

Accepting Jesus

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16).

“The law is an expression of God’s idea. When we receive it in Christ, it becomes our idea. It lifts us above the power of natural desires and tendencies, above temptations that lead to sin.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 235.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 49–55.

1. Conquering Our Natural Condition

- a. What is the only way to effectively fight the enemy? James 4:7–10.
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“It is not necessary for us deliberately to choose the service of the kingdom of darkness in order to come under its dominion. We have only to neglect to ally ourselves with the kingdom of light. If we do not cooperate with the heavenly agencies, Satan will take possession of the heart and will make it his abiding place. The only defense against evil is the indwelling of Christ in the heart through faith in His righteousness. Unless we become vitally connected with God, we can never resist the unhallowed effects of self-love, self-indulgence, and temptation to sin. We may leave off many bad habits, for the time we may part company with Satan; but without a vital connection with God, through the surrender of ourselves to Him moment by moment, we shall be overcome. Without a personal acquaintance with Christ, and a continual communion, we are at the mercy of the enemy and shall do his bidding in the end.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 324.

- a. **James 4:7-10** (7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

1. Conquering Our Natural Condition

b. How does Christ dwell in my heart? John 14:23.

b. **John 14:23** (23) Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

2. Rejecting Complacency

- a. What parable describes the danger of not inviting Christ to come into our heart and of not uniting with Him? Matthew 12:43–45.
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“The parable of the man from whom an evil spirit had been cast out, who did not fill the soul with the love of Christ, illustrates the necessity of not only emptying the heart, but of supplying the vacuum with a divine occupant. The demon desired to return to the heart from which he had been expelled. He came, and though it was swept and garnished, he found it still empty, and entered in with seven other spirits more evil than himself, so that the last state of the man was worse than the first. The man in this parable refused to do the work of Satan; but the trouble with him was that after the heart was swept and garnished, he failed to invite the presence of the heavenly guests. It is not enough to make the heart empty; we must have the vacuum filled with the love of God. The soul must be furnished with the graces of the Spirit of God. We may leave off many bad habits, and yet not be truly sanctified, because we do not have a connection with God. We must unite with Christ.”—*The Review and Herald*, January 24, 1893.

a. **Matthew 12:43-45** (43) When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. (44) Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. (45) Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

2. Rejecting Complacency

- b. What will Jesus do if we welcome Him into our heart? Jude 24; Revelation 3:20.
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“We must be emptied of self. But this is not all that is required; for when we have renounced our idols, the vacuum must be supplied. . . . As you empty the heart of self, you must accept the righteousness of Christ. Lay hold of it by faith; for you must have the mind and spirit of Christ, that you may work the works of Christ. If you open the door of the heart, Jesus will supply the vacuum by the gift of His Spirit, and then you can be a living preacher in your home, in the church, and in the world. You can diffuse light, because the bright beams of the sun of righteousness are shining upon you. Your humble life, your holy conversation, your uprightness and integrity, will tell to all around that you are a child of God, an heir of heaven, that you are not making the world your dwelling place, but that you are a pilgrim and a stranger here, looking for a better country, even a heavenly, living with an eye *single* to the glory of God.”—Ibid., February 23, 1892.

- b. **Jude 1:24** (24) Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, **Revelation 3:20** (20) Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

3. Acceptance

- a. How can we, sinful humans, become sons and daughters of God?
John 1:12, 13.
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“Divine sonship is not something that we gain of ourselves. Only to those who receive Christ as their Saviour is given the power to become sons and daughters of God. The sinner cannot, by any power of his own, rid himself of sin. For the accomplishment of this result, he must look to a higher Power. John exclaimed, ‘Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world’ (John 1:29). Christ alone has power to cleanse the heart. He who is seeking for forgiveness and acceptance can say only—

‘Nothing in my hand I bring;

Simply to Thy cross I cling.’ But the promise of sonship is made to *all* who ‘believe on his name.’ Everyone who comes to Jesus in faith will receive pardon.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 12.

