

CHANGE YOUR LIFE. CHANGE YOUR WORLD.

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Activated Basic Course 2 • Eternal Salvation

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

Finding eternal security

God's Plan

God so loved the world

Less Is Better

The things that matter

Source of True Joy

Unconditional love



EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

ONCE SAVED, ALWAYS SAVED

Some people live in eternal insecurity. They can never be sure, no matter what they do or don't do, that they will go to heaven when they die. It's enough to make a nervous wreck out of anybody—and I once read about a man that it did just that to.

He had received Jesus as his Savior and tried his best to live according to Jesus' teachings, but found he couldn't live up to other people's standards, what *they* said was necessary to merit salvation. According to them, every time he made a mistake or had an unholy thought, he lost his salvation and was right back where he had started, a lost sinner.

Finally he wound up a nervous wreck and was hospitalized. While recuperating in the hospital, he spent much of his time reading the Bible. One day he read Ephesians 2:8–9: “By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast”—and he finally got the point. Salvation wasn't dependent on anything that he had done or could do beyond believing that Jesus had died for sinners like himself. He got so excited about this simple truth that he felt better immediately and started sharing his discovery with everybody around him: “Do you know that all you have to do to be saved is *believe*, that's all? Just believe! God's grace plus your faith plus nothing!”

And he was so right! We're saved by grace through faith—not by good works, or by being perfect, or doing penance, or keeping an endless list of dos and don'ts. Jesus has already done it all! And just like you are *saved* by grace, you are *kept* by grace. You don't need to worry about losing your salvation, because you can't! Once saved, *always* saved!

For more information on *Activated*, visit our website or write to us.

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ETERNAL SALVATION



THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT “GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD”—you and me—“that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). God loved you so much that He gave Jesus, who suffered and died for the sins of all humankind. “In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him” (1 John 4:9). Jesus is the manifestation of the love of God.

Some people ask, “Why can’t you just leave Jesus out of it? Why do you have to use that name? Why can’t

you just say God and speak of God only? Then we could accept it much easier, if you wouldn’t insist on using the name of Jesus.”

If Jesus really is God’s Son, and God has chosen Jesus to reveal Himself to the world and to show His love, then God Himself has insisted on it. Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6).

None of us can really grasp how great and marvelous and wonderful God our Father is, so far beyond the mind of man, for He and His Spirit surpass the whole universe.

SALVATION BY GRACE

But He has stooped to send us His Son, Jesus Christ, to show us what He Himself is like. This, then, is the most important will of God for every person: to recognize Jesus as the Son of God and believe in Him as Lord and Savior and receive His love, manifested in His death on the cross when He took the punishment demanded by God's perfect laws for our sins, so that we could be forgiven and saved.

Why do we need to be forgiven? Because we are all sinners. The Bible says that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23), and "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, His Son" (Romans 6:23).

We must first confess that we know we're sinners. But we could be tempted to say, "I'm pretty good. God will surely give me credit for being pretty good, at least a lot better than many others." That's not enough, because you can't go to heaven unless you're perfect, and nobody is perfect.

It is impossible for us to be perfect or to keep God's perfect laws in the Bible and the Ten Commandments. Only Jesus is perfect, and that's why He could pay the price of our sins through His death, and God could forgive us, because Jesus took our punishment for us. We could never earn it. We have all sinned, we all need God's love and mercy to be saved, and we find that love and mercy in Jesus Christ.

We cannot save ourselves by our own works, our own goodness, our own attempts to keep God's laws and to love Him, or our own endeavors to find and follow His truth. Salvation is a gift of God performed by a transformation of our lives when we accept His truth in the love of His Son Jesus by the work of His Holy Spirit.

No amount of church attendance or prayers or anything else is going to save us; only Jesus saves. "Nor is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12 NKJV).

Only Jesus can free us from sin and its power and its condemnation. "For 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). No matter what you've done!



SPIRITUAL REBIRTH

Jesus said, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). When you receive Jesus as your Savior, you are spiritually born again and become a “new creation” in Christ Jesus. “The old has passed away and the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Once you have received Jesus, He will never cast you out (John 6:37). “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:28). Salvation is forever. Once you are “born again” as His child, you will always be His child. You can’t be unborn. You can’t lose your salvation. “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life” (John 3:36).

