I will] not, [I will] not in any degree leave you helpless nor forsake nor let [you] down (relax My hold on you)! [Assuredly not!].”* (Hebrews 13:5b, AMPC)

That means God will never fail you in any aspect of life. Before we know Jesus as our Lord and Savior, life is miserable. Living for God does not mean a perfect life, but it is infinitely better! Life with God is rich and satisfying because you have His love, joy and peace.

I can attest, as can millions of others, that God truly does never fail the person committed to Him. That includes overcoming the enemy of all believers – the devil. Do not panic. Just keep reading.

**The devil is real- but God is FAR FAR greater**! You need to know the devil is real but you also need to know there is no need to be afraid! He is a fallen angel who rebelled against God. “He was never like God, who is omnipotent—all powerful, omniscient---all knowing and omnipresent---everywhere present. Satan is not all powerful. HE doesn’t know everything, and he is not everywhere at once.” (*Seventy Reasons for Speaking in Tongues*, p 171, by Dr. Bill Hamon).

The devil, called Satan, is the reason you committed the sins you have, and he will fight to keep you living for him, rather than this new life of living with God. You might think tomorrow that “Nothing happened yesterday. I got carried away with emotions. God is not really real.” Such thoughts are from the devil as he tries to pull you away from God, just as he did in the garden of Eden. Satan is a liar (John 8:44) and he constantly seeks to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). He is often called the Prince of darkness.

Walking in the light means that daily commitment to staying in right standing with God. Darkness always, always, always flees in the presence of light. God is light, and as we walk with God, we walk in the light (Psalm 56:13).

But, as believers in God, we can rejoice! God is light, and as we walk with God, we walk in the light. (Psalm 56:13) Walking in the light means that daily commitment to staying in right standing with God. Darkness always, always, always flees in the presence of light.

God’s light in our heart drives away darkness and sin. If we keep our hearts and minds on God, He will guard, lead and keep us. Do not fear! God rules the universe and all that is. God’s kingdom rules over the kingdom of darkness. God is infinitely greater and more powerful than Satan. Spend your time thinking about God, not the enemy, because what you focus on grows. God will be your helper, and there is no need to fear (Hebrews 13:6). Jesus overcame Satan and deprived him of power to harm us, and when we are in right relationship with God, we have His power and His weapons to defeat the enemy. We can stay saved, that is, keep walking with Jesus, right into eternity in heaven!

**How to be sure you stay saved.**  If you keep following and obeying God, you will stay saved. No one can snatch you out of His hand. Jesus said:

*“My sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow Me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father’s hand. I and the Father are one*.” (John 10:27-30, NIV).

Do you see that Jesus said His sheep follow Him? Obeying and following Jesus is a process that must continue the rest of your earthly life. Let’s see the basic steps to following God. Then we will learn about the power God will give you to do that, yes--you.

**[7] FOUNDATIONS OF FOLLOWING JESUS**

So, what are the basic steps to following and obeying God? They are simple and will become as natural as eating and sleeping.

1. Bible study and meditation,
2. Prayer,
3. Worship,
4. Fellowship (being friends with other believers),
5. Witnessing, and
6. Using the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

***[1] Daily prayer*** *–* Prayer is simply talking with God, just as if He were a human being in the room with you. A good pattern to follow forms an acronym--ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication. First, just adore God, tell Him you love Him, and talk about His goodness to you. Then confess any sin. Thank Him for everything you can think of! Then, make your requests, or supplications, to Him.

***[2] Daily Bible study and meditation****.* It is essential to read your Bible and pray daily. Start with the book of First John – read it seven times. Also, pick a verse that especially touches your heart and think about it, ponder on it, all day long and talk with God about it. This is called meditation, and God will give you deeper understanding as you think about His Word with Him.

For more information about how to study your Bible, see “Desperate Bible Study” and “Desperate Meditation” on the ‘Basics of Believing” page of the website.

***[3] Worship.*** Find a church that believes all the Bible is true and attend regularly. Get to know people and get involved. How to know if the church believes all the Bible is true? Ask the pastor! Tell him you recently gave your heart to Jesus. If he will not speak with you or if he does not boldly state that yes, he believes all the Bible is true, look for another church! God will guide you.

