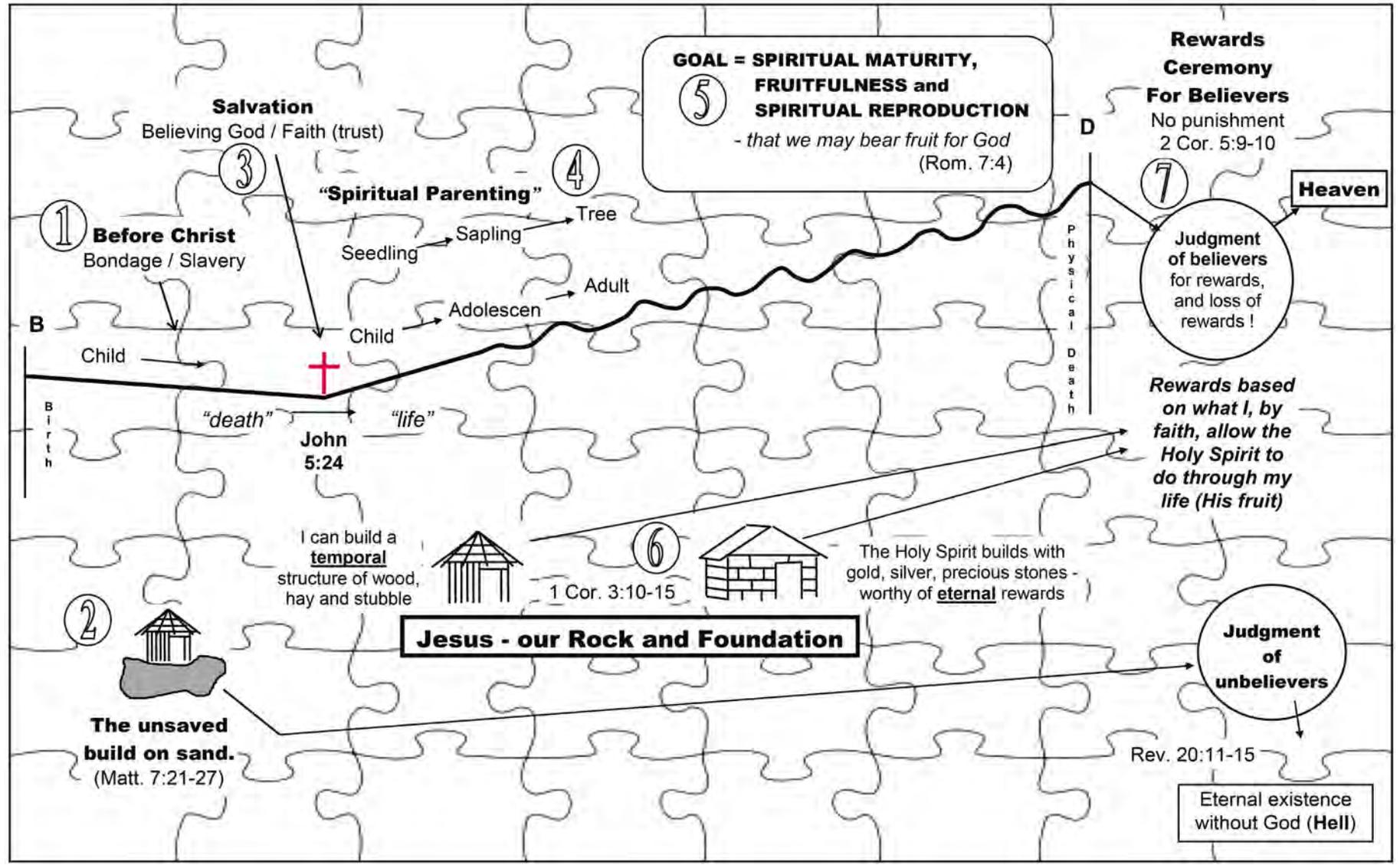


Abbreviated Overview of the "Normal" Christian Life

Imagine the Christian Life as the Boxtop of a "Jigsaw Puzzle" and portions of Biblical truth are presented as "*pieces of the puzzle*".



Abbreviated Overview of the “Normal” Christian Life

Explanation of the “Jigsaw Puzzle” Diagram

The main purpose of this lesson is to understand a practical overview of the Normal Christian Life. As I acquire Biblical concepts and knowledge I want mentally to connect the pieces to God’s overall plan for my life.



Consider a jigsaw puzzle. Imagine trying to fit together the pieces of a puzzle without being able to refer to the picture boxtop. It is much less frustrating when the boxtop picture is available for reference.

The second diagram (on the next page), the “Abbreviated Overview”, is like the puzzle boxtop, while the pieces represent bits of Biblical knowledge.

Typically, I accumulate information from the Bible, friends, books, sermons, podcasts, conversations, etc. I may have difficulty knowing how this new information fits into my everyday life here on earth, or worse yet, I may arrive at wrong conclusions which can distort my understanding of God and the Christian life.

