

Salvation Basics

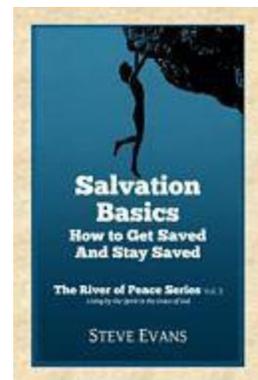
How to Get Saved and Stay Saved

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CHAPTER 1: ARE YOU A SEEKER?

The most important task imaginable lies right in front of you. We are disconnected from our God and we know it. What will you do about it? Our lives are racing towards death and we know it. What will it be like for you to face a God you have never known? In the moments after death you will know the truth, but by then it will be too late to make any adjustments. The time to act is now!

There is neither wisdom nor honor in setting this all-encompassing assignment aside: If God can be known, we must know Him. If He is there, He certainly expects nothing less from us. What honor or reward can there be for selfish, ungrateful creatures that show no interest in their Creator? If God can be found, we must find Him! Even if we are not at all concerned about the next life, we would be wise to re-unite with One who can make this life on earth a heaven and not a hell. What wisdom is there in rejecting any possible source of divine assistance?



In Christian terms all of this is impossible. We are so completely lost, it would take God to “find” us; so totally blind, it would take God to open our eyes; so entirely separated, it would take God to restore us. We cannot lead ourselves completely out of the darkness that enshrouds us, nor free ourselves fully from the sins that enslave us. Don’t let that stop you! Like miners trapped within the depths of the earth, we can hold fast to hope and send our desperate messages to the surface. We can “grope” our way towards the light. We can seek Him whom we cannot see. We can cry out to Him whom we cannot hear. All is not lost, just because we are lost. Take heart from this: Jesus promised that “All who seek shall find.” We can embrace the quest!

In the beginning of my journey I didn’t know Jesus Christ from Adam’s house cat. At first my spiritual quest only succeeded in getting me further lost! Yet, my heart was crying out for God, for the living God. He heard that silent plea and took pity. That story is told in *Rescued from Hell: An Odyssey of Deception and Discovery*. Had He not come to my rescue, this book could never have been written. As it is, I have had the pleasure of being a part of His rescue in many lives since then. I have never yet seen Him fail to save those who are crying out to Him and calling upon His Name. May you, too, find Him to be more than you could ever have dreamed possible.

CHAPTER 2: WHAT ARE THE SALVATION BASICS?

I plan to walk you through all of the main issues, beginning with why you need to be saved and continuing all the way through to what your first steps as a newborn Christian will be. First, however, I have to introduce you to the “salvation basics.” This profound truth appears in every chapter. It is a divine key that will unlock doors to your understanding and reveal God’s working in your life as a comprehensive whole.

“What must I do to get saved” and “How can I get to heaven?” are the essential questions of salvation in terms of eternal life. The answer to both is wrapped up in the extremely “good news” of our salvation basics found in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians: We are saved by grace through faith.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one would boast. Ephesians 2:8-9 WEB

The Basics Rule All of Life

These basics get you started, but the basics also keep you going! Once you get a satisfactory answer to those two elementary questions, you will quickly discover a few more:

- Is there anything I need to do to stay saved?
- How can I always be sure that I am saved?
- Can I lose my salvation?
- How can I stop sinning?
- How do I live now that I am saved?

The answer to these and all other daily life questions is the same: You are saved by grace through faith! That dual purpose may surprise you, but don't let it throw you. God has no need to alter His methods, as if one way might work for getting us to heaven, but not for helping us live a heavenly life on earth. His way is perfect! It is perfectly designed to work for our benefit.

Everything and anything you try to do to “save” yourself (in this life or for the next), will only end in failure. Such misplaced effort will also burden you with unnecessary stress all along the way, because you put the responsibility of rescuing your life on you rather than on God. That is trying to live by making self into your savior. The truth is self cannot save you from sin and death; neither can Self save you from your own failings as a person or from the many predicaments of life. We need God's salvation to reach us in both of these dimensions:

1. Getting us to heaven means God has to save us from our sins.



2. Getting a heavenly life into us while we are still on earth means God has to save us from ourselves.

God's laws found in the Bible (a.k.a. God's Rule Book for us) will show you what you need to do and what you need to avoid, but the law cannot give you the power to live within its boundaries. It certainly cannot give you the freedom to soar on wings of the Spirit. For that you will need God's grace which is also found in the Bible (a.k.a. God's Love Letter to us). By His wisdom God foresaw that we could only be saved by His grace through faith. You simply have to learn to trust God that His way of saving you—for heaven and in this life—really works.

Getting to Know God

Fortunately, you can get saved without knowing much about God, except that you want to know Him and need Him to save you. However, you need to know that you cannot live in the fullness of joy and peace promised to you unless you get to know your God very well—well enough to keep trusting and obeying Him no matter what's going on. Here is an absolutely certain progression: To truly know Jesus is to love Him; to love Him is to trust Him; to trust Him is to follow Him. Making "progress" in the walk, therefore, always comes as we get to know Jesus (and God) better.

Knowing God well is a lifelong quest! At times it requires determined work, the work of growing one's faith. Happily, we actually want to do that part of the work, because God gives us a love for Jesus and Jesus awakens in us a love for the Father and the Holy Spirit. With these basics in mind, let us move on to consider why we need to be saved.

Prayer

God, I don't know yet if You are really there or who You truly are, but if You are out there, then I ask You to come to me and help me find You. I need You to save me. I also desire to know You, the true and living God. Prepare me to receive Your salvation. Reveal Your truths to me and keep leading me in the way of grace and faith. I want to believe in You. Help me overcome my unbelief!

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