***[4] Fellowship.***It is vital to make friends with other believers. Friends influence what we do. Christian friends can help you grow and help you keep following God, rather than returning to the old life of sin.

***[5] Witness.*** Study and learn how to share your faith. We are all called to win others to Jesus, not just evangelists and pastors (Matthew 28:16-20).

***Water baptism is part of witnessing****.* All believers should follow the example of Jesus and be baptized in water, which is an outward show of the inner work God did in your heart. Speak with the pastor of your church and ask to be baptized.

***[6] Using God’s power****.* The previous steps should be started immediately and continue throughout your life. And there is one more step you need to take right now, just you and God. God wants you to have the fulness of His power in your life.

**[8] GOD’S POWER SOURCE FOR YOUR NEW LIFE WITH HIM**

* You need God’s power
* God has made His power available – TODAY - for all who will receive it.
* Jesus had God’s power – so can you!

**You need God’s power.** God knows your needs. God understands every aspect of your entire being – body, mind, soul and spirit. He knows that life in this world is hard and how strong the temptation is to go our own way rather than living for Him. So, God made the way for us to overcome our human weaknesses. How? By letting Holy Spirit --- God Himself—dwell in our hearts. Jesus comes to make His home in our human hearts when we receive Him as Lord and Savior. Jesus said:

“*If a person [really] loves Me, he will keep My Word [obey my teaching]; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home (abode, special dwelling place) with him.”* (John 14:23, AMPC)

This is what happens when you are saved from sin and decide to follow God. When you give your heart to God, He changes your heart so that you *want* to follow Him. God prepared the way for you to have His constant presence in that, when you love and obey Him, He makes His home with you, or He “dwells” in you (John 14:23). However, God also made the way for you to not only have His presence but also to access *His* very own power. How?

**God has made His power available -- TODAY – for all who will receive it**. Before Jesus came, God led people through His Word and His prophets and priests. Then God took on human flesh, through Jesus, and taught as well as showed us how we are to live. After Jesus died on the cross, rose from the grave, and ascended into heaven, He returned and appeared to His disciples many times. The last time, Jesus gave them a command to wait for the gift He would send. This gift is God’s Holy Spirit, Whom Jesus called “The Comforter, Counselor, Helper, Advocate, Intercessor, Strengthener, and Standby” (John 15:7b, AMPC) It is God Himself, making His home in us when we love and obey Him. This Holy Spirit, this marvelous Third Person of our beloved three-part God, is the One who comes to live in your heart.

God also made the way for you to not only have His presence but also to access *His* very own power.

But, besides living in and with you, God also wants to give you the power of His very own Spirit, flowing through your human spirit. You will have His power to live holy, to witness and to build yourself up spiritually. God also gives special gifts of the Holy Spirit for helping others, such as words of wisdom, gifts of healing, and so forth, but that is a topic for another day. For now, we will look at this gift of the baptism in the Holy Spirit that God wants to give every believer.

**Jesus had God’s power—so can you!** While on earth, Jesus was tempted in every way that we are, but Jesus overcame all temptations. How? Jesus had the Holy Spirit – and without limit (John 3:34) We humans cannot have Holy Spirit without measure, like Jesus did, with all of God’s Holy Spirit in all of our human heart. Why? Because our human heart will always have human, sinful tendencies. But we can have all we need of that same Power at work in us, that same Power that enabled Jesus to perform miracles and that raised Him from the dead.

**[9] HOW DO WE GET THAT POWER FROM GOD?**

**The power that comes from total commitment.** How do we get that power from God? When we totally commit our life to God, holding nothing back, deciding to immerse all that we are in living for Him, He will baptize us in His Holy Spirit, which is evidenced by praying in tongues. Remember that we are baptized in water as a sign that we are washed clean of our former way of life. God baptizes us in the Holy Spirit when we ask Him to. Matthew 3:11 tells us that Jesus will “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.” (NIV)

When we totally commit to God, holding nothing back, immersing all that we are in living for Him, He will baptize us in His Holy Spirit, which is evidenced by praying in tongues.

