

Jesus wants to forgive us — and help us outgrow the need to be forgiven

It is a great mistake for us to think of God's plan of salvation as a mere insurance plan. We should never think God gave His Son simply to protect us from the consequences of our sins. The fact is, Jesus lived and died to save us from our sins themselves. *Jesus wants to forgive us — and help us outgrow the need to be forgiven.*

Just as God delivered Israel from physical bondage in Egypt, God delivers us from spiritual bondage to sin. We could not have delivered ourselves; it had to be God who redeemed us from our slavery to sin. That is why the Bible uses the word “salvation” to describe what has happened to us in Christ. We have been “saved” in the sense of having been “rescued.” Thanks to God, we have “escaped” the bondage in which we were held. Peter speaks of this when he says we have “escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” (2 Pt. 1:4).

We need to understand, however, that God redeemed us with a definite goal or purpose in His mind. In the verse cited above, Peter wrote that we have been given “precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature.” God set us free from sin that we might be free to become conformed to His own character. Our Father's purpose is nothing less than the complete renovation of our being. He desires to heal the damage done by sin and make us, once again, the pure and holy beings He created us to be.

It is through God's power that we have been redeemed from our past sins, and it is also through His power that He intends to redeem us from sin in the present. Paul said, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age” (Tit. 2:11,12).

The plan God has devised to save us is for the purpose of renewing us in His own image, as well as rescuing us from our punishment. As Christians, we are involved in the process of being transformed “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Cor. 3:18). It's important that we make progress toward that glory right now. Let's think about that this week.

Monday: Romans 6:1-7

Key Idea: When we are baptized, we are raised to walk in newness of life.

Questions for Family Growth: What is baptism a picture or representation of? What is the “old self” (v.6) that is crucified with Christ? What does it mean to “walk in newness of life” (v.4)? What if we do not, as Christians, live that kind of life? What did Jesus say in Mt. 7:21?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 25:13.

Tuesday: Romans 6:8-14

Key Idea: We should not let sin control us.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul mean when he says, “consider yourselves dead to sin” (v.11)? Is it possible in this life to be sinlessly perfect? If not, is it possible for us to keep sin from “reigning” (v.12) in us? How can we do that?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 25:14.

Wednesday: Romans 6:15-18

Key Idea: We should let righteousness control us.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.16, how can we tell whose “slaves” we really are? In vv.17,18, what change takes place when we obey the gospel? As Christians, can we continue to live any way we wish?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 25:15.

Thursday: Romans 6:19-23

Key Idea: We should let ourselves be set free from sin.

Questions for Family Growth: What does Paul mean by saying “present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification” (v.19)? If we were to continue to live in sin, what would we get out of it, according to v.21?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 25:16.

Friday: Romans 8:5-11

Key Idea: We will think and act righteously if Christ lives in us.

Questions for Family Growth: In v.5, what is the difference between the righteous and the sinful? What does it mean that “the Spirit of God dwells in you” (v.9)? According to vv.10,11, what will happen if God’s Spirit dwells within us?

Wisdom for the Day: Proverbs 25:17.

Gary Henry — WordPoints.com