- a. **John 1:12-13** (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (13) Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

3. Acceptance

- b. How can we receive righteousness from God? John 3:16; Mark 9:24; Romans 1:16, 17.
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“Not by painful struggles or wearisome toil, not by gift or sacrifice, is righteousness obtained; but it is freely given to every soul who hungers and thirsts to receive it.”—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 18.

“Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ’s character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

“More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 62, 63.

b. John 3:16

(16) 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.

Mark 9:24 (24) And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

Romans 1:16-17 (16) For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

4. More than Forgiveness

- a. **What does God promise to do for those who accept Christ as their righteousness? Ezekiel 11:19, 20; Matthew 5:8.**
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“The religion of Christ transforms the heart. It makes the worldly-minded man heavenly-minded. Under its influence the selfish man becomes unselfish because this is the character of Christ. The dishonest, scheming man becomes upright, so that it is second nature to him to do unto others as he would have others do unto him. The profligate is changed from impurity to purity. He forms correct habits, for the gospel of Christ has become to him a savor of life unto life.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 345.

a. Ezekiel 11:19-20 (19) And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: (20) That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.

Matthew 5:8 (8) Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

4. More than Forgiveness

- b. How do we know that the words of Jesus, “Go, and sin no more,” mean more than forgiveness? John 5:14; 1 John 1:9.
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“The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 420.

b. John 5:14 (14) Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

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

4. More than Forgiveness

- c. What is the evidence of having my sins forgiven? Luke 7:47; Matthew 7:16–20; Galatians 5:22, 23.
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“When the Lord speaks forgiveness to the repenting soul, he is full of ardor, full of love to God, full of earnestness and energy, and the life-giving Spirit which he has received cannot be repressed. Christ is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 5, 1896.

c. Luke 7:47 (47) Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

Matthew 7:16-20 (16) Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? (17) Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. (18) A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. (19) Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. (20) Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

Galatians 5:22-23 (22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (23) Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

5. Abiding With Jesus

- a. Why did the delivered demoniacs seek to remain with Jesus?
Psalms 16:11; 51:11; Luke 8:35.
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“[The restored demoniacs] desire the companionship of their Deliverer. In His presence they feel secure from the demons that have tormented their lives and wasted their manhood.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 98.

“Whenever men reject the Saviour’s invitation, they are yielding themselves to Satan. Multitudes in every department in life, in the home, in business, and even in the church, are doing this today. It is because of this that violence and crime have overspread the earth, and moral darkness, like the pall of death, enshrouds the habitations of men. Through his specious temptations Satan leads men to worse and worse evils, till utter depravity and ruin are the result. The only safeguard against his power is found in the presence of Jesus. Before men and angels Satan has been revealed as man’s enemy and destroyer; Christ, as man’s friend and deliverer. His Spirit will develop in man all that will ennoble the character and dignify the nature.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 341.

a. Psalms 16:11 (11) Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Psalms 51:11 (11) Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

Luke 8:35 (35) Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

5. Abiding With Jesus

- b. Why did Mary sit at Jesus' feet? Luke 10:38, 39. What beauty in Christ's character attracted her? Isaiah 40:11; 41:13; 42:3; Ezekiel 34:11, 15, 16, 23, 30, 31.
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"Jesus would teach His children that they must seize every opportunity to gain that knowledge which will make them wise unto salvation."—*The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 359.

b. Luke 10:38-39 (38) Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. (39) And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

Isaiah 40:11 (11) He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Isaiah 41:13 (13) For I the LORD thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee.

Isaiah 42:3(3) A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

Ezekiel 34:11 (11) For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

Ezekiel 34:15-16 (15) I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD. (16) I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Ezekiel 34:23 (23) And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

Ezekiel 34:30-31 (30) Thus shall they know that I the LORD their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord GOD. (31) And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord GOD.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What can we do to fight evil in ourselves?
2. What happens to anyone who does not actively accept Jesus?
3. How do we accept Jesus?
4. What are the certain results of being fully forgiven by God?
5. Why is the beauty of Christ so attractive to the heart of the sinner?