Some newer Christians become frustrated and return to their secular life style. Some may focus only on behaving correctly and develop a list of “do’s and don’ts”. Others may compartmentalize their life, resulting in a perceived “spiritual life” separate from a “secular life”. They may attempt to live an acceptable spiritual life before others, while at the same time concluding that Biblical principles somehow don’t apply to their secular everyday life.

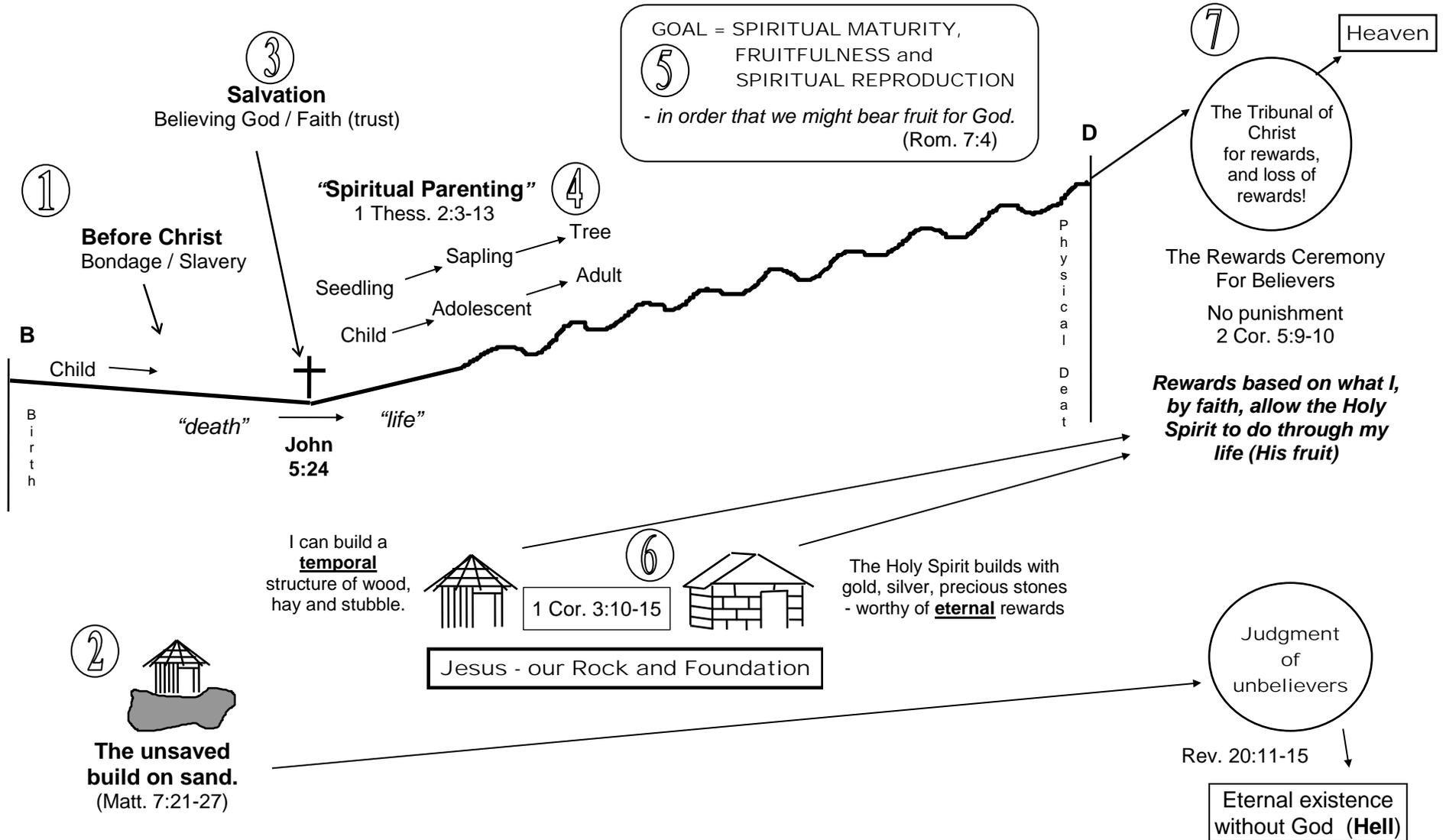
My response should be to view the various components of my everyday life as a unit, and involve God in every aspect of my life.

My goal is to understand how to integrate Biblical knowledge into my daily relationship with God and others, and to protect me from falling into the common practice of simply archiving Biblical information.

As I grow, I will become increasingly more aware of my need to walk continually before the Lord (24/7), seeking His approval, and less dependent on the need for approval from others.



Abbreviated Overview of the "Normal" Christian Life



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Jigsaw Puzzle “Boxtop” Guide

Discuss the explanations below for each component of the jigsaw puzzle “boxtop”, all of which will be covered later in more detail in the following lessons.

