

12 Steps to Become a True Christian II

Counting the cost, baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit of God, conversion, faith/hope/love, grow in grace and knowledge, overcome
Fred R. Coulter—July 27, 2019

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services! Let's continue with how to become a *true Christian!* There are many fake Christians out there in the world. That's why we have to go to the Word of God. What does God tell us? How do we put the Bible properly together so that we get the full message and understanding of God?

Before we get into the last seven parts let's review the first five.

1) God's Calling

First of all, God does the calling. That's why many are called, but few are chosen, because few repent.

2) Repentance

Repentance is something that God grants when you see your sins. Sin is the transgression of the Law. Repentance means *a beginning of a cleansing inside!* People can be ever so nice on outside, and be hateful and sinful on the inside. Let's see what King David said concerning His repentance when he sinned greatly against God.

Psa. 51 is fantastically important to understand, because this tells you the attitude and the understanding that each one of us need to have. No one is going to tell God what to do. No one is going to reject what God says and be in His favor. *It's just not going to be!*

So, repentance is *repenting of your sins*, and *sin is the transgression of the Law*, and more accurately, *sin is lawlessness!* That means that people and 'religionists' put *their ways and their thoughts, their laws, their ideas in place of God's!*

But we're told that the Law of God is perfect (Psa. 19). As you begin to understand about the laws and commandments of God, you will see that that is true.

Psalm 51:1—David says: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions." *That's what repentance is meant to do!*

You come to God, God comes to you; you see the righteousness of God, you see the sinfulness of your actions.

Verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin, for I

acknowledge... [or confess] ...my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. **Against You, You only**, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge" (vs 2-4). *That's how has to be with us:*

- as we see ourselves
- as we see our actions
- as we see our thoughts

before God!

That's why there is repentance. That's why we saw that repentance is also required every day. Here's the end result of conversion when it comes to repenting and having God's way put in our heart and mind:

Verse 6: "Behold, **You desire Truth in the inward parts...**" That's what God wants:

- in your heart
- in your mind
- in your thoughts
- in the inward parts

That's why He gives the Holy Spirit!

"...and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (vs 6-7). *That's what repentance is all about!*

3) Belief and Faith

- you believe God
- you believe the Word of God
- you know the Word of God is Truth
- you base everything that you do on the Word of God

4) Forgiveness

Forgiveness comes after repentance and belief. You have to have repentance, and you have to have belief that God can forgive your sins, then God grants forgiveness! *God removes our sins from us as far as the east is from the west* (Psa. 103).

5) Justification

Justification means that you are put in right standing with God. After you heed the calling of God, after you repent, after you have been forgiven, then you have justification. But there is something else you need to do.

If you repent of your sins you cannot keep on living in your sins. Sin is the transgression of the Law, meaning *you're breaking the Law!* You can't have forgiveness and be in right standing with God if you continue breaking the Law.

Look at the Ten Commandments. Most people will agree that we ought to keep the Ten Commandments, except the second one and the fourth one. Guess what you've done? ***You have made the Law of God imperfect!*** You have replaced it with the *laws and traditions of men!* If you've done that, it doesn't matter what else you do, you are a ***fake Christian***, and you can never be in right standing with God. You can never be justified from your sins ***if you're still living in sin!***

As we have covered, the second commandment is making idols and bowing down to serve them. The fourth commandment is: Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy. You can't make Sunday Holy. No way possible. ***No man can do that and no man can change it!*** They can say that they change it, and they can say that they transfer everything to the first day, but it's impossible because:

- *God alone* is the One Who made the Sabbath
- *God alone* Who gave the laws concerning the Sabbath
- *God alone* is Creator and Lawgiver

So, no man can do that!

Romans 2:13 "Because **the hearers of the Law are not just before God...**"

You can repent of your sins all that you want, but unless you turn around and love God, and keep His commandments, all your repentance is worthless. If you repent of your sins and get up and go to church on Sunday, ***you are living in sin!*** *You are not a doer of the Law!*

I hope that you understand that that's simple, v 13: "Because **the hearers** of the Law **are not just** before God, but the **doers**... [the ones who are practicing] **of the Law shall be justified.**"

This means that when you repent of your sins and you've been forgiven, you are justified and you cannot continue living in your sins. ***If you're still living in your sins you shall not be justified, and you will not be in right standing with God!*** You need to understand that, and you need to keep that in mind.