Of course, we have to work to pattern our lives according to God’s will and His Word, and follow the example Jesus set for us of loving God and loving others. But you can’t keep yourself saved. Jesus did that once and forever, and His gift is eternal life! Grace plus faith plus nothing. That’s salvation!

NEW LIFE, NEW YOU

When you receive Jesus, your whole life will be changed, and there will be a transformation. You may actually feel different and think differently and experience greater peace and joy than ever before. The “old you” has passed away and there is a whole “new you,” much better and happier than ever before.

Jesus’ entrance into your life not only renews and purifies and regenerates your spirit, but it also renews your mind, breaking old connections and reflexes, and gradually rebuilding and rewiring you into a person with an utterly different outlook on life.

Jesus promised that if you believe in Him and receive Him, He will come in. “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). May you experience His love and salvation—now and forever! ■



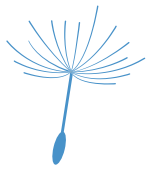
NEW BEGINNINGS

As the son of a successful corporate lawyer, growing up was pleasant for me. In my early teens my parents sent me to an elite private boarding school. Due to my great interest in art, I was then sent to a high school specializing in art and academic studies. My artwork and academic achievements there won me a scholarship at the Ontario College of Art, Canada’s most prestigious art college.

When I entered college, I was placed in the third year of the four-year art course—only the second student in the history of the college to receive this placement. At the end of my fourth year, I was given another scholarship and a grant to travel. After returning from extensive travels in Europe, I was hired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, where I worked for four years as a graphic designer. I also did freelance illustrations for a top agency in New York and for major newspapers, magazines, book publishers, TV, and animation companies.

I had climbed the ladder of success in my field, but it wasn’t enough; my heart was not satisfied. I began to understand that “one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses” (Luke 12:15 NKJV). I began to see that the things I owned, owned me. I wanted to find the true meaning of life.

Then one cold winter night on the downtown streets of Toronto, Canada, I met a total stranger who, in less than an hour, explained passages to me from the Bible that changed my life in the most profound way. That night I asked Jesus to come into my heart and found the greatest of all riches—Jesus and the Word of God.—*Michael, from Canada* ■



GOD'S

PLAN

BY PETER AMSTERDAM

THE CORE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CAN BE FOUND IN ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL VERSES OF SCRIPTURE: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

This verse reveals the amazing truth that the Creator of the universe loved the human race so much that He sent His Son Jesus to become human and to die in our place for the sins we have committed, so that we wouldn't have to suffer the penalty for those sins, even though we deserve to. We have the opportunity to receive everlasting life because Jesus has paid the price for our sins through His sacrifice.


God's plan of salvation, which was decided upon before the creation of the world, is rooted in God's love for humankind. He made a way for us to be saved from the ultimate consequence of sin—spiritual death and separation from God in the afterlife, which is called hell in Scripture.

Some people have the impression that God is a cruel and angry God: that He judges people harshly because He is personally offended that they sinned against Him, and therefore He

selfishly demands that they be punished. The true picture is very different. Because God's nature includes the attributes of holiness, righteousness, justice, and wrath, in order to be true to His divine nature He must judge sin.

His divine nature also includes the attributes of love, mercy, and grace. His wish was that no one should perish (2 Peter 3:9), and to that end He has made a way in which humans can be redeemed. That redemption is rooted in His love, because He “so loved the world.” God's plan of salvation is the manifestation of His mercy and love for humankind. “In this is love, not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

God knew, before creating the universe, that human beings created with free will *would* sin, so He made a way to save humanity from the penalty for sin through His plan of salvation. God's desire is to save humans, to redeem them, to reconcile them with Him. He was under no obligation to save us; He could have simply let all humans suffer the penalty of sin, but He didn't. In His love for us, God made a way to redeem us. God had the plan of salvation from the beginning, which was put into play starting with Adam



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and Eve's first sin and culminated in Jesus' death and resurrection.

Since God is the omniscient Creator, it was no surprise to Him that the first human beings, Adam and Eve, sinned. He knew that they would freely choose to disobey Him, and in His foresight, He had already designed His plan of salvation.