① **Birth to Rebirth** – We should each be able to easily identify ourselves as having gone through this period, alienated from God, living in spiritual darkness, and without hope.

② If a person rejects Christ and dies during this period, that person who has built their house upon the sand without a foundation, will go to the **judgment of unbelievers** to spend eternity separated from God. It is important to understand that this judgment has **nothing to do with believers**, only unbelievers.

Matt. 7:24-27 (*Jesus said*) “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn’t collapse, because its foundation was on the rock. But **everyone who hears these words of Mine and doesn’t act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!**”

Rev. 20:11-15 (*The apostle John wrote*) “Then I saw a **great white throne** and One seated on it. Earth and heaven fled from His presence, and no place was found for them. I also saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged according to their works by what was written in the books. Then the sea gave up its dead, and Death and Hades gave up their dead; all were judged according to their works. Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And anyone **not found written in the book of life** was thrown into the lake of fire.”

③ **The Cross** – This event is by far the most important happening in my life. From God’s perspective I have passed from “death” (without His life) to “life” (the Lord indwelling), from hopelessness to hopefulness.

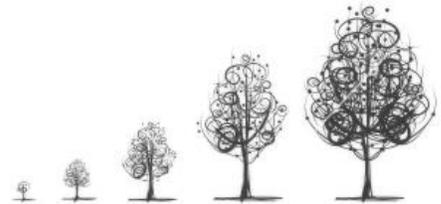


John 5:24 “I assure you: Anyone who **hears** My word and **believes** Him who sent Me **has** eternal life and will **not** come under judgment but has passed from **death to life.**”

④ **The New Life** – It is important that I understand the event of salvation is the **entrance** into a new life with God, prepared by Him to completely meet my every need as I fit into **His** design. I am introduced to the concept of fitting into **God’s plan** for my time here on earth, which is but a small part of His **eternal** plan for me. Two Biblical analogies can illustrate my Christian life: that of a plant growing from a seedling to a tree, and that of a human growing from a baby to an adult. Again, the event of salvation is just the **beginning** of the new life of learning to walk with God. During this period of time it is **very important** for a new believer to be **disciplined** (“**spiritually parented**” / **mentored**”).

1 Thessalonians 2:7-13 ... we were gentle among you, **as a nursing mother** nurtures her own children. We cared so much for you that we were pleased to share with you not only the gospel of God but also **our own lives**, because **you had become dear to us**. ... **like a father** with his own children, we **encouraged**, **comforted**, and **implored** each one of you to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory. This is why we constantly thank God, because when you received the message about God that you heard from us, you welcomed it not as a human message, but as it truly is, **the message of God**, which also **works effectively in you** believers.

5 The Intended **Objective** (Goal) – Just as I would expect a healthy sapling to grow into a fruit-bearing tree, and a healthy infant to grow into an adult and become a parent, so God’s intention is to make of a healthy spiritual infant a **spiritually mature and fruitful** Christian.



6 **God’s Foundation** and **My Building Options** – God has laid a Foundation, Jesus Christ, which represents my salvation. This is equally true for **all** believers. However, **each** of us individually has a choice as to how we will build **on** that Foundation. The buildings represent **the use of my resources (time, energy, possessions)** during my physical life here on earth. If **I allow** the Holy Spirit, as the Master Building Contractor, to use my resources, **He** will use those building materials to **create for me** an **eternal** structure of gold, silver and precious stones. That which **I deny** Him use of will produce a structure of wood, hay and stubble.

1 Cor. 3:10-15 (*Paul wrote*) According to God’s grace that was given to me, I have laid a foundation as a skilled master builder, and another builds on it. But **each one must be careful** how he builds on it. For no one can lay any other foundation than what has been laid down. That foundation is Jesus Christ. If anyone builds on that foundation with **gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or straw**, each one’s work will become obvious, for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire; the fire will test the quality of each one’s work. **If** anyone’s work that he has built survives, he will receive a **reward**. If anyone’s work is burned up, it will be **lost**, but **he will be saved**; yet it will be like an escape through fire.

7 These verses speak of a future **rewards ceremony** called The Tribunal of Christ (or The Judgment Seat of Christ) at which time **each** believer will **individually** appear before Jesus Christ to be rewarded (**for eternity**) for what he/she has **allowed** the Holy Spirit to do through their life while living here on earth.

There should be **no fear of punishment** at this event, although I need to be aware of the potential for **loss of eternal rewards**, since all that is wood, hay and stubble will be turned into worthless ashes. It is important to note that **no unbeliever** will be present at this event.

2 Cor. 5:9-10 Therefore, whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to be **pleasing to Him**. For we must **all** appear before the tribunal of Christ, so that **each** may be repaid for what he has done in the body, whether good or worthless.

Matt. 6:20-21 But collect for yourselves treasures **in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don’t break in and steal. **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**