Remember that you consist of body, soul and spirit. When you deliberately choose to live for God and obey Him, you are spiritually born. Your spirit, though it was dead in sin, is given life through your faith in Jesus. God Himself comes to live in your heart. He puts His Spirit inside your spirit and you have new desires – you want to live for Him and follow Him.

It is like you are walking along the road of life with God and His Spirit is connected to your spirit and He makes His home in your spirit, but the rest of your heart is still walking in the world and therefore susceptible to sin.

However, when you make a total commitment, a sellout, to God it is like you step onto a different pathway where you are totally immersed in God. It is like you jumped into a river. Yes, your human heart is still human and susceptible to sin but your human heart is covered completely by God because you asked Him to take control of **all** of you.

Speaking in tongues is the initial evidence that you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit. Please, please, please put aside any negative things you may have heard. Satan knows that believers who regularly pray in tongues gain tremendous strength for holy living and for winning souls. That is why He leads people, even believers, to mock and lie about this gift.

**[10] THE INITIAL OUTPOURING OF GODS POWER IN HIS FOLLOWERS**

* God’s power for living a holy life and for witnessing.
* God initiated the gift of His power in a special way
* Two key facts to keep in mind.

**God’s power for living a holy life and for witnessing.** When Jesus appeared to His disciples after He was resurrected from the dead, He told them to go to Jerusalem and wait until they were “clothed with power from on High. (Luke 24:49). They obeyed and stayed in Jerusalem forty days and waited for the power Jesus spoke of. And on the day of Pentecost (a Jewish celebration) . . .

“They were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” 12Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

13Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.” (Acts 2:1-13, NIV)

Why did the onlookers say that? The believers were so joyous and excited and happy in God that they looked and acted as if they were drunk.

**God initiated the gift of His Power in a special way**. God initiated the gift of His Power in a special way. One purpose of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is to give us power to witness, to tell others about God. That is what happened. The first time that believers received this special gift of power from God was on the day of Pentecost that we just read about. (The gift continued and we will see more about that soon.)

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:4, NIV)

The tongues—speaking in unknown languages--described in Acts 2 was for the specific purpose of witnessing to the Jewish people from every nation who were gathered in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. The people were amazed to hear Jesus’s followers speaking in their own language. Fourteen languages are mentioned. And what did these people hear? When the believers spoke in tongues, “as the Spirit enabled them” the people heard them “declaring the wonders of God” -- *in their own language*.

God used that amazing phenomenon to draw a crowd, and then Peter, one of Jesus’s disciples, addressed the crowd. Peter explained that this was what God had promised through His prophets long ago and that the death and resurrection of Jesus had also been prophesied. Jesus, whom God had raised to life, was “exalted to the right hand of God [and had] received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.” (Acts 2:32-33, NIV) Peter told them that God had made Jesus, whom the wicked religious leaders had crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

This is what was promised through God’s prophets long ago.

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call. With many other words, he warned them; and he pleaded with them, ‘Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.’ Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand (emphasis added) were added to their number that day.” (Acts 2:36b-41, NIV)

***Two key facts to keep in mind.* (Fact #1)** Speaking in tongues declares the wonders of God. When the disciples spoke in tongues, as we just read, they were “declaring the wonders of God.” They themselves did not understand the words they were saying but Holy Spirit made those sounds the disciples uttered come out in at least 14 different languages. Why? Go back and read and you will see it was so that the crowd would be amazed enough to listen to Peter and be saved and receive the Holy Spirit also.

Speaking in tongues is always speaking in some kind of language, although we do not understand it. It may be a heavenly language or the language of angels (I Corinthians 13:1) or it may be a language somewhere on earth. I have personally experienced this. In a prayer group once where we all prayed out loud in tongues for part of the time, a couple from Portugal told me afterward that I spoke beautiful Portuguese. I was just praying in tongues! I have never learned Portuguese!

Receiving this gift is part of receiving Jesus.

**[Fact #2]** Second, do you see that receiving this gift is part of receiving Jesus? Peter told the people to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of sin and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. There is the baptism with water, to symbolize you have been washed clean of your past sins and are now resurrected into a new life with Jesus. And there is the baptism—or total immersion—in the Spirit, which is evidenced by speaking in tongues. Those followers of Jesus waiting on the day of Pentecost were totally sold out to Jesus. They were immersed in God, completely committed to God as much as someone is immersed in water. And God baptized them in the Holy Spirit.