His plan of salvation included calling out a people, Israel, to whom He would reveal Himself and give His commandments. It was through His words spoken to Israel that God revealed knowledge about Himself, the one true God, and His law. Israel guarded and passed on His revelation from generation to generation, thus ensuring its preservation. The Old Testament not only contains prophecies about the Messiah's life and mission, but also numerous foreshadows of the salvation to come through His incarnate Son.

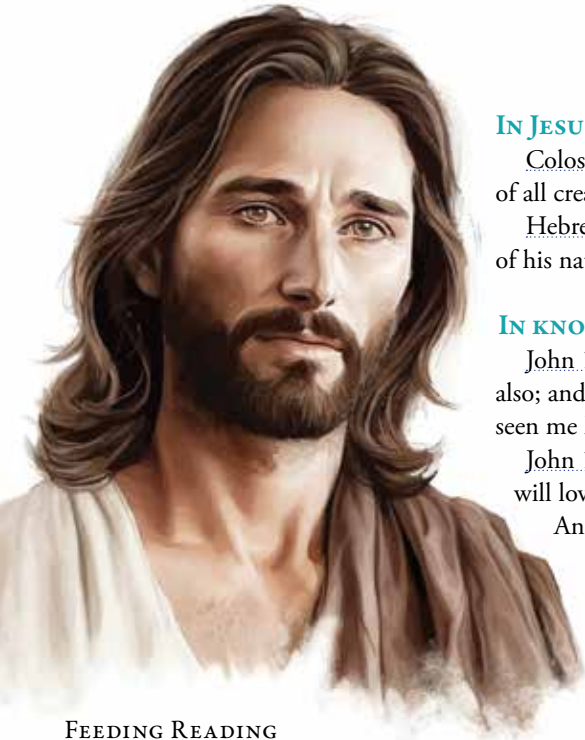
God's plan of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus was His plan of redemption for human beings before humans ever existed. Within the Old Testament He begins to reveal His plan; and then in New Testament times when John the Baptist proclaims, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the

world" (John 1:29), the fullness of His plan begins to be fully revealed.

The fulfillment of God's plan of redemption through Jesus' death, His sacrifice of Himself in our place through His blood shed for our sins, is repeatedly spoken of throughout the New Testament. He is the Redeemer who saves us from the slavery of sin. His death and resurrection are the fulfillment of God's plan of redemption. God has been holy, righteous, and just to His creations. He has been loving, merciful, and gracious. And we are beneficiaries of the greatest sacrifice ever made.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.—Ephesians 1:7–10.

PETER AMSTERDAM AND HIS WIFE, MARIA FONTAINE, ARE DIRECTORS OF THE FAMILY INTERNATIONAL, A CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY OF FAITH. ■



FEEDING READING

WHY GOD SENT JESUS

IN JESUS WE SEE WHAT GOD IS LIKE.

Colossians 1:15: He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Hebrews 1:3: He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power.

IN KNOWING JESUS, WE CAN KNOW AND UNDERSTAND GOD.

John 14:7–9: If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; and from now on you know him and have seen him. . . . Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

John 14:23–24: If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. . . .

And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father’s who sent me.

GOD SHOWED US HIS LOVE BY SENDING JESUS TO EARTH.

Romans 5:6–8 NIV: You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 John 4:9–10: In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

JESUS CAME TO PROCLAIM THE TRUTH.

John 18:37: For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth listens to my voice.

John 14:6: Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

JESUS SHOWED US GOD’S LOVE BY DYING FOR US.

John 10:11: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

John 15:13: Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

TO RECONCILE US TO GOD, SO WE CAN HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

Luke 19:10: For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

John 3:17: For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ■

LESS IS BETTER

BY UDAY PAUL

I VIVIDLY REMEMBER THE DAY IN MY EARLY TWENTIES WHEN I WAS SITTING IN THE COMFORTABLE LIVING ROOM OF MY UPPER-MIDDLE CLASS HOME and felt a void and restlessness within me that none of the plush surroundings or gadgets around me could assuage. In that fleeting moment, I sensed the powerful truth that material things cannot fully satisfy or give us happiness. I realized that our spirits will never be satisfied until they are in union with the great and loving Spirit who created them. As Augustine said to God in his autobiography *Confessions*, “You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.”