6) **Counting the Cost**

This is a very important thing we need to do, because when we come to God it has to be

wholehearted, with everything within us! We have to repent deeply of our sins and transgressions.

We have to understand how important the decision of coming to God is, ***because God wants to give you eternal life!*** It's not just so you can be a better person in society. That's required, too, but God wants you to be ***converted in your mind!***

So, if you're going to come to God, it's got to be all or nothing! You can't come halfway. Luke 14-26 is a tough verse. So listen up! This is called ***counting the cost!***

Luke 14:26: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, **he cannot...** [Greek: 'ou dunatai'—*the impossibility*] **...be My disciple.**"

Think about that! We will see that this means ***you love God more than anything else, including your own life!*** Paul says that 'we take up our cross *daily*, and *crucify* the flesh.' The sins are inherent within the flesh.

Let's see where Jesus clarifies this so that we understand what 'hate' means. It means ***to love God more than anything else!***

Matthew 10:37: "The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me..." *When you're coming to the point that you want to be baptized, these are some of the decisions that you have to make!*

As we go through this, you will see why there's so much ***fake Christianity*** in the world. It's not based on all the Word of God. ***Fake Christianity*** takes ***some*** of the Word of God, and they reject how much of the Word of God that there don't agree with.

Verse 37: "**The one who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and the one who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And the one who does not take up his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me**" (vs 37-38).

Think about that! This is all a part of counting the cost. You have got to sit down and understand:

- ***if*** you want to have eternal life
- ***if*** you want God to forgive your sins
- ***if*** you want Jesus Christ to be your Lord and Master

you must come to God completely! And that must remain that way and continue, as we will see, the rest of your life.

Verse 39: "The one who has found his life

shall lose it...” *If you think you found it your way in the world, you’re going to lose it!*

“...and the one who has lost his life for My sake **shall find it**” (v 39). *You’re going to find eternal life!*

Are you willing to make that decision in counting the cost, that nothing—*not even the closest ones in your family*—will become between you and God? To *hate* means that *you love them less than you love God!*

What is the great commandment of God? *This is fantastically important to understand, because everything that God does is based upon His love!*

Matthew 22:37: “And Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love *the* Lord your God **with all**... [not part, not some, not most] ...**your heart**, and **with all your soul**, and **with all your mind**.’” *This is the first and greatest commandment*” (vs 37-38).

Let’s analyze something for just a minute. *If the Law has been done away, the love of God has been done away! Think about that, because this is the first commandment!*

How can you love God unless you believe that this is the first commandment? *The very first of all, above everything else!*

Verse 39: ““And *the second one is* like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.””

If you still have any questions about commandment-keeping, we’ll answer some more a little later! But here is a great answer:

Verse 40: “On these two commandments hang **all** the Law and the Prophets.” *Everything that God has done hangs on that!*

What about the New Testament? *For God so loved the world...!* So, God has His love. This is our love back to God! See how all of it comes together and makes a perfect picture. That’s all counting the cost in loving God!

7) **Baptism**

This becomes so important, and most people do not understand what baptism is all about! We already covered the part about *repent of your sins and be baptized!* That brings about the remission of your sins in the name of Jesus Christ.

Let’s see something really important, the whole explanation of baptism. It’s totally misunderstood. If you’ve been baptized in the Roman Catholic Church as a child, forget that; that was a *fake* baptism!

- What did you know about God? *Nothing!*

- What did you know about sin? *Nothing!*
The only thing you knew at that time was that you were plunged into cold water and you cried like crazy! Rom. 6 explains about baptism, and it also explains what we are to do after baptism. It also tells us *what baptism means!*

Remember, count the cost and put nothing before God. This is the promise that you are making to God. *You want the Holy Spirit of God so that you can walk in newness of life, so that you can become a true Christian!* That’s what you want if you want to be a *true* Christian.

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin...**” (vs 1-2).

What does that mean? *That has a great meaning*, I’ll explain in just a minute.

“...how shall we live any longer therein?... [living in sin as a way of life; can’t do it] ...Or are you ignorant that we... [Paul is including himself] ...as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?” (vs 2-3).

Baptism is by full immersion in water. Why? *Because it says*, “...we who died to sin...” Let’s see the perfect covenant parallel. Jesus Christ died for the sin of the world. It goes clear back to Adam and Eve. He died; shed His blood. When you are baptized then you enter into the New Covenant.