**[11] WHO CAN HAVE THIS POWER?**

* Who is it for?
* What is it?

We need God’s power today as much as believers during Bible times did. “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*” (Hebrews 13:8, NIV). God still gives us His gifts – today!

**Who is it for?** This gift of being baptized in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is for all who believe in Jesus, who are walking in righteousness, (having have no unconfessed sin), and who ask Him. It is important to remember that speaking in tongues was a normal part of the life of the early Christians. It is also an essential part of living a powerful life for God in our world today.

**What is it?** To pray in the Holy Spirit, or to pray in tongues, is *to pray in a language your mind does not understand but your spirit does because it is Holy Spirit praying through your spirit.* There are two kinds of speaking in tongues.One is for use in public, in worship services where a person speaks in tongues and someone gives an interpretation of what God is saying to the church. The messages are words of comfort, encouragement and sometimes of correction. This is similar to the way tongues happened at Pentecost. The interpretation might convict sinners of their need to repent as it did at Pentecost and/or comfort and encourage believers. I personally have heard dozens of messages in tongues during worship services.

The second kind of tongues is for private, personal use, and is often called your “prayer language”. It is for your private use with God. Every believer should speak in tongues daily. Speaking in tongues began with that initial outpouring you just read about. *That outpouring in Acts was for that specific occasion but the gift of tongues for private use and for public worship are for today as much as then.*

**[12] WHAT DOES PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT DO?**

* Why do you need the baptism in the Holy Spirit?
* Praying in tongues gives you power to witness.
* Praying in tongues builds you up.
* Praying in tongues gives power for holy living.
* Other blessings of this precious, precious gift.
* Tongues for public worship
* Let’s review
* Seek the Giver, not the gift

**Why do you need the baptism in the Holy Spirit?** There are many, many blessings of speaking in tongues. Here are just a few.

**Praying in tongues gives you power to witness.** Jesus told his followers “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8, NIV) As evangelist Mario Murillo put it, when you are baptized in the Holy Spirit, talking about God bubbles out of you naturally. You want to tell others what God did for you. You do not need any special training in evangelism. Jesus’s followers received the Holy Spirit baptism and the power to witness on that day of Pentecost and then, as they continued following God, they turned the world upside down for God. Believers today are supposed to do likewise!

**Praying in tongues “builds you up.**” Scripture is clear that praying in the Spirit strengthens us, or builds us up. First Corinthians 14:4 says, “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself. . .” And in Jude verse 20 we read “*But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.”* The habit of speaking in tongues in your time alone with God will bring many blessings, to you and to others. You gain spiritual strength, strength to resist temptation and strength to live like God wants you to. God say, “*For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy.”* Consecrate means to dedicate something for a specific purpose. To be holy is to be dedicated to God. We build ourselves up “*in our most holy faith*” as we *“pray in the Holy Spirit.”* (Jude 1:20)

Scripture is clear that praying in tongues “edifies” or builds us up.

**Praying in tongues gives “power for holy living.”** The gift of speaking in tongues is called “the baptism in the Holy Spirit” because it signifies total immersion in God, a total sell-out to Him, holding nothing back. If you are unwilling to let God do what He wills with ALL of your life, you are not fully immersed in Him and I do not believe you will not receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost with the evidence of speaking in tongues. You also have to be willing to feel a bit foolish. If your dignity is more important to you than having all of God, well then you may keep your dignity but I believe it is likely you will not receive the baptism. Notice I said “willing” to look foolish. God sometime just requires our willingness, not the actual thing. Think about it. Do you mind looking foolish when you coo baby talk to an infant? How important is God to you? Which do you value more – what God thinks of you or what people think of you?

**Other blessings of this precious, precious gift.** You can also pray with more confidence and get guidance when you pray in the Spirit. Sometimes we humans simply do not know what to pray for.

“*In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God’s people in accordance with the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27, NIV)*

*Your* mind is not aware of what you are saying when you pray in tongues but often Holy Spirit puts thought into your mind as you pray in tongues– like how to solve a problem, or just words of comfort. I have experienced these things often.