We’re constantly bombarded with advertisements telling us to buy newer and better things. It doesn’t matter if we’re content with what we have, or already have more things than we need, or simply can’t afford more. We’re told that better things will make our lives better! But in addition to making our lives more stressful, consumerism also puts enormous stress on our planet. Mahatma Gandhi said, “There is enough on earth for everyone’s need, but not enough for everyone’s greed.”

Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471) said that “the happiness of man does not consist in abundance of this world’s goods, for a modest share is sufficient for him.” In more

recent times, Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) echoed this when he said, “Our life is frittered away by detail. Simplify, simplify, simplify!” I too have found that having too many material things keeps me from enjoying what I have to the fullest, and that the simplest pleasures of life, which don’t cost much, provide us with the greatest happiness.

In the book of Isaiah, God says, “Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy?” (Isaiah 55:1–2). We were created as eternal creatures; that’s why the temporality of materialism leaves us with an empty feeling.

The greatest and most precious possession we can ever have is eternal life through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst” (John 6:35). Only God can satisfy the thirst and hunger of our spirits, because He created us with a space in our hearts that only He can fill. We enjoy that satisfaction in our inner being as we deepen our relationship with Him.

UDAY PAUL IS A FREELANCE WRITER, VOLUNTEER, AND TEACHER BASED IN INDIA. ■

Frequently Asked Questions About SALVATION

Who needs it?

Most people seem to think God grades on a curve. If you try to be a good person and don't make too many serious mistakes, you'll probably be given an average or above average grade when you die, pass the course of life, and go to heaven; if you're below average, you fail, and, well...

That might sound like a fair enough arrangement, especially if you consider yourself a better than average person, but according to the Bible, it doesn't work that way.

None of us deserve to go to heaven. The Bible says, "There is not a righteous man on earth who does good and does not sin" (Ecclesiastes 7:20). Anyone who thinks they're good enough to make it to heaven on their own is only kidding themselves—and they will miss out on God's greatest gift.

You can't be good enough. You can't earn salvation or work your way



to heaven. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5 NKJV).

So who needs salvation? Everyone!

What's it going to cost me?

"Surely there's a catch," you're probably thinking. "Surely I have to give up something, work hard, or do something to deserve salvation." No, you don't—and that's the beautiful thing about salvation! "It is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). If you had to earn or pay for it, it wouldn't be a gift.

Salvation is not a reward for good works. Your good works can't get you into heaven any more than your bad deeds can damn you to hell once you've asked for and received God's forgiveness through Jesus' sacrifice. You just have to accept the fact that you couldn't possibly pay enough to buy your way into

words when speaking of sin, translated as wrongdoing, deviation from truth, unrighteousness of heart and life, unbelief, and willful disobedience.

Are there any sins too bad for God to forgive?

God wants to freely forgive everyone for every wrong they have ever committed. “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him” (John 3:17). He wants to forgive everyone, and the way to experience His forgiveness is to believe in Jesus (Acts 16:31).

When people hear the truth—God’s plan of forgiveness and salvation through Jesus’ sacrifice—if they believe and accept Jesus as their Savior, their sins are forgiven. But if they willfully refuse His forgiveness, God’s hands are tied. God has given every person the majesty of free choice, and He will not override their decision to reject His offer.

Of course, just because someone rejects the truth the first time they hear it, doesn’t mean they’ll never be given another opportunity to make the right choice. Still, the Bible tells us, “Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2 NKJV). “For you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4:14 NKJV).

Why Jesus?

“Why must I ask Jesus into my heart?” you may ask. “Why do I have to use that name? Why can’t I just pray to God directly and find salvation that way?”

Because Jesus is the only One who came to earth and gave His life for you. Jesus said, “I am the door”—into His Father’s house, the kingdom of God. “If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved” (John 10:9). So if you want to get to heaven, you have to walk through Jesus, the open door.

Then what about the adherents of all the other religions in the world? Can’t they be saved? Yes, they can all get saved, regardless of their religion. Even if they don’t have any religion, they can still be saved—but only through Jesus.

Can I lose my salvation?

No! One of the most marvelous things about the gift of salvation is that once you have received Jesus in your heart, He is there to stay. He has come into your life, and He will be with you forever. Jesus has said that He will never leave you nor forsake you, and that He will be with you always, even to the end of the world (Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 28:20 KJV). There is nothing you could ever say or do that would nullify these wonderful promises.