Covenants always require a symbolic show of one’s death, when it’s a serious covenant like this.

Sidebar: Some covenants that are not that serious may be setting up a pillar or writing a memorial and you both agree to it.

But the New Covenant has to do with the death of Jesus Christ.

Baptism becomes your symbolic death! You are pledging your death if you are not faithful to the end. That’s what baptism is all about.

“...were baptized **into His death**”: How much into His death?

Verse 4: “Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into **the death**... the very death of Jesus Christ] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life.” *Notice that it doesn’t say that you are born again!*

{Articles (truthofGod.org): What Do You Mean “Born Again”? and What Do You Mean “Born of God”?} That means when you are resurrected and changed from flesh to spirit. **There is no such thing as being born again in the flesh!**

Baptism does not bring that about. Baptism is a symbolic *death!*

- you die to sin
- you die to the world
- you die to your self
- you die to Christ

That's your pledge!

Baptized "...into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life" (vs 3-4)—*because we're brought out of the water!*

If you're held under the water long enough, you're dead! So, baptism is the closest thing to death that you can come to, and it is *your symbolic death* in the watery grave. You're raised back with the physical life to "...**walk in newness of life.**"

Verse 5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also **shall we be in the likeness** of His resurrection."

That's going to happen at the return of Jesus Christ! There's no going to heaven; forget that, that's fake Christianity! That's pagan religion!

Here's what you need to understand about baptism; v 6: "Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed..."

- all the sin in the mind
- all the sin outward

"...so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin... [ruled over by sin, because that's what it was before we're baptized] ...**because the one who has died to sin...** [v 2, we who died to sin. Paul just explained what it was, you symbolic death and burial in full immersion in water] ...**has been justified from sin**" (vs 6-7).

Now, that puts it all together: *repentance, justification, forgiveness and baptism!*

How many times does it say that we died? *Three times!* Baptism is *a symbolic death, a covenant death!*

Verse 8: "Now, if we died together with Christ, we believe that we **shall also live with Him.**"

8) Holy Spirit of God

That's very important; now lets see what we are to do *after* baptism. John 14 is one of the most important chapters in the entirety of the Bible. As we know from Acts 8 that when people have been baptized and come up out of the water, then there is what is called *the laying on of hands* and a prayer

give to *receive the Holy Spirit*. This is what seals the baptism and New Covenant, that you receive the Holy Spirit from God.

When Paul came to Ephesus (Acts 19) there were certain who were baptized under the baptism of John. He asked them:

Acts 19:2: "...Did you receive *the* Holy Spirit after you believed?' And they said to him, 'We have not even heard that *there* is a Holy Spirit.'" So, he baptized them again (v 5).

This shows us a key that is important. If you have had any other baptism, you must be re-baptized the correct way.

Verse 6: "Now, when Paul laid *his* hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with *other* languages and prophesied." *That was a sign to Paul to stay in Ephesus, which he did for two and a half years!* He did a great ministry there.

I have said and you need to understand that in the Bible there are 1700+ *ifs*, which is a qualification of a statement. This shows that the love of God is not unconditional.

John 14:15: "**If**... [that independent free moral agency (IFMA)] ...**you love Me...**" *Think about that!* If you say that you love God; you think you have loved God in the past. Maybe you had an emotion, an internal feeling in your heart, but *IF you did not do the following then it was not true:*

"...**keep the commandments—namely, My commandments**" (v 15).

Let me explain this to you so you fully grasp what we're talking about: The One Who was the Lord God of the Old Testament spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai to the children of Israel. By the way He gave the Ten Commandments all during the time from Adam until Moses. You see that with the life of Abraham, that Abraham kept the commandments of God.

So, if you've heard a minister say that there was no Law until Mt. Sinai, it's a LIE! Absolutely not true!

Verse 15: "**If you love Me...**" How did we see we are to love God? *With all our heart, mind, soul and being!* Jesus was the Lord God of the Old Testament, keep that in mind.

"...**keep the commandments—namely, My commandments**" (v 15). *That includes everything that Jesus said!*

Now you know why He said, *'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.'*

- Do you do that?
- Are you willing to do that?

That will determine whether you will be, or are a true Christian!

Now notice what Jesus says after that, and this makes it clear that you cannot receive the Holy Spirit of God until you love God and keep His commandments.

Verse 16: “And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it...” (vs 16-17).