**Tongues for public worship.** The gift of tongues for public worship is a topic for another time and is for use when you are in a gathering of believers. Praying in the Spirit is for your personal use with God.

**Let’s review**

* There are two kinds of speaking in tongues.
  + One is for your personal use, in your personal times with God.
  + The second is for public use in worship services.
* Speaking in tongues began with the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the feast of Pentecost and continues today.

**Seek the Giver, not the gift.** Pay attention here: we are not seeking the “sign” of speaking in tongues. People were human in New Testament times, just like today. Back then, some people wanted the gift so they could look especially religious. That still happens today, and even if your motives are right, it could be easy to get confused. What is important here is that you are totally committed to God, welcoming Him into every area of your life. You seek more of the Giver, not the gift!

Dr. Bill Harmon has written a book “70 Reasons for Speaking in Tongues: Your Own Bult-in Spiritual Dynamo.” If you still have questions, I believe this book will answer them. But right now you need to receive the gift of God’s power to live this new life with Him.

**[13] HOW TO RECEIVE GOD’S GIFT**

* What happens when you speak in tongues?
* How to receive

**What happens when you speak in tongues?** When you speak in tongues, you do not understand the words and sounds you are speaking. “You are speaking mysteries to God.” That is where faith comes in – and also why this gift is often ridiculed and scorned—to the danger of those who do. You open your mouth and start speaking words of praise and gratitude to God. Then, as you speak, as you do the physical part necessary, Holy Spirit will make those words and sounds you are making be praise to God or whatever else God knows you need.

This “not understanding” is part of the experience – for everyone. Paul said “*For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. (*I Corinthians 14:13, NIV). Praying to receive salvation exercises your faith in God’s ability to save you, just as sitting in a chair exercises your faith in that chair’s ability to hold you up. Regarding praying in tongues, opening your mouth and speaking, believing in God’s ability to make the sounds come out in an unknown language, is exercising your faith.

**How to receive.** (1) First, you must be totally committed to God, holding nothing back. Only then are you ready to be “filled and flooded with God Himself.” (2) Second, there must be no unconfessed sin in your life. Ask God and He will show you if there is.

(3) Receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues is simple. Just start praising God, talking about His wonderful qualities and thanking Him for what He has done. Fill your mind with thoughts of His goodness and His great love for you. As you keep speaking out your love and gratitude to God *in English*, Holy Spirit will make your words come out in sounds you do not know and/or He may put sounds in your mind. It may sound like gibberish or nonsense or even “baby talk.”

Steps to take

(1) Be fully committed and free from sin,

(2) ask,

(3) start praising God,

(4) then exercise your faith and speak!

*[4] Just use your faith, speak out the sounds you hear, and keep speaking*. You may get only a few syllables and that is fine. Just speak them out loud. As you keep speaking in tongues, you will have more words, or sounds. Or you may have an explosion of many sounds coming very fast. Either way, just keep speaking the sounds you hear and keep your mind loving and praising and thanking God. Some people feel very emotional and others feel nothing. Feelings do not matter here.

**[14] CONTINUE EXERCISING YOUR GIFT**

* Spend time daily speaking in tongues
* Do not boast
* What if other believers criticize?
* What if I do not receive?
* My experience

**Spend time daily speaking in tongues.** This is important, especially at first, until it becomes a deeply--rooted habit. We have already talked about the benefits of speaking in tongues and you need them! Speaking in tongues, also called praying in the Holy Spirit, will build you up spiritually. It is a way to pray when you do not know how to pray about something and it can bring you peace and comfort when you are confused or upset. Make praying in tongues a part of your daily routine. Never stop!

You may receive this wonderful gift in a church service when a prayer worker prays with you or you may receive alone at home, just you and God. Just be sure you pursue this gift and exercise it daily for the rest of your life.

**Do not boast**. A word of caution: Do not look down on those who have not received the baptism or who do not believe it is from God. Our human tendency is to boast about what we do for God, like the Pharisee in the parable in Luke 18:9-14. Stay humble and just keep exercising this gift.