Jesus knows you’re not perfect and never will be—and He loves you just the same! When He forgave you for your sins, He not only forgave your past sins but your present sins and those you will commit in the future. Eternal life is not a sometimes thing—saved and lost and saved again, every time you make a mistake and say you’re sorry. There’s no such thing! Once you’re saved, you’re saved forever! ■

heaven, and then humbly accept God’s gift. It’s as simple as that.

What is sin?

The most common Hebrew word used for sin in the Old Testament is defined as “to miss the goal or path of right and duty, to miss the mark, to wander from the way.” The Old Testament also uses words for sin translated as transgression of God’s will, rebellion, and going astray. The New Testament uses a variety of


RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

EVERYONE WHO RECEIVES JESUS AS THEIR SAVIOR, who is saved and born again, receives a measure of the Holy Spirit. In fact, you cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit, because salvation is a work of God, which the Bible refers to as being “born again of the *Spirit*” (John 3:8).

Jesus said, “Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:38–39).

Shortly before His crucifixion and resurrection, Jesus promised His disciples that He would send them a comforter and an advocate, the Holy Spirit, to strengthen, empower, lead and guide them in their spiritual lives and relationship with Him. “But the Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. ... and when the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you into all truth” (John 14:26 KJV; John 16:13).





Receiving the anointing, infilling, or baptism of the Holy Spirit may be a subsequent experience to that of salvation. In the book of Acts, the apostle Paul inquired of certain disciples that he met, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit’” (Acts 19:2).

The Greek word *baptizo* means to be *fully* covered or completely *immersed*. Thus to be “baptized” in the Holy Spirit means to be filled to overflowing with the Spirit of God. We all certainly need this baptism of the Holy Spirit to live the life of a disciple of Jesus.

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is a baptism of love—love for the lost, love enough to witness, love enough to win others to the Lord, a love for all people and a desire for their salvation. At the same time, it’s a baptism of the *power* of God, the power that enables you to tell others about Jesus, to be a *witness*, to share the gospel with others. When you feel compelled to tell someone about Jesus—this is the result of the baptism of God’s Spirit.

Jesus told His disciples, “You will receive *power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be My *witnesses*” (Acts 1:8). We read about this power to witness in the book of Acts in the

New Testament, on the Day of Pentecost when the first disciples received the Holy Spirit, and they stood up and *boldly* preached to the people, resulting in the salvation of 3,000 souls. (See Acts chapter 2.)

Peter, who had been so fearful when Jesus was arrested that he denied Him three times, preached fearlessly

and with boldness to the multitudes after he was filled with the Holy Spirit. This showed that whatever Peter accomplished was not of him, but of Christ that lived first *with* him and then *in* him. “For we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of *God*, and not of *us*” (2 Corinthians 4:7 NKJV). We all need the baptism of the Holy Spirit in order to have the love, power, and strength to be what He wants us to be.

As is the case with salvation, we receive the Holy Spirit by faith—which means you do not always get immediate evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. The Holy Spirit will manifest Himself in your life—it may be at that very moment or it may not be until later. “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7 NIV).

Once you have received the divine anointing of God’s Spirit, if you continue to abide in God’s Word in the Bible and are obedient to Jesus’ commands, you’ll be led by His Spirit. “For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God” (Romans 8:14 NIV).

When you ask God for the Holy Spirit, you’ll know you have received the promised infilling just as you know you are saved—because the *Bible* says so. “For faith comes by hearing the Word of God” (Romans 10:17 NKJV). Jesus said, “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds” (Matthew 7:7–8). “If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Luke 11:13).

If you haven’t yet received or been infilled with the Holy Spirit, you can do so right now by praying the following prayer:

Dear Jesus, please fill me to overflowing with Your Holy Spirit so that I can love You more, understand Your Word in the Bible, follow You more closely, and have greater power to tell others about Your love and salvation. Amen. ■



GOD IN THREE PERSONS: THE TRINITY

BY PETER AMSTERDAM

FOR THE UNINITIATED, the impression could be that Christianity believes in three Gods—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But that’s not the case. Christians believe that there is only one God. The doctrine that explains the concept of how the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God is called the doctrine of the Trinity.