God only gives the Holy Spirit to those who love Him, who obey Him! It makes it very clear.

“...but you know it because it dwells **with** you, and shall be **within** you” (v 17). *Now there’s a distinct difference!* When it’s **in** you that is called the begetting of the Holy Spirit by God the Father. We will also see how important that this is concerning Christ and the Father and receiving the Holy Spirit.

If you do not have the Spirit of God ‘you none of His’—period!

Verse 20: ““In that day, you shall know that I am in My Father, and you *are* in Me, and I am in you. **The one who has My commandments and is keeping them,** that is the one who loves Me, and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.’ Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’” (vs 20-22).

It’s a spiritual thing by the Spirit of God coming to you!

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, **‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...’**” *Think about that!* In this case it means **all the message of Christ!** And He received that *from the Father!*

“...**and My Father will love him...**” (v 23). The Great Sovereign Ruler of the universe Himself ***personally will love you!*** Christ loves you and the Father loves you.

The next sentence is the most important concerning the Holy Spirit in the whole Bible:

“...and **We...** [the Father and the Son] ...will come to him and make **Our** abode... [dwelling place] ...with him” (v 23). *That’s the receiving of the Holy Spirit!* Notice how Christ does this in alternating juxtapositions:

Verse 24: “The one **who does not** love Me

does not keep My words, and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s, Who sent Me.”

Let’s see that there are these two parts of the Holy Spirit:

- the begetting from the Father to become a son or daughter of God spiritually forever and ever
- the Spirit of Christ to have the mind of Christ

Let’s see how Paul addresses it. What we’re talking about is something the unconverted carnal mind cannot understand, nor wants to understand, because they’re blinded; they have *spiritual blindness!*

- they can’t see
- they can’t know
- they can’t understand

because God made it that way!

If you do not love God and keep His commandments, ***you can’t really understand*** the plan of God, the plan of conversion, and what you need to do to become a son or daughter of God! The carnal mind is flesh, void of the Holy Spirit of God.

Romans 8:7: “Because **the carnal mind is enmity against God...** [an enemy] ...for it is not subject to the Law of God; **neither indeed can it be.**”

If you go to Sunday church, why don’t you go up to your pastor and ask him:

Does the fourth commandment say to remember the Sabbath Day to keep in Holy? Is that not the seventh day of the week called *Saturday* today? Could you please tell me why we don’t meet on the Sabbath? Why we meet on Sunday?

Watch his answer. He may speak in nice words, but he’s an enemy of God! Why? “...**for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it be.**”

If you’re a good Catholic and you ask the same thing of your priest, and they will admit that, yes, the Sabbath is the seventh day. Then ask your priest:

Why in the Catechism book does it remove the second commandment forbidding idolatry?

They will dance all around and tell you that they ‘just venerate, we don’t worship.’ Well, then you tell them:

I thought it says that ***you shall not make*** any image of any likeness that’s in heaven above and on the earth beneath. Or anything that is under the waters of the earth, either!

Why do you have it in the Douay English version of the Catholic Bible, but you remove it from the Catechism?

An enemy of God! That's why!

Verse 8: "But those who are in *the* flesh cannot please God. However, you are not in *the* flesh, but in *the* Spirit, **if** *the* Spirit of God is indeed dwelling within you. But **if** anyone does not have *the* Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (vs 8-9).

Remember John 14, that the Father will love you, Christ will love you, and 'WE will make OUR abode—or dwelling place—within you!'

Verse 10: "But if Christ *be* within you, the body *is* indeed dead because of sin... [because you were baptized, a spiritual pledge of death] ...however, the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness. Now, if the Spirit of Him Who raised Jesus from *the* dead **is dwelling within you...**" (vs 10-11).

That's the Spirit of the Father; this confirms John 14 that Jesus and the Father—through the power of the Spirit of God will be dwelling within you.

"...He Who raised Christ from *the* dead will also **quicken...** [to be raised from the dead] ...your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwells **within** you" (v 11).

What I have done, because they're so closely related, I covered baptism (#7) and the Holy Spirit of God (#8), and the #8 means *newness or new beginning*. So, if you receive the Holy Spirit of God, that's a new beginning.

(go to the next track)

Let's look at a couple of other Scriptures concerning the Holy Spirit and what we need to do, and what the Holy Spirit does for us.

The book of Ephesians is one of the most inspiring books that Paul has written in the New Testament. He wrote this when he was in prison in Rome. Paul is writing to the brethren in Ephesus who were trusting in Christ, believing in God and were baptized and received the Holy Spirit. He defines a little bit more about receiving the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1:13: "In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.**"

Sealing is what happens when you receive the Holy Spirit. In the book of Colossians it explains it just little bit differently. This is called the circumcision without hands. Be on guard against:

- false teachings
- false interpretations
- pretenders, those who are claiming to be Christians
- pretenders, those who claiming to be ministers of God

Colossians 2:8: "Be on guard so that no one takes you captive through philosophy... [Greek religion, what is in the Roman Catholic Church] ...and vain deceit, according to the traditions of men, according to the elements of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, Who is the Head of all principality and power in **Whom you have also been circumcised with the circumcision not made by hands...**" (vs 8-11).

This is the spiritual circumcision that comes with baptism and the laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit.

"...in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; having been **buried with Him in baptism...**" (vs 11-12). *That explains what this is!*

Baptism, as we have seen, is a burial, and when we receive the Holy Spirit, this is the earnest of the Holy Spirit. It is a begettal! It is a beginning! This is why we need to always be faithful and stay close to God. Once we receive the Holy Spirit then:

9) Conversion

What is conversion? *You need the Holy Spirit for conversion!* You can't be converted until you receive the Holy Spirit.

What does conversion mean? *First of all, you change your way of living from the way you have been living, to living God's ways according to the commandments of God!*

More than that, receiving the Holy Spirit within your mind, and how the power of God the Father and Jesus Christ—the earnest, the down payment, the begettal—the Holy Spirit in our mind unites with the spirit of man that all of have.

Conversion means *the changing of the mind so that you begin to develop the kind of thinking that God wants!*

Romans 12:1: "I exhort you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, Holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service. **Do not conform yourselves to this world...**" (vs 1-2).

You're called out of the world. Jesus said that we *'are living in the world, but we are not of*

the world. That means that we are of the Kingdom of God in our lives.

“...but be **transformed...**” (v 2)—*changed!* The mind is such that things are written and stored in our mind. What we’ve had in our mind before conversion is what the Bible calls *the world*.

- we thought like the world
- we did like the world
- we worshipped like the world

We have to have a change!

Verse 2: “Do not conform yourselves to this world, but **be transformed...**”—*changing it!* That’s what God wants done with your mind.

“...by the renewing of your mind in order that you may prove what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God” (v 2). How is that done?

Let’s see what it is with the New Testament, the primary thing, and what it does for us. We saw that **baptism is circumcision of the heart**. That’s getting rid of the world! That circumcision of the heart is:

- being buried with Christ
- receiving the laying on of hands
- receiving the Holy Spirit

We know that God the Father and Jesus Christ are going to be dwelling in us! What are we to do? *Have our mind transformed!* How do we do that?

- prayer
- study
- living by the ways and commandments of God

Heb. 10—we are told that this the very reason why Christ died and rose again. This explains about the sacrifice of Christ. Then we will see what a tremendous thing that it was that Christ did, what He wants us to do.

Hebrews 10:14: “For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified.” *That is subject to prayer, study, growing and overcoming!*

Verse 15: “And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, “This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,” says *the Lord...*” (vs 15-16)—*the New Covenant under Christ!* That is taking place with baptism, laying on of hand and receiving the Holy Spirit, after repenting of sins, etc.

“...“**I will give My Laws into their hearts...**” (v 16). Remember Rom. 8:7 that **‘the carnal mind is enmity against God!’** that’s the mind that we had, the mind of flesh, before baptism and the receiving of the Holy Spirit of God and the

circumcision of the heart. This is the circumcision of the heart, *rather than being hostile!*

“...and I will **inscribe them in their minds**” (v 16). *That is a true scientific thing that we know today!* Our minds are inscribed with everything that we have ever done. That’s why *we need our mind renewed with the Spirit of God, and transformed with having the laws and commandments of God written in our heart and mind!*

That’s important for us to do. That is the very reason for conversion. If you’re going to have them written in your heart and mind, how are you going to act? *You’re going to love God and keep His commandments, just like Jesus said!* Isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*

Let’s see something very interesting. This will tell us what the mind of Christ is to do for us. And this will tell us even more what Christ did. So that you can understand the great sacrifice that Jesus Christ Himself did to come to this earth to become a pinpoint of life and be begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary and be born as a human being, and live as a human being.

Philippians 2:1—Paul sums it up this way: “Now then, if *there be* any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of *the Spirit*, if any *deep* inner affections and compassions, fulfill my joy that **you be of the same mind, having the same love, being joined together in soul, minding the one thing**” (vs 1-2).

That’s the collective togetherness of overcoming with all the brethren. This is something we need to follow along and do:

Verse 3: “[#1]**Let nothing be done through contention or vainglory**, but in humility, each esteeming the others above himself. [#2]**Let each one look not only after his own things, but** [#3]**let each one also consider the things of others**” (v 3-4).

Notice what Paul say here, this is something you have to do, something you have to apply:

Verse 5: “[#4]**Let this mind be in you...** [it is with the Holy Spirit] **...which was also in Christ Jesus.**”

Now notice what Jesus did, v 6: “Who, although He existed in *the* form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God”—verified by:

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

Philippians 2:7: “**But emptied Himself...**” *He gave up all of His glory, all of His Divinity,*

everything that He had as God, and God the Father made Him into a pinpoint of life to be begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary.

Stop and consider this: Christ having done that to come and willingly lay down His life to be the perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world. To receive His life back by resurrection from the dead, and then ascend to the Father to be at the right hand of God. Ask yourself: How much have I given up to love and to serve God? Whatever you give up you're going to receive back spiritually at the resurrection, many-fold over again!

"...and was made in *the* likeness of men... [exactly the same] ...and took the form of a servant... [Greek: 'doulos'—*slave*] ...and being found in *the* manner of man... [He had to eat, sleep, drink water, etc., and had all the processes of human life] ...He humbled Himself... [How much have you humbled yourself? How much have you given up for God?] ...**and became obedient unto death...**" (vs 7-8). *How obedient are you* just in doing the thing that are unto life by keeping:

- the commandments of God?
- the love of God?
- the faith of God?
- the hope of God?

"...even *the* death of *the* cross" (v 8)—*one of the worst ways to die!*

Verse 9: "Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him... [and God wants to exalt us] ...and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name; **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow** took the form of a servant, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father" (vs 9-11).

Notice Paul's admonish and this will lead into the rest of the step of becoming a true Christian.

Verse 12: "So then, my beloved, **even as you have always obeyed...**"—*God! Jesus Christ! Kept the commandments of God!*

"...not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (v 12).

Think about what that means. That's covering the whole aspect of *how we overcome, how we grow, how we relate to everything that God wants us to do!* If you do this, here is what's going to happen:

Verse 13: "For it is God Who works in you both to will and to do according to *His* good pleasure."

The power of the indwelling of the Holy

Spirit of God will be the motivating factor for you to do what God wants. ***You've got to pray, study and live God's way.*** All of those are the steps to becoming a true Christian

Verse 14: "Do all things without complaints and disputes; so that you may be blameless and without offense, **innocent children of God in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world**" (vs 14-15).

Isn't it true that we live in crooked and perverse generation? You can mark these words as absolutely true: ***It's going to get worse in the world!***

Don't think that you're going to wait and at the last minute you're all of a sudden going to latch onto God. It isn't going to happen that way, my friend! ***No sir!*** You have to come to God and do what God wants. This is part of #9, *conversion!*

- change of heart
- change of mind!
- change of everything that you do

Notice how we develop the mind of Christ, and we find this in the Old Testament. As we've said before, the apostles taught Christ from the Old Testament.

Isaiah 55:6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near. **Let the wicked forsake his way...** [New Testament doctrine] ...and the unrighteous man **his thoughts...** [be renewed in your mind] ...and let him return to the LORD... [come out of the world instead of living like the world] ...and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (vs 6-7).

Consider this: We are to have the mind of Christ. That means with the commandments and the Word of God written in heart and mind, what is actually happening? That is part of conversion. But notice what God says:

Verse 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD. 'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (vs 8-9).

Now notice how God pictures the Holy Spirit to rain that comes down for those who receive the Spirit of God and they develop and grow as He likens it to plants.

Verse 10: "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, **so shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth;** it shall not return to Me void, but it shall

accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do” (vs 10-11).

Notice what comes next, because what comes next is the time when God gives understanding and truth:

Isaiah 56:1: “Thus says the LORD, ‘Keep justice and do righteousness; for My salvation is near to come... [that today] ...and My righteousness to be revealed.’.... [notice how you’re going to produce the fruit that He’s talking about]: ...Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who lays hold on it; **who keeps the Sabbath from profaning it, and keeps his hand from doing any evil**” (vs 1-2)—*newness of life!*

Verse 4: “For thus says the LORD, ‘To the eunuchs... [or anyone] ...**who keep My Sabbaths, and choose things that please Me**, and take hold of My covenant.” *New Testament doctrine, and teaching about the Sabbath Day!*

Conversion requires quite a lot, and means *that our mind is changed, our heart is changed!* Not let’s see how Paul talks about it in another way. Here’s the whole thing of God’s Holy Spirit being in us, which is the earnest of eternal life that we are going to receive.

When I’m talking about these 12 steps and conversion, they are part of the mystery or the secret of God, or the plan of God that the world doesn’t know.

Colossians 1:26: “**Even the mystery that has been hidden from ages and from generations, but has now been revealed to His saints.**”

Think about the revealed knowledge of God that He had given. Think about how that ties in with Sabbath and personal prayer and study. Every:

- Sabbath
- Passover
- Feast of Unleavened Bread
- Pentecost
- Trumpets
- Atonement
- Tabernacles
- Last Great Day

Verse 27: “To whom God did will... [to the saints] ...to make known what *are* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” That ties in with John 14 and all of this is part of conversion.

- Christ in us
- Christ motivating us
- the Father in us
- the Father leading us

Both of Them together!

Verse 28: “Whom we preach, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, so that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” *That perfection comes at the resurrection!*

Let’s see what Paul says and how he views Christ in us, and how that reflects on part of what God is doing.

Galatians 4:19: “My little children, for whom I am again laboring in pain until **Christ has been formed in you.**”

Starts with the mind of Christ and everything else. That ties in with the thing of the resurrection.

Philippians 3:21: “**Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body**, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself?”

We’re going to see with the next reference, that we’re going to see God as He is, because we will be like Him.

I want you to grasp this. We read Paul were he says that Christ is going to transform our bodies to be like His body. We know that in the book of Revelation that His face shines like the sun, and His body is glorified, so much so that His feet are like fine brass as if it glowed in a furnace. What kind of existence is that going to be, to live forever and ever.

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested... [at His return] ...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure” (vs 1-3).

That the whole process of conversion, and we are develop:

10) Faith, Hope and Love

Each one of those is a whole topic in itself. We have the faith of Jesus Christ, we have the love of God. Let’s see exactly how Paul expresses this concerning the love of God. We’ve already covered loving God with all your heart, mind, soul and being.

Rom. 5 tells us how this works, even in times of trouble.

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been

justified by faith...”

- you believe in God
- you believe in forgiveness
- you believe in redemption
- you believe in receiving the Holy Spirit of God
- you believe in the love of God
- you believe in the faith and hope of God

“...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access **by faith** into this **grace**...” (vs 1-2). *The whole relationship you have with God, directly to the Father in heaven above!*

“...in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God” (v 2). *We will see Him exactly as He is!*

Verse 3: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations... [we’re going to have difficulties in the world without a doubt] ...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance, and endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of *God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, which has been given to us” (vs 3-5).

That’s quite a statement, the love of God working in us:

- loving God
- loving each other
- loving the brethren
- loving all the things that God commands us

11) Grow in Grace and in Knowledge

It also tells us *why* we need to grow in grace and knowledge. This is why daily prayer and study is so important. When we all understand and realize that the Word of God is inspired by the mind of God, and are the very words that God wants written to give to us:

- the voice of God
- the words of God
- the Truth of God

2-Peter 3:17: “Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness; **rather, be growing in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ**...” (vs 17-18).

That is accomplished through prayer and study. God will reveal things to you. You’ll go along when you’re studying and all of a sudden BING! a

light bulb goes off in your brain! You connect the words of God together and you understand it even more. That is a fantastic thing.

Let’s see *why*, and let’s see *how* we are to grow in grace and knowledge.

2-Peter 1:1: “Simon Peter a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained *the* same precious faith as ours by *the* righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied to you...” (vs 1-2).

That’s what God wants; He wants you to grow in grace and knowledge, expand and develop.