**What if other believers criticize?** You also need to know that some believers strongly oppose all the gifts of the Spirit and especially speaking in tongues. Remember that praying in the Spirit was an integral part of the New Testament church. Paul specifically said “*and do not forbid speaking in tongues.” (I* Corinthians 14:39, NIV). Why then do some believers continue to oppose speaking in tongues? Some reasons include lack of knowledge, a different interpretation of Scripture, wanting to maintain control of what they do and say and how they look rather than totally surrendering to God and being willing to look foolish.

Paul specifically said “*and do not forbid speaking in tongues.” (I* Corinthians 14:39, NIV).

Do not judge those who do not believe as you do! Pray for them and “*If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone*”(Romans 12:18, NIV).

Seek Holy Spirit about whether you are to stay in that congregation or go elsewhere but regardless, do not argue or stir up strife. Proverbs 6:16-19 clearly says God hates strife. For this reason, people who receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit sometimes leave a congregation rather than cause division. Seek God and He will show you the path for you – but in any case – do not stop praying in tongues!

**What if I do not receive?** Doubt and unbelief are two of the biggest obstacles to receiving. You may have heard teaching against speaking in tongues, saying that the gifts of the Spirit like prophecy, healing, miracles, words of wisdom and so forth are not for today, that they stopped with the New Testament. Do not believe such statements! Remember, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever (Hebrews 13:8, NIV). And if someone’s comments make you feel inferior because you have not yet received the gift, forgive their ignorance, cruelty and pride and keep pursuing God.

Tell God sincerely, “I believe! Help my unbelief!” and keep pursuing the gift. Ask God to reveal if you are doing or not doing something you should and obey what He shows you. Do not give up! This gift is for every fully committed believer!

**My experience.** I initially had doubts about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, too. I was desperate when I was saved. I made a total sell-out to God and kept that commitment. So, a few months later, when I heard about the baptism I wanted to receive. I was regularly attending a Pentecostal church so I had witnessed some of the gifts of the Spirit, including tongues and interpretation and healings.

However, such things did not fit my idea of church because I had grown up attending a Baptist church, although I did not know Jesus then. Fortunately, after giving Jesus my heart, regular, serious Bible study became a habit those first few months. I studied Scriptures, read a book about the baptism, and beading reading through the book of Acts. Acts 10:44-48 convinced me.

(44) While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. (45) The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. (46) For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, (47) “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. (NIV)

Look at verse 45 and 46. The circumcised believers were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles FOR (or because) they heard them speaking in tongues praising God. I knew God was showing me—through the Word, no one but me and God and His Word--that the sign of receiving the baptism was speaking in tongues.

So, right there on the couch, alone with God, I began thanking Him for saving me and for all the good things He was doing for me and my daughter. I heard a few syllables in my mind and spoke them out loud. And I kept speaking them. Then came a few more “sounds.” (Remember, they are actually words in some language—we just do not know the language). I began taking time in daily devotions to speak in tongues and the gift grew and grew.

“The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.” (Acts 10:45-46, NIV)

It became natural to speak in tongues at odd moments of the day like walking to the break room, waiting in line at the grocery or at a red light. I found I could also sing in tongues. At that time, we sang choruses in church and, to my delight, I could sing the tunes in tongues. I did not understand the words, of course, but I could tell the sounds were the same each time we repeated the chorus.

I was still only months old in the Lord and at some moments even had doubts about my salvation and sometimes thought I was just “making up” the sounds I was speaking. But I kept following God, living out the basics of daily Bible study and prayer, attending church, being with other believers, talking about God to people and praying in the Spirit regularly. The doubts soon vanished. They will for you, too. God does not have any favorites (Romans 2:11). What He did for me, He will do for you.

**A final word.** Beloved believer and fellow pilgrim, that was over forty years ago and God has continued to keep me walking with Him. How God longs for you to give your heart to Him and then receive His power for living with and witnessing for Him.

God says He loves you as high as the heavens are above the earth. That is why you are reading this little booklet. God is speaking to you. Will you say yes, yes to salvation and yes to His power? I promise you will always, yes always, yes always, be glad you did!

In His Love and continuing prayer,

Freda