This doctrine explains that God has always existed as three persons in one being, each distinct from the other, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—and yet one being. Each of the persons is fully God, having all of the attributes and the complete essence of God.

The concept of three persons in one God was not something that was explicitly expressed in the Old Testament, though there are Old Testament verses which infer that there is more than one person in

God. (See [Genesis 1:26](#); [Isaiah 6:8](#).) The understanding of the three persons in one God became clearer in the New Testament because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the believers. The followers of Jesus came to understand that Jesus is God, but He is distinct from the Father, and that the Holy Spirit is also God, but is distinct from the Father and the Son.

In 2 Corinthians, Paul lists the three persons of the Trinity in a manner that shows they are distinct from one another: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” ([2 Corinthians 13:14](#)).

Jesus, just before ascending into heaven, commands the disciples to baptize in the name of each person of the Trinity, thus showing He saw them all as equal, all as God. “Go

therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” ([Matthew 28:19](#)). In truth, the concept of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit being one God is impossible for us as humans to completely understand. That might be disconcerting, but it’s also consistent with our belief that an all-powerful, all-knowing creator God exists. As He reveals Himself to us, it stands to reason that understanding some aspects of Him might be beyond our human experience and understanding. So if you feel you can’t fully understand this, don’t worry about it. The important things are to know that there is one God, that there are three Persons in God, that God loves you and Jesus died for your salvation, and that the Holy Spirit is with you as a helper and counselor. ■

THE SOURCE OF TRUE LOVE

GOD CREATED US WITH THE NEED TO LOVE AND BE LOVED, and He alone can satisfy the deepest yearning of every human soul for total love and complete understanding. The things of this earth can satisfy the body, but only God and His eternal love can ever fill that aching spiritual void in our hearts that He created for Himself alone. The human spirit can never be completely satisfied with anything less than utter union with the great and loving Spirit that created it.

“God is love” (1 John 4:8). He is the very Spirit of love itself, true love, everlasting love, real love, genuine love that never ends from a lover who never leaves, the Lover of all lovers. He’s pictured in His Son, Jesus, who came for love and lived in love and died for love that we might live and love forever.

If people could just understand the magnitude of the Lord’s love—how truly unconditional it is, how vast and deep and wide and unending it is—it would solve so many of their problems. They would find freedom from so many of their fears and worries and regrets. If they could just understand that, then they’d know that everything

is going to work out, that He is going to cause everything to work together for good for those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28), and His hand on their lives is perfectly loving.

Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.
—*Ephesians 1:4 NLT* ■

PRAYER FOR THE DAY THE GIFT OF KNOWING YOU

Dear Jesus, thank You for this life that You’ve given me. Thank You for bringing me into this world and bestowing upon me the greatest gift there is—the gift of knowing You and loving You. I didn’t have to earn it, I didn’t have to be anything special, I didn’t even have to deserve it. You only asked that I receive it. I’m so grateful, Jesus, because I’m so unworthy.

You’ve brought me through all these years, and for that I’m grateful. There have been ups and downs, but through it all I’ve learned to trust You. I’ve finally been able to see that You do all things well. Every year of my life is in Your hands, just as every day, every hour, every minute, and every second is known by You. Amen.



FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

THE SOURCE OF JOY



When you accept Me into your life and come to know Me, you come to experience profound and intense happiness. The apostle Peter described this as “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:8 KJV).

When I died on the cross, I paid the price for the sins of the world—including every wrongful deed you have ever committed. And because I did that, whoever believes in and receives Me will live forever—and that includes you too.

When you understand what that means, when you realize that all is forgiven, that I love you unconditionally, that I will be there for you through thick and thin, that I will never give up on you, and that no matter what turns this life may take, you can look forward to eternal happiness in a truly perfect world—now *that* is something to get happy and excited about!

You can find joy in knowing that the nagging problems and imperfections of this present world will soon pass away, and then everything will be made perfect in love. You come to that realization by focusing on Me and My power and My promises.

And if you experienced that joy in the past but have somehow lost it, you can regain it the same way. Just think about Me, all I have done for you, and all I have promised you. I told My first disciples, “These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full” (John 15:11), and that same joy can be yours.