

Salvation – Teacher’s Guide

1) Why do we need to be saved?

- A) We were created by God to love and serve Him (Matthew 22:37–40). His will for our lives is clearly revealed in His Word the Bible. Within the Bible are written all of the commands that God expects us to obey—it is His law (John 14:15).
- B) Everyone has broken God’s law (Romans 3:23; cf. 3:10–18). Consider only a few of God’s commands (Exodus 20): Have you ever told a lie? Have you ever taken something that wasn’t yours? Have you ever lusted after someone? Have you ever coveted what belonged to another? We don’t have to go very far into God’s law before we realize that we have broken not just one but many of His commands.
- C) When we break a man-made law there is a punishment (e.g., the penalty for speeding is a fine, while the penalty for murder is death or life imprisonment). Breaking God’s law is sin, and sin is rebellion against God. Because God is infinite, the consequences of rebelling against Him are also infinite. Thus breaking God’s law brings the punishment of eternal death (Romans 6:23; Matthew 25:46).
- D) There is nothing we can do to merit God’s forgiveness. No amount of money can repay the debt we owe Him. No amount of time spent in His service can make up for breaking His law. No amount of good works is ever enough to outweigh our sin. The Bible is clear that there is nothing we can do in and of ourselves to escape the sentence of eternal death (Psalms 49:7–9; Ephesians 2:8–9; Isaiah 64:6; Galatians 2:16).

2) How can we be saved?

- A) There is good news (gospel)! Jesus said, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:16 NASB). Jesus Christ died on the cross in our place and took the punishment of death that we deserved upon Himself (Romans 5:8; 1 Corinthians 15:3–4). He offers us eternal life through a relationship with Him (John 17:3; Revelation 3:20).

3) Is there a cost involved in God’s offer of salvation?

- A) God’s gift of salvation is freely offered to everyone, but there is a cost involved in being Jesus’ disciple. In fact, Jesus made a point of urging those who sought to follow after Him to count the cost of such a decision (read Luke 14:25–33):
 - (1) The commitment. When Jesus said, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple,” He meant that we must love God more than we love anyone else (not that we must literally “hate” our family). Our loyalty to Jesus must come before our loyalty to our family, our spouse and even our life itself. Are we willing to love God more than anyone, including ourselves?

- (2) The cross. The cross was an instrument of humiliation and death. If we want to follow Christ, we will have to die to ourselves. This means that we must renounce our right to **control** our own fate and **choose** our own way. Are we willing to **give up** our self-sovereignty and obey the will of Christ?
- (3) The cost. Jesus warned that those who didn't consider the true cost of their endeavors would find themselves **unable** to complete them (Luke 14:28–33). Are we willing to count the cost and take Jesus' words to heart: "So therefore, any one of you who does not **renounce** all that he has cannot be my disciple"?

4) How do we respond to God's offer of salvation?

- A) **Confess** our sins. Confession is not mere speculation ("If I have sinned...") or catharsis ("Just wanted to get that off my chest..."). It is **agreeing** with what God says about our sinful condition. It is recognizing and acknowledging that we are **guilty** of breaking His law. When we confess, we must put aside our natural desire to justify ourselves. Instead, we must agree with God that we stand justly condemned as a sinner (Psalm 32:5; 1 John 1:9–10).
- B) **Repent** of our sins. Repentance is not simply feeling bad that we have done wrong. It is a complete **change** of **mind** toward sin and a **desire** for forgiveness (Mark 1:15; 1 Thess 1:9; Ezekiel 33:11). When we repent, we turn from our old way of living for sin and self and begin living for Christ. True repentance always shows itself in a change of **behavior** (Acts 3:19; 8:22; 17:30).
- C) **Believe** in Christ. We must believe that Jesus Christ is the **Son** of God, that He **died** on the cross in our place, and that He was **resurrected** to bring life to the world. We must place our trust in Christ's sacrifice as the atonement for our sins (**Romans 10:9–10, 13**; Acts 16:31). When we believe in Christ, we are staking our lives on Jesus' claim that He is the only way to God.
 - (1) Jesus said, "**I** am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through **me**" (John 14:6; cf. Acts 4:12). There is only one way to be forgiven of our sins and be reconciled to God—through His Son, Jesus Christ.
 - (2) Our faith in Christ is not a **work** of which we can boast. Faith is only possible by and through God's **grace** (Ephesians 2:8–9). God's Word is clear that no work can save us.
- D) **Pray** to God. Many people find it helpful to be guided in how to express their decision to repent and trust Christ for salvation. Here is an example of a prayer for salvation that carefully accounts for the essential requirements of turning to God:
 - (1) [For adults] God, I confess that I have broken your law. I stand justly condemned as a sinner. Today, I declare that I choose to repent of my sin and turn from my old way of living for sin and self. I also declare that I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died in my place and that He was resurrected to bring me life. I place my faith and trust in His sacrifice, and I humbly ask you to forgive me and give me new life. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

(2) *[For children]* God, I know that I have done bad things. I'm sorry for doing wrong. I believe that Jesus is Your Son. I believe that He died for me and that He came back to life so that I could live in Him. I ask you to forgive me and come into my heart. Thank you for saving me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

E) Be **Baptized**. Baptism is the first step of **obedience** for those who have been saved (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). It is also one of the ways that you "**confess** with your mouth that Jesus is Lord" (Romans 10:9). Becoming a disciple of Jesus is a personal decision but it is not a **private** one. We must **publicly** declare our intention to commit our lives to Christ. If the baptism takes time to arrange, don't wait—tell someone (a parent, a sibling, a friend)! Confessing Christ is not a single, isolated event. It's something every disciple does for the rest of their lives.

5) What happens when we're saved?

A) We are spiritually **united** with Christ and become part of His **body**. As a result of this union, we are:

(1) **Justified**. God **forgives** our sins and declares us **righteous** in His sight (Romans 3:24–26; 5:9).

(2) **Regenerated**. God makes us spiritually **alive** (Ephesians 2:1–5). This is what the Bible means when it speaks of being "born again" (John 3:1–8).

(3) **Sanctified**. God makes us holy. This means we are **set apart** from sin and **dedicated** to God as His possession (1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:11).

(4) **Cleansed**. God washes away our **guilt** and **sin** and makes us clean (1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

(5) **Reconciled**. God **reconciles** us to Himself through Christ. We are no longer enemies of God but **friends** (Colossians 1:21–22; Romans 5:10).

(6) **Adopted**. God **adopts** us as His children with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities associated with such a relationship (John 1:12–13; Galatians 3:26; 4:4–6; 1 John 3:1). This relationship is the essence of what it means to be saved (John 17:3).

(7) **Naturalized**. God makes us **citizens** of Christ's kingdom (Colossians 1:13). The kingdom has a King, laws, a culture and a mission.

B) We begin a **lifetime** journey of **becoming** like Jesus (**discipleship**).