“...in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord” (v 2). *Notice what God is doing; this is a fantastic thing when you understand it!*

Verse 3: “according as His Divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life... [eternal life] ...and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; **through which He has given to us the greatest and most precious promises**...” (vs 3-4).

There can’t be anything greater than this. Nothing in the world! Nothing anywhere! That’s why the saints are going to rule the world when Christ returns.

“...**that through these you may become partakers of the Divine nature**... [overcoming the carnal nature, the human nature, the mind of the flesh] ...having escaped the corruption *that is in the* world through lust” (v 4).

That’s quite a thing, indeed! This we can overcome. We need to overcome so many things. We find that we overcome with the power of the God’s Holy Spirit:

12) Christians are to Overcome

They are to overcome *sin, self and Satan the devil!* We can do all of those. Here is the summary of it:

1-John 5:1: “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God...”

That’s receiving the earnest of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, that He and the Father will come and make Their abode within us.

“...and everyone who loves Him Who begat... [you love God the Father] ...also loves him who has been begotten by Him... [loving the brethren] ...By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments” (vs 1-2).

See how all of these tie together. Even though these are 12 steps listed out one after the

other, it's more like a sphere. Everything fits together.

Verse 3: "For this is the love of God: that **we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.**" *They're perfect!*

Verse 4: "Now then, everyone who is begotten by God **overcomes the world...**" Why? *Because you're faithful to God!* You overcome Satan, and we will see how in just a bit.

"...and this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world? Even the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" (vs 4-5).

Let's see how we overcome Satan the devil, because he's 'the god of this world.' He's the one who is running everything in the world and all the *fake Christianity*, as well as all the other religions of the world.

This is a prophecy of the coming final battle of which Satan the devil is going to lead the world against God. There will be utter defeat of Satan and all the forces of the world.

{note sermon series: *Daniel/Revelation*—you will see how all of that comes about}

Revelation 12:9: "And the great dragon was cast out, the ancient serpent who is called the Devil and Satan, who is deceiving the whole world..."

He is called *the god of this world* and we are to overcome him, and this will tell us how.

"...he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven say, 'Now has come the salvation and the power and the Kingdom of our God, and the authority of His Christ because **the accuser of our brethren has been cast down, who accuses them day and night before our God**'" (vs 9-10).

Being a true Christian requires the power and strength of God:

- to fight against self
- to fight against sin
- to fight against the world
- to fight against Satan the devil

All of those forces are there against us, but we're guaranteed the victory! We are guaranteed because Jesus said, 'I have overcome the world.' We can overcome all of these things when we stay close to God and do what God wants us to do.

Verse 11: "But they overcame him through the blood of the Lamb... [through the grace of God and the forgiveness of sin] ...and through the word of their testimony... [having the knowledge and

Truth of God to reject everything that's satanic] ...and they loved not their lives unto death." *That is the conviction right there!*

We've cover an awful lot in these two parts of the 12 steps of becoming a true Christian. That can be expanded out even more and more. Like everything else that God does, there's so much to it, because it's all inspired by God.

That's why we need to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being; keep the commandments of God; yield ourselves to God and the power of the Holy Spirit ***so we can stay the true Christians that we need to be, and to enter into the Kingdom of God at the return of Christ through the power of the resurrection!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 51:1-7
- 2) Romans 2:13
- 3) Luke 14:26
- 4) Matthew 10:37-39
- 5) Matthew 22:37-40
- 6) Romans 6:1-8
- 7) Acts 19:2, 6
- 8) John 14:15-17, 20-23
- 9) Romans 8:7-11
- 10) Ephesians 1:13
- 11) Colossians 2:8-12
- 12) Romans 12:1-2
- 13) Hebrews 10:14-16
- 14) Philippians 2:1-5
- 15) John 1:1
- 16) Philippians 2:7-15
- 17) Isaiah 55:6-11
- 18) Isaiah 56:1-2, 4
- 19) Colossians 1:26-28
- 20) Galatians 4:14
- 21) Philippians 3:21
- 22) 1 John 3:1-3
- 23) Romans 5:1-5
- 24) 2 Peter 3:17-18
- 25) 2 Peter 1:1-4
- 26) 1 John 5:1-5
- 27) Revelation 12:9-11

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 19; 103
- Acts 8; 19:5

Also referenced:

Articles (**truthofGod.org**):

- What Do You Mean "Born Again"?
- What Do You Mean "Born of God"?

Sermon Series: *Daniel/Revelation*

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