

Salvation, our Two Natures and Lordship A Discussion

1. Contrast the **substitutionary principle** of salvation with the common inclination toward merit-based salvation. I need to clearly understand that salvation is not earned, nor kept through my human effort so that I do not reason like the Galatian Christians. *You foolish Galatians! Who has hypnotized you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was vividly portrayed as crucified? I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? **After beginning with the Spirit, are you now going to be made complete by the flesh?*** (Galatians. 3:1-3) (For a complete discussion, see Lesson 1-3.)
2. The “**event**” of salvation (my “new birth”) is just the “**first step**” in my spiritual walk with God, just as physical birth is the first step in the human experience of progressing from childhood to adult maturity. Many Christians emphasize the event of salvation (and obviously it isn’t optional), but then fail to emphasize the importance of the Christian’s life between the experience of salvation and the departure from this body.

I should not view my daily life as being a difficult and frustrating struggle with sin, to be endured until I am finally delivered through death (an unpleasant, but necessary experience) into heaven. Although I want to experience a consistently victorious life, it’s a misconception to reason that only “very spiritual” believers are able to achieve that goal. God has provided me everything I need to live the abundant life. 1 Peter 1:3
3. It’s critical to understand the importance of **God’s character** as it pertains to **His trustworthiness?** Do I fall to the enemy’s strategy of **undermining and distorting God’s character** in my mind by portraying Him as One who cannot always be counted on to do what is best for me as I follow Him?

Does the enemy utilize my human nature’s propensity toward independence from God to promote distrust in Him, even though the Bible continually reinforces God’s character as loving, perfect, faithful and **absolutely worthy** of my trust? How do I reconcile this tension?
(See Lesson 1-5)
4. How did I as a **believer come to have within me two natures** which are in direct opposition to one another? I need to understand that my human nature is **not the least bit improved at conversion**, as compared to the common perception that the Holy Spirit’s presence somehow raises my human nature to a new level of goodness. I have the same potential for committing sins after being saved as before. My human nature is beyond repair. God’s only provision for a victorious life is through the **Divine Nature in the Person of the Holy Spirit!**
5. It is important to view the Holy Spirit as a **Person**, God Himself, in contrast to the idea that He is something less, such as an “inspiration” or an “influential force” for good in my life? He should be recognized as a constant Overseer and Companion, and a Person with whom there needs to be continual **communication** and **interaction**, as I would have with a spouse or a close friend.

He has a daily plan for my life and wants me to learn to **follow Him** and fit into **His** plans, contrary to the commonly held belief that He is always by my side, but is really only needed for those difficult times **when I determine through my human understanding** that I can’t cope alone. (my Divine 911)

6. **Christ's "ownership"** of me is **a truth** that does not in any way depend upon my acknowledgment or acceptance of it. I need to clearly understand **from the very beginning** that surrender does not imply I'm giving up something **to** God, because it is already His. **He has bought me** and, therefore, anything less than an unconditional yielding of myself to Him is to seize authority over that which is not mine. **He is rightfully my Lord**, and I need to acknowledge and accept it. He should not be presented as One who will "**become**" my Lord sometime in the future. A refusal to acknowledge God's stated truth will result in forfeiture of blessings both here on earth and at the Rewards Ceremony. The result is wandering in my "spiritual desert" -- never quite finding victory and enjoying the abundant life as God intended.

7. I can perceive the concept of Lordship as a **decision** (event), a submission of my will to His authority, followed by a process (abiding, sanctification, spiritual growth). This event is characterized by the decision of the second group of Israelites to cross the Jordan River into God's chosen place of blessing and fruitfulness (Canaan), where they learned to follow God in the process of conquering the land.

The marriage ceremony (Marriage "Covenant") is also an **event** of commitment ("relinquishment of independence") followed by the marriage **process** ("learning to live together in harmonious fellowship"). This perspective is in contrast to the prevalent misconception that Lordship is a **goal** that is attained to **as a result** of a "process" of surrender and obedience.

"True surrender is not simply surrender of our external life but surrender of our will -- and once that is done, surrender is complete. The greatest crisis we ever face is the surrender of our will. Yet God never forces a person's will into surrender, and He never begs. He patiently waits until that person willingly yields to Him. And once that battle has been fought, it never needs to be fought again. Jesus says, "If you want to be My disciple, you must give up your right to yourself to Me." And after you surrender -- then what? Your entire life should be characterized by an eagerness to maintain unbroken fellowship and oneness with God." (Taken from My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers – Sep. 13. (c) 1935 by Dodd Mead & Co., renewed (c) 1963 by the Oswald Chambers Publications Assn., Ltd., and is used by permission of Discovery House Publishers, Box 3566, Grand Rapids MI 49501. All rights reserved.)

8. These **two** aspects of surrender can present an obvious opportunity for confusion. There is an **initial** surrender of the **will** to His authority which is an event, followed by the process of surrendering those areas of my **understanding** and **behavior** that He wants to change and/or prune to mold me into a more useful and fruitful vessel. (A wild horse's will must first be broken, after which the training process can follow.) The "yoke" referred to in Matthew 11:28-30 speaks of "the relinquishment of my independence to Him" (event), followed by a process of learning to walk in harmonious fellowship with Him, "getting to know Him" ("sanctification").

9. Do I mistakenly equate Lordship to a surrender of **external behavior**? This misconception can result in me repeatedly committing to total surrender and obedience, only to be soon disappointed by the lack of anticipated purity and godliness. I can then easily conclude that such struggles with my human nature must be due to insincerity, lack of understanding, or lack of commitment on my part. Many Christians repeat this process throughout the years, but it doesn't have to be that way for me.

10. Which group of Israelites does my life mirror? The **first group** who refused to believe God and entrust themselves into His care because they did not consider Him trustworthy and as a result found themselves in a desert experience where God faithfully took care of all their temporal needs, but **they were not fruitful** from God's eternal perspective? Or, the **second group** of Israelites who trusted God and enjoyed the Promised Land, even though they